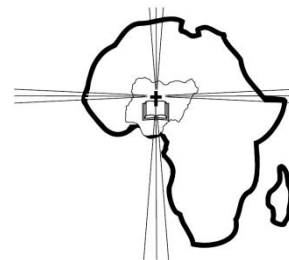


DAILY LINK WITH GOD 2015

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.

March

Text: Ezra 1-2

Brief Introduction

In this month, we are reading about the merciful God at work. We can see how He delivered his people from slavery in Babylon. God is merciful; He does not look at your ability. What God requires from us is faithfulness to Him.

March 29th Sunday 2015

Text: Ezra 8:24-30

Topic: Ezra's Physical Preparations

Ezra took special precautions to make sure the expensive temple utensils arrived safely and to guarantee that everyone would perceive that his handling of the precious cargo was completely honest (cf. 2 Cor. 8:20-21). The Babylonian "talent" (v. 26) weighed about 66 pounds. The "daric" (v. 27) was a thick gold Persian coin that weighed 130 grams or about 4 1/2 ounces. The total weight of the precious cargo the exiles took with them seems to have been about 28 tons. There are records that indicate that there were some very wealthy Jews living in Babylon at this time. Following Ezra's example, Christian leaders should delegate responsibility. Ezra carefully chose the people to whom he gave responsibility. It may seem exaggerated to have taken such precautions with the money, to weigh it out carefully, to record every detail. However, to do things carefully, with decisions and transactions documented in writing, is a sign of wisdom rather than a lack of confidence. It protects everyone involved. Many present-day scandals could be avoided if Christian leaders would learn from Ezra.

Lesson: Learn from what Ezra did.

Prayer: Teach us Jesus Christ to love one another. Amen.

March 30th Monday 2015

Topic: Safe Arrival

Text: Ezra 8:31-36

The exiles had begun their journey on the first day of the first month (7:9), but they had camped by the Ahava waterway for 12 days (8:31). They arrived in Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month (7:9). Thus the trip took four months, and it covered about 900 miles. God kept them safe on their dangerous trip, and all their 28 tons of valuable cargo arrived safely. Burnt offerings represented the consecration of the worshippers' persons to God (Lev. 1; 6:8-13). Sin offerings provided atonement (covering) for the worshippers' sinful natures (Lev. 4:1—5:13; 6:24-30). A satrap (v. 36; lit. protector of the realm) ruled over governors in the Persian governmental structure. God is our protector in our journey of life.

Lesson: Do not despair, Jesus is with us.

Prayer: Lord, you are good to us. We worship and magnify Your name.

March 31st Tuesday 2015

Text: Ezra 9:1-4

Topic: The News

The Mosaic Law strictly forbade intermarriage with the native Canaanites (Exod. 34:11- 16; Deut. 7:1-5). Furthermore, intermarriage with other non-Israelites had resulted in tragic consequences in Israel's earlier history (cf. 1 Kings 11:1-8). Thus the action in Ezra 10 is not directed against inter-Israelite marriages between the returnees and the 'peoples of the land' but specifically against Israel's old wilderness and early conquest enemies, namely, the Canaanite, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Amorites, Egyptians and Moabites (Ezra 9:1). It is upon this note of the 'conquest re-established' that the Book of Ezra ends. Under these circumstances the spirit of the law demanded an application broader than its original application. Hence Ezra was justified in applying a law limited to Canaanites to all pagan foreigners, even the Egyptians who were originally explicitly excluded. Ezra pulled out his own hair, but Nehemiah later pulled out the hair of his enemies (Neh. 13:25). A man's attitude toward God's Word is one of the ultimate criteria of his spirituality.

Lesson: Spirituality is the bedrock of Christian life.

Prayer: Help us to see the new month Lord Jesus and rededicate ourselves to You. Amen.

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 1st Wednesday 2015

Text: 2 Timothy 1:3-5

Topic: Timothy's Past Faithfulness

Paul gave thanks to God for Timothy's past faithfulness to his Lord and encouraged Him to continue to be faithful to strengthen Timothy's resolve in view of ever increasing apostasy and the decision of many to abandon Paul. Paul voiced thanks for his own salvation and ministry (1 Tim. 1:12) in his first epistle to Timothy. In this second epistle he began with thanks for Timothy's salvation and ministry. However throughout this epistle Paul looked backward into the past and ahead into the future, when he would no longer be alive. This reference reveals that Paul regarded his own ministry as part of the continuation of God's great ongoing plan of the ages. He was one of the faithful throughout history that have loyally served God sincerely, with a "clear conscience." God requires us to be faithful to him.

Lesson: Be faithful to God always.

Prayer: Teach us to be faithful our Lord. Amen.

April 2nd Thursday 2015

Text: 2 Timothy 1:6

Topic: Timothy's Quality of Faith

In view of the quality of his faith, Paul urged his younger friend not to neglect the use of his God-given abilities for the service of Christ. Any person can become less effective in the exercise of his abilities if he or she does not use them regularly. This was Paul's concern. He wanted Timothy to keep active. He was not implying that Timothy's gift had left him. Timothy may have received special abilities from the Lord through Paul at his ordination (cf. 1 Tim. 4:14). The bestowal of these may have been a unique apostolic ministry that ceased with that office (Eph. 2:20; Heb. 2:3-4). Every Christian minister needs at times to return to the inspiration of his ordination, to be reminded not only of the greatness of his calling, but also of the adequacy of the divine grace which enables him to perform it. Indeed, every Christian worker engaged in however small a task requires assurance that God never commissions anyone to a task without imparting a special gift appropriate for it. It seems more likely however; that what Timothy received was divine enablement to do the work into which God was leading him. We could understand the gift, then, as a special endowment or enablement by the Holy Spirit (cf. v. 7).

Lesson: Utilize the gift given to you by God.

Prayer: Help us to serve you diligently Lord. Amen.

April 3rd Friday 2015

Text: 2 Timothy 1:8-12

Topic: Do Not Let Others Intimidate You

In view of the Holy Spirit's enablement just mentioned, Paul instructed Timothy not to let others intimidate him. "Do not be ashamed" indicates that Paul was implying that Timothy was already guilty of this. Because of opposition Timothy had evidently experienced temptation to demonstrate some sign of embarrassment with the gospel and with Paul, perhaps because he was in prison. The apostle reminded Timothy that he was in prison as Christ's prisoner. Paul consistently referred to himself as Christ's prisoner (cf. Eph. 3:1; 4:1; Phile. 1, 9). He viewed himself as in prison for no other reason than that he served Christ. The Lord had placed him there, so there was no reason to feel ashamed about that. Rather, Timothy should join his mentor in suffering for the gospel; not by being imprisoned with him necessarily, but by proclaiming it boldly (cf. Rom. 1:16). God will empower us to stand tall by His grace.

Lesson: Do not be ashamed of the Gospel.

Prayer: Strengthen us not to be ashamed of you our Lord. Amen.

April 4th Saturday 2015

Text: 2 Timothy 1:9-11

Topic: The Glory of the Gospel Shines

Paul expanded on the glory of the gospel to rekindle a fresh appreciation of it in Timothy. This is one of the seven so-called liturgical passages in the Pastorals, all of which expound the essentials of salvation (cf. 1 Tim. 1:15; 2:5-6; 3:16; 2 Tim. 2:8-13; Titus 2:11-14; 3:3-7). God has delivered us from the penalty and power of sin. He has called us to a special purpose, not because of us but by His free choice. He enables us to achieve this purpose by His sufficient grace that comes to us in Christ. Our calling took place before the creation of the universe (cf. Eph. 1:4; Rom. 16:25; Titus 1:2), but God has revealed its full dignity only since Christ has come. Jesus Christ destroyed the effects of death and made it possible for us to live with God eternally. The gospel is the revelation of this plan, but Timothy appears to have felt ashamed of it! Paul proudly acknowledged that God had appointed him, of all people, a herald (announcer), an apostle (establisher), and a teacher (perpetuator) of this good news. What an honor and privilege it is to communicate the gospel!

Lesson: Communicate the gospel freely.

Prayer: You are our pillar Jesus Christ. Amen.