

THE RED THREAD

THE GIFT OF SALVATION

Acknowledge to yourself and to God that you have sinned (Romans 3:23).

In sorrow for your sins, turn from them to God and ask His forgiveness (Isaiah 55:7).

By faith receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, believing that He died in your place on the cross (John 3:16).

BETWEEN TIMES

PSALM 136
BIBLE STUDY

Day 1—Goodness
vv. 1-3

Day 2—Wisdom
vv. 4, 5

Day 3—Creation
vv. 6, 7

Day 4—Creator
vv. 8, 9

Day 5—Deliverance
vv. 10, 11

Day 6—Victory
vv. 12-16

Day 7—Warrior
vv. 17-20

Day 8—Inheritance
vv. 21, 22

Day 9—Redemption
vv. 23, 24

Day 10—Provision
vv. 25, 26

WHY & HOW

THE RED THREAD exists to be an encouragement to the men and women currently separated from family and friends in correctional institutions. It is published on 2nd and 4th Wednesdays by **Crimson House Ministries** at 1616 North Robberson, Springfield, Missouri, 65803. Please send all correspondence to that address. Subscription information is available online at: <http://readingroom.crimsonhouseministries.org/>

PROCLAMATION OF THANKSGIVING

The year that is drawing toward its close has been filled with the blessings of fruitful years and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the Source from which they come, others have been added which are of so extraordinary a nature that they can not fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever-watchful providence of Almighty God.

In the midst of a civil war of unequalled magnitude and severity, which has sometimes seemed to foreign states to invite and to provoke their aggression, peace has been preserved with all nations, order has been maintained, the laws have been respected and obeyed, and harmony has prevailed everywhere, except in the theater of military conflict, while that theater has been greatly contracted by the advancing armies and navies of the Union.

Needful diversions of wealth and of strength from the field of peaceful industry to the national defense have not arrested the plow, the shuttle, or the ship; the ax has enlarged the borders of our settlements, and the mines, as well of iron and coal as of the precious metals, have yielded even more abundantly than theretofore. Population has steadily increased notwithstanding the waste that has been made in the camp, the siege, and the battlefield, and the country, rejoicing in the consciousness of augmented strength and vigor, is permitted to expect continuance of years with large increase of freedom.

No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the



gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy.

It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently, and gratefully acknowledged, as with one heart and one voice, by the whole American people. I do therefore invite my fellow-citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those

who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next as a day of thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the heavens. And I recommend to them that while offering up the ascriptions justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to His tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners, or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty Hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore it, as soon as may be consistent with the Divine purposes, to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility, and union.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

[Signed]

A. Lincoln

PASTOR'S DEVOTION

TEN DAYS OF THANKFULNESS

DAY 1 | REMEMBER [PSALM 105]

Over the next ten days the common thread, sewn through mercy, is "Thankfulness" as seen in the tapestry of Psalm 136 (cf. *Between Times*) and the various texts through the guide.

Psalm 105 references the miraculous deliverance from Egypt in remembered thanksgiving. As you read this Psalm recall the circumstances and situations prior to your deliverance from sin and remember all that the Lord saved you from through His gracious gift of salvation. Give Him praise, for His mercy endured to you! Then intercede for all those who need to accept Christ as their Savior; pray that they too may embrace His mercy unto salvation.

DAY 2 | ALWAYS [EPHESIANS 1]

Think for a minute on exactly what prompts us to earnestly seek the Lord. More times than not it seems like trouble, sickness, distress, or a crisis are the conditions that motivate us to pray. And while those circumstances are an obvious catalysis for needed intercessions, especially since they are so much above our abilities to personally handle, notice how Paul's prayers were prompted:

To the Ephesians: (Ephesians 1:15-16 KJV);

To the Romans: (Romans 1:8 KJV);

To the Philippians: (Philippians 1:3-5 KJV);

To the Colossians: (Colossians 1:7-9 KJV);

To the Thessalonians: (2 Thessalonians 1:3 KJV).

Today, pray blessing on your family, friends, and fellow saints by beginning with their strengths, thanking the Father for their faith, love, and fellowship. Commit to keeping a balance in your prayer life between the urgent petitions and the prayers of thanksgiving.

DAY 3 | GRACE ON OTHERS [COLOSSIANS 1]

The Good News of God had not been confined to the Jews, or limited to the narrow country where it was first preached, but had been sent abroad to the Gentile world.

