

# Faithbuilders Devotional Series

Through the Bible in a Year  
A Daily Devotional

July

Pastors Mike Fast & David Curtis &  
Tom Garo



Day 212 - July 31<sup>st</sup>

2 Kings 22:3-20; 2 Chronicles 34:8-28; Jeremiah 5:20-6:30 —  
Rewarded Repentance

The scroll containing the Book of the Law was found in the Temple and read to King Josiah. After hearing the words, Josiah humbled himself before God in sorrow and repentance and tore his clothing and wept. His immediate response had a bearing on God’s response. Josiah pleaded with the high priest to speak to the LORD on behalf of himself and the entire nation. Josiah instantly knew that the nation had not followed the LORD and His Word for many generations, and that God’s wrath had been poured out against them as a result.

The Lord told Josiah that, because of how he responded, He would not bring disaster to him or the nation during his reign. It’s important to note that Josiah didn’t recline after hearing that and breathe a sigh of relief. No, instead he summoned the nation—every leader, priest and commoner—to come to the Temple and listen to the words of the Book of the Law. He pledged to obey every word in it, and asked the nation to make a similar pledge. How does God’s Word affect you?

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Day 182 – July 1<sup>st</sup>

2 Chronicles 29:3-31:21 — Faithful Reform

Hezekiah’s father, Ahaz, was a wicked king, as was Hezekiah’s son, Manasseh. However, Hezekiah “did what was pleasing in the LORD’s sight” (29:2). Hezekiah promoted reform in Judah as had not been witnessed in years. He developed a powerful prayer life and interceded for his people. He instituted civil and religious reform. He contributed generously to God’s work. He aggressively removed evil influences from his life and from Judah. He reformed worship in the lives of the people. He reintroduced Passover, and rededicated the Temple.

Often our passion to reform is more in line with a failing resolution. The element missing is the heart.

Reform works when the heart propels it. If our heart isn’t in it, it won’t last. This is confirmed by the statement at the end of chapter 31; “In all that he did in the service of the Temple of God and in his efforts to follow the law and the commands, Hezekiah sought his God wholeheartedly. As a result, he was very successful” (v. 21). As you commit to serve, obey, and grow in the Lord, make sure your heart is in it.

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Week 27<sup>th</sup> – July 2<sup>nd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>

Psalms 1-2, 10, 33, 42-49, 71, 84-85, 87, 91-100, 102, 104;  
Proverbs 25-31

The theme this week is communication. The wisdom literature of the Proverbs and the poetry of the Psalms have much to say about how we communicate. Sometimes this communication happens internally, sometimes it happens with other people, and sometimes it happens between us and God. So much of life involves communication, so I hope that you are able to glean much from the devotionals this week.

Bible Discussion Guide:

How can you tell the difference between genuine sincere compliments and flattery?

What kind of damage can happen to a relationship when we use flattery?

Why is it so difficult to tell the truth sometimes?

Is it ever okay to lie?

Day 201 – July 30<sup>th</sup>

Jeremiah 2:23-5:19 — Catch Me, Now!

When I was three years old, our family was playing in the swimming pool at the trailer court where we lived. My dad was in the pool catching me as I jumped from the side. This continued for quite some time until my dad started playing with my younger brother. Dad had told me he was going to play with Tim and had warned me not to jump. But there I was, and he had his back to me, but somehow I still figured he would catch me if I jumped in. He didn't... but fortunately a long-armed friend was there to pull me up from the bottom of the pool. When I came up I was mad. My dad had abandoned me to die a horrible death (at least that was my perspective).

That's the kind of perspective Israel had. "Why do you accuse Me of doing wrong? You are the ones who have rebelled, says the LORD" (2:29). We often get mad at God because He doesn't continue to catch us even though we may not be obeying.

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Have you ever found yourself doubting whether or not God was making the best decisions? What are we prone to do that? How do we change, or what must develop in our life to lessen this tendency?

