



**UNSUNG HEROES
IN
THE BIBLE**

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Wish you all a very happy new year. Pray that this year will begin and end with God working through each one of us in a powerful way.

We all are getting ready for the Quiet Time to be done daily on Unsung Heroes in the Bible. All of us like to be a hero, who everyone notices and appreciates, but who would like to be a unsung hero? This month all the 6000 disciples in our family of churches are going to learn about few men and women who had great impact even though they are not the familiar and famous heroes of the Bible like Abraham, Moses, Joshua and David. Their life, faith and struggles will inspire us and call us to imitate them. I would encourage you read about them in the Bible and meditate on their lives and also decide to practically implement daily one thing that the Holy spirit has inspired you to do.

I pray that our lives will play a significant role in building the kingdom of God as theirs did even though nothing may be written about us or talked about us. What we need to desire is not what men may talk about us on earth but what angels will be talking about us in heaven. May God use the lives of these unsung heroes of the Bible to impact our lives and inturn impact our family, neighbour, city and our Country for Jesus. For Jesus all the 6000 of you are heroes!

Love in Jesus

Dinesh George

DAY 1 - BEZALEL

Exodus 35:30-36:5

01-01-2016

Chosen to glorify God

We read from **v30-33** that this man Bezalel, was chosen by God, and God filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability, and knowledge.

We are also chosen by God, hand picked by Him before the creation of the world (**Eph1:4**), to do good work which He prepared in advance for us to do. (**Eph2:10**).

Do we doubt our calling? There are times when we feel we are not chosen, we are useless, and not great at anything! Well, the scriptures say otherwise. Today if you are in God's Kingdom, you are there because you were specially chosen. After being chosen and cleansed by Christ, you were also filled with God's Holy Spirit! His Spirit provides and enables us to use our gifts to build up the church, and bring Him glory. (**Read 1Cor12:7-11, Rom12:6-8, 1Pt.4:10-11**).

Passing on to others

v34 tells us that God gave both Bezalel and Oholiab the ability to teach others. God considered it important that they pass their abilities and expertise to others and equip others for serving Him. Are we not called to do the same today? what are the abilities He has provided you with? Is it singing, serving, teaching in kkc/preteens/teens/campus, preaching, teaching Bible, preparing lessons, translating, creative and artistic abilities, cooking, encouraging, administration, organising events, Are you using it for His Kingdom? Are you also pulling in others and teaching and training them?

Reliable and responsible servants

Ex.38:22-23 tells us that Bezalel and Oholiab carried out everything just as the Lord had commanded. In **Ex.35:4-5** we also see that they reported the progress of their work and communicated exactly what was needed with Moses. Are you reliable in the Lord's work? Do you faithfully carry out instructions, and communicate clearly and consistently so that the Lord's work is carried out smoothly?

Application

1. Pray thanking God for choosing you, remembering your conversion and the amazing ways in which God arranged it.
2. Identify the gifts of the Spirit in your Christian life, and write how you can allow God to use you more? In what ways can you be more reliable?
3. Pray, talk and set up an appointment with someone whom you can teach and pass on what you have.

DAY 2 - PHINEHAS

Numbers 25

02-01-2016

Background: Phinehas is the grandson of Aaron and the son of Eliezar. The Israelites were on their way to the Promised Land, having been saved from enslavement by the Egyptians. God's hand was upon them and fear gripped the nations they passed through. Moab was one of those nations. Balak, the king of Moab hired Balaam to curse Israel, but whenever Balaam opened his mouth to curse Israel, he uttered blessings instead. So Balaam told Moab to entice Israel through Baal worship. He advised them to send the most beautiful women to seduce the Israelites into idolatry. The strategy worked and soon many of the Israelites were seduced.

Studying the passage: Being seduced by the Moabites, the Israelites committed the following sins: They were sexually immoral. They were a part of the sacrifice that was offered to their idols. They ate a sacrificial meal. They bowed down before their god. They yoked themselves to the Baal of Peor and the Lord's anger burned against them.

Consequences: A plague broke out and 24,000 Israelites died that day. Some of us could question, "Could our loving God be so angry and act this way?"

That's a separate study altogether. A love that does not hate evil is not the love of which the Bible speaks. Someone said, "It is most fitting therefore that a volume on God's love should include an essay on the wrath of God."

Now the Lord commanded Moses to put to death the leaders of those people who committed this sin and expose it in broad daylight. The whole assembly of Israel was weeping at the entrance of the tent of meeting. Meanwhile an Israelite, Zimri son of Salu, a Simeonite leader brought into camp a Midianite woman Kozbi, daughter of a tribal chief right before the eyes of Moses. When Phinehas saw this, he left the assembly, took a spear in his hand and followed Zimri into the tent. He drove the spear into them, right through Zimri and into Kozbi's stomach. Phinehas did this irrespective of the fact that they were an influential family. That's when the plague against the Israelites stopped.

What was the depth of Zimri's sin? Why did Zimri have to be punished?

Zimri was not in touch with reality. The Lord's anger was burning against the Israelites and 24,000 people were already dead because of the plague. Moses was holding an assembly with the elders of Israel. People were weeping in front of the tent of Meeting, but Zimri was so obsessed with sin and with the pleasure that sin had to offer. He took her into the tent right before the eyes of Moses (an open disrespect towards authority).

That's what sin does to us. Is there any sin that you are so obsessed with that it is taking your eyes off from reality around you?

What made Phinehas the hero of today's study?

