

## **July 23 — Pass/Fail**

### **READ**

Isaiah 40:1-42:25

Isaiah 41:10, *“Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.”*

### **THINK**

Sometimes life feels like an intense exam that we didn't study for. Totally unaware that we'd be taking a test, we look down and realize we've been studying the wrong book. Feeling overwhelmed and afraid, what do we do?

When health issues arise, when a family is shaken by tragedy, when finances are sparse — when life rocks us to the core with an unexpected challenge — we have two options. We can fall back on human logic and spin our wheels looking for answers, or we can stop, look up and give the situation to the One who is the answer — Jesus! However, we must make that choice; He'll never force us to put our trust in Him.

God didn't create us so that He could watch us struggle on our own. He wants us to feel the peace of His presence and the security of knowing He's in control. All we need to do is ask. Have you put your faith in Jesus? Is your heart His home? Because He always knows what we need, when we need it. We may not always get the results we expected, but with God, we'll always pass the test.

### **PRAY**

Heavenly Father, Thank You for loving me and always standing ready to meet my needs. I feel secure in Your strength, and Your constant presence gives me peace. When I need answers, help me to look to You first. In Jesus 'name, Amen.

## July 24 — God of Salvation

### READ

Isaiah 43:14-48:11

Isaiah 45:22, *“Let all the world look to me for salvation! For I am God; there is no other.”*

### THINK

How often do you ignore warnings? When a sign says, “Road Closed to Thru Traffic,” do you skirt around it and keep driving? When you read “Do Not Climb on Rocks,” do you do it anyway? If your “low fuel” light comes on, do you try to push the limit? Hazards await when we refuse to heed such warnings. In a much bigger way, Israel refused to listen to the prophets God sent to warn them about their disobedience. But along with these recurrent warnings, God also sent messages of hope and the promise of a Messiah. In today’s reading, He extends that call beyond Israel to the entire world — and to us. He is reminding us of His absolute authority and power — it’s only He who can bring salvation because He alone is God!

The belief that fame, fortune, and earthly relationships can give us security and salvation has made these the little “g” gods of our time. A lifetime of attention and worship has been poured into things that can only bring temporary satisfaction — they always overpromise and underdeliver. These “gods” require a sacrifice well beyond what we bargain for. They are incapable of satisfying the soul, and in the end, we discover that investment into the temporal gets us nowhere in eternity.

Salvation is found through accepting Christ into our hearts and letting Him reign supreme in our lives. Today, God is calling out with an urgent reminder to turn from the temporal and look to the eternal. Give Him the reigns of authority. Let Him rule. Bask in the hope of heaven that awaits those who love Him and live according to His purpose.

### PRAY

Heavenly Father, I am in awe of You. I know sometimes I need to be reminded that You alone are God, and I am not. I give You authority over my life. Help me to be mindful of eternity while I’m living for You today. Amen.

## July 25 — It's Permanent!

### READ

Isaiah 48:12-52:12

Isaiah 49:15b-16, "*...I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of My hands; your walls are ever before Me.*"

### THINK

Have you ever written on your hand to remind you of something important? Our hands are constantly before us — we look at them a lot, whether we realize it or not. Take a step further for those fond of “ink art.” Granted, some tattoos are face-to-palm what-was-I-thinking (or not thinking) regrets. But, most of the time, people get tattoos of memorable or meaningful things to them — an intentional permanent outward display of what they want to remember. With that in mind, reread today’s verse above.

“I have engraved you on the palms of my hands.” What beautiful imagery! We are always seen and remembered by our great God. He holds us close in His care, never overlooking any need, never distracted or lost in thought. We are on His mind 24/7. The vastness of His mind, His thoughts, and knowledge are unfathomable. There’s nothing He doesn’t know. So, again, let this sink in: You are a permanent mark! Before the world began, you were already thought of, already part of God’s great plans and purpose.

Although this verse was spoken to Jews in the Old Testament, how much more meaningful is it to us today as we think about the nail-pierced hands of Christ! He suffered beyond belief, died a shameful death, and rose again for our sins so that the Father could look at us as He does Jesus. Our souls have been permanently marked with a giant “R” — the ultimate and transcendent tattoo reminder that we are declared righteous and redeemed by God’s grace, forgiven, and forever His child. Marinate on that today! Allow your heart to be infiltrated by Christ’s love and give thanks. Because, right now, God is definitely thinking about you!

### PRAY

Heavenly Father, Thank You for always keeping me at the forefront of your thoughts. I adore You, and thank You for this perfect reminder of Your constant presence and provision in my life. Amen.

## July 26 — Lost and Found

### READ

Isaiah 52:12-53:12, 54:1-57:21

Isaiah 53:6, *“All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God’s paths to follow our own. Yet the Lord laid on Him the sins of us all.”*

### THINK

Have you ever been lost? It’s not a good feeling. We call for help, look for familiar landmarks or search for a clear path back to where we belong. We don’t accept defeat in these scenarios; we keep on searching. So why, at times, do we settle for less in our walk with God?

God says you are important. Because you are so valuable and loved, God didn’t want you to stay “lost” in sin, so He sent His one and only Son to take the punishment for your sin. But we encounter a problem in today’s reading — we are like sheep. Notoriously headstrong animals, they are simply not very smart. And, like sheep, we try to go our own way, led astray by the pull of worldly temptation, until we find ourselves lost in sin.

