

The Weekly Word

April 22-28, 2019

Oh, Happy Day... Christ is risen and God has given us His story. Happy reading...
Grace and Peace, Bill

To hear the Bible read click this link... <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/>.

Monday, April 22: Zephaniah 3- Grace...

Grace: God's Riches At Christ's Expense.

Grace: Not getting what we deserve, instead getting what we do not deserve.

In this chapter Israel receives what she does not deserve... *The LORD has taken away your punishment, he has turned back your enemy. The LORD, the King of Israel, is with you; never again will you fear any harm* (15).

Seeing God's gift to Israel, I began to consider the grace God has shown to me. His gifts have resulted in my faith, my family, my friendships, my future, my work, my health, my experiences... God's grace has granted it all.

I sit today utterly thankful for all God has shown to me. None of it I deserve, all of it is gift. All of it is by God's grace...

Thank You, Lord. I am humbled today recognizing everything I have received by Your grace. Thank You, Lord. Amen and amen.

Tuesday, April 23: Haggai 1- God calling to us...

The prophecy of Haggai generally calls to me to make sure I am building God's house (doing God's work) and not merely looking after myself. But today as I read I saw more clearly the way God calls out to His people. God gives us chances to respond. He is not a 'one call and done' God!

God brought His people to the land to rebuild the temple and reinstitute worship after the exile. They came but became distracted rebuilding their own homes.

The Lord tried to get their attention Verses 5-6 using natural means, which Israel should have known was a call from God, since He promised them these things. *Now this is what the LORD Almighty says: "Give careful thought to your ways. You have planted much, but harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it."*

Sadly, they missed God's shouts.

Did God give up on them? NO! He sent a prophet, Haggai, with a specific word. *This is what the LORD Almighty says: "These people say, 'The time has not yet come to rebuild the LORD's house.' " Then the word of the LORD came through the prophet Haggai: "Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?"* (2-4).

God pursued them...

In my own life I can see the pursuit of God. He has never given up on me. When I stray into sin, God calls me home again and again. And His delight is when I turn to Him, confess and return. He always receives His children with open arms. Always.

Thank You for Your lavish grace. Thank You for the promise to forgive every time I confess (1John1:9) Thank You for the cross on which the penalty of my sin and the sin of the world was hung and paid for. Thank You, Lord. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Wednesday, April 24: Haggai 2- God's glory and peace through Jesus Christ ...

Verse 7 caught my eye... *I will shake all nations, and what is desired by all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory,' says the LORD Almighty.*

This comes on the heel of God lamenting with Israel that the temple they are rebuilding does not look as grand as the former temple. It is not difficult for me to imagine the disappointment and even disillusionment of the Israelites who remember the former temple and are now staring at this "shadow of its former greatness." Not only will God fill the house with His glory (7). God goes on to say, *The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house,' says the LORD Almighty. 'And in this place I will grant peace,' declares the LORD Almighty"* (9).

As I contemplate this scene, it is not the brick and mortar that give the temple its true glory. God Almighty's presence in the temple gives it true glory. A building by itself is inanimate, a creation of human hands. Only when God enters the dwelling does it radiate with glory and honor, because it radiates God Himself.

God goes on to say that *in this place I will grant peace...* Hmmm, I thought. The temple the people were rebuilding was the basis for the Temple Jesus saw in His day. And when the curtain was torn from top to bottom as He died on the cross, ultimate peace was given as the separation between God and humanity was bridged by the cross of Christ.

God's glory and peace through Jesus Christ... two wonderful thoughts to carry with me throughout today.

Lord God, Your presence changes anything it touches. When You touched me and redeemed me, You changed me and I am forever grateful. The peace you gave me through Jesus' gift on the cross gives me life every day. I pray, Lord, that I am an able ambassador for You in this world. May my life count for everything You desire. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Thursday, April 25: Zechariah 1- Don't disregard the correction of the Lord ...

Funny how nudges from God work. As I was reading through the chapter, verse 4 seemed to call to me. But I kept reading. I was on my computer reading in my study. Someone popped in I needed to speak with so we held our 15-minute conversation. When I turned back to my monitor and woke up my computer, which verse what highlighted? Yup, verse 4, so this is where I spent my meditation time.

