

**Psalms 51
Personal Prayer**

*“Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness;
According to the greatness of Your compassion blot
out my transgressions.*

*Create in me a clean heart, O God,
And renew a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from Your presence
And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of Your salvation
And sustain me with a willing spirit.*

*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.”*

September Birthdays

11 Marie Burruss 15 Marcos Perales 16 Jim Burruss
30 Dortha Gentry 30 Kurt Hoffman

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Lord, Give Us Wisdom

By Jack Critchfield

*“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman
who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word
of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15).*

This statement occurred in Paul’s last writing quite probably not long before his execution (2 Timothy 4:6-11). There are more questions to be asked about the statement than there are affirmations made in it. Yet, we tend to base much of a theological position on the verse. Remember, the statement is an encouragement from one preacher to another.

When we look at the immediate context of the verse, we find it nestled sandwich-style between two statements: (1) Do not wrangle about words because it is useless and ruins hearers, and (2) Avoid worldly and empty chatter because it will produce ungodliness. Remember, the direction is from an older preacher who is about to die because of his preaching to a younger (but experienced) preacher who risks discouragement through the execution of his close mentor.

Printing, as we know it, had yet to be invented. The only access to scriptures seemed to be in synagogues. Very few individuals could afford a hand-copied book of what they understood to be scripture. All indications suggest that the scriptures of the early church would be what we, today, call the Old Testament (Hebrews 1:1, 2).

The burning issues of the first century would have been: (1) Was Jesus the Christ that God promised the Jewish people [consider the sermon in Acts 2:14-36]? This would have been of basic interest to a Jewish audience. (2) Was there a resurrection from the dead [see Acts 17:16-32]? This would have been of basic interest to most of idolatrous background. In (1), preachers often appealed to

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.

Sunday.....10:45 a.m.

Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

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the Old Testament to prove Jesus was the Christ. In (2), preachers often discussed the nature of God. Those are hardly the burning issues of today!

It was (and still is) easy to get so focused on words, myths, and legends that one lost sight of the questions! Paul said, “Timothy, do not do that! Base your discussions on the word of truth!” The foundation of the discussion commonly determines the conclusion. Paul urged Timothy to discuss the word of truth, and not to discuss things that would produce more hurt than understanding.

Beware of making scripture to say things it does not say. Beware of thinking human opinion is scripture. Beware of defending today’s church instead of the Bible’s God.

“Never Outnumbered”

By Bruce Evans

“Don’t worry, I’ve got your back”. Hearing such words is indeed a comfort, especially when it seems as if everything and everyone is amassed against you. There are those who make such assertions, but more often than not when push comes to shove, turn out to be like Job’s “comforters”. Then wrap your mind around what Job’s wife was noted as having said, “*Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!*” (Job 2:9). Even his wife could not be counted on when things got overwhelming. However, Job after sitting in agony for seven days in silence before his “comforters”, when he did finally speak, he refused to say anything contrary about God.

Did Job recognize that he was never outnumbered, as long as he had God with him? That appears to be the case as seen in chapter forty -two. Job was humble and contrite before God. The give and take between Job and his friends is really remarkable and shows that the one who is righteous is never really outnumbered in spite of what it may seem. Which is exactly what Paul, in his epistle to the church in Rome laid out in chapter eight. In verse twenty-six, he begins by talking about how “*The Spirit helps our weaknesses; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us...*” Then in verse twenty-seven, “*and He who*

searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.” God amply providing and helping with our weakness. A constant, providing one remains constant with Him

God has clearly supplied for those who follow the pathway He has put in place. “*What shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?*” (Romans 8:31) Job, who lived hundreds of years before Paul wrote these words, was embracing the same attitude. Though life was pressing hard on him, he refused to capitulate. That same mind set must resonate with children of God today. “*For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace*” (Romans 8:6).

Stop and consider what we face in this world, and then awaken to the fact that in essence, when we strive to walk steadfastly, we are not alone. “*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*” (Romans 8:35). “*For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*” (Romans 8:38-39). The only thing that can separate one from a right relationship with God, is self. Doesn’t that speak volumes with respect to comfort?

Another nugget seen is what in is penned to the brethren in Rome as seen in the thirty-seventh verse of chapter eight. “*But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.*” Drink that in; more than conqueror. We benefit by what Christ did for us. We benefit by the pattern and plan the Father had set in place before time was (see Ephesians 1:3-14). We benefit because Jesus is our High Priest and Mediator, and the Holy Spirit serves as our Intercessor.

Take some time and read over what Peter writes in his first epistle, chapter five, and verse six through ten. Hold on to the words, “*because He cares for you.*”