

**Monday**

Hebrews 10:26-31
Romans 12:9-21
Luke 12:1-12

These passages explain the reality for those who may mentally assent the truth, but do not truly hold to and pursue a loving relationship with Christ. Popular notions say things like: "God would not send good people to Hell," or "God would not send people to Hell who have never heard of Him." However, Scriptures like this and Romans 3:9-26 state that none are righteous. The status of man being unrighteous is the case whether we have heard of Jesus or not. The only thing that changes our status before God is belief - belief that results in a relationship with Christ. Otherwise, the reality of human existence is sin, death, and Hell. Sometimes, we are easily tempted to think that God would not send people to Hell or cast them away from His presence. We are tempted to maintain this because we think that if He did separate man from Himself, then He must be an evil God who doesn't really care about some of His creation. *Instead*, He is a good God who desires the opposite! The bleak and hopeless condition of humanity being separated from God is precisely why Jesus suffered, died, and rose again! Therefore, how do the consequences for those who do not truly know Jesus motivate you to share the truth of His love with others?

Tuesday

Hebrews 10:32-39
Matthew 5:1-12

Today's reading is a beautiful closing to chapter 10 of this letter to the Hebrews. It is one that we can reflect on heavily and one that gives context to the life and suffering of believers both then and today. While you may not have encountered beatings, ridicule, and imprisonment due to your beliefs, you probably have encountered some challenges and suffering in life that put into question your view of God, yourself, and others. What makes it possible for you to view and embrace these experiences with joy? How do you hold to the truth of your eternity with Christ?

Wednesday

Isaiah 26

Isaiah 26 thematically matches the text we have been reading so well. The glory of the Lord, the consequences for unbelievers, the hope in suffering for believers, and the worship of God are all prophesied by God through Isaiah. As the story of God unfolds in Scripture, we can see how all of those aspects listed above are evident through the New Testament. For example, verse 12 can be particularly interesting in an individualistic, Western society like ours. While many Christians claim to understand the concept that all our accomplishments are from God, how tempting is it for you to ascribe your accomplishments to yourself? Even when you want to say, "God gave me the skill to do _____," examine your heart to determine if that intent is your humility before God and a desire for Him to receive glory, or is it a back door for you to seek credit for yourself while appearing to give credit to God?



Thursday

Habakkuk 2

Today's reading points to what happens when we do not recognize that Jesus is who He is - our Savior, the Redeemer, the Messiah, and Lord of all. When we do not recognize Him, our only other option is to be idol worshippers, which is so far opposite to the greatness of worshipping Jesus. While we generally understand this, the deeper question is what happens when a Jesus worshipper is tempted to be an idol worshipper? In other words, what happens when you experience the conflict of compromising your faith and your witness in order to serve your own ends (to earn more, to be satisfied more, etc) with your desire to love Jesus and do what He says? First, take heart if that has been a situation in your past. Know that God offers grace in unlimited abundance. Secondly, repent and then move forward, knowing that being a Jesus worshipper is not well received in this world. There will continue to be times when Jesus calls you to be honest, kind, or long-suffering in face of the world permitting and even expecting that you lie, hate, and be impatient in order to advance an agenda that is not of Christ.

Friday

Hebrews 11:1-2 Romans 8:18-30 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:10

This text opens with an incredibly important description of faith. In fact, some biblical interpreters may say this is more of a description of what faith does than of what faith is. As such, it is important to emphasize the idea that faith is characterized by confidence, or assurance, which means that faith is certainty, even while it is invisible. While much of our faith can be believing God for our momentary needs being filled (i.e., food, shelter and clothing for survival), it is incomplete if our faith does not demonstrate believing and acting in confidence that God is using us to reconcile the earth to Himself up unto our eternal existence with Him. Consider a situation that you face, then ask yourself this question: what is your hope? Keep diving into your questions until you make a connection to how your hope in eternity with Christ gives meaning and purpose to your situation.

Saturday

Hebrews 11:3 Psalm 33

Faith is presented in verse 3 of Hebrews as being fundamental to everything that we see and sense. Yesterday's activity of identifying the connection of your eternity with Christ to your current circumstances is similar to the notion in this text. Through faith, we can understand every bit of what we can physically see and experience on the Earth can be traced back to the invisible God who created it. Tracing this Scripture back to Psalm 33 brings us then to the broader context that through faith, we know God, and it is through faith that we worship. What does worship look like for you and how can you dedicate yourself to giving God glory and honor through **all** that you do?

**Sunday****Hebrews 11:4**
Genesis 4

Today's reading begins what will be several more verses describing the faith of some people in the Old Testament. With regard to Cain and Abel's sacrifice, it is important to remember that God's acceptance of a person's sacrifice is understood to be God's acceptance of that person, and God can only accept righteousness. Furthermore, because Abel's story of faith was recorded, his faith is still a powerful reminder of the importance of our faith in Christ. This is so because like Abel's faith in God Who would accept his animal sacrifice, our faith is in God Who accepts us because of His willingness to sacrifice His Son to cover us once and for all. Spend some time in prayer today simply holding to the beauty of the sacrifice of Christ and the fact that you are now righteous before a Holy and perfect God simply due to your faith in that sacrifice. *[Side note: some may be confused on how God can accept someone in the Old Testament to be righteous when Jesus had not yet died for their sin. Remember Hebrews 10:4, as it describes the reality that "the faith of Old Testament saints was effective only because of the future sacrifice of Christ, which animal sacrifices foreshadowed" - ESV Study Bible.]*