He was in touch with reality. He felt what God felt. Look at the testimony that the Lord gave to Moses about Phinehas. "Phinehas has turned my anger away from the Israelites. Since he was as zealous for my honour among them as I am, I did not put an end to them in my zeal."

Whose honour are you more concerned with? Often we could be more concerned about our own honour than God's honour. We may be a hero in the eyes of the world if we are concerned about our honour, but we will be a zero in God's eyes.

Phinehas concern for God's honour made him a hero. Phinehas was more mindful of honouring God than himself. That itself inherited a blessing for him from God. He and his descendants would have a covenant of a lasting priesthood.

The same promise could be applied to us today if we choose to honour God rather than honouring ourselves in our lives.

Application:

1. What kind of an image do you have of God?
2. What are few things that you are so obsessed with that it is taking your eyes off from reality and bring dishonour to God?
3. What are some practical steps that need to be taken if you have to honour God more than yourself?

DAY 3 - JAEL Judges 4 : 17-24

03-01-2016

The setting is a scene of a fierce battle. The enemy is losing and Sisera the Commander of the losing side flees. He heads to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite. He thought to himself, this is a safe place to hide and avoid being captured.

The Kenite tribes were allies of Israel, yet Heber's clan was friendly with Jabin's army – the enemy. His clan was probably the one who gave away the location of the Israel army. Jael chose to stay loyal to the Israelites unlike her husband, however she kept that information to herself.

Sisera had no reason whatsoever to doubt her loyalty. His guard was down since he didn't feel threatened in the presence of this woman, the wife of a faithful loyalist. Battle worn, tired, fleeing for his life he could finally relax as he was with someone he trusted, what harm could possibly come to him.

A dutiful, hospitable, respectful, concerned and sweet wife, yet there was a fierce commitment and loyalty in her that brought about unquestioning obedience to the unconventional role she was called to in God's amazing plan to bring victory to his people. She had a clear focus and very good understanding of her responsibility. She displayed a courage and toughness at a very crucial time and did not waver in fulfilling her duty. A woman unknown until then was Jael tending to her family and going about her ordinary normal life.

God however was preparing her for a special role and purpose in the history of Israel. She did not hesitate to accomplish what God had put on her heart to do. We don't need to have a role or title to fulfil God's purpose. We all have strengths and talents that can be used for God. In those days it was the women who put up the tents and Jael was very good at driving a tent peg in the ground. She did what she knew how to do best to bring victory to God's people. A small talent, a quick decision at an opportune time brought about complete victory for God's people. She did not wait for someone to come and get the job done. She could have waited for Barak to arrive and do the job, but she did not. She was a quick thinker and grabbed the opportunity that came her way.

JUDGES 5:24-27

In her song honouring God, Deborah called Jael blessed for her obedience to God's call.

Like Jael if you were the only one in your family to stand up for God, would you do it or would you give into your fears and follow the crowd?

Was there a time when someone close to you, maybe your spouse, a sibling, a close friend or your mentor chose to make an unspiritual choice? How did you respond? Were you willing to take a stand? If not, what was the reason for it?

Would you be confused or at doubt fulfilling an unconventional role God calls you to? Something that was risky, way out of your comfort zone, dangerous and beyond your ability how would you respond? Would you respond with obedience or would you question God's wisdom in it?

Are you quick to act when an opportunity presents itself or do you wait for someone else to take the lead while you take a safer stand?

Do you use your talents to honour God?

Jael did something very radical, not something normally a woman would do. She was called blessed. We too need to be prepared to heed God's call anywhere, anytime, anyhow so that the victory can be the Lord's.

DAY 4 - BOAZ

04-01-2016

1 Tim 5:2

“Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.”

Boaz lived out this scripture even before it was written. He treated Naomi as his own mother and Ruth with purity. He was a man that even vulnerable woman could trust. We live in a world that takes advantage of those who are defenceless but Boaz went above and beyond in treating people with honour and respect.

1) Boaz - a man worthy of emulation.

He was the kind of man we would want our daughters to marry and the kind of man we would want our sons-in-law to imitate.

Ruth 2: 8-9

Boaz asked about Ruth and found out she was a hard working woman who had stood by her mother-in-law. Knowing she must be afraid, he put her at ease and referred to her with a term of endearment – "My daughter". This established the boundaries for the relationship at that point.

Through his words he made her feel:

- Secure – stay here and work alongside the other women.
- Protected - from the other men - he may have had his doubts about the, men but let it be known that they were not to lay a hand on her.
- Respected – by thinking of details and giving her specific direction on what to do if she felt thirsty.

Ruth 2: 22-23

Naomi realized Boaz was a good man, who honored his responsibilities. She was grateful and urged Ruth to follow Boaz's advice of staying close to the women.

Reflect: What must I do to imitate the spirit and heart of Boaz?

2) Boaz – His life matched his doctrine

Ruth 3: 7-13

It is night and Boaz discovers Ruth lying down near his feet. He commends her for not running after the younger men and refers to her as a woman of noble character. In keeping with his words he continued to maintain a boundary.

What does this say about Boaz?

- He was consistent in his conviction.
- He did not let circumstances dictate or use them as an excuse to compromise.
- He knew Naomi and Ruth were struggling and blessed her with six measures of barley.

His righteousness would have strengthened their faith in the God who cares for widows.

