



ST JAMES CROYDON

TAKE 10 MINS
TO SHAPE
YOUR DAY

30 DAYS OF BIBLE
READING

INTRODUCTION

*May your unfailing love come to me, LORD,
your salvation, according to your promise;
then I can answer anyone who taunts me,
for I trust in your word.*

Psalm 119: 41-42

The month of September is a chance for us to commit to read the Bible, reflect on God's word and respond in prayer. 2020 has been an unexpectedly challenging year and one where so much of our lives and plans have been disrupted. My prayer is that as we focus together on God's word that we will be filled with love, wisdom and hope that will shape our days.

So often our devotional life is done in private and so it is tricky when we get stuck, or tired or defeated. Our hope is that September will give us a chance to talk more openly and encourage each other. As a community of God's people at St James we can talk, pray and encourage each other throughout the month over coffee, over Zoom, in our growth groups and as we catch up on Sundays.

This year we will start with Psalm 119 and some passages from the New Testament and be encouraged by how God's word sustains us and enables us to persevere. We will enjoy the letters of 1 & 2 Peter, written to communities that were suffering to give them encouragement to hope and live for Christ.

I've invited our Growth Group Leaders & staff to write these reflections and I love their insights. I pray you will be likewise encouraged by their wisdom and understanding.

Each day includes a Bible passage, a guided reflection and a question for you to ponder and some directions to prayer. They should take you about 10 minutes to do each day. If you are a newcomer to personal devotions this is a great way to start and if you are someone with good devotional habits you may just like to add this for a while so that you can encourage others.

May God use this booklet and conversations to help us delight in Scripture, trust him in prayer and shape our days around his word.

In His Service,
Caroline Andrews
Growing Believers Minister
#stjames10mins

SEPTEMBER 1

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO WALK IN THE WAY OF THE LORD

Passage: Psalm 119:1-8

Reflection:

Psalm 119 is a Psalm that reflects on God's word and rejoices and delights in Scripture and its ability to sustain people as they live for God and as they struggle and persevere. It is a huge Psalm of 179 verses all of which point us to God's decrees and remind us of how good and sufficient they are to shape our lives.

These opening verses remind us of who is blessed by God. Blessed is a word that includes happiness and rejoicing but also declares who will be vindicated and rejoiced in by God. As I read these opening words, I rejoiced at who will be blessed and then immediately plummeted into despair as I realised that blessing comes to those whose ways are blameless, and who seek God's will with all their hearts. I fear that is not me.

The Psalmist follows a similar journey- he acknowledges that blessing comes to those who follow God's laws and keeps them. He knows, without doubt, that God's precepts are good and are to be fully obeyed. Like us he declares a desire for his life to be lived in obedience with faithfulness to God and his calling. With that declaration the Psalmist also acknowledges the gap between where he is and where he would like to be. So he commits to be a person who will praise God with his heart and commit to learning and obeying God's word.

As I struggle with this Psalm, I am also encouraged to look to Jesus who perfectly fulfills this Psalm, as the one who is blameless and righteous and who lives a life where he seeks God with all his heart. Jesus can read Psalm 119 with utter confidence. Jesus is the also the one who is utterly forsaken on the cross in order that we are never forsaken and so that all our sins and wrongdoing is covered. We are very blessed!

Consider: Can you echo the Psalmist's word and long to be a person that is shaped by God's word, seeking to be obedient and made wise by it?

Prayer: Pray that God may help you in September to build regular habits of reading His word and to shape your heart and mind to love and delight in His instructions.

We are reading the Bible today with Caroline Andrews - Growing Believers Minister

SEPTEMBER 2

WHY READ THE BIBLE?

Passage: Psalm 119:9-16

Reflection:

When it comes to bible reading there are a million reasons not to. There are the things of life to be done, places to be, people to meet, croissants to be tasted. In an age of access to information with a voice command to Alexa/Siri/chosen voice preference why do we need to engage with reading information? If we have questions about God we can Google what Bible passages will help us or search for general sage advice. Why do we need to read it?

Psalm 119 describes a very different relationship with God's word. It is not just something that communicates information. It does communicate information but more than that it draws us into a story of the way God is at work in the world. So we engage with it differently; not just as a reference book for our tough questions. It is something we rejoice in, meditate on, delight in, and hide it in our heart. As we engage with the word it reshapes us that we would not stray from the Lord's commands and might not sin against God. God's word is more than an information transfer. It's a beautiful invitation into God's story of the way the world is. A story of how everything began, what happened in the past, what is to come, and how to live in the moment.

So why read the bible? Not just to learn something new but to be transformed by the words of God. To join in on God's story. To be shaped into who God is creating us to be.

Consider: : What are the reasons we don't engage in God's word? How does God's reshape how you think, feel, and act in the world?

Prayer: That God 's word would dwell in our hearts enabling us to be the people of God by the work of the Holy Spirit

We are reading the Bible today with Myles Elton - Discipling the Young Minister

SEPTEMBER 3

LONGING FOR THE WORD

Passage: Psalm 119:17-24

Reflection:

What a joy it is to be able to read the bible each day with our entire St James church family. I always look forward to September and the encouragement that comes with knowing we're all meditating on God's word together – but it's especially encouraging in this current season to have a reminder that though our normal sense of church community isn't the same, we remain connected as God's family gathering under His word.

Today's passage is a wonderful reminder of the great privilege it is to have God speak to us in His word, and that we have access to Him so readily and personally. We see the psalmist overwhelmed with a sense of longing for God's word, finding goodness and comfort in it. The psalmist humbles himself before God, asking Him to reveal His goodness and to help him to obey His word. Through whatever trial and opposition, scorn or contempt, the psalmist is assured by and confident in the power of the word to counsel him, and we see a true desire for God that consumes his soul.

Sometimes we need a reminder that spending time with God in His word is a blessing and not a chore, a gift and not simply a daily routine. In God's word, we find His goodness and wisdom, and we should delight in it as we meditate on what He has to say to us.

Consider: As you reflect on today's passage, how can you be more like the psalmist, humbling yourself before God, longing to be obedient to His word and delighting in the counsel of His word?

Prayer: Pray that God would help you to obey His word and to see wonderful things in it. Pray that your soul would be consumed with longing for God's word, that you would delight in it and meditate on it day by day.

We are reading the Bible today with Caitlin Falls -7pm Congregation

SEPTEMBER 4

THE ANSWER IS IN THE WORD

Passage: Psalm 119:25-32

Reflection:

What part does God's word play in your life? It's a question which deserves reflection. Does it do any 'heavy lifting' in shaping your normal outlook and resourcing your responses to daily challenges? Or is it a matter of occasional information and reminders? Or something else?