The August 4<sup>th</sup> devotional could be elaborated on and personalized as you think of any time in your life when, after reading some “do” or “don’t” in Scripture, you first thought of how someone else could apply it, and not you. List the dangers to this way of thinking, as many as you can.

What does it mean to be still and know that He is God?

Why can it be so difficult to be silent?

Why is it that, once we start speaking, we listen so poorly?

What does it communicate when we listen poorly? How does that affect a relationship?

What is it about boasting or bragging that creates a problem in our lives?

What can we tell ourselves in order to avoid boasting?

What do you have in life to be thankful for?

How does being thankful impact the way we communicate with ourselves, others and with God?

Can you share a time when you said something that you wish you could have taken back?

What changes can you make to avoid hurting people with your words?

What is your reply to someone who struggles with the violence in Scripture that was the result of God's punishing a nation or people?

“I will take vengeance; I will repay those who deserve it,” says the Lord.” (Rom. 12:19)

How would you explain God's avenging characteristic to the unsaved?

Is there a way to avoid God's wrath?

Is there a way to avoid God's judgment? (Mt. 16:27)

Many people struggle with the idea that God's choices and decisions have a greater influence in our life than the decisions we make. Why is it uncomfortable to acknowledge that God has the right to do with our life whatever He wants? (see August 3<sup>rd</sup> devotional)

Week 31 — July 30<sup>th</sup>-August 5<sup>th</sup>

2 Kings 22:3-24:4; 2 Chronicles 34:8-36:5; Jeremiah 2:23-6:30; 22:1-23; chs. 25-26, 36, 45-48; Nahum 1-3; Habakkuk 1-3; Zephaniah 1-3

This week’s theme has to do with the justice and wrath of God. Charles Swindoll wrote the following:

Surely this phrase “the wrath of God” is greatly misunderstood. Many think, invariably, of some sort of peeved deity, a kind of cosmic, terrible-tempered Mr. Bang, who indulges in violent, uncontrolled displays of temper when human beings do not do what they ought to do. But such a concept only reveals the limitations of our understanding. The Bible never deals with the wrath of God that way. According to the Scriptures, the wrath of God is God’s moral integrity. When man refuses to yield himself to God, he creates certain conditions, not only for himself but for others as well, which God has ordained for harm. It is God who makes evil result in sorrow, heartache, injustice, and despair. It is God’s way of saying to man, “Now look, you must face the truth. You were made for Me. If you decide that you don’t want Me, then you will have to bear the consequences.” The absence of God is destructive to human life. That absence is God’s wrath. And God cannot withhold it. In His moral integrity, He insists that these things should occur as a result of our disobedience. He sets man’s sin and His wrath in the same frame. (*Living Above the Level of Mediocrity*)

Bible Discussion Guide:

Wrath = anger, indignation

Justice = fairness, merited reward or punishment

How are these two words similar and how are they different?

Day 183 – July 2<sup>nd</sup>

Proverbs 25:1-29:27 — Flattery

I don’t know if you have heard of the TV show *American Idol*. Basically the show is a singing competition. My favorite part of the show is the audition segment in the first few weeks. It never fails that a few people will audition who are poor singers, but think they are good because all their friends say they are good. Either these friends are terrible judges of musical talent, or they were saying flattering words to boost this person’s self-esteem.

This is the danger of flattery. It is terribly misleading, if not entirely wrong. Proverbs tells us that flattery causes ruin (26:28), that it is a trap for people (29:5), and that it is less appreciated than frankness (28:23).

Flattery can be as subtle as it is destructive. It can be easy to justify the use of flattery as well. How bad can something we say be if it results in someone feeling better about themselves. Even though you love and care for the person that you are speaking with, the Bible tells us to speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15), not speak a half-truth or choose to omit the truth.

Flattery may sound nice, but in the end someone will get hurt.