Ruth 4:13-16

At the start of the book Naomi is desolate. As the end draws near, Naomi is holding a child in her arms. The women noticed and praised God for Boaz and the new baby - Obed. This was no ordinary son. Through Obed we see Jesus come into this earth.

Reflect: How can my example influence and impact people in a similar manner?

DAY 5 - HANNAH

05-01-2016

1 Sam 1:1-2:21

The life of Hannah is during a time when judges ruled. It was a time when everyone did as they saw fit (**Judges21:25**).

Each year, Elkanah a Levite (**1Chr.6:27**) and his family travelled from Ramah to Shiloh (the religious centre of the nation) where they worshipped and sacrificed at God's tabernacle (Tent of meeting). Hannah, one of Elkanah's two wives didn't have children. She was ridiculed by the other wife Peninnah for many years, to the point of Hannah weeping and not able to eat anything.

Although we cannot keep others from hurting us , we can choose how we react to those hurts.

Though the Lord had closed her womb, (**1:5**) her heart was still open toward him. **1Sam1:10- In bitterness of soul Hannah wept much and prayed to the LORD.** She was misunderstood by the Priest . **Vs.13-Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard. Eli thought she was drunk.** Hannah had good reasons to feel discouraged and to be bitter, but instead of giving up hope she kept praying. She brought her problem honestly before God. She poured out her heart to God - trusting him.

We notice a complete change in her attitude. In **1:18, she said, "May your servant find favour in your eyes." Then she went her way and ate something, and her face was no longer down-cast.**

Why didn't Hannah lose her hope, though she didn't the see results for many years?

How she could persevere not getting angry or bitter to God?

Why didn't she blame her husband or quarrel with Peninnah?

Why didn't she have a bad attitude towards Eli, the priest?

When God gave her the desire of her heart, how she could give him back to the Lord, for His service allowing Eli to raise him?

We see the answers if we study her prayer; how she had a clear understanding of the Lord she was worshipping. She knew her God.

There is no one holy like the LORD, no rock like our God,(2:2) the LORD is a God who knows and by him deeds are weighed,(2:3) the LORD brings death and makes alive(2:6), he humbles and he exalts,(2:7) the foundations of the earth are the LORD's(2:8), he will guard the feet of his saints(2:9), the LORD will judge the ends of the earth.(2:10) alive(2:6), he humbles and he exalts,(2:7) the foundations of the earth are the LORD's(2:8), he will guard the feet of his saints(2:9), the LORD will judge the ends of the earth.(2:10)

Though Eli's sons were wicked men, **the boy Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favour with the LORD and with men.(2:26)**. Samuel became a great judge, prophet and priest.

Application:

- 1-Get back faith in the areas you've lost hope in and stopped praying.
- 2-Get to know God deeper by spending quality time with His word.

06-01-2016

DAY 6 - URIAH - HUSBAND OF BATHSHEBA 2 Samuel 11

Throughout history, many attempts have been made to cover up incompetence, immorality, and even crimes. In the Bible, cover-ups appear early on. Adam and Eve sought to cover their nakedness and to hide from God, not realising their efforts betrayed their sin and guilt. **2Sam.11** is one of the great cover-up attempts of all time, and like so many, it too fails miserably.

It seems likely that David, Uriah & Bathsheba are hardly strangers, but that they all know each other, to some degree at least. Bathsheba, her father was Eliam, one of David's Mighty Men (**2 Samuel 23:34**) and grand-daughter of Ahithophel.

Uriah is listed among the mighty warriors of David (**2Sam.23:39; 1 Chr.11:41**). Some of the "mighty men" came to David, while he was in the cave of Adullam (**1 Sam. 22:1-2**), and we suspect that among them were Joab, Abishai, and Asahel, the three brothers who were mighty men (see **2Sam.23:18, 24; 1 Chr. 11:26**). Others joined David at Ziklag (**1Chr.12:1ff.**), and still other great warriors joined with David at Hebron (**1Chr.12:38-40**). We do not know when and where Uriah joined David, it would seem though that these two men know each other, fighting together and perhaps even from fleeing Saul together.

David knew what he did was wrong, yet he did it. So many times we too listen to Satan who makes us doubt and believe that my sin will not affect anyone but it surely does. If David had *thought* about all this, he would see the cost was so much greater than what he wanted to consider at the time. If David only knew that this illicit pursuit of pleasure would directly or indirectly result in:

- **An unwanted pregnancy**
- **The murder of a trusted friend**
- **A dead baby**
- **His daughter raped by his son**
- **One son murdered by another son**
- **A civil war led by one of his sons**

A son who imitates David's lack of self-control, leading him and much of Israel away from God

Question: Do we understand clearly that no matter what compromise we are involved in or sin we indulge in, it is going to have its deadly effects later on?

When David heard the disastrous news of Bathsheba's pregnancy, he should have used it as a prompt to repent. Instead, David did what most unrepentant sinners do: he tried to hide his sin.

He drew Uriah back home to have relations with Bathsheba to give a reason for her pregnancy, and when that didn't work; he planned things in such a way that Uriah went to battle with his death sentence in his hand.

The whole concept of hiding our sin is deceptive. Our sin is never hidden before God and only hidden with difficulty from our conscience. Our hidden sin hinders our fellowship with God and others and is a barrier to spiritual life and power. We tend to forget (1 John 1 & 2) that when we confess, God is faithful and gracious to help and forgive us from our transgression. Hence we lose our confidence.

The real question for us all is: "Are we prepared to face sin? Not to discuss someone else's sin, but to face our own."