Psalm 119 is a long psalm all about one thing – God's word. Today we are looking at one section of it. Notice two things.

First, the writer is directly addressing God – it's a prayer. He makes multiple requests; that his life will be preserved, that he will be strengthened in his sorrow, that he won't fall into deceitful ways, and more. The intimacy of these requests challenges us – he depends on God to cope with each day and to press on in godliness.

Second, he knows that God will answer every one of his requests through his word. Through God's word God will give him the understanding he prays for, and the strengthening he needs, and the protection from being shamed, and the rest.

This is someone devoted to reading God's word, but who understands that only God himself will make reading the word transformative. He opens God's word prayerfully and with his heart open to God's working in his life.

Consider: How do your prayer concerns compare with those we see here? Do you assume the answers to your prayers for yourself and others may come in or through God's word?

Prayer: Choose one of the verses here which speaks to how you are feeling just now. Use it as a prayer, and keep watch in God's word for an answer in coming weeks.

We are reading the Bible today with Al Lukabyo- Senior Minister

SEPTEMBER 5

THE LORD IS MY TEACHER

Passage: Psalm 119:33-40

Reflection:

A sense of dependence and a consciousness of extreme need pervade this section, which is all made up of prayer and plea.

"Teach me, LORD, the way of thy decrees." Child like, blessed words, from the lips of an old, experienced believer, and he a king, and a man inspired of God. Alas, for those who will never be taught. They dote upon their own wisdom; but their folly is apparent to all who rightly judge. The Psalmist will have the Lord for his teacher; for he feels that his heart will not learn of any less effectual instructor. A sense of great slowness to learn drives us to seek a great teacher. What condescension it is on our great Jehovah's part that he deigns to teach those who seek him. The lesson which is desired is thoroughly practical; the holy man would not only learn the decrees, but the way of them, the daily use of them, their tenor, spirit, direction, habit, tendency. He would know that path of holiness which is hedged in by divine law, along which the commands of the Lord stand as sign posts of direction and mile stones of information, guiding and marking our progress. The very desire to learn this way is in itself an assurance that we shall be taught therein, for he who made us long to learn will be sure to gratify the desire.

Consider: Who do you learn from at the moment? Is your heart open and do you desire to learn from God and his decrees?

Prayer: Pray that as you take 10 minutes to shape your day that you may be open to the teachings of God in your life and a willingness to follow his decrees to the end. Pray Teach me, LORD.

We are reading the Bible today with Charles Spurgeon -19th Century Baptist preacher

SEPTEMBER 6

I WILL NOT BE PUT TO SHAME

Passage: Psalm 119:41-48

Reflection:

There are times that we are mocked as Christians for what we believe. Sometimes a non-Christian friend might mock certain beliefs they find ridiculous, like Jesus being God and being raised from the dead. They might find certain Christian values offensive, for example the belief that all people will have to give an account to their creator of how they have lived their life.

There may be times in your life when you are taunted like the Psalmist (v. 42) or people might just find you strange.

The Psalmist is determined not be silenced by the derision of other people (v. 46). He knows that the word of the Lord is full of promises to him that give him hope and joy (v. 41, 43). He knows that faith in God is not all about rules and restrictions, but about joy and freedom.

The Psalmist loves God's word, delights in the word (v.47) He is not embarrassed. They are words that bring life. He meditates on them and trusts that they are true (v.42).

Consider: How will you respond when people criticize your Christian faith or laugh behind your back? In what ways has God's word brought you life and freedom?

Prayer: Kind heavenly Father, thank you for your word which brings us hope and joy. I delight in your commands to me and the truth that you have revealed to me. I thank you for your promises and your unfailing love. Help me to meditate on your word and to keep it in my mind today as I work and rest. I pray that I will be not ashamed of my faith but to speak up when I have opportunities.

We are reading the Bible today with Ruth Lukabyo – 10.30am Congregation

SEPTEMBER 7

GOD'S PROMISE IN DIFFICULT TIMES

Passage: Psalm 119:49-56

Reflection:

What 'hurts' are in this season of your life? Broken relationships, chronic pain, a terminal diagnosis of a family member - none of us is without pain. In the midst of our suffering, God reminds us to cling to his ultimate promise of eternal life.

Living in this world is hard. People have turned away from God and it seems that wickedness flourishes. But no matter the time or place, we have assurance that God loves us and his ways are best.

Scripture provides the comfort that we need as we look to his ancient promises and his faithfulness and love to people throughout the generations. It is this remembering of who God is that sings out to us in the times of suffering and hurt or when wickedness flourishes

Consider: Which part of today's reading could you memorise to cling to in times of hurt or when wickedness flourishes? In the hurts you are currently experience what comforts can you take from who God is?

Prayer: Thank God that He has given us the of the promise of eternal life and assurance of His love. Pray for people of our St James community who are currently suffering or experiencing hardships that they may experience God's comfort.

We are reading the Bible today with Emma Brown- gam Congregation

SEPTEMBER 8

BEAUTY IN CHALLENGE

Passage: Psalm 119:57-64

Reflection:

When reading Psalms, we can easily be wrapped up in the flow of the words and miss the boldness of what they are proclaiming, and Psalm 119 is both challenging and beautifully bold.

Verse 57 begins with the Psalmist knowing his place before God, that the Lord is his portion. This whole section is orientated to Him. What bold statements and promises they are! The Psalmist not only promises to obey God's words but also to not delay with obeying commands, to wake at midnight and praise God for his laws, and yet to continue to be taught by the Lord.

How often have you been convicted when reading a passage of Scripture, or hearing a sermon, that something needs to change in your life but not acted on it? Do you seek to be taught by the Lord? This passage can be really challenging- we fail and don't even live up to our own words, we can feel guilty for that thing in our life we're not sure how to change, and there are times when our heart is not oriented to the Lord.

The beautiful truth that this part of Psalm 119 helps points us to God's works in us to bring us closer to Him in the midst of our failings. Knowing Jesus' great love and mercy to us, we have received His Spirit who guides us to seek the Lord and be taught by Him, to praise his name, and obey his words! When we know the Lord, we can take comfort in the fact that He is working in us for his good purposes. And because of the Spirit, we can praise our Heavenly Father day and night (vs 62), reading his word to know God and His will for us all the more!