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Day 183 – July 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Proverbs 30:1-31:31 — Pinocchio

Sometimes I wish that we could all be a little more like Pinocchio. Not because of the strings or being made out of wood, but because of his nose. If you recall, Pinocchio’s nose gets him into all sorts of trouble because it grows when he tells a lie. In many ways, it would make life far easier if there was some easy way to tell if someone were lying.

We all know the damage that can come when we choose to lie. It is such a significant issue that Agur, the author of Proverbs 30, asked for help from the Lord to never do it.

As a parent of young children, I have learned that you do not need to teach a child to lie, rather you must teach them the importance of telling the truth. As sinful humans, we naturally lie to protect ourselves or others. We lie because we fear what might happen if we tell the truth and because, ultimately, we do not trust that God is in control.

May you come to trust that God does know the future and is in control and that you can confidently speak the truth regardless of the outcome.

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Day 210 – July 29<sup>th</sup>  
2 Kings 21:1-22:2; 2 Chronicles 33:1-34:7; Jeremiah 1:1-2:22 —  
How Bad is Your Past?

How bad is your past? Is it as ugly as Manasseh’s? He led the nation of Judah to do more evil than even the pagan nations were guilty of. He built pagan altars everywhere, even inside the Temple. He worshipped everything from stars to idols. He practiced sorcery, divination, and witchcraft, and consulted with mediums and psychics. He even sacrificed his own sons in the fire. I doubt your past was that bad.

It took capture by the enemy to reduce Manasseh’s pride. The Assyrians put a ring through his nose, bound him in chains, and led him away. While a prisoner, “in deep distress,” he cried out humbly to God. “He prayed, the Lord listened to him and was moved by his request for help. So the Lord let him return to Jerusalem and to his kingdom” (2 Chr. 33:13).

If God can forgive the past sins of Manasseh, there is no doubt that He can forgive anyone. Don’t become so guilt-ridden that you fail to come to the One who has the power to heal and forgive anyone.

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Day 209 – July 28<sup>th</sup>

2 Kings 20:20-21; 2 Chronicles 32:32-33; Isaiah 63:15-66:24 — Looking In

“How ignorant can they be?” I can read passages day after day that describe how people mess up, everyone from a king to a common Israelite. Seemingly one minute they will see the hand of God in a powerful way and then, two sentences later they have totally turned the wrong way. There are two things of which I need to remind myself. One, from one sentence to the next, you could have a gap of 20 years. Perhaps not overnight, but in time, each of us has the capacity to become more complacent and less committed.

The second thing I need to be aware of, and evaluating, is my personal walk. Do I have rebellious or spiritually ignorant tendencies? Am I negligent in feeding the hungry, working for justice, obeying God’s Word, caring for the poor, or serving wholeheartedly? Do I faithfully stand with a humble and contrite heart, trembling at the Lord’s word? (see Isa. 66:2)

If God chose to dedicate a section of Scripture to describing your life, how would it read?

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Day 185 – July 4<sup>th</sup>

Psalm 42-46 — Silence

“He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet He never said a word. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep is silent before the shearers, He did not open his mouth.” (Isaiah 53:7)

Why was Jesus able to be silent in the midst of the mistreatment and accusations He faced? Confidence. Jesus was confident in the fact that His Father was working out His perfect plan of redemption. He did not feel compelled to fight back or argue with His accusers because he knew his Father was in control.

Silence is a sign of assurance and confidence and strength. As it says in Psalm 46:10, “Be silent, and know that I am God.” What does it mean to know that He is God? It means to know who God truly is, the sovereign almighty, all-knowing God whose plans are never frustrated and whose will is always accomplished. Silence demonstrates a genuine trust in God. God does not need a multiplicity of words to defend Himself or to reveal Himself in this world.

May you learn that sometimes the very best response to God is in the form of silence.

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Day 186 – July 5<sup>th</sup>  
Psalm 47-49; 84-85, 87 — Listening

“My dear brothers and sisters, be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry.” (James 1:19)

A while back, I watched a TV program about how children learn the grammatical structures of language by listening to the people speaking around them. This got me thinking because, before we can ever learn to speak, we can already listen. In fact, we can listen and distinguish voices while still in the womb.