I love this quote from Spurgeon. "As soon as ever we are conscious of sin, the right thing is not to begin to reason with the sin or to wait until we have brought ourselves into a proper state of heart about it, but to go at once and confess the transgression unto the Lord, there and then."

Application:

Think about your temptation/ compromise and make a list of its consequences. Pray today to have courage to confess your sins and not conceal them.

DAY 7 - MEPHIBOSHETH

07-01-2016

How God Reaches Out to Us

References: 2Sam 4:4, 2 Sam 9:1-8, Eph 2:1-6

Mephibosheth's life is a great reminder to us of the way God reached out to us and saved us. It reminds us of our utter helplessness, because of our fall into sin and its effect on us. His story reminds us of the incredible love, and generosity of God in reaching out to us while we were his enemies and deserving of His wrath. It is so easy to forget God's love and goodness, especially when we go through tough times and we neglect spending time with God. This is a story that serves to remind us once again of what God did for us.

- Q. According to **2 Sam 4:4** who is Mephibosheth?
 - Q. What happened to Mephibosheth as he was carried by his servant when they were trying to escape after his father Jonathan and King Saul were killed?
 - Q. What was Mephibosheth's age when this happened?
 - Q. After God kept his promise and raised up David to be the new king of Israel, what was one of the first things David had on his heart? (**2 Sam 9:1-5**)
 - Q. Mephibosheth, being the grandson of the king could have been a threat to David's throne. In spite of this, what did David decide to do for Mepibosheth? (**2 Sam 9:6-11**)
 - Q. According to **2 Sam 9:8**, how did Mephibosheth feel about himself? Why do you think he felt this way?
 - Q. According to **2 Sam 9:11**, how did David feel or look at Mephibosheth?
- Read **Eph 2:1-6** and reflect on how this story is similar to our story and the way God reached out to us while we were still sinners and helpless.
- Q. What was our condition according to **vs 1-3**? Is this how you see yourself? Why is this important?
 - Q. How is God described according to **v 4**?
 - Q. What has God done for us according to v 6? How often do we think about this and thank God about it?

It is easy to let momentary trials and struggles make us forget who God is and what he has done for us. Mephibosheth's story is a reminder to us of how God reached out to us in our weakness and sin and how he has made us one of his own sons and daughters. It should teach us gratitude, which is the key to worship and a life of service to God.

DAY 8 - JEHOIADA THE PRIEST

(2 Chronicles 22:10-12, 23:1-21)

08-01-2016

The scene: Jehoiada is married to the former King Ahaziah's sister (**22:11**). That is, he is the former king's brother-in-law and the son-in-law of the king before Ahaziah—Jehoram. Jehoiada finds himself faced with a critical choice. He knows that sheltering Joash is nothing short of treason. Nonetheless, as God's priest, he submits to the divine law and will.

Jehoiada finds a way to raise Joash in the Temple and to keep him out of sight. It is not just raising a child at Jehoiada's age that is important here; it is the risk involved. Athaliah is in complete control of the kingdom. Should she find out, not only will Joash be killed, but so will Jehoiada.

1) TAKE RISK (2Chr 22:10-12)

- Jehoiada took the risk of doing what is right even at the cost of his life.
- We take risks when we know there is personal gain.
- However, do we take risks just to do what is right?
- When was the last time I took a risk to obey God's word?
- When was the last time you risked your relationship to confront someone about their sin?
- Do we compromise God's standard when we know that it can cost us something - our job, relationships, future insecurities or our children's future?
- We took a risk when we decided to become a disciple of Jesus. What stops us now?
- The reason we do not take risks now is because of fear of failing.
- I love these words of a soldier from Gorkha Rifles, Indian Army, "SOME GOALS ARE SO WORTHY, IT'S GLORIOUS EVEN TO FAIL".

CHALLENGE: Take a risk. Do something that will challenge you. Lead a Bible Talk, start a Family Group in a new area, invite people who intimidate you, go on a mission team, take a one-year challenge to serve God. Do something. Take risks. Don't just sit there waiting for things to happen.

2) BUILD A TEAM (2Chr 23:1-15)

- Jehoiada needed a team for his plan to succeed, to make Joash the king.
- Six long years, Jehoiada lies low.
- Six long years, the boy is hidden in the temple, known only to a select few.
- For years now, he has been at work behind the scenes, fortifying the relationships that will aid in overthrowing the evil queen.
- The initial mission of Jehoiada's secret band is to gather the priests and town leaders to assemble in Jerusalem at a set time.
- It is notable that Jehoiada begins his enlistment with those he knows best - the Levites (**v. 2**).
- When they arrive in Jerusalem, Jehoiada finally unveils his grand scheme.
- He does not present Joash and then allow the people to vote.

- He enters into a covenant with them and then presents the answer to their common problem. That answer is a seven-year-old named Joash.
- God's kingdom cannot grow without teamwork.
- We are called to be a team player. (1 Cor 12)
- Am I a team player?
- Or am I just a passerby, watching?
- Am I willing to get my hands dirty to help or am I just critical and negative?

3) A CALL BACK TO GOD (2Chr 23:16-21)

- Jehoiada made a covenant that he, the people and the king will be the Lord's people.
- Like Jehoiada, we must first call our self back to God, call our family to be God's people and call the world to be God's people.
- When we got baptised, we made a covenant with God that Jesus would be our Lord. Is he still the LORD of your life, your time, your talents, your money?
- Is he still the same Lord that you are excited to share with others?
- When was the last time I helped someone to become a disciple of Jesus Christ?