Consider: How have these verses from Psalm 119 challenged you? How have they helped you to understand more who our great God is? Pray through these things, and that you might also delight in God's word.

Prayer: For others in our St James community, that we can seek to continue to point each other to Christ, walking with each other in hardships. Pray that we can love one another and point them to also delight in the law of the Lord!

We are reading the Bible today with Elyse Shaw – MTS Trainee

SEPTEMBER 9

REMAIN IN JESUS

Passage: John 15:1-8

Reflection:

When I was growing up in Albury, we had an apple tree growing in our backyard. For many years my parents fertilised and watered this small tree tucked away in the back corner. Each year we waited and hoped that the tree would produce fruit. I remember one year finally seeing little apple blossom flowers starting to appear, but after a few months, the flowers withered and soon the branches were bare again...no fruit had ever arrived. And as each year passed with no fruit, we began to question the health of our apple tree.

In verses 1-8, Jesus teaches that bearing fruit is the measure of being a disciple (vs 8). He uses the metaphor of a vine, in which Jesus is the true vine (vs 1, 5), his followers are the branches (v 5) and God is the gardener (v 1).

God is so concerned with fruitfulness that branches that don't produce fruit are cut off. Even branches that are producing fruit are not left to grow wildly and untamed, but are pruned so they will produce even more fruit. And so as followers of Christ, we must reflect on our spiritual health and ask – am I producing fruit?

Fruitfulness in the Christian life is not brought about by working harder, being better or doing more. Instead, the follower of Jesus is reminded that just as the vine branch is lifeless and useless unless it remains attached to the vine, we cannot grow and produce fruit if we do not remain connected to Jesus (v 4). We can only produce fruit when we are in relationship with Jesus. It is being connected to and dependent on him that sustains us, strengthens us and grows us. So, we must be totally dependent on Jesus Christ – recognising that he is vital to our health - and let his words remain in us. In this dependence, the comfort is that as we remain in him, he will surely remain in us.

Consider: Have you grown to produce more fruit or started to wither in your relationship with Jesus over the last few months? What factors have contributed to this? How might this passage challenge and/or comfort you?

Prayer: Pray that you will remain dependent on and connected to Jesus and that God might grow you and make you more fruitful as you do this.

We are reading the Bible today with Katie Mugridge – Youth Minister

SEPTEMBER 10

THE TEACHER TEACHES US TO PRAY

Passage: Matthew 6:9-14

Reflection:

In this famous moment Jesus teaches his disciples how to pray. Let us look at each of the parts of the prayer Jesus teaches us:

Our Father- Jesus teaches us that God's love and provision for us are remarkably similar to a parent who loves us unconditionally.

Your Kingdom come- The kingdom Jesus is praying about is not an earthly kingdom or a physical kingdom, rather it is a spiritual Kingdom where God reigns and all who believe and obey the good news of Jesus will be citizens.

Your Will be done- Jesus lives out and teaches us to have the utmost respect for God's will and allow it to reign supreme in our lives. As Jesus did God asks us to put him first in our lives.

Give us today our daily bread - Jesus tells us that we can call on God to provide for our physical needs and he will- Jesus will provide all we need both physically and spiritually.

Forgive us our sins- Jesus explains that we must be forgiving to receive forgiveness from God. Jesus has shown us the ultimate act of forgiveness at the cross – he forgave the sins of those who crucified him- including us!

Lead us not into Temptation- God asks us to acknowledge that it is him who delivers us from the hands of the evil one and he will be with us in each and every difficult situation.

Consider: How can you keep in mind the Lord's Prayer today? What part of this prayer do you find hard to pray?

Prayer: Pray that God may help you in September to meditate on The Lord's Prayer in your daily life and what that means for you as you grow as a disciple of Jesus.

We are reading the Bible today with Alison Collins – Kids' Minister

SEPTEMBER 11

PUT ON THE NEW SELF!

Passage: Ephesians 4:17-32

Reflection:

We see examples of the Gentiles 'old' way of life all around us today – lives motivated by greed, people indulging in every kind of sensuality and lacking in sensitivity. Many are living their lives separate from God and their hearts are hard. Their thinking is pointless, and their desires deceive them – always promising to fulfill and never quite delivering. People wonder what the point of their life is and are desperately trying to find some meaning and fulfillment for themselves.

The great news is that we have been delivered from this old way of life by Jesus. We no longer have to live a fruitless, meaningless life separated from God. Jesus has made available to us a new way of life, one of true righteousness and holiness. Of course, we know that this is not because of anything we have done – it's all been done by him. Our job is to 'take off' the old self and 'put on' the new one. It's a conscious and deliberate action we must do (and keep doing) to show that we have been sealed by the Holy Spirit ready for the final days.

As we read through the list of behaviours that characterize the 'new self' I'm sure there are different things that challenge each of us personally. I'm always working on taming my tongue. I find it too easy to lash out at those I care about most and hurt them with my words. I need to put off this behaviour (get rid of it!) and replace it with self-control and words that build up others. Please God help me to do this more and more!

In the end, I think the biggest challenge for all of us is to be "made new in the attitude of our minds". It's one thing to work on our changing our behaviours but the work of changing our minds is far more difficult. Thanks to God that we are not on our own here but have the Holy Spirit working in us to change our attitudes and our thinking.

Consider: Are there things in your life you need to get rid of? Which of these characteristics of the 'new self' do you need to work at putting on and how (practically) will you do that?

Prayer: Thank God for saving us from the futility of our own thinking. Ask him to make new the attitude of your mind so you can be like him

We are reading the Bible today with Michelle Wyatt – gam Congregation

SEPTEMBER 12

EYES ON JESUS

Passage: Philippians 3:16-21

Reflection:

When I think of my friends and family who do not know Jesus, I don't often think of verse nineteen. I think of their kindness, generosity, humour and so many other things. This verse reminds me that because they do not know Jesus, they will not experience eternity with Him. While I can feel comforted that one day I will be transformed to be like Jesus in heaven, I also feel challenged to share my faith with those around me. I love these people so I should share the most important thing in my life – Christ.

It is also a reminder to set our eyes on the Lord in all things. It is so easy to get swept up in conversations around money, relationships, careers etc and see life in a very self-focused way. None of those things are necessarily bad, but we need to use what we have to glorify God. We need to be aware of those conversations with people that can sway or tempt us to look to ourselves rather than Jesus.

We need to encourage each other to filled with a vision of Jesus and the hope and knowledge that he is resurrected and ruling. As we live as citizens of heaven we look forward to our own resurrection.