So, if listening is such a natural and easy thing to do, except for the hearing impaired, why is it that once we start speaking we listen so poorly? Why else would James feel led to write the verse above if in actuality we didn't practice the opposite? So many times I find myself rushing to judgments or giving my input or trying to offer solutions when all I really need to do is just listen.

Is it out of pure laziness that we don't listen, or is it a deeper spiritual reason that we don't listen, like pride or rebelliousness? The reasons for not listening may be as many as the times that we fail to do so.

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Day 208 – July 27<sup>th</sup>  
Isaiah 58:1-63:14 — The Right Time

A sign over a clock in school read, “Time will pass. Will you?”

Many of this week's passages have been providing us with unique perspectives on time, past and future. Yet at the close of chapter 60, we have one of the best statements about time: “I, the LORD, will bring it all to pass at the right time.” It's not just the aspect of perfect timing, but it is also the facet of the perfect controller, the LORD. Man will not bring it to pass at the perfect time. Neither creation nor chance will bring it to pass at the right time. Only God can bring it to pass at the right time, and only God knows what to bring and how to bring it to pass at the right time.

There is a “right time” for everything, whether it is for us personally this week or for all of mankind 1,000 years from now. Although I may have my struggles from time to time with impatience or discontentment, I truly am genuinely glad to know God has the timing for everything all figured out.

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Day 207 – July 26<sup>th</sup>

Isaiah 52:13-57:21 — Old Testament Gospel

From 52:13 to the end of chapter 53, nearly every verse has a prophetic statement of Jesus Christ and the suffering He was to endure. It is central to the passage from chapter 40 to the end. The section is broken up into five stanzas of three verses each. The passage is quoted more frequently in the New Testament than any other Old Testament passage. In fact, it is often referred to as the “gospel” in the Old Testament.

The Hebrews anticipated a messianic (anointed) deliverer coming to save them from their enemies. Generally, they felt He would come in the figure of a great political ruler. Therefore, passages such as this one in Isaiah tended to be ignored. The concept of a suffering Servant Messiah was one they would rather overlook.

Jesus perfectly fulfilled all the prophecies of the Messiah. Still, there is something somber to be reminded of in His suffering. Let the written descriptions become a visual description. Don’t allow the words to let you miss the image, the pain, the humility, the rejection, the injustice, the price, the love, the sacrifice, etc.

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Day 187 – July 6<sup>th</sup>

Psalms 1-2, 10, 33, 71, 91 — Boasting

“As for me, God forbid that I should boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of that cross, my interest in this world died long ago, and the world’s interest in me is also long dead.” – Galatians 6:14

In making the above statement, the Apostle Paul sets the standard regarding boasting quite high. This stands in stark contrast to the words of the psalmist in Psalm 10:3 about how the wicked people brag about their evil desires.

What is it about boasting or bragging that creates a problem in our lives? Could it be that it isn’t so much the boasting itself, but rather that boasting is a symptom of a deeper issue, pride? When you look at the surrounding verses in Psalm 10, you will notice that the psalmist indeed connects boasting and pride. Paul also connects these two traits in two separate lists of vices or sinful tendencies of mankind (Rom. 1:30; 2 Tim. 3:2).

Are you struggling with boasting? Let me first encourage you to examine your heart for pride. Second, allow me to remind you that every good and perfect thing in your life is from God so, really, your boasting is pointless (James 1:17).

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Day 188 – July 7<sup>th</sup>  
Psalm 92-97 — Thanksgiving

“Gratitude is a vaccine, an antitoxin, and an antiseptic.” – John Henry Jowett

Yesterday we thought about boasting and pride. One way to approach reducing our tendency towards boasting is to respond with gratitude. As Pastor Jowett so aptly noted, gratitude is good medicine especially towards pride which leads to boastfulness.