CHALLENGE: Make a decision to share Jesus with someone every day.

09-01-2016

DAY 9 -THE WIDOW AT ZEREPHATH

Prophet Elijah was sent with an unpopular message to a hostile audience - King Ahab and Jezebel. They wanted him dead from their very first encounter. To establish his God-given authority, Elijah explained that there would neither be dew nor rain for next few years except at Elijah's word.

Read 1 Kings 17:7-24.

Being a widow itself must have been challenging. However, facing lack of water, dry famine, and parched land must have felt like a hopeless situation especially with a son to support.

1 Kings 17:7-9

- God has a mysterious yet humorous way of meeting our needs.
- He tells Elijah that he has chosen a widow to supply his needs.
- God chooses anyone to accomplish his work.
- Do you believe that God has chosen **you** to accomplish his will?
- Do you believe that God can use an insignificant, ordinary nobody to be of great help to you, in your time of need?

1 Kings 17:10-14

- The widow had no hope.
- Her plan was to cook the last meal and then wait for death.
- Elijah was sent by God to be her provider.
- The person who asked her to share her last meal became the saviour for her and her son.
- The person who was to be a burden to her became her burden bearer.
- She and her son survived because she decided to obey.
- She was blessed because she obeyed even when it was difficult for her to obey.
- Do we obey God's word, even when it is difficult?
- Are we willing to be generous with what little we have, so that God can continue to meet our needs?

1 Kings 17:15-16

- When the widow decided to trust God and obey the prophet with whatever little she had, God blessed her and her family with daily needs.
- God is our provider. He provides for us. Sometimes he provides for us in mysterious ways, through mysterious people in unusual circumstances.

1 Kings 17:17-24

- We all love our children. We do not want anything bad to happen to our children.
- We do everything to make sure that our children gets the best: best clothes, best education etc.
- The widow's son survived the famine only to die mysteriously later on due to illness.
- What a tragedy! What heartbreak!
- When tragedy strikes us, what is our response?
- Do we blame God? Do we blame people around us? Or do we respond like this widow?
- This widow looked at her life, her sin, and her action.
- God gave her back her son reminding us all that what we have is given by God and he has every right to take it back, whatever he wants, whenever he wants.
- We can only have the response of Job, "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the lord be praised." (Job 1:21)

Challenge: Write down what you feel is very difficult for you to obey right now and pray that God will give you the strength to obey even when it is difficult.

DAY 10 - OBADIAH

10-01-2016

1Kings 18:1-16

Obadiah-an ordinary man who showed extra- ordinary courage

The country of Samaria was going through intense famine. There was continuous drought for three and a half years. Finally God had mercy on them and sent rain.

Ahab was a wicked king in Samaria, yet it looks like he trusted a god fearing man Obadiah, the palace administrator, whose name meant "Servant of the Lord." We understand he was a Godly servant, from the introduction given to him (v3-4). He showed the courage of a God-fearing man.

Going against the will of the queen, while serving in a palace, was not an easy thing to do. Doing such a thing would invite trouble, even death. Yet Obadiah showed extraordinary courage to save 100 prophets who were being persecuted by a wicked queen, Jezebel. Not only did he hide them, but also provided them with bread and water. That was an act of kindness too.

When you fear God, you would be trusted by people and God.

V5-6 - Ahab sent him to find grass for his cattle in the midst of intense drought, because he trusted him enough to get the job done.

V8-11 - Even Elijah used Obadiah as a mediator between himself and King Ahab, because he trusted him.

Obadiah clearly took a risk when he saved the prophet. Was he a courageous man by nature? Seeing his conversation with Elijah (1 King 18:9), you wouldn't think so. The fact that he feared God more than people enabled him to take such a big risk.

Do you fear God more than people? Was there any situation in your life where you stood up for what is right because you feared God?

Are you a person who does right things only when you are given a particular position by a leader? How do you feel when you have done something great but not given enough recognition?

Do you believe Obadiah will have a great place in heaven because he feared God?

There is something common about all the great people in the bible. It is the "fear of God". It is fear of God that made a big difference in the life of ordinary people.

Application:

- Today you may decide to do something different because you fear God more than people.

- Share your faith with someone whom you are fearful about or not comfortable with at your work place.

-Do a study on 'fear of God' or 'people who feared God'

Optional: Compare Obadiah with other god-fearing people like Daniel (Daniel 6), David, and Shiphra and Puah (**Exodus 1:15-17**)

11-01-2016

DAY 11 - MICAIAH

1Kings 22:1-28

Ahab - King of Israel and Jehoshaphat - King of Judah met together for political reasons. They wanted to attack the King of Aram and get Ramoth Gilead.

Ahab asked King Jehoshaphat to help; but he wanted to get the counsel of God first. That is where 400 prophets of Ahab and the sole prophet of the Lord, Micaiah come into the picture. This is what Ahab spoke about Micaiah:

1 Kings 22:8 - The king of Israel answered Jehoshaphat, "There is still one man through whom we can enquire of the LORD, but I hate him because he never prophesies anything good about me, but always bad. He is Micaiah son of Imlah.

Here in this passage, we see that Micaiah the prophet of God and 400 lying prophets. The Kings of Israel and Judah wanted to know whether they will win in the war against King of Aram. All the 400 prophets of Ahab said what the king liked to hear, but Micaiah said what the Lord wanted. Though he was compelled by others to speak favourably, he didn't compromise. He could have avoided taking risk by telling a small lie, but he kept holding on to the truth.