Are you searching to find your way? You don’t have to wander lost and unfound. The moment you choose to enter a personal relationship with Jesus, He ushers in overwhelming peace, unmatched hope, and ultimate freedom. And here’s what’s great! Jesus never gives up searching or throws in the towel when you lose focus or wander off track. No, instead, He appeals to the Father who’s always on the lookout for your return. The path back may not be the smoothest primrose path, but joy and everlasting life are waiting at the other end. It’s HIS way that, time and again, leads us in the right direction.

Jesus loves you so much that He died for you. Never lose hope and remember, you were lost, but now you’re found in your Savior’s loving embrace.

### PRAY

Dear God, Thank You for constantly pursuing me with grace so that I may have the hope of heaven. Help me to remain on the path of righteousness and love each day! Amen.

## July 27 — Rise and Shine

### READ

Isaiah 58:1-63:14

Isaiah 60:1-3, *“Arise, shine, for Your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and His glory appears over you. Nations will come to Your light, and kings to the brightness of Your dawn.”*

### THINK

Darkness seems to cover the world at times. The dark of night pervades as a cloud seems to prohibit even a sliver of the moon’s light. Sin is blatantly celebrated, Christians are persecuted, and the unrest of political turmoil and war causes many around the globe to be without food and other basic needs. Stumbling about, many cling to whatever feels good or right to them at the moment. But false hope is like a cheap toy with a dead battery — quickly, the light fades.

With that in mind, picture being in a room blanketed in thick darkness. Suddenly, a match is struck, lighting a single candle, and everything changes. In an instant, the darkness is broken as the flame’s warm glow fills the space. Eventually, more candles are lit, and the entire room is visible.

Believers, it’s time to wake up! Shake off the darkness of complacency. Rid yourself off the mental cobwebs and wipe the sleepiness from your eyes. It’s time to arise and shine, for the light has come. The glory of the Lord has risen upon you. So, live in the radiant glow that’s made yours in Christ Jesus.

### PRAY

Lord, Let me be a LIGHT in this dark world. As I go about today, let my words, attitudes, and actions come from Your strength. In that way, may Your light pour through me onto others today that they may draw near to You. Amen.

## July 28 — What are You Waiting For?

### READ

Isaiah 63:15-64:12, 65:1-66:24

2 Kings 20:20-21

2 Chronicles 32:32-33

Isaiah 64:4, *“Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who acts on behalf of those who wait for Him.”*

### THINK

“I love to wait!” — Said no one ever! We anxiously wait for things to come to fruition — for the traffic jam to loosen up, for the recovery process to be complete, for that “special someone” to come along, or to find out if we got that job we excitedly applied for. But, waiting is a part of life. Why, then, are we so quick to lose hope when God doesn’t answer our prayers in our expected time frame? We get frustrated, asking Him, “Are You there? Don’t You care about me and what I’m going through?” Yet, the Bible clearly states that patience is a fruit of the Spirit — something made ours through Christ.

Waiting patiently requires us to surrender our elusive grip on time and our perception of when things should happen. It makes us realize we’re not in control and forces us to trust God with the outcome. And that’s where, in the midst of the waiting, we can move from living an anxious life full of endless frustration to a life of peace, where we trust God through the question marks and believe that His timing is perfect.

Remember, such trust isn’t about the circumstances; it’s about faith in who God is. He is sovereign over all things — nothing happens that He doesn’t see, and we can’t rush His perfectly orchestrated timing, plans, and purposes. So, whatever you’re waiting for, take a deep breath, have faith, and wait for God to do something great in and through your situation regardless of the outcome. He’s got this!

### PRAY

Lord, Forgive my impatience. I trust You and know that You know what and when is best in all things. I release my grip on trying to control what only You can and surrender my life to You. Amen.

## July 29 — Insecure, Inadequate... Incorrect

### READ

2 Kings 21:1-22:2

2 Chronicles 33:1-34:7

Jeremiah 1:1-2:22

Jeremiah 1:6-9, *“Alas, Sovereign Lord, I said, I do not know how to speak; I am too young. But the Lord said to me, ‘Do not say, “I am too young.” You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you, ’ declares the Lord. Then the Lord reached out His hand and touched my mouth and said to me, ‘I have put My words in your mouth.’”*

### THINK

Have you ever felt inadequate? Or have you ever experienced imposter syndrome — that belief that you aren’t as competent as others think you are?

Jeremiah certainly did. When the God of the universe told him he was set apart from birth and appointed to be a prophet for the nations, Jeremiah’s response amounted to, *“Uh, yeah, I think You’ve got the wrong guy. See, I’m not so great with words, and I’m too young.”* But what the Lord showed him, and what He desires to show us, is that when God gives us a job to do, He provides us with all that we need to accomplish it. Our limitations do not limit God.

So, whatever God asks of you, don’t try to constrain Him with your concepts of what is and isn’t possible. There’s a reason God touched Jeremiah on the mouth and told him not to indulge his insecurities. Words have power, and we can talk ourselves out of many great things that He has in store for us if we give voice to those doubts. It’s our job not to give them that ground — to hold fast to the promise that God will be with us, will rescue us, will be our strength, and will give us words when we have none. Remember, if He didn’t think we were up to the job, He wouldn’t have given it to us in the first place; He sets us up for success and provides the support we need to do the work. Believe it, and you’ll be amazed at what God will do in and through your life!

### PRAY

Lord Jesus, Make my heart obedient to You and help me trust in You more and more each day. Remove my excuses and subdue my insecurities. You are greater than all these things. I’m so thankful that I can rely on You! Amen.