We have all seen this difference in the professional athletes of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Those who are truly thankful for their opportunity and God-given talent do not boast of their personal exploits.

Thankfulness should be a constant theme of our lives. The Apostle Paul wrote, “no matter what happens, always be thankful” (1 Thess. 5:18). The psalmist in our readings today has declared that it is “good to give thanks to the Lord” (92:1), and that we are to “come before Him with thanksgiving” (95:2). Clearly, thanksgiving should be a significant component of our relationship with the Lord.

How else are we to respond and approach the One who has done so much for us?

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Day 176 – June 25<sup>th</sup>  
Isaiah 48:12-52:12 — Who’s Forsaking Who

“Be strong and courageous! ...the LORD your God will go ahead of you. He will neither fail you nor forsake you” (Deut. 31:6). Joshua and the Hebrews who were about to enter the Promised Land found great comfort in those words.

After floating around in the ark for a year, I would imagine Noah could have wondered if God had forgotten about them. After 70 years in captivity, apparently some of the Jews felt God had forgotten about them (prophetically declared). God’s reply was, “Never! Can a mother forget her nursing child? Can she feel no love for a child she has borne? But even if that were possible, I would not forget you!

See, I have written your name on my hand” (49:15).

Will God forsake us? No. Can it feel as though He has? Yes, but it’s not coming from His direction. Perhaps the feeling comes from discipline we are enduring like the Jews, or from a lack of patience and trouble resting in God’s timing or, most likely, from the fact that we have put God on a back burner.

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Week 28 – July 9<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>

Psalms 105-107, 111-121, 123, 125-126, 128-130, 132, 134-136, 146-150

The theme for this week is worship. This week will finish off our time in the Psalms (except for Psalm 137). This week’s devotionals were written by Tom Garo, the Director of Worship here at Faith Baptist Church. I hope you thoroughly enjoy considering the various aspects of worship that Tom writes about.

Bible Discussion Guide

What is Godly praise? How should we praise and how did David praise God?

When do you find it difficult to praise the Lord?

What things or events in life are you truly passionate about?

Are you as passionate about worshipping God as you are about your favorite hobby?

Day 204 – July 23<sup>rd</sup>

Isaiah 40:1-44:5 — Learning Lessons Through Time

From chapter 40 of Isaiah on to the end of the book, you will read of specific events to take place several centuries into the future. Isaiah will describe the Babylonian captivity of Judah and then Judah’s release from 70 years of captivity (almost 200 years after Isaiah prophesies). Isaiah prophesies the fall of the Babylonian empire, and its method. Isaiah also details the coming and suffering of Jesus Christ (700 years later).

Isaiah’s message no doubt exhorts the hearers to follow after God and turn from disobedience. The miracle of looking ahead to what the future holds gives obvious credence to that fact. Yet, so does the ability to look back. At one point, he condemns the idols people honored, and asked, “Can those things tell us what happened long ago or what the future holds? ...They are less than nothing and can do nothing at all” (41:22-24). Humans have more ability than that. In the next chapter, the people are criticized for “not applying the lessons from the past” (v. 23). Learn from the lessons of time.

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How can pride hinder learning from the past or preparing for the future?

When it comes to forgiving sins, or more specifically, God's removing them from us, how far does God look back? (Jer. 31:34)  
Where do our feelings of guilt about the past come from?

Spend time to list some of the things you have learned from the past.

Which of the postures for worship described in the devotional on July 12<sup>th</sup> do you resonate with the most? Which one do you resonate with the least?

In what ways does remembering help you to worship God?

Can you share a particular time when God demonstrated His faithfulness to you?

Do you find it easier to pray for others or for yourself?

What part of life do you find difficult to bring to God in prayer?

Is true worship just something we do on Sunday?

In what ways can you incorporate worship into your everyday life?