For telling the truth, Micaiah was slapped by Zedekiah. He was put in prison, but still he stood as a man of God. He didn't please others or himself but God.

Are you the man/woman of God in your family, office or society? Do you speak what God wants to you to speak? Ahab didn't like Micaiah, because he didn't say what the King liked to hear. Do you like to be hated by others for speaking the truth?

What kind of people do you like? Those who speak the truth to you or the ones who speak what pleases you? What are some ways that you relate to the prophet Micaiah?

What price have you paid for telling the truth? Was it worth the cost? How do you choose among conflicting opinions? Do you look for your safety or would you take a risk? Even if you are the only one, will you stand up for the truth?

Application:

- List out situations where you have held back from speak the truth; pray and get confidence from God to stand up like Micaiah.
- Initiate and listen to the advice of people who speak the truth to you.

DAY 12 - NAAMAN'S SERVANT GIRL 12-01-2016

Source of solution

We know Naaman very well. He was the commander of king Aram's army. He was a great man in the sight of his master and highly regarded. Through him, the Lord had given victory to Aram. He was a valiant soldier. But there was a problem. Naaman had leprosy.

A young girl from Israel was taken captive, and she served Naaman's wife. There was something extraordinary about her. She believed in the God of the universe even after going through much pain and embarrassment. Whereas some stop believing in God when they face pain in their life, she became the source of solution for a huge problem.

We all face problems all the time. Sometimes, we alone are the source of those problems. Today, we are going to learn from this little girl, a slave girl, how to be a solution for the problems we face.

The little girl pleads with the mistress, "If only..." (**2 Kings 5:3**). She speaks not only with respect, but also with complete faith. This can only be done if she absolute believes in the Lord Almighty the God of Israel.

Now we know that Naaman believed in the God of Israel. In fact, **2Kings 5:1** says that the Lord (Jehovah) had given victory to Aram the King, through Naaman who was a Syrian.

There is a possibility that this little girl would have been talking incessantly about "the Jehovah" to Naaman and his wife. This doesn't look like the first time, the little girl talked about the prophet in Samaria. After much persuasion though, her master listened to her.

Notice how the little girl says 'my master,' showing her loving care for Naaman. History says that Naaman was the one who drew the bow and killed King Ahab, the King of Israel at war (**1Kings 22:31-35**). With Israel being an enemy nation, Naaman had to be bold. First, he had to ask the King of Syria and then go face the enemy king, Jehoram. And he did it! Why? That is the power of our God through our unsung hero, the little girl.

Our God is the solution to all of our problems, no matter how big it is. Do we believe this?

The little girl believed in the extraordinary. She, being a slave, persuaded her master to do something that he would not even imagine to do – approach a rival king for help.

We are surrounded by people who do not believe in Jesus or His power. We see them go through major crises in their lives. Do we ignore them or feel helpless? Or can we do what this little girl did - persuade them to "TRY JESUS".

We know that Naaman faced the rival king's abuse then got disappointed by Elisha's way of healing. Yet when he listened to his soldiers, he was healed. Naaman "tried" the God of Israel and was victorious.

This victory cannot be made complete if we don't talk about the little girl who worked in Naaman's life behind the scenes.

Application:

Let us first believe that we worship a God who can solve any kind of problem upon asking.

Let us persuade our non-believing colleagues to TRY JESUS. We might end up being the unsung hero in their life.

13-01-2016

DAY 13 - THE RECAPITES

Jeremiah 35

God uses the Recabites to teach the Israelites a lesson. He tells Jeremiah to go to them and offer them some wine in v 1. Their answer is in v6-7 where they say we don't drink wine, never build houses or sow vineyards because our forefather Jonadab, son of Recab had commanded us not to do 200 years ago. God responds to them in v12-17 comparing the Israelites' response with the Recabites' response.

Let us see the contrast:

- 1) The Recabites kept their vows to a fallible human leader **BUT** the Israelites broke their covenant with their infallible divine leader.
- 2) Jonadab told them not to drink just one time and they obeyed **BUT** God commanded his people many times to turn from sin, yet they refused
- 3) The Recabites obeyed laws that dealt with temporal issues **BUT** Israelites refused to obey God that dealt with eternal issues.
- 4) The Recabites had obeyed for hundreds of years **BUT** Israel had disobeyed for hundreds of years.
- 5) The Recabites would be rewarded **BUT** the Israelites would be punished.

Jonadab gave a commandment to his sons and daughters that they should drink no wine, build no houses, sow no seeds, plant no vineyards but live in tents. His instructions seemed severe, and we might argue that he was depriving them of perfectly legitimate things. However, it is obvious that he was a man who feared God deeply. Seeing the awful wickedness around him, he desired to preserve his life from such sin and lawlessness, and so he placed them under this solemn pledge.

It was calculated to preserve their pilgrim character and keep them from putting down roots. The great founders of the nation of Israel had been pilgrims who lived in tents, and Jonadab decided that his family should do the same. The remarkable thing is that 200 plus years later, his descendants were absolutely true to this family tradition, and that is what it was.

A tradition is something handed down from one generation to another, and from one generation to another they had passed it on and had lived by it. So firmly did they adhere to the family tradition that when Jeremiah tried to persuade them to drink wine they flatly refused, and out came the story of the commandment of Jonadab their father. (**Jer. 35:8-10**).

