

God Is Always Faithful

At the end of your life you will groan, when your flesh and body are spent (Proverbs 5:11).

Scripture: Proverbs 5:7-14

Song: “The Steadfast Love of the Lord”

Many families, including my own, have suffered the heartbreak of divorce due to adultery. Sadly, my father’s last days on earth were spent virtually alone as a result of his sins. God was gracious in allowing me to visit him on his deathbed despite airports and roads being closed due to weather. I saw it as the LORD wanting to grant him one final opportunity to repent.

Unfaithfulness in marriage will cause great pain in life. God repeatedly cautions us to stay away from these harmful choices. He is always ready to provide a way of escape from temptation to sin, and He is quick to forgive and restore us when we repent.

When we seek God about our relationships, then He will help us to grow in faithfulness and love with our spouses, people around us, and also with Him. My life with Christ and my nearly 40-year marriage with my husband give testimony to what God can do.

The end of our physical lives might be hard, but living with God’s wisdom, forgiveness, and restoration will always make our days better and easier. He is always faithful to those who seek Him.

Father God, thank You for Your faithfulness to all those who heed Your words of wisdom. In Messiah’s name, amen.

August 17–23. **Deborah Markowitz Solan**, of Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, is a substitute teacher and conference speaker. She is committed to sharing God’s intimate love with everyone in her life.

A Good Night's Sleep

The Sovereign LORD has given me a well-instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being instructed (Isaiah 50:4).

Scripture: Isaiah 50:4-11

Song: “Great Is Thy Faithfulness”

Many people have difficulty sleeping due to worries, the cares of the day, and troubling circumstances in their lives. Sleep and rest, however, are vital for health and well-being. During the day, thought processes are often not completed due to interruptions or other distractions, but the mind completes these processes during sleep. Problems that seemed difficult are less daunting or even resolved after a good night's sleep.

God can help us sleep well and have a heart that rests in Him even when we are facing trouble. We may be fighting a dreaded disease or experiencing financial hardship. We may have been falsely accused. However, God desires for us to rest in His peace in all circumstances. He longs to awaken us refreshed each morning and ready to read His Word and apply His truths in our lives. “In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, LORD, make me dwell in safety” (Psalm 4:8).

A good way to end each day is with a prayer of confession of sins of that day and with gratitude for forgiveness. We can offer petitions for the needs of others and give our concerns to God. This releases us to worship God at the end of the day and receive His grace and peace as we sleep.

Lord, help me to trust my waking and my sleeping hours to You. In Jesus' name, amen.

Reflecting the Beauty of God

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things (Colossians 3:1, 2).

Scripture: Colossians 3:1-11

Song: “Look Up, Child”

Fields of wild sunflowers dot the countryside across America and invite our attention to bring us joy as their towering, golden appearance seems to invite the sun. The endless fields of these majestic sunflowers need full sun and rich soil to reach their maximum height of 6 to 10 feet. Their beauty seems to beckon us to reflect the glory of the true Son—Jesus Christ.

Christians are implored throughout the Bible to look up; to set our minds on things above; and to think about things that are lovely, noble, and pure so that we might live spiritually healthy lives that are good, holy, and righteous. The finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross draws us to accept the only way into His presence. Dwelling there creates a soft soil for the planting of His Word in our hearts, which produces rich fruit and innumerable spiritual blessings. Prayer and meditation on His Word bring fullness of life in God and help us to put to death sinful things. Our hearts are changed as we spend time with God and live in His presence—and allow Him to mold us into the people He desires for us to be.

Lord, help me to seek Your face so that I may put to death earthly things and reflect the beauty of Your holiness in all that I do. In Jesus' name, amen.

Laws to Live By

I long for your salvation, LORD, and your law gives me delight. Let me live that I may praise you, and may your laws sustain me (Psalm 119:174, 175).

Scripture: Psalm 119:169-176

Song: “Thy Word”

I have been involved in several automobile accidents, the result of driving too fast and not following the law. Two of the accidents could have resulted in my death or very serious injury. God, in both instances, graciously and miraculously protected me from my own recklessness. By violating the speeding laws, however, my vehicles were totaled, and I lived with the consequences of the accidents.