Day 190 – July 9<sup>th</sup>

Psalms 105-106 — Thoughts on Worship

This week, as we read through the last 50 Psalms, there are a number of thoughts that we will cover and ponder a bit. Other topics may stand out as well. I encourage you to jot down those themes or ideas that strike a chord with you and pray about what the Lord may be revealing to you. During the next six days we will cover these topics:

*Praise* – What is Godly praise? How should we praise and how did David praise God?

*Worship* – Is true worship just something we do on Sunday?

*Demonstrative Worship* – What does worship look like throughout the Scriptures? How do we show God our worship?

*Remembering* – Never forgetting what the Lord has done for us, with us, and in us.

*Conversational or Continual Prayer, Asking God* – What did David ask for? What did he talk to the Most High about? Was he meek or bold?

As you read through the Psalms, how would you answer these questions?

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Week 30 — July 23<sup>rd</sup>-July 29<sup>th</sup>

2 Kings 20:20-22:2; 2 Chronicles 32:32-34:7; Isaiah 40-66; Jeremiah 1:1-2:22

“If a man had half as much foresight as he has twice as much hindsight, he’d be a lot better off.” – Robert J. Burdette

The theme of the week is primarily that of learning from the past, although there is a great deal of looking to the future as well. As you explore what learning from the past really means, you will need to discover the place for proper perspectives and earnest applications. It is truly a journey we are on, so may we learn as we go.

Bible Discussion Guide:

Is hindsight always 100%? What could make it less than 100%? Or, is there something we can do to make use of the 100%?

We know we can learn from the past, but why are we not proficient at doing so?

What part does prophecy and fulfilled prophecy play in looking back? (see July 26 devotional)



Day 192 – July 11<sup>th</sup>

Psalms 115-118 — Demonstrative Worship

As we read through the Psalms, we see there are many ways to express our worship to God. We see His people face down and on their knees before Him, as well as standing with arms out and hands lifted high, singing to the heavens.

As humans, one of the ways we communicate best is with body language. It's quite easy to read someone's mood simply by observing them. Feelings of sorrow look quite different than those of joy and happiness. For example, at a ball game the winning team's expressions and actions are quite different from those of the losing teams. Certainly a football game is not a worship service, but it does contain many of the same elements of a worship service. We see loyalty and a sense of community that bring us together in the same place and at the same time. There are even coffee and snacks... maybe it's not so different after all! Of course, the object of our attention is the true distinction. How much more involved should we be when worshiping the God of the universe than when at a football game? Tomorrow we will look at the Scriptures for some answers.

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Day 202 – July 21<sup>st</sup>

2 Kings 19:1-37; 2 Chronicles 32:9-23; Isaiah 37:1-38 — Saved from the Power of Sin

“You have died with Christ, and He has set you free from the evil powers of this world.” – Colossians 2:20

Today we have read the magnificent account of how God responded to the faith of Hezekiah and Isaiah and delivered Jerusalem from the armies of the Assyrians. While nothing is too difficult for God (Jer. 32:17), the defeat of the Assyrian army was no small thing. The Assyrians were the dominant nation in the region at that time. The army they had amassed was over 185,000 troops, and they had already taken the northern territory of Israel into captivity. To say the least, the Assyrians were powerful and had every reason to be in control of Jerusalem except for the intervention of the Lord.

In a similar way, sin has power and control in the lives of people. It is only when someone experiences salvation from the Lord through faith in Christ Jesus that they are set free from this power. And not only that, but every time we choose obedience instead of sin we are saved from the power of sin.

My Prayer List:

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Taking every thought captive to Christ: \_\_\_\_\_

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Taking every thought captive to Christ: \_\_\_\_\_

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Day 201 – July 20<sup>th</sup>

2 Kings 18:13-37; 2 Chronicles 32:1-8; Isaiah 36:1-22; Micah 6:1-7:20 – Foolishness of the Cross

Recently I watched an episode of Nightline, in which they moderated a debate between Christians and atheists. The atheists in the debate worked hard at making the Christian gospel sound foolish. Of course, this would come as no surprise to the Apostle Paul who declared in his own day that the message of the cross, the gospel, was foolishness to those who don't believe (1 Cor. 1:18).