Jeremiah did not want to tempt the Recabites into disloyalty to their pledge; he wanted to use the example of their devotion as a lesson for God's people, Judah. The Recabites had been far more true to the commandments of their forefathers than Judah had been to the commandments of the Lord. That is the main point that comes out of the story to provide a lesson for us today.

Question: What spiritual traditions are we passing on to our families? Remember, we can't pass anything that we don't have.

14-01-2016

DAY 14 - BARUCH THE SCRIBE

Jeremiah 36:1-32.

Baruch was a close friend of Jeremiah and his partner in preaching the Word for many years in Judah. They both saw the terrible destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 607 B.C and the resulting exile into Egypt. Since Jeremiah was restricted at this time, which meant he had been imprisoned or banned from entering the temple because he spoke out against the people's wicked ways, he took the help of Baruch.

Baruch followed all the instructions of Jeremiah. He wrote the Word on the scroll as Jeremiah dictated. Baruch risked his life for the partnership with Jeremiah in the midst of great persecution. These words were about the upcoming judgment of God. The king was against God, so it was risky for Baruch to go openly into the temple and read the words of warning to the crowd.

Think about the last time you were excited to do something for the kingdom.

When was the last time you took a risk to share the Word?

How openly do you share your faith?

When was the last time you talked about God to someone?

In **V27**, we read that the king burned the scroll and in **V32**, we see that Jeremiah again asked Baruch to write with additions about prophecies against the king, which he did. Baruch is a good example of a faithful friend and a loyal partner. Baruch did not allow fear of persecution to keep him from speaking God's truth faithfully and repeatedly.

Is there anyone in your life to whom you have been a friend and support like Baruch was to Jeremiah?

How important is it to you that the Word of God be shared?

Are you willing to keep sharing your faith even when the response is not positive?

Challenge: Share the Word with someone this week. Prepare. Write down specific scriptures and share. Irrespective of the response, follow up and share again.

Pray and think of someone who is active in the ministry. Go to that disciple and ask how you can help out.

15-01-2016

DAY 15 - EBED-MELECH - GOD'S DELIVERANCE Jeremiah 38:1-13

Jeremiah was the sole prophet in Jerusalem prophesying its destruction. His message was so contrary to the false prophets who were preaching peace and safety. The message did not go very well with the people. Hence, Jeremiah was imprisoned and later thrown in a cistern filled with mud (**38:6**) by the spineless King Zedekiah (**38:5**), with the real possibility of having to face death (**38:4, 6, 9**). All he could do was cry out for mercy and help. Unless God rescued him, he was not going to last long in the thick mire. (**Psalm 102:19-20**)

God has His own peculiar ways and resources to rescue his people. He has His chosen people in every corner ready to do His bidding and His will.

"Ebed-melech (meaning "servant of the King") an Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs who was in the king's palace, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon; he went to the king's house, and spoke in defence of Jeremiah. He went on to get the king's approval and rescued him from the cistern through some old rags and worn-out clothes with the help of 30 others.

• What motivates courageous people like Ebed-melech—or Jeremiah, to speak up boldly?

- What was the physical and spiritual state of Jeremiah in the cistern? Can you relate to being in a spiritual pit? What kind of feelings do you go through? **Psalms 37:7**
- Have you stood up for what is right even when it was risky?
- Ebed-Melech could have given a lot of excuses but he did not? Why?
- What are the excuses we give to serve God or his people?
- What prompted Ebed-Melech to go out of his way to help Jeremiah? Write down his traits in your journal.
- Have you gone the extra mile for someone recently? What made you do it?
- We see Jeremiah suffer, what is the purpose of such suffering? Does God intend to have a desired effect of some sort? Have you gone through some trials recently? What are some lessons learnt?

God delights in using people like Ebed-Melech. They are the nobodies in society; the rest of the world views them as useless, rejected by everyone. However, God sees them as His remarkable treasure. God used him to save a prophet who went on to preach God's word and saw them be fulfilled.

- How do you feel about yourself today? Do you feel insignificant, small, inferior, rejected or useless? **1Cor 1:27**. Do you believe he can use you powerfully?
- Are you motivated to serve God when people around you are not doing so? If yes, what motivates you?

Jer.39:15-18: God rewarded Ebed-Melech. God never forgets us (**Isaiah 49:15**).

- What were the five promises given to Ebed-Melech through Jeremiah for his faithfulness?

Challenge:

- There are many people, including some disciples who are in a spiritual pit today. They are in despair, feeling hopeless and lonely and are yearning for someone to rescue them. Pray and ask God to help you reach out to someone stuck in a spiritual pit this week.

DAY 16 - ANNA

READ - Luke 2:36-38.

16-01-2016

1. Even though Anna was 84, she never left the temple. She worshipped God, day and night and spent her time, fasting and praying.

This means Anna was always available and her only priority was God and worshipping God.

What about you? How much time do you give to God and his church?

Do you feel like you've reached a stage where you've done enough?

Do you feel like it's time you take a back-seat and relax and let the next generation continue the work of the Lord?

2. Anna recognised and identified the Messiah, even as the other teachers of the Law were going about their business. They were busy creating rules and traditions. (**Matt 15:9**)

Are you so busy that you've missed the Messiah or missed the call of the Messiah?

Do you hear God speaking to you?

3. Anna spoke to everyone about Jesus.

Who are you speaking to, about Jesus?

