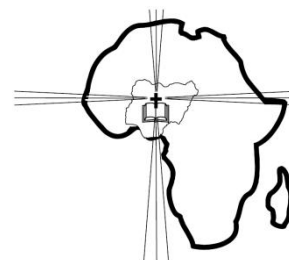


DAILY LINK WITH GOD 2015

A Daily Devotional Guide from the EYN (Church of the Brethren in Nigeria)



EYN leaders in Nigeria believe prayer is one of the most important ways to support the Nigerian people and the Church. These daily devotions were written by EYN members and published by the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria. Reading them daily is a powerful way we can be in solidarity and connect with our brothers and sisters caught in this crisis. EYN's daily devotional for 2015 will be posted a week at a time on the blog site www.brethren.org/nigeriablog, appearing mid-week for the following week. More information about the crisis can be found at www.brethren.org/nigeriacrisis.

April

Text: 2 Timothy 1-4

Brief Introduction

This month is a blessing for all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. These passages are not talking about the Easter season, but Christ has risen and He remains victorious. As we study His word, let us reflect on His salvation for the world.

April 19th Sunday 2015

Text: 2 Timothy 3:1-7

Topic: Evidences of Faithlessness

3:1 Paul had given Timothy some instruction concerning the apostasy of the last days in his first epistle (1 Tim. 4:1-3). Now he gave much more. The "last days" refers to the days preceding the Lord's return for His own (i.e., the Rapture). They are "last" not because they are few but because they are the final days of the present age. In another sense the entire interadvent age constitutes the last days (cf. Heb. 1:2). Timothy was already in the last days, but they would continue and grow worse. These times would be "difficult" for all, especially faithful Christians. A list of 19 specific characteristics of these days follows. 3:2 People would be (1) self-centered and narcissistic (Gr. *philautoi*), (2) lovers of money (*philargyroi*, cf. 1 Tim. 3:3, 8), (3) boastful of their own importance (*alazones*), and (4) proud, arrogant in attitude (*hyperephanoi*). They would be (5) abusive toward others (*blasphemoi*), (6) unresponsive to parental discipline, (7) ungrateful, unthankful, unappreciative (*acharistoi*), and (8) impure, unholy (*anosioi*). 3:3 Furthermore, they would be (9) heartless, callous, hateful (*astorgoi*), (10) unforgiving (*aspondoi*) and consequently irreconcilable, and (11) slanderous of others (*diaboloï*), speaking with malicious gossip. Are you part of this?

Lesson: Do not be carried away by the evil of the last days.

Prayer: Our Redeemer, protect us from the evil of the last days. Amen.

April 20th Monday 2015

Text: 2 Timothy 3:8-13

Topic: Negative and Positive Illustrations

3:8-9 Paul used the Egyptian magicians who opposed Moses in the plagues (Exod. 7:11; 9:11) to illustrate the fate of these false teachers. Jewish oral or written tradition preserved their names even though the Old Testament did not. Their names, probably nicknames, mean "the rebel" and "the opponent." Like these magicians, the false teachers opposed God's revealed truth, possessed corrupt minds, and were outside the fold of the faithful. They would proceed only so far, as their Egyptian predecessors did. Their foolishness would become common knowledge when their power would prove inadequate. 3:10-11 Timothy's past character and conduct stood in stark contrast to that of the false teachers. He had fully followed Paul's ministry (teaching, conduct, and purpose) and his life (faith, patience, love, and perseverance). The fact that God had delivered Paul from all his persecutions would have encouraged Timothy to continue following the apostle's example. Do not be like false teachers.

Lesson: Abstain from falsehood.

Prayer: Teach us to discern false teachers, Jesus. Amen.

April 21st Tuesday 2015

Text: 2 Timothy 3:14-17

Topic: Adherence to the Truth

3:14-15 In his personal life Timothy should continue living as he had rather than turning aside to follow the example of the evil men Paul just mentioned. Timothy's conduct grew out of what he had learned that gave him personal convictions. Jewish parents were expected to teach their children the Law from the age of five onwards. Timothy's convictions grew stronger because Paul's life had backed up the truth that Timothy had learned from him. Furthermore they were consistent with the sacred Scriptures that he had known all his life (i.e., the Hebrew Scriptures cf. 1:5). These inspired writings convey wisdom and lead to personal salvation from sin because they point to Christ. Thus they are reliable and powerful. 3:16-17 Paul wanted to reemphasize the importance of Scripture in Timothy's present and future ministry. His emphasis in verse 15 was on its importance in Timothy's life in the past. Do not turn away from God's word.

Lesson: Teach your children the way of the Lord.