This dynamic seems to parallel the scene that is taking place in 2 Kings 18 & Isaiah 36. King Sennacherib's representative mocks the idea of trusting in the Lord for

Jerusalem's deliverance. Even in the Old Testament, those who did not know the Lord were unable to comprehend His power to save and deliver His people.

Do not be surprised when you are mocked or scorned for trusting in Jesus for your salvation. Do not respond harshly, but rather may you "live wisely among those who are not Christians, and make the most of every opportunity (Col. 4:5).

My Prayer List:

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Day 193 – July 12<sup>th</sup>

Psalm 119 — Demonstrative Worship II  
(continued from yesterday)

The scriptures give us much direction on the posture and heart attitude of praise and worship. Here are just a few:

- Exodus 33:10 Standing
- Psalm 95:6 Kneeling
- Mark 14:35 Falling to the ground
- Heb. 13:15 Sacrifice, fruit of the lips
- 1 Tim. 2:8 Lifting holy hands
- Psalm 141:2 Lifting up of hands
- Psalm 47:1 Clapping
- 1 Chron.15:29 Dancing
- Ezra 3:11 Shouting
- Acts 16:25 Singing

My Prayer List:

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Please take the time to read these passages today. There are, of course, many more than space permits.

The Psalms and the rest of the scriptures continually extol the intrinsic worth of God through demonstrative acts of worship. As we read through these verses, it is evident that these things are the external signs of true worship.

Taking every thought captive to Christ: \_\_\_\_\_

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Taking every thought captive to Christ: \_\_\_\_\_

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Day 199 – July 18<sup>th</sup>

Isaiah 30:1-33:24 — Salvation is in Christ Alone

“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father but through Me.’” – John 14:6

In today’s reading, Isaiah warns God’s people about relying on outside help for their salvation. Israel as a small nation was weak at this point in history because of civil war and rebelliousness toward God. It was tempting to rely on Egypt’s help in battling the Assyrians instead of relying solely on the Lord.

These international relationships and the need for Israel as a nation to rely on the Lord (Isa. 31:1) is representative of our need to rely on the Lord for our own salvation.

Our salvation is based in the Lord and our standing as righteous before Him is because of the work of Christ and His imputed righteousness in our life. However, many times we attempt to attain righteousness through our own efforts. Any time we add lists of dos and don’ts to our relationship with God, it makes our faith about earning righteousness.

May you begin to see your salvation as complete in the work of Christ, and that you cannot do more than He has already done.

My Prayer List:

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Day 195 – July 14<sup>th</sup>

Psalms 128-130, 132, 134-135 — Praying

Another continuing theme of the Psalms is that of prayer. I believe we view prayer somewhat differently than David did. David comes before the throne with a boldness that seems today to be somewhat presumptuous. The things that he chooses to pray about are much different also. We tend to pray for things that personally do not involve us as much. We will pray for the sick or those who are going through a particularly bad time. We seem to always put others first in our prayers. Of course, I think this is good and right to an extent, but I wonder if at times we are taking the focus off of ourselves and our own personal relationship with God by continually thrusting the center of attention on someone or something else?

David’s prayer life was predominantly about himself. He simply talked (we call it prayer) to God about everything in his life. God wants us to continually talk with Him about all the things going on in our lives. From the rising of the sun till the time it goes down again, talk to the Lord. The name of the Lord shall be praised!

My Prayer List:

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Taking every thought captive to Christ: \_\_\_\_\_

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Taking every thought captive to Christ: \_\_\_\_\_

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Day 196 – July 15<sup>th</sup>  
Psalms 136, 146-150 — Worship

I know how to worship. We all do. Here’s my first experience with worship. A 1970 Pontiac GTO – yeah, baby!