And to the Colossians the Apostle Paul writes to not only attack some false doctrine that was being circulated, but also to excite in them a sense of gratitude that the gospel had, indeed, been sent to them. The "sending" and then "receiving" of the gospel was owed entirely to the goodness of God, who would have all men come to the knowledge of the truth (cf. 1 Timothy 2:4).

Thank God for the Gospel—the Good News that allows for abundant life now and the hope of heaven for eternity. Pray a continued grace on the saints throughout the world and for protection against the attacks of the adversary who tries to steal the peace that is found in grace.

DAY 4 | THANKFULNESS BY THE LEVITES [2 CHRONICLES 5]

In the Old Testament we see where the phrase "For his mercy endures forever" shouted in two distinct areas: in the Temple's dedication (cf. 2 Chronicles 5:13) and in the battle at Tekoa (cf. 2 Chronicles 20:21). In the New Testament we see the application of mercy's endurance, first as Zacharias recognizes its continuance while in the temple: "Blessed by the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people...To perform the mercy promised to our fathers..." (Luke 1:68, 72); and in the many "battle" shouts of the afflicted: "...have mercy on me [us], thou Son of David..." (cf. Matthew 9:27, 15:22, and 20:30).

W.E. Vine writes in his *Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*: "it [mercy] assumes need on the part of him who receives it, and resources adequate to meet the need on the part of him who shows it."

Whether at peace in the sanctuary or at war on the battlefield, we can only stand by the Lord's mercy, knowing that He alone has the adequate resources to supply our stand (Ephesians 2:4).

Rejoice today that the Lord has visited His people to perform the mercy He promised. Thank Him for the time His mercy gave your first victory from sin unto salvation, and the many times afterward as you grow in that salvation. Pray continued mercy on those who have rejected His mercy and grace thus far in their lives; intercede for them to know Jesus Christ as their Savior.

DAY 5 | DANIEL [DANIEL 2]

This is probably Daniel's fifth year under Babylon's captivity. He had been trained in the way of the Chaldeans; yet, he had maintained his integrity to God's commands and way of life. Such personal character had been rewarded with an unparalleled favor with the king (cf. Daniel 1:20 KJV). But now, through no act of his own, his life was at risk (cf. Daniel 2:13).

Daniel's Chaldean education couldn't save him; his past favor couldn't stay his execution. There was only one thing that could stop the slaughter—a very immediate prayer with a very direct answer. "Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions: That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon" (vv. 17, 18). And the God of heaven answered.

A united prayer has a unique favor with God (cf. Matthew 18:19 KJV). Today, meet with, or contact a few others to pray together for the mercies of God on all those facing major consequences through no fault of their own. Intercede for the persecuted church that is facing death for their testimony.

DAY 6 | JONAH [JONAH 2]

Unlike yesterday, when Daniel found himself in an unprovoked situation, Jonah had created his own difficult circumstance through disobedience. There in the depths of darkness he realizes a timeless principle: "They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy" (Jonah 2:8).

James Smith writes in his book, *Minor Prophets*: "Jonah is aware of how much he was indebted to divine grace. His prayer concludes with a declaration of commitment. He notes first that idolaters eventually forsake their 'vain idols.' He, on the other hand, pledges to sacrifice to Yahweh and pay his vows. He recognizes by personal experience that 'salvation' is from Yahweh. Jonah now realized that he needed salvation as much as the Ninevites. He also now realized that salvation was by grace."

Pray for the multitudes who listen to lying vanities—those empty and worthless things that cry satisfaction and contentment but really only lead to darkness—to awake to the mercy of God unto salvation. Petition the Father specifically the He would open their eyes to the blinding lies of the adversary.

DAY 7 | SIMEON [LUKE 2]

The next two days we read the thanksgiving of two aged "believers" both of whom had deep prayer lives. Anna, who worshiped the Lord with fasting and prayer night and day; and Simeon, whose intercession had ultimately resulted in a stunning revelation: He would not see death until he had seen the Christ—or, he would not see death until he saw Life.

In *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Alfred Edersheim writes, "Simeon combined the three characteristics of Old Testament piety: 'justice,' as regarded his relation and bearing to God and man; 'fear of God,' in opposition to the boastful self-righteousness of Pharisaism; and, above all, longing expectancy of the near fulfillment of the great promises, and that in their spiritual import as 'the Consolation of Israel.'"

