

December 2 – It’s Nice to be Missed!

READ

Acts 20:13-21:36

Acts 20:32,36-38, *"And now I entrust you to God and the message of his grace that is able to build you up and give you an inheritance with all those He has set apart for Himself." ... When he had finished speaking, he knelt and prayed with them. They all cried as they embraced and kissed him goodbye. They were sad most of all because he had said that they would never see him again. Then they escorted him down to the ship."*

THINK

Paul knew that trouble awaited him. After three years working tirelessly alongside the Christians in the province of Asia, he was about to set off for Jerusalem, undoubtedly to face all kinds of hardships that might even end in death — but it was a chance he was willing to take for the sake of His Lord and Savior. So, as he and his fellow believers united for this bittersweet farewell party, he was met with long faces and heavy hearts. What could he say to encourage his friends? He said the one thing he could be sure of — that he entrusted them to God, and His grace that would see them through. Because, when all else fails, people leave, and the walls are pressing in from all sides, only God and the hope of Heaven remain.

Paul’s pending absence would leave a hole in so many hearts. He would be remembered as a humble and faithful servant who pointed others to Jesus with compassion and conviction.

This leaves us to wonder: “How will I be missed, and what kind of legacy will I leave behind?” Whether we’re missed by a few or by the masses, we’ll all be remembered for something. What message is your life sending right now? What do you need to change to live out God’s best and point others to Christ?

As you look to the future, remember that in all uncertainty and struggle, God remains. Seek to live a life of humility, compassion, integrity, faith, and service. Do so, and, like Paul, you’ll make an indelible mark on the world around you as your life screams: “It’s all about Jesus!”

PRAY

Lord Jesus, When all else fails and I’m shaken by uncertainty, You remain. In You, I’m complete and lack nothing. Help me to live each day with a humble, servant’s heart that I may make a difference in this world for You! Amen.

December 1 – Accept It, You’re Weak!

READ

2 Corinthians 11:1-13:13

Acts 20:7-12

2 Corinthians 12:9, *“Each time He said, ‘My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.’ So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.”*

THINK

Anyone who's been on a job interview has heard some form of this question: "What would you say is your biggest weakness?" Isn't it interesting that this question can make us so uncomfortable? Perhaps it's because we don't like to admit that we have them; we don't want to reveal our shortcomings. But with God's power working in us, we can view our weaknesses as strengths — areas where we can be refined and made stronger with His coaching and correction.

Paul accepted his limitations and areas of weakness. He was content because he knew that, within his weakness, he gained opportunities for God's strength to shine as Christ's transforming power worked in and through his life. The wise apostle was even "glad to boast about his weaknesses" because he knew that, where he fell short, Christ's strength would help him excel.

So, whenever you think you're too weak — or you're asked that same cringe-worthy question — be confident that Jesus is strong. There's no match for His almighty power. So, lean on Him, trust Him, and know His strength!

PRAY

Lord, I know that I am weak. Help me depend on Your strength and power today! In Jesus' name, Amen.

November 30 – Love in Action

READ

2 Corinthians 6:14-10:18

2 Corinthians 9:7, *“So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.”*

THINK

When you give someone a present, what is the reason behind it? Oh sure, we could rattle off answers like, “It’s their birthday,” or, “We always exchange presents at Christmas,” or, “My wife would disown me if I didn’t give her something on our anniversary!” But those aren’t reasons; they’re occasions.

The real reason behind any meaningful gift is one powerful four-letter word: LOVE — and love is a verb; it requires action!

When we love someone, we want to show them how much they mean to us. We can say it all day long, but the words don’t carry much weight until we actually carry out that emotion with action.

The same is true when it comes to our relationship with God. If you claim to love God, that’s great. It’s important to express it verbally. But are you genuinely showing Him your love through actions such as generosity, obedience, service in the local church, and helping those in need? When you prioritize what’s important to God, you’re not only saying, “I love You,” you’re truly fulfilling what He’s placed you here to do — and that is what truly warms His heart!

PRAY

God, It’s not enough to just say I love you; I want to show it! Help me be faithful about putting my words into action as I live with intentionality and purpose each day. Amen.

November 29 – Steady in the Storm

READ

2 Corinthians 2:5-6:13

2 Corinthians 4:8-9, *“We are hard-pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.”*

THINK

In 2020, the deadly and destructive category 4 Hurricane Laura made landfall in Louisiana with up to 150 mph winds and a 15-foot high storm surge. It cost \$19.1 billion in damages and cost 81 people their lives. In the hardest-hit parishes, no home or business was left untouched by the powerful gusts that snapped electric poles and uprooted massive trees. After the storm, however, people were amazed to find a few random things precisely in place.

A plastic trashcan remained unscathed outside a local business. A single crepe myrtle tree stood proudly among the wreckage. A home by the coast had significant damage, but a seashell placed on a fence post remained untouched and unharmed. These objects weren't immune to the storm's power, which certainly pushed at them from every angle, yet they were not destroyed.