I loved that car. I mean, I really loved that car. I was in high school and that car was everything to me, and I cherished it. I adored it. I used to just sit in the leather bucket seats and admire its magnificent craftsmanship. I washed and waxed it nearly every day. Keeping that car looking good was my mission in life. I even broke up with a girl because she wrote “wash me” in the dust on the back of my car! (Some things just can’t be tolerated.) I loved to read the owners manual each night before bed. I knew every square inch of that car and I was proud to let people know it. I think it’s fair to say I worshiped that car. Of course, that was long ago...

David knew how to worship also. The difference between his worship and my own is obvious. David worshipped the only recipient that is truly worthy of our worship, the God of the universe. David loved, adored, cherished and knew his God inside and out. He knew very much about God and he enjoyed sharing what he knew with others. How much do you worship God?

Taking every thought captive to Christ: \_\_\_\_\_

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My Prayer List:

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Day 198 – July 17<sup>th</sup>  
Isaiah 24:1-27:13; 29:1-24 — Free Gift of Salvation

“God saved you by His special favor when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it” – Ephesians 2:8-9

I was once asked how I respond to God for His gift of salvation, considering that not everyone will receive that gift. I think that the gratitude and joy expressed in Isaiah 25:9 sums it up well. There is nothing more and nothing less that can be done in response to God’s salvation than to just praise Him. You cannot claim credit for your salvation, for you did not earn it. And it is not that your faith is greater than the next person, for the faith to believe is from God Himself (John 6:44, 65).

Any time you find yourself feeling proud and satisfied about your faith when standing before God, instead of feeling humble and gracious, that is an attitude that should be repented of. The only right response toward our salvation is one of worship and gratitude for the free gift that God has given us.

Taking every thought captive to Christ: \_\_\_\_\_

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My Prayer List:

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Day 197 – July 16<sup>th</sup>

Isaiah 18:1-23:18 — Saved from the Penalty of Sin

Judgment, Judgment, Judgment. Five chapters of judgment. Judgment is not a pretty thing to look at or encounter or even to think about. However, it is an important part of who God is. Judgment is God’s reaction or response to man’s sin and rebelliousness and, as the verse above indicates, the judgment or penalty for that sin is death.

This is where the need for salvation comes in. It is because, on our own, we stand before God condemned or judged in our sin. This salvation I speak of today is the first level or primary experience of salvation in that we are saved from the penalty of sin. We experience or will experience salvation on two other levels, which we will discuss later in the week.

This experience of being saved from the penalty of sin is often what we think of when we talk about being saved. It is in this salvation that comes by faith in Christ that we experience a regeneration of life and an adoption into the family of God, becoming co-heirs with Jesus.

My Prayer List:

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Taking every thought captive to Christ: \_\_\_\_\_

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Week 29 – July 16<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>

2 Kings 18:13-20:19; 2 Chronicles 32:1-31; Isaiah 18:1-27:13; 29:1-39:8; Micah 2:1-7:20

Our theme for the week is salvation. There are a number of different topics related to salvation that we are going to look at. My prayer is that, by the end of the week, you will be rejoicing even more in the salvation that we have in Christ.

Bible Discussion Guide:

Why is it so unpopular to think about God as the one who judges or condemns sin?

How many times will we be saved from the penalty of sin? When?

How do you respond to God for His free gift of salvation?

Do you ever find yourself trying to pay God back for your salvation? Why is this goal hopeless?

In what ways are you attempting to achieve or earn righteousness?

Why are we to not continue in sin as Christians, even though we can fall on grace?

In what ways do we as the Church or Body of Christ replicate the attitudes and actions of the people in Micah's day?

What is it about the message of the cross, the Gospel, that sounds foolish to the world?

What do you think is our most compelling evidence for the truth of the Gospel?

How are we saved from the power of sin?

How many times can we be saved from the power of sin? When?

How will life be different when we are saved from the presence of sin?

How many times will we be saved from the presence of sin?  
When?