Thus, as Simeon held the Babe in his arms, we see pictured the impending death of a righteousness under the law and the birth of the righteousness through grace in the person of Jesus Christ.

Notice also the difference in Simeon's words based on those holding the Babe: In his arms (Luke 2:28) it is a prayer of thanksgiving, anticipation of a joyful departure, and the universal impact of the Christ; however, back in Mary's embrace (Luke 2:34) he speaks of the pain and anguish that is to be suffered. The words of Paul to the Philippians defines both (Philippians 3:10 ESV).

Begin your prayer with thanksgiving; rejoice that you have experienced Life long before your death. Now, think of all those who are immediately facing death today, saints who have endured the fight and finished their course, who are ready to be released like a sentinel from their duty and pray for their peaceful departure as they receive the crown of life.

DAY 8 | ANNA [LUKE 2]

Yesterday the aged Simeon saw the fulfillment of a personal Word from the Spirit and spoke accordingly; today the aged Anna, the second witness against whom no objection could have been brought from such a consecrated life, testified in the streets that the Messiah had come.

Again Edersheim writes, "A special interest attaches to her who, coming that very moment, responded in praise to God for the pledge she saw of the near redemption. A kind of mystery seems to invest this Anna. A widow, whose early desolateness had been followed by a long life of Solitary mourning; one of those in whose home the tribal genealogy had been preserved. We infer from this, and from the fact that it was that of a tribe which had not returned to Palestine, that hers was a family of some distinction. Curiously enough, the tribe of Asher alone is celebrated in tradition for the beauty of its women, and their fitness to be wedded to High-Priest or King."

Thirty-eight days of fasting and prayer pales in comparison to the 84 years that Anna prac-

ticed such discipline; however, it does give, even so tiny, a taste of the splendor found in a devoted relationship with the Lord.

Give thanks to the Lord today that in Him you are "fit" to be wedded to the King. Pray protection and consecration on those who witness for Christ so that their lifestyle would not hinder the sharing of the Gospel or bring reproach to the Name of our King.

DAY 9 | PAUL [ACTS 28]

It had been quite a few months for the Apostle Paul: shipwrecked, snake-bit, and miraculous signs, all while a prisoner headed to Rome. Yet even while walking in the super natural and fulfilling his call, the importance of fellowship is seen.

Warren Wiersbe writes, "When the word got to Rome that Paul had arrived..., the believers arranged to meet him. Since Paul remained at Puteoli a week, there was ample time to carry messages between the churches. How wonderful it is to be a part of the fellowship of the Gospel and find 'brothers and sisters' in Christ wherever we go! 'Appii forum' is literally 'the Market of Appius' and refers to a town about forty miles from Rome on the famous Appian Way. Here Paul met one deputation of believers; then, ten miles further, he met another group at Three Taverns. (This Latin word translated 'tavern' does not mean what the English word commonly means today. A Roman 'tavern' was any kind of shop.) Seeing these believers, to whom he had written his Roman epistle some three years before, brought Paul courage."

Begin by thanking God for your brothers and sisters in Christ. Pray encouragement over those in your local church; speak against discouragement and depression in the body of Christ. Seek to "bring courage" to someone today.

DAY 10 | LET EVERYONE [PSALM 150]

John Pulsford, in *Quiet Hours*, writes, "Each of the last five Psalms begins and ends with Hallelujah! – 'Praise ye the Lord.' And each Psalm increases in praise, love, and joy, unto the last, which is praise celebrating its ecstasy. The elect soul, the heir of God, becomes "eaten up" with the love of God. He begins every sentence with Hallelujah; and his sentences are very short, for he is in haste to utter his next Hallelujah, and his next, and his next. He is as one out of breath with enthusiasm, or as one on tiptoe, in the act of rising from earth to heaven. The greatest number of words between any two Hallelujahs is four, and that only once, in every other instance, between one Hallelujah and another there are but two words. It is as though the soul gave utterance to its whole life and feeling in the one word, Hallelujah! The words, 'Praise ye the Lord!' or, 'Praise him!' 'Praise him!' 'Praise him!' are reiterated no fewer than twelve times in a short Psalm of six short verses."

Today's prayer is Hallelujah—let it be voiced throughout the day! ▪

LET'S HEAR FROM YOU...!

We love hearing from you and so do our readers. Please send your articles, poems, praise reports, testimonies, etc..., to *The Red Thread, Crimson House Ministries, 1616 North Robberson, Springfield, MO, 65803.*



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