What storm are you facing today? What forces are surging against you? You are not alone! Though you may be hard-pressed, you will not be crushed. You may be perplexed by what's ahead, but you're not without hope. Persecution may come, but God will not abandon you.

Like the seashell unmoved by the hurricane, have faith that in Christ you can remain steady — no matter the season — because He goes before you and will be with you through it all!

PRAY

Father, I put my hope and trust in You. I acknowledge that nothing is too difficult for You, and You're never overwhelmed. Continue to grow my faith as well as that of those close to me struggling with significant trials. Open the door for me to show them Your love today. Amen.

November 28 – Flip the Script

READ

Romans 15:1-16:27

2 Corinthians 1:1-2:4

Romans 15:13, *“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”*

THINK

It’s said that life is 10% of what happens to us and 90% of how we respond to it. It’s so easy to look at all that’s happening in our world with an attitude that’s anything but grateful. But although we can’t control the “10%,” we can choose how we respond to the rest. It’s all a matter of perspective.

No one could flip the script on people’s perception of the world like Jesus. His words and actions completely contradicted cultural norms. Picture the puzzled look on people’s faces as He said, “Not only should you love your enemies, you must pray for them, too!” Such talk was unheard of! Who was this man who spoke with such authority, dined with sinners, and laid His healing hands on lepers? How could He call Himself God’s Son? Blasphemous! Right? No wonder Jesus was on the religious leader’s Top 10 Most Wanted List!

Just as He did 2,000 years ago, the moment Jesus enters our lives, our hearts and minds open to a new perspective as we enter into a personal relationship with our loving Heavenly Father. We can flip the script on our lives because Jesus flipped the script for us! When we open our eyes to everything He’s done in our lives, we can’t help but have an attitude of gratitude. Even in the worst circumstances, we have the hope of heaven, allowing us to have joy-filled hearts.

Whatever you’re facing today, think like Jesus, flip the script, and give thanks!

PRAY

Heavenly Father, The world is challenging me from every side. It seems I’m being told how to think and respond at every turn. Help me stop and filter it all through Your Word and remind me that You indeed are in control. I look to You, Lord, as my source of hope and peace. In Jesus’ name, Amen!

November 27 – Screen Time

READ

Romans 11:1-14:23

Romans 12:1-2, “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is — His good, pleasing and perfect will.”

THINK

Most of our mobile phones come equipped with a feature called “screen time,” where the user can view the total amount of hours and minutes they’ve spent on their phone, as well as a breakdown of the most used apps throughout a given day. For many people, the results can be surprising!

What if you could view a “screen time” of your mind? Did you know that we have around 50,000 thoughts a day? From the moment we wake up until we go to sleep, our brain processes thoughts of worry, excitement, ease, boredom, intrigue, and so much more. As we delve into the results, we see thought patterns emerge.

The Apostle Paul tells us in Romans 12 that our thought patterns determine our beliefs, directly affecting the feelings that drive our actions and choices. His teaching reminds us that to live out God’s intended best for our lives, we must constantly reset our minds. How do we do that? As we move through each day, we put our thoughts, feelings, and actions through the filter of God’s Word.

Are you able to discern what thoughts should manifest in your mind or stop in their tracks? The word “renewing” in today’s verse signifies a routine action. It’s the daily task of allowing Scripture and the things of God to help direct your thought life. What will you discover when you check the screen time of your mind? Will you find distractions that take you off-course, or will you see God’s good, pleasing, and perfect will?

PRAY

Dear God, Thank You that the Bible is so relevant and applicable to my life today. Renew my thoughts and help me focus on what’s pleasing to You. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

November 26 – One By One

READ

Romans 8:18-10:21

Romans 8:34-37, *“Christ Jesus who died — more than that, who was raised to life — at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.”*

THINK

Imagine walking barefoot on a wooden deck and getting several splinters. You have a few options. You can pretend they don't exist and risk them getting infected. You can try to wipe them out all at once with a rag, but there's no way to do that effectively. Or, you can strategically use tweezers to remove the splinters one by one. Initially, this final course of action is more difficult and time-consuming, but you'll eventually be able to resume walking pain-free.

Dealing with fear is similar. We can choose to ignore it, but that gets us nowhere. We can try to distract ourselves, but that's just a temporary diversion. Or, we can decide to employ God's winning strategy to eradicate it from our lives completely.

Eliminating fear is an intentional and strategic process of taking one small incremental step at a time. Through daily prayer, spending time in the Word, and little progressive personal goals, we CAN and WILL overcome it as we walk in the freedom that Jesus secured for us the moment He burst forth victoriously from the grave!

So, what will it be? Because you can choose a life splintered by fear, or you can be more than a conqueror through CHRIST who LOVES YOU!

PRAY

Dear Heavenly Father, I'm ready to eradicate the unhealthy fear in my life. I lean on Your power to help me take my first step today as I move forward in the freedom of Your love. Through You, I am more than a conqueror! In Jesus' name, Amen.