Prayer: Lord, help us overcome this evil generation. Amen.

April 22nd Wednesday 2015

Text: 2 Timothy 4:1-5

Topic: Proclamation of the Truth

Paul wanted Timothy to proclaim the truth in his public ministry as well as to adhere to it in his personal life. He introduced the command in verse 2 with a very solemn preamble in verse 1 (cf. 1 Tim. 5:21; 6:13). He reminded Timothy that God was watching him, as was Jesus Christ who will judge all people. He further reminded him that Christ will return (at any time implied) and set up His messianic kingdom. Timothy should prepare to meet Him by carrying out Paul's command (cf. Mark 13:34-35). Paul's point was this. Jesus Christ will judge Christians at the judgment seat of Christ and then appear again at the Second Coming (cf. 1:10) and set up His millennial kingdom on the earth. Consequently Timothy needed to herald the Word of God (v. 2) and faithfully carry out the ministry that God had given him (v. 5).

Lesson: Are you waiting for the coming of the Lord?

Prayer: Help us Lord not to backslide. Amen.

April 23rd Thursday 2015

Text: 2 Timothy 4:6

Topic: Paul's Role in the Last Days

Paul revealed that he was about to die to impress on Timothy further the importance of remaining faithful to the Lord. 4:6 Paul believed that he would die very soon. He used two euphemistic expressions to describe his death. First, his life was presently being "poured out" as a sacrifice to God, like the daily drink offerings in Judaism (Num. 15:1-10; cf. Num. 28:4-7; Phil. 2:17). Soon there would be nothing left. After the Jewish priest offered the lamb, ram, or bull in this ritual, he poured wine beside the altar. This was the last act in the sacrificial ceremony all of which symbolized the dedication of the believer to God in worship. The pouring out of the wine pictured the gradual ebbing away of Paul's life that had been a living sacrifice to God since the apostle's conversion. Second, Paul was getting ready to depart this earth as a traveler leaves one country for another or as a soldier breaks camp. The apostle believed that Nero would not release him from prison but would execute him. Christian tradition confirms that Paul died as a martyr in Rome. The impending death of Paul lent added urgency to his charge to Timothy. Are you numbering your days?

Lesson: Your life is not in your hands.

Prayer: Help us to number our days, our Lord Jesus. Amen.

April 24th Friday 2015

Text: 2 Timothy 4:7-8

Topic: Describing Your Life

Paul used three more figures to describe his life as he reviewed it. The first two were athletic metaphors (cf. 2:5) describing a boxer or wrestler and a runner (cf. Acts 20:24). The third was that of a faithful steward who had kept (guarded) his charge (cf. 1 Cor. 4:2; Matt. 25:14-30; Luke 19:11-27). Another view is that the first figure was military, the second athletic, and the third religious. A third view is that all three figures were athletic. Paul had lived the Christian life and served the Lord as He had commanded. Verses 6 and 7 constitute Paul's epitaph. Paul probably meant that he had run in the noblest race of all, namely, the ministry of the gospel, not that he had done his best in the contest. 4:8 Because he had been faithful, Paul did not dread dying but looked forward to seeing his Lord. On the day of rewards for Christians (the judgment seat of Christ; 1:12, 18; 2 Cor. 5:10) Paul was confident that the Lord would give him a reward that was proper. The "crown of righteousness" may be either the fullness of righteousness as a reward or some unspecified reward for righteous conduct on earth (cf. James 1:12; Rev. 2:10).

Lesson: Have you been good steward?

Prayer: Lord, we want to be good stewards. Help us. Amen.

April 25th Saturday 2015

Text: 2 Timothy 4:9-10

Topic: Fellow Workers and An Opponent

4:9-10 Paul urged Timothy to join him in Rome soon. He did not expect to live much longer (cf. v. 6). The constitutional method of inflicting capital punishment on a Roman citizen was by the lictor's axe. The criminal was tied to a stake; cruelly scourged with the rods, and then beheaded. Demas, a short form of Demetrius (cf. 3 John 12, probably not the same man), Paul's fellow worker, had succumbed to the allurements of the world (instead of loving Christ's; cf. Gal. 1:4; Eph. 1:21; 1 Tim. 4:8; Titus 2:12; 1 John 2:15). He had departed from Paul and had gone to live in Thessalonica (cf. Col. 4:14; Phile. 24). He, like Hymenaeus and Philetus (2:17), Alexander (1 Tim. 1:20), and others had not continued to follow Christ faithfully. Continue in the Lord no matter the situation.

Lesson: Be in the Lord always.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, You are our shield. Protect us from the wicked. Amen.