The laws of a nation are meant for the good and protection of its citizens. Without the constraint of the law, there would be innumerable accidents, injuries, and deaths due to people behaving improperly.

The Lord gave the Israelites His law for their own good and to set them apart as His people. It also showed them that they needed a Savior, because they could not follow all His commands. Although not always easy to follow, God’s laws are meant to help us. They cannot guarantee our salvation, which comes only through Jesus Christ, but they can bring safety and good things for us to enjoy.

Jesus said that if we love the Lord with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength and love our neighbors as ourselves, we will fulfill the heart of God’s law (Matthew 22:36-40). As we pray and consecrate of our lives to Him, we can experience great delight in God, His salvation, and His law.

Lord, please continually teach me Your ways so that I honor You in all my ways. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Living in Unity

When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: “Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language?” (Acts 2:6-8).

Scripture: Acts 2:1-12

Song: “Bind Us Together”

Christians come in many shapes and sizes. Our cultural backgrounds are different, as are our ages, ethnicities, appearances, styles of worship, languages, manners of dress, length of time walking with the Lord, and countless other factors that make us more different than alike on the outside. God never asks us to be cookie-cutter Christians, lacking any distinguishing characteristics, but He does desire for us to live together in unity. Jesus prayed that we might all be one so that others would know that it was God, the Father, who sent Him into this world (John 17:20-23).

In today’s reading, Jews from many nations were visiting Jerusalem during Shavuot (Pentecost), a holiday celebrating the wheat harvest in Israel and the anniversary of God’s giving His law to the nation of Israel at Mount Sinai. On this day people heard the followers of Christ speaking a unified message of the wonders of God in a diversity of languages.

Our varied backgrounds and styles of worship are not meant to create divisions among us. Rather, our diverse backgrounds are what help us be equipped to declare the unifying message of the gospel to reach the lost of all nations and people groups for Christ.

Holy Father help us to be of one mind and heart in reaching the lost. Amen.

One for All and All for One

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it (1 Corinthians 12:27).

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:27-31

Song: “We Are One in the Spirit”

My mother and I were a dynamic duo, both coming to Christ from a strong cultural, if not religious, Jewish background. We spoke about the Jewishness of Jesus and of the Christian faith with all who would listen. We experienced God’s pleasure in the way we worked together using our God-given strengths. But as my mother aged, debilitating pain made it hard for her to be out and about. But she didn’t stop doing her part—she simply adjusted to what she was able to do.

Paul’s metaphor of the human body helps us understand our parts in the body of Christ. We all know about our different physical body parts, and how they each operate in distinct but coordinated ways. Each part of our bodies works independently and yet also works within the entire human anatomy for its effective use. And when parts of our bodies don’t work so well, we adjust and keep living and giving as long as we can.

In the same way, we in the body of Christ each have important roles throughout our lives. And sometimes we might need to seek God on how we should adjust as we continue to serve for the greatest spiritual effect in our world.

Lord, help me to recognize and fulfill the unique role You have for me in Your church at this stage of my life—for Your glory and witness in the world. In Your name I pray. Amen.

Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires

Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark (James 3:5).

Scripture: James 3:1-12

Song: “Speak Life”

Smokey Bear (in the longest-running, public service advertising campaign) said, “Remember . . . Only YOU Can Prevent Forest Fires.” He reminded us all that wildfires are mainly caused by careless individuals. Every year, videos of raging fires grab our attention and might look like the end of the world as we know it.

As forests and other natural areas are set on fire by a small spark, so too the tongue (a small part of the body in a human being) can be deadly and devastating to our lives. Many adults suffer their entire lives from hurtful words spoken to them as children. Heated arguments often become violent, and one violent action can ruin a person’s entire life.

“The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit” (Proverbs 18:21). God gives us wisdom and power to curb the tongue, if we will. Paul said that God, through Jesus Christ, rescues us from the wretched state of our bodies (Romans 7:24, 25). By meditating on Christ and on “things above” (Colossians 3:2), and by speaking words of encouragement and life to ourselves and to others, we can overcome the snares of our tongues and be a blessing to others.

Lord, help me to use my tongue as an instrument of love and healing in this world. For Your glory, amen.