Do not be like your ancestors, to whom the earlier prophets proclaimed: This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Turn from your evil ways and your evil practices.' But they would not listen or pay attention to me, declares the LORD (4).

Re-reading these words, I immediately thought, "Don't disregard the correction of the Lord."

I believe God speaks. I believe He speaks through His Word and through His Spirit, in nudges, pictures, words, even dreams –not that I have experienced all of these.

What the Lord is impressing upon me is that I must not disregard when God speaks, particularly when he speaks a word of correction.

When God reveals a sin pattern, or a singular inappropriate action, what do I do with this word from the Lord?

Beyond this chapter a day, I am reading through the Bible in a year. Presently I am in 2Samuel with all the stories about David King of Israel. David is not perfect. A couple of his sins were BIGGIES! But one thing about David, when God confronted David with his sin, he immediately repented accepting whatever consequence God might render. David's seemingly immediate reaction to listen and accept God's rebuke is an example to me on how to live faithfully.

I hope, I pray I am as faithful as David in this department...

Lord, lately I have been praying for strength and courage... give me more courage to obey You whenever You speak, whether a directive to go and do something or to deal with any particular sin in my life. Lord, I don't want to be like Israel who would not listen or pay attention. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Friday, April 26: Zechariah 2- God's glorious day...

This chapter paints quite a picture. There is a great day coming when many nations are drawn to the Lord. There is a great day coming when God Himself will be our wall of defense and God Himself will be the glory within the wall. Yes, there is a great day coming. *While the angel who was speaking to me was leaving, another angel came to meet him and said to him: "Run, tell that young man, 'Jerusalem will be a city without walls because of the great number of people and animals in it. And I myself will be a wall of fire around it,' declares the LORD, 'and I will be its glory within.'... "Many nations will be joined with the LORD in that day and will become my people.... (3-5,11a).*

I think we are living in the day described. People from many nations are coming to Jesus, believing in Him as Lord, Savior and God, and being grafted into God's family.

I think we are seeing the day about which Zechariah was prophesying.

We are so blessed to live in 'that day.'

We are so blessed because we get to be part of the chorus of voices who are proclaiming the name of the Lord and inviting people to join the family of God through faith in Jesus.

What a glorious day it is, and when the fullness of that day arrives and Jesus returns as King for His bride, He will carry us away to a new heaven and new earth... one that will never spoil or degrade ever again. Evil will be banished forever and ever.

What a day that will be!

Thank You, Lord, for this glimpse of the day of Your coming. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Saturday, April 27: Zechariah 3- God alone is the one who can cleanse sin ...

I wondered what was in this chapter for me.

Lord God, what would you speak to me?

This is what kept coming to my thoughts, "I will take away your sin." (see verses 3 & 9)

God alone is the one who can cleanse sin. God alone is the one who can forgive and what God promised to do for the High Priest Joshua, God has done for all who believe in Jesus. By dying on the cross for all humanity, Jesus takes away the sin of everyone who believes and puts their trust in Him.

Just last weekend we celebrated Easter, Jesus' resurrection and vindication of all he taught. On the cross Jesus died for the sins of humanity. In the resurrection God declared that Jesus' sacrifice was accepted. All who believe in Him will be saved, redeemed and made new by the love, grace, mercy and sacrifice of Jesus.

Thank You, Jesus, Father and Holy Spirit, for the gift of salvation and acceptance into your family through faith in Jesus. Halleluiab! He is risen and through faith, I will rise with Him in the last day. I love You, Lord. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Sunday, April 28, 2019, Sunday Worship

If any of my thoughts or the Bible readings spark questions send an email reply and I will do my best to answer all questions from people on the list... I will answer personal questions privately; general questions will be answered in a subsequent email installment.

If you are reading along with me from the Living Hope website you can send questions or request being placed on the weekly email list by emailing Lisa at office@LivingHopeCT.org.

Click [here](#) for a link to my sermons on the web. Sermons are generally posted within 2 days.