Consider: How can you set your eyes on the Lord in this COVID year? How can we continue to share our faith with the opportunities that COVID presents?

Prayer: Pray that God will strengthen and renew you each day to look to Him in all things. Pray all areas of your life might glorify Him and that God's spirit will work in you to share your faith with those around you.

We are reading the Bible today with Tori Emmerson – 7pm Congregation

SEPTEMBER 13

JOY IN HARDSHIP

Passage: 1 Peter 1:1-12

Reflection:

'Whatever doesn't kill you makes you stronger.'

I have always disliked this saying. As far as I'm concerned, whatever doesn't kill you nearly killed you! The saying is an attempt to find meaning in suffering by suggesting that it leads to personal strengthening.

God's word is full of comfort for hardship, but it takes a different approach. Today's passage is so full of excitement that it's a bit startling to realise that it was written to people who were suffering 'grief in all kinds of trials' (v. 6). Read the passage again: what is the source of his enthusiasm? Why does grief not dampen his joy?

The answer is their powerful Jesus-focused story. Jesus suffered, and he has risen and is returning. This is real, true and guaranteed. They are his people; as for Christ, so for them and for us. Salvation and glory lie just ahead beyond 'a little while' of suffering. He begins in v. 3 not with their circumstances, but with their thrilling hope. The way of salvation is lived out daily, and this fills them with 'an inexpressible and glorious joy'. This is the basic frame of reference for Christian living, suffering and persevering, and our inexhaustible source of wonder and joy.

Consider: The spiritual challenge of 2020 (or even this very day) may not be persecution but disappointment, demotivation and weariness. This passage blesses us by drawing us back into our Jesus-focused story. What one idea in the passage can you keep going back to throughout today?

Prayer: My father in heaven, Thank you for the resurrection of Jesus: my guarantee of salvation, my source of joy, and my future hope.

We are reading the Bible today with Al Lukabyo – Senior Minister

SEPTEMBER 14

EYES ON JESUS!

Passage: 1 Peter 1:13-21

Bible reading tip:
when you see a "therefore"
ask "what's it there for?"

Reflection:

Our passage begins with the word "Therefore". In the verses before this passage, we've read of our living hope and our sure future in Christ...so now what? Peter calls us to focused action.

If you are reading the NIV, v13 says "*with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming*". If you are reading the NRSV the words are "*prepare your minds for action; discipline yourselves; set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed*". The Greek words are "gird up the loins of your mind". To "gird up your loins" in the ancient world was to tuck up your long robes, which you would need to do if you wanted to run or engage in physical labour. A modern day equivalent might be "to roll up your sleeves" There's a sense of "**urgency!**" as my son's Rugby coach used to say.

So where are we directing our focus?

- Away from the attractions of the world around us: Peter points out that a life without Christ is one of "evil desires" and "ignorance" (v14) and that it's "empty" (v18). Though we might like the thought of "just fitting in" with our world, Peter calls us to see ourselves as "foreigners" (v17).
- Towards God: this passage begins and ends with "hope": we know that Jesus will return (v13) and we know that He has been raised from the dead (v21). However uncertain our circumstances, we have a solid foundation and an unshakeable heavenly future.

And how does focusing on God influence our actions?

- we're called to be like God: to be holy ("set apart", distinctive) (vv 15, 16); and
- we're called to be accountable to God for what we do (v17).

These seem impossible, so let's be encouraged that the One who rescued us in the first place (v18) isn't going to leave us to struggle along by ourselves.

Consider: Where are you finding it hard to be holy in your daily life? How does our solid hope help us be more like God and less like our world?

Prayer: Let's pray for God's help in focusing more on Christ and being distinctively His. In the words of an old prayer "*May I know Thee more nearly, love Thee more dearly and follow Thee more nearly*".

We are reading the Bible today with Lis Boyce- 10.30am Congregation

SEPTEMBER 15

CRAVING NOURISHMENT

Passage: 1 Peter 1:22-2:3

Reflection:

Many of us are familiar with the lousy feeling you have after one too many successive takeaway meals, or, when you're staving off hunger with not-quite-a-full-meal snacks during a busy period. All you crave is a nourishing, home cooked meal.

We need nourishment not just for sustenance, but for growth. Nourishment from God is as essential as a newborn's need for her mother's milk. When was the last time you or I said, "what I'm really craving is a few hours in the Bible"? God has both the capacity and the desire to nourish us with His Word. The sometimes dusty, neglected Bibles on our bedsides are a literal life source. You may be thinking that reading the Bible doesn't feel like a transformative, supernatural experience. Let me assure you, if you love and follow Jesus, you have experienced this. It was by the life source of His Word you were born again. You have tasted that God is good.

Knowing truth is not just a dry mental chore either, it transforms how we live. A person who understands Biblical truth will also live in obedience to it and reject sin. In fact, it goes beyond our personal holiness. We spend time in the Bible in order that we may love one another deeply and genuinely. When truth and obedience are inseparable as they should be, obedience to the Bible itself is an act of sincere love for each other. Friends, as we spend time in God's Word let us not be motivated by guilt but by a sincere love for each other. God's Word will nourish, equip and mature us to love deeply.

Consider: Does spending time reading and understanding God's Word feel like a chore you avoid or something good that you crave? (You might like to meditate on Psalm 34) How might being motivated by love for each other speak into how you approach quiet times?

Prayer: God, help me fill my cravings for something good, with your Word instead of other things. Allow me to be motivated by love and not by guilt. Please grow in me a longing and desire to know and obey your truth. Remind me that every time you speak to me through your Word, I am experiencing the transformative, supernatural power of your Word by which I was saved. Amen.

We are reading the Bible today with Jeri Jones Sparks – Reaching the Lost Minister

SEPTEMBER 16 CHOSEN!!

Passage: 1 Peter 2:4-10

Reflection:

Ever been to Stonehenge in the UK? Or the Great Pyramids of Egypt? If you have you've joined with people from all over the world to marvel at the wonder of – what? Stones, all chosen or cut off site, fitted perfectly into a specific place, for a mystical purpose. And according to 1 Peter 2, that's exactly what we are.

Chosen, precious and valued – to be: "living stones, shaped and placed in a crucial location in the design of God's living temple; a people who belong to God; part of a holy nation; to function as a royal priesthood.

Philip and I have spent most of our lives being busy people. Apart from our chosen careers and raising a large family, God has opened doors to many other pursuits, projects and ministries over the years. Now, both well on the road to 90, ageing and health issues prevent us taking on any new challenges! Most opinions or advice we have to offer are often interpreted at best, as "old hat" or at worst, as "senile". So who are we now?

How about you? Do you ever wonder whether you have any vital place in this world? And I don't think this is necessarily an age-related question. Well, according to today's reading, God's building would collapse without you. I need you to be there, and you need me to be there. And why?

Because God is building us *together*, so that as the world looks at the *living* stones that make up his spiritual building, and we declare how He has brought us out of darkness, into His light, He will be glorified. No room for identity crises here!

Consider: How can *my* life and actions declare what God has done in *my* life – what He is doing *in the world* - through Jesus?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you that I don't have to search for my identity in anything this world has to offer. Nothing could surpass what you have chosen me for. Help me to maintain this perspective.

We are reading the Bible today with Pat Taylor – 10.30am Congregation

SEPTEMBER 17

STRANGERS IN THE WORLD

Passage: 1 Peter 2:11-17

Reflection:

This letter by Peter is addressed to the early churches in modern-day Turkey. Peter reassures these early Gentile Christians that through faith in Christ, they have become God's people, a holy priesthood (v9).

Peter reminds God's people that Christians are not at home in this world (v11 -12), they belong elsewhere, a theme repeated throughout the New Testament (eg., Matthew Ch6 v20, "storing your treasure in heaven"). As foreigners, passing through this world, Christians are called to live by the values of our eternal home, God's Kingdom. This passage also challenges contemporary Christians: What are the sinful desires that tempt us most, could they be evident in our actions to those we should be witnessing to? Are we making an effort to glorify God in our day-to-day, in how we relate and make decisions? This passage reminds us to use our Christian freedoms responsibly (v16), to serve as ambassadors of Christ (v12).

Christians are also called to serve God through submitting to all levels of formal human authority, and by dealing respectfully with all (v14-17).

Consider: In which areas of your life can you grow to better witness Christ to the world around you? Are there areas of weakness that you should commit to God in prayer?

Prayer: Pray for God to guide and strengthen us to serve as his ambassadors in this world, and to overcome sinful desires or patterns of relating.

We are reading the Bible today with Adam Hales – 10.30am congregation

SEPTEMBER 18

VULNERABILITY

Passage: 1 Peter 3:1-7

Reflection:

Vulnerability. A term we are pretty familiar with. Our whole world lays low because of a virus that threatens to infect and kill. Thousands of protestors hit the streets enraged at the inequality between people of differing skin colour. A climate where we see increasing occurrences of extreme weather events. These things reveal to us how small we are. How vulnerable. How weak.

And yet as I read this passage I often struggle with the label given to me as a woman. The weaker partner. We can rage against this label or we can learn to accept it and acknowledge that our weakness and vulnerability can be a gift from God and a great blessing.

Take a look back in time and even around the world today and you will see the weakness and vulnerability of women. Female babies are more likely to be aborted in the womb, girls sold into slavery, women physically and sexually abused in relationships. Women experience menstruation, childbirth, menopause. Women are more likely to be physically weaker, hold positions lower down in workplaces, work for no pay in the home. And yet, the command Peter gives to husbands is to treat their wives with respect as the weaker partner. Respect means to listen, to acknowledge.

The place of weakness offers women a unique picture into the world. As we perceive our own weakness we can see deep into the weakness and vulnerability of others. It is no mistake that women are often engaged in caring professions and volunteer work. It is no mistake that Bible authors use metaphors from the experiences of women to illustrate important Bible truths. It is no mistake that God uses those who are weak and small to show how mighty and strong He is. We need to listen to these voices.

Consider: Are you a woman? How can your perspective of weakness be a strength for Gods kingdom? Are you a man? What might it look like to respect your wife, women you know?

Prayer: Lord God you made us all. Teach us to love one another as you love. To look upon each other and see as you see. Amen

We are reading the Bible today with Erin Elton - 10.30am Congregation

SEPTEMBER 19

BLESSINGS IN ABUNDANCE

Passage: 1 Peter 3:8-14

Reflection:

When I consider the idea of blessing, the first thing I think of is the blessings I've received. Here in Sydney, we receive blessings in ABUNDANCE. Sometimes we even remember to give thanks for the good things and favour we receive from our generous God. We drink clean water straight from our kitchen taps and we have access to wonderful Bible teaching.

Peter challenges how we think about blessing. What does it mean to focus on giving blessing, and not just receiving? There is a focus in this exhortation to bless our fellow human. It's worth remembering that we are in a different time and cultural space to the original readers of 1 Peter. Perhaps we are not facing the threat of persecution in the same way the early Church was, in fact we benefit in many ways because so much of our western society was built on the Christian heritage. It is still very worth asking, however, if we are prepared to receive disrespect from our wider community?

This passage reminds us to respond to these circumstances with blessing, not with retaliation or defensiveness. Let's not focus on garnering favour because we deserve it, but on giving favour even when others don't deserve it. May blessing be something we give before we receive. May we grow a reputation as a St James community for an eagerness to do good.

I begin to count all the blessings we receive in abundance and wonder, what a powerful witness we would be if we gave blessing abundantly too!

Consider: How does the picture of community in 1 Peter 3:1 resource us to be outward looking and grow an eagerness to do good? What might it look like for you practically to give blessing before you receive blessing?

Prayer: God, thank you for all the blessings you give us. I bring some of these to mind now. Thank you for the most profound blessing we have received through the death and resurrection of Jesus. We know you are turned in favour towards us because Jesus made it possible. Help us to grow as a St James community to be outward looking and an eagerness to do good.

We are reading the Bible today with Jeri Jones Sparks – Reaching the Lost Minister

SEPTEMBER 20

HAVE A READY ANSWER

Passage: 1 Peter 3:15-22

Reflection:

A while ago I became friends with the barista who made my coffee each day. He knew my name and order and I knew his. He also knew I worked as a Christian minister and I prayed for him and an opportunity to share Jesus. One morning I dropped in for coffee, I was running late and so I was a bit flustered, and he asked me: "You're a Christian. What do you think of Darwin?" I looked at him in a puzzled way and replied: "I'm not sure. I've only ever been to Alice Springs." Alas, he was asking about Charles Darwin and wanting a Christian perspective on Science and Christianity. Doh!

In this wonderful passage Peter encourages them to be a people ready to give an answer for the hope they have in Jesus. They are to live radically different lives, persevere through suffering and persecution and to be ready! I love this passage because it reminds us that God always goes before us prompting and stirring in people a desire to know more about Jesus. Our job is to be ready to speak of the way that Jesus has worked in our life. To declare his praises and speak of his goodness, mercy and grace for us and the ways that our lives have been changed by knowing Him.

What is the motivation? Reverence for the Lord (vs 15). We are prepared to give an account for Jesus because we love and honour Him and we want others to do the same. We share in order to talk of the freedom and life that comes in Jesus and the hope that will transform the lives of those around us. And we do so with gentleness and respect (vs15) to reflect the Lord we trust in, the one who suffered and died for the righteous and the unrighteous to bring them to God.

Consider: Are you ready to give an answer of the hope you have? What would you say if someone asked you today about why you trust in Jesus?

Prayer: For an opportunity to give an account for the hope you have.

We are reading the Bible today with Caroline Andrews- Growing Believers Minister

SEPTEMBER 21

LIVING FOR GOD

Passage: 1 Peter 4:1-6

Reflection:

A bit of a struggle in the Christian walk is living out our faith to please God rather than be tempted to live our lives like those in the world around us, who continue to live in sin and pursue earthly pleasures and desires. As Christians, we can be ridiculed for our lifestyle choices and mocked for not living life to the full and in some cases, even suffer for what we believe.

In the preceding chapter, we read about how Jesus suffered though he was blameless and that we should be prepared to endure the same trials if we are followers of Jesus. We are reminded that God's judgement is coming and that everyone will have to give an account for how they have lived out their lives.

This is the reason why the gospel is being preached, and we can be encouraged that those faithful believers who have endured suffering for their faith and lived out their lives ahead of us in accordance to God's will (and have since passed away), will be rewarded and stand confidently before Jesus on the Judgement Day.

Consider: Who or what are you living for? Are you tempted to live only for the here and now, with no thought towards what will happen in eternity after we die? Are you willing to suffer for your faith? What can you do to ensure that you are focused on the things of God rather than the things of this earth?

Prayer: Ask for God's help to live out a life as a devoted follower of Jesus, to be able to stand firm under opposition and suffering, and ignoring the temptations of this world and sinful desires (which leads to judgement) but instead pursuing God's will and living for that day when we will reunited with God, confident in the saving grace of Jesus' death.

We are reading the Bible today with Richard Soo – 10.30am Congregation

SEPTEMBER 22

LIFE IN THE END TIMES

Passage: Acts 8:1-25

Reflection:

I wonder how you might finish the following sentence: "The end of all things is near, so we must..." There are many possible endings to that sentence: 'we must preach the gospel', or 'we must go on mission'... You might be surprised at how Peter chooses to end the sentence: we must pray (4:7), love (4:8), and serve (4:10) one another.

While love, service, and prayer are each key aspects of Christ-oriented living, what Peter describes here almost seems like too mundane a task for him to be urging his readers to do in light of Jesus' imminent return. But let's read this passage in light of one of this letter's key verses:

"Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us." 1 Peter 2:12

To Peter, our daily conduct is a core component of gospel proclamation. Peter exhorts us to serve and to love - which covers over a multitude of sins (4:8) - so that the gospel we preach would not be undermined by the way we live. He calls us to pray with alert and sober minds, because the day Christ comes will be too late for those around us to come to faith.

I wonder if you ever feel like your words and deeds don't ultimately matter or make a difference? Peter has a very high view of our words and deeds as Christians; he encourages us to speak as those with the words of God, and to serve with the strength he provides (4:11). Our salvation is not based on our own merit, nor is our contribution to God's kingdom work in our world. In God's grace, and through the work of his Holy Spirit, our prayer, love, and service can make all the difference in an unbeliever's life. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Consider: Who are the people in your life that you long to see come to faith? Does the way you witness Christ to them reflect a confidence in God's power to save, or in your capacity to say and do the right thing?

Prayer: Pray that God might abundantly grow you in love and prayerfulness, and that he would enable you to love and serve others to the glory of Christ.

We are reading the Bible today with Gab Lim - MTS Trainee

SEPTEMBER 23

BLESSED IN PERSECUTION

Passage: 1 Peter 4:12-19

Reflection:

We at St. James seem far removed from the persecution which Christians in other parts of the world experience on account of their faith in Christ. Yet times are changing. In the western world we see various evidences of a growing departure from the Christian worldview and a day may well be coming when standing up for the name of Christ will come at a high cost.

So how should we respond if suffering in some form for the name of Christ should be visited on us? Peter tells us that we should not be surprised if we experience insult, rejection or persecution. The crowd hated Jesus and it may well hate us. Furthermore, we should realise that our suffering for Christ is not meaningless. Yes, we sometimes suffer needlessly as a result of our sin and folly but suffering for the name of Christ is an instrument used by God to test and purify us. We share in Christ's sufferings that we may grow to be more like Him. And we are not immune from such suffering. God's judgement is stirring throughout the world to refine His church often through the difficulties it experiences. In the light of this, one shudders to think of the judgement resting upon the godless who do not obey the gospel!

We may wonder how we can stand firm when our faith is challenged - perhaps severely. At such a time, however, we can rejoice and not be ashamed because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon us and God will give us all we need to meet the challenge of the hour. We have a faithful Creator and when the going gets rough we can entrust our circumstances and lives to Him. As we walk closely with Him He will strengthen and guide us forward. Indeed, we are blessed! We can rejoice in the present, and indeed, it is a prelude to greater rejoicing when we meet Christ in eternity.

Consider: Reflect upon how God has been faithful to you in the past. Can you trust Him to be faithful to you in the future --- even if you are persecuted in some way for your faith?

Prayer: Pray that God will help you to adopt the right attitude and response if confronted with hostility and rejection on account of the gospel.

We are reading the Bible today with Kevin Sherack - 10:30am Congregation

SEPTEMBER 24

A LEADER LIKE ONE OF US

Passage: 1 Peter 5:1-4

Reflection:

We are confronted in the media by various styles of leadership across the world. Some world leaders appear to promote themselves, their greatness so qualify to lead. Other leaders promote a vision, a way forward that is for the common good of their nation. In this passage Peter, a man of God who could so easily have promoted himself as one of the greatest elders of the church, instead identifies with his readers, as one of them, a fellow elder. Peter appeals to the readers, the elders of the church at this point, reminding them that they too will share with Christ in His glory. What an amazing truth that can lead to a grateful response of eagerness to serve others rather than seek personal gain. Peter suggests for them to live as a shepherd of God's flock. This is a such a clear image that Jesus had described of himself in John 10:11-18 "A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand . . . when he sees the wolf coming he abandons the sheep and runs away". This analogy purports for the reader to be as a shepherd, protecting his flock of sheep, watching over and caring for them. Peter's words are a comforting reminder of the undeserved glories we will receive, glories that will not fade away if today we eagerly serve one another in God's love.

At this unusual time where we may be feeling a sense of bewilderment, take comfort in looking to God's glories as we reconsider with who and how God may want us to serve in this year of our life. How does God want us to be like Peter, a humble example, to others who may also feel bewildered, so they can taste a fresh God's love and glory for them.

Consider: When we stop to reflect on the amazing truth of Jesus our loving Shepherd, who laid down His life for you and me, what is our response?

Prayer: Lord thank you for Peter's example of you. A person who watched you suffer, who stumbled and denied knowing you, yet who you graciously shone through in his significant role in the Early Church. Father show us through your Holy Spirit at this time of unusual circumstances where you want us to humbly serve and shine for you so others too can share in your glory that never fades. We ask in Jesus' name, Amen.

We are reading the Bible today with Christine Egri – gam Congregation

SEPTEMBER 25

STRENGTH THROUGH HUMILITY

Passage: 1 Peter 5:5-13

Reflection:

In our society, humility is one of those elusive character traits which is widely praised but little practised. Yet it wasn't always so. In the world of Jesus, to be humble was derided as a sign of weakness. Therefore, this passage presented a significantly countercultural challenge to early Christian believers. Humility was the way to receive God's blessing. We too are called to be humble by the example of our Lord Jesus. But what is humility?

One aspect of humility is that it is "toward one another" (v5). That is, humility is a relational not a solitary virtue; to be humble is not to be shy or modest, but to treat someone else in a particular way. What does that look like? This passage gives us some clues. One example of an activity for which humility is required is submission; younger believers are to submit to, that is, put themselves below, their elders. But Peter goes on to call all believers to humility toward all believers. How does that work? In Philippians 2, this Christian virtue is explained in more detail, and its underlying attitude is described as valuing others above oneself or counting others more significant than oneself (v3). Self-centredness and self-obsession can consume us, but God would have us be concerned with others. Because Jesus in his incarnation, life, suffering and death valued us more than himself, we are saved and set free to value others as more important than ourselves.

A second aspect of humility is that it is toward God, or "under God's mighty hand" (v6). There is a grand and all-encompassing sense in which we are to recognise our smallness before and dependence on God. He is the one who will grant us what we need and listen with care to our anxious thoughts (vv6-7). Tempted and suffering, a humble attitude of faith in him will sharpen and ready our minds (vv8-9). He is the one who will restore us and make us strong (v10). Dependent on him, we receive his true grace (v12).

Consider: In what ways can I grow in humility toward God and toward other people?

Prayer: Thank God for his humility toward you in Jesus, and pray for humility toward him and toward other people today.

We are reading the Bible today with Phillip Mugridge – 7pm Congregation

SEPTEMBER 26

GRACE AND PEACE TO YOU

Passage: 2 Peter 1:1-4

Reflection:

As Simon Peter starts his second letter, we have the reminder that our faith has been received from God and that it's something to be valued. God has given us everything we need for life and godliness. Our faith is precious and on equal value with the apostle's faith. God has called us and given us these promises because of who he is rather than who we are. The Message translation puts it this way 'Everything that goes into a life of pleasing God has been miraculously given to us by getting to know, personally and intimately, the One who invited us to God'.

As our knowledge of God increases, we are better able to please him and continue to turn away from our evil desires. Simon Peter's salutation is apt in light of this: 'grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord'. Hold fast to his promises and enjoy the godly life.

Consider: As you reflect on this passage, can you think of times in your life when you were tempted to feel like you needed something more from God in order to have a chance at living his way? Can you think of someone who needs to hear and understand this message of the sufficiency of God's gift of grace? Prayer for them now and for our St James community to be ever joyful at the miraculously gift we've been given.

Prayer: Pray that grace and peace may also be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord as you reflect on the sufficiency of his provision to you.

We are reading the Bible today with Virginia Oakley - Parish Administrator

SEPTEMBER 27

Passage: 2 Peter 1:5-8

Reflection:

I love a good list. I have dozens of workbooks filled with pages of dot points. Most of the time they help me to feel organised and prepared for whatever task or day that we have ahead. But they can also feel overwhelming and unachievable. And that's what it can sometimes feel like with all the lists in the Bible. Throughout the Bible there are lists everywhere - starting with Genesis - the list of the first 7 days.

So it can be daunting to see yet another list. Peter tells us this list of things is necessary to keep us from becoming ineffective and unproductive. What a kick in the guts that can feel like - to be called near sighted and blind if I do not have these qualities.

But, verse 9 reminds me of who I am, and brings me back to the passage we read yesterday in 2 Peter 1:1-4. I am cleansed from my past sins and reminded that God has given me what I need as he has called me by his own glory and goodness. I am not working on the qualities in my strength, but in God's strength. If God has built this foundation in me through Christ, then I stand in knowing it is through his strength that he will be building these qualities in me.

Consider: These verses are still a list, and they still contain a warning to us all. But it is also a list of great joy and thankfulness. - as we live and work because of what Christ has done for us, knowing that God continues to work through us. Including in this list.

Prayer: Remember that Jesus has cleansed you from your sins and give thanks to God.

We are reading the Bible today with Hannah Egri - 7pm Congregation

SEPTEMBER 28

ALWAYS REMEMBER THE REPORTS ABOUT JESUS

Passage: 2 Peter 1:12-21

Reflection:

I love reading – recently I read Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, which I hadn't looked at for many years. I was surprised at how much I had forgotten about characters, their backgrounds and events and needed to pick up again.

In our reading today, Peter reminds us of the need to **refresh** our Biblical memory, to **revisit** the prophecies and eye witness reports of Jesus. There are at least 332 distinct Old Testament predictions regarding the Messiah that Jesus fulfilled *perfectly*. When I stop and really think about Peter and others witnessing Jesus' majesty, I am in awe of what was shown to them. Again, we are given the reassuring picture of the "light shining in a dark place".

Consider: We know that the prophecies about Jesus were not fables, but *actual* historical events. We know of the many times the majesty of Jesus, God's dearly loved Son, was *witnessed* by his followers. How can we, as members of St James', ensure these wondrous facts are continually in the minds of ourselves and believers in the years to come?

Prayer: God, our kind Heavenly Father, thank you for providing so many facts that Jesus was truly your Son, through Old Testament prophecies and eye witness reports of Him. May we be diligent in studying our Bible, and so allow these wondrous truths to refresh and uplift us in our journey here on earth.

We are reading the Bible today with Juliet Olive – 10.30am Congregation

SEPTEMBER 29 IN FEAR OF DECEPTION

Passage: 2 Peter 2:1-22

Reflection:

How do you know if you are being deceived? How do you know if you are being sold a lie? I would like to think I am not gullible but there are a number of situations that would point to the opposite. Moments where knowledge is low or information is incorrect mean sometimes it is easy to be led down a path of confusion and frustration.

2 Peter 2 brings an extended warning of being wary of false prophets and teachers who can lead us down a path of destruction for themselves and others. The fact that Peter warns about false prophets and teachers raises questions for me about being deceived in the present. Am I listening to a person or cultural narrative that is leading me astray? Is there information I am missing or an area I am low on knowledge that is undermining my ability to perceive truth.

In the moment of fear of deception I am thankful for the community of believers around me who help me see my error and warn me of the false nature of others. I am thankful for the clarity of the word which helps me discern the truth of God. I am thankful for a God who does not speak mysteriously but who has made himself known clearly in the word of God. I am thankful for the Spirit of truth which condemns lies and guides us into all truth.

Consider: Are there blind spots where you are potentially deceived? Have you invited those close to you to speak truth into your life to cast out deception?

Prayer: Father, guide us by your Spirit into the truth of reality found in Jesus. That he would lead us into life founded on Christ's death on the cross for us.

We are reading the Bible today with Myles Elton – Discipling the Young Minister

SEPTEMBER 30

BACK TO THE FUTURE

Passage: 2 Peter 3:1-10

Reflection:

As we live through a COVID world and see the tragedy of that disease spreading across the world it is common to feel uncertain and worried about the future. Where do we look for security and confidence as we face the unknown future?

In today's passage Peter calls us to look back as we face the future. He warns that times are coming that will challenge us and cause us to question whether God has the situation in hand and whether Jesus will return. You may have also reflected on these questions recently. Peter encourages us by focusing our eyes on who God is and his faithfulness throughout history, starting all the way back in the story of creation.

The world may feel uncertain or scary but the same God who spoke and created the heavens and the earth. The same God who acted for destruction and salvation in Noah's flood. The same words will also preserve the world and ultimately bring all of creation under God's judgement. God is powerful and faithful!

We are not to forget that the LORD is at work, he is not slow, he is working his purposes out in the world and keeping his promises made to his people. God is patient because he loves us and is committed to the world he so wonderfully created. He is waiting for the world to listen to his word, for the people that he created to respond and repent before judgement is rolled out. He wants no one to perish

This COVID challenge is an opportunity for us to trust God and be patient. It is also a chance for us to continue to come to him in repentance. We can also join Him in holding out the word of life, Jesus, to all people.

Consider: How do you feel at the moment about uncertainty that we experience? How can God's faithfulness in the Scriptures help you face this?

Prayer: Father, guide us by your Spirit into the truth of reality found in Jesus. Lead us into life founded on Christ's death on the cross for us.

We are reading the Bible today with Caroline Andrews- Growing Believers Minister

BONUS - OCTOBER 1

PERSERVERE, GROW IN GODLINESS, STAND FIRM IN THE GOSPEL

Passage: 2 Peter 3:11-18

Reflection:

We live in a broken, fallen, unjust world. This is nothing new. There has always been war, famine, death, sickness, unjust rulers, poverty, and we could go on.... Yet all of this will be destroyed, the things of this world will pass away and there will be a new heaven and new earth, where righteousness reigns. In light of this, Peter exhorts us to live holy and godly lives, fit for this new restored creation.

The world as we know it will be destroyed, so we need to focus on what will remain and is eternal. We are to make every effort to live spotless, blameless lives, to be at peace with Him (v14). Christ has done all that is required for us to be at peace with God and His Spirit continues to work in us. What a blessed assurance, we have nothing to fear, we can be at peace with our Creator now, as we live on this earth, and in the world to come!

In a post-modern world where there is no ultimate truth, how can we be sure of this future? Because of "his promise" (vs13). We can trust God, we can trust His Word. He is unchanging, trustworthy, faithful. In stark contrast, the rulers of this world, whether good or evil, in government or in other positions of authority, or less obvious rulers that deceive us, such as materialism and other ideologies, they all make empty promises, are ultimately powerless, we are and will be disillusioned and let down by them. Not so with God, we can trust Him.

We are to "grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus." (v18). We are urged to be on our guard, and not be deceived by those who are distorting the Scriptures, ("ignorant and unstable people distort"), to stand firm in the true Gospel, so we do not fall away. V15-17.

Consider: What is stopping me from growing in godliness? What measures can I put in place to help me persevere and endure through hard times? How can I fix your mind on eternity, so as to persevere, endure, grow in holiness, stand firm in the Gospel?

Prayer: Dear Lord, help me to fix my eyes upon you, so the things on earth would grow strangely dim in the light of your glory and grace, and the sure hope of a new, restored heaven and earth.

We are reading the Bible today with Catherine Turner – 10.30am Congregation

WHERE TO NEXT?

Now that you have a month of personal devotional life under your belt - now is a chance to build on that. Below are some possible next steps.

1. You can just choose a book of the Bible and read through that using S. O. A. P:

SCRIPTURE: Read slowly and thoughtfully several times – (you can read aloud if that helps concentration)

OBSERVATION: What do you see and notice? (you can take notes) What do you learn here about God and his character? His purpose? About the world? About yourself?

APPLICATION: What leaps out as particularly relevant to what is going on in your own thinking or life? What sins to repent of? What challenges or comforts to apply to your heart?

PRAYER: Let the scripture shape or inform some of your praying.

2. You can download a daily Bible reading and/or Prayer app:



Bible in One Year



Prayermate



Youversion



Daily Prayer



Our Daily Bread

3. Ask a friend what they do and follow their example.
4. Grab "daily Bible reading" notes from a Christian bookseller

HOW SWEET ARE YOUR WORDS TO MY TASTE,
SWEETER THAN HONEY TO MY MOUTH!
I GAIN UNDERSTANDING FROM YOUR COMMANDMENTS;
THEREFORE I HATE EVERY WRONG PATH.

This booklet belongs to:



ST JAMES CROYDON

— reach • disciple • grow —