APPLICATION

1. Speak to everyone you meet today about Jesus.

2. Fast and Pray and submit all your moaning and groaning to the Lord, so that you don't miss the Messiah.

17-01-2016

DAY 17 - WOMAN WHO ANOINTED JESUS

Read Luke 7:36-50

Jesus always found people's homes as a place of conversion. Homes are a great place to convert households. Hospitality during Jesus days was awesome and yet it was mostly among the equals. But Jesus did not discriminate between rich and the poor, sinful and the religious.

The Pharisee mentioned in the passage was religious and probably a leader in the synagogue. The woman had obviously lived a sinful life. The Pharisee held on to his good standing. The woman was a broken vessel. Both approached Jesus differently. How do we approach Jesus? If we think it is like the Pharisee we have hope that we recognise our stand. Yet when we say we are like the

woman we need to re-evaluate ourselves again to see whether it is true. Why? The Pharisee never thought he will be not accepted by God but the woman never thought that she will be accepted by God.

The woman felt the need to serve Jesus – just serve Him without expecting anything from Him. She uses her tears and hair to wipe His feet. (Imagine Jesus's feet being dirty after a full day of walking and Simon had not given any water to wash.) She went the extra mile to kiss and pour perfume on the feet.

When was the time that you have done something special for Jesus just to show Him your love and be grateful to Him?

The Pharisee did what he did the best. Judged! As a leader or even as a disciple we end up judging. So what is wrong? We fail to judge ourselves. And that is what happened to Simon the Pharisee. He forgot to give water and kiss Jesus. Simon not only looked down upon the woman but questioned and doubted Jesus' ability to assess the woman.

Why did Jesus tell Simon a story? Why did Nathan tell David a story? Simon and David were good at judging. But they were not able to judge themselves. Yet their judgment about others was used to convict them. What story will Jesus tell to convict us?

What was the story? Who will love more, the one whose debts are bigger or one whose debts are lesser? How much of our sins are forgiven? Are we behaving like our forgiven sins are really great? Or are we quick to judge others?

The woman could have judged the Pharisee and questioned his lack of hospitality towards Jesus. But she focused on herself and her love for Jesus. The result: Jesus forgave her sins. Until we forgive we are prisoners and only Jesus can set us free.

Faith is the foundation of our security in Jesus. The woman had her faith and therefore her security in Jesus but the Pharisee had his faith in his position and therefore his security came also from his position.

Finally the woman's faith saved her. She has taught us how to ask for forgiveness with great humility. Jesus gave her His peace. Jesus never had conditions to forgive the woman. She came with confusion and she left in peace.

The woman's story has found its way in the Gospel. Truly she is an UNSUNG HERO.

Application: Let us examine ourselves by writing out our sin list before we were baptised and after we are baptised. This will be a test whether we are the unforgiven Pharisee or the forgiven woman.

DAY 18 - A MAN BORN BLIND

John 9:1-3 – The Two Views Of Pain

18-01-2016

As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. (John 9:1-3 ESV)

Have you come across this kind of conversation? What will be your opinion? The disciples decided to focus on the hurt and sin instead of seeing the picture of God working through it. We can do the same thing.

Do you remember any time lately when you failed to see God working in your situation? What thoughts did you struggle with?

Why did God allow this to happen in my life? Why is there evil in the world? Would a loving God allow so many starving children to die? We have all thought something similar to one of these questions.

In God's wisdom, he has decided to not divulge too much of where evil comes from or its origin (**Deut.29:29**).

This mystery can consume many of us to the core of our being and we may never forgive God for an event we feel he is to blame for and we focus on the unfinished part of the picture and forget to see the other side, which is finished & perfect.

But, we do know that all things work together for the good of those that love God (**Romans 8:28**).

Instead of focusing on the "disease", we should be focusing on the cure that is Jesus. Jesus told his disciples that they were looking for the wrong thing. We should stop looking for something to blame and start looking for God to praise. They were blinded by the problem of pain, instead of seeing God's glory displayed. They could have easily missed out on the works of God.

Think about that for a minute. Have you been focusing so much on the problem of pain in your life or of those around you that you are missing the glory of God being displayed? Realizing that God can bring good out of our hard times is what allows us as Christians to make it through those times. Joseph is the perfect example of this as he is sold by his brothers, becomes a slave, is put in jail, and eventually the right hand man of the king (Genesis 50:20). Jesus took the greatest sin of all, death of an innocent man, and turned it into the greatest work of God's glory to be displayed.

Application: How are you viewing the pain around you today? Pray that God can show his might in your situation.

DAY 19 - THE ROMAN CENTURION

A HERO WHO AMAZED JESUS

Reading: Matthew 8:5-13 / Luke 7:1-10

19-01-2016

True faith always amazed Jesus.

True faith starts when you understand the authority of Jesus.

Here is a story of a centurion who met Jesus and asked for help to heal his servant. Jesus quickly offered to help – but to Jesus' surprise the centurion rejected Jesus' offer of help and instead asked Jesus to command the healing of his servant. This centurion reasoned that if a man on earth like him could have such authority, how much more Jesus, who is from heaven.

This faith of the centurion amazed Jesus. He was surprised that the Jews who talked about the centurion (Luke 7) did not have this faith. He exclaimed that he had never found such faith in Israel.

The centurion was one the most unlikely persons to amaze Jesus. He was a Gentile. Doubtless he had a pagan upbringing. He was a Roman, stationed in Palestine to subject the Jews to the Emperor's rule. He was a man of war. He achieved the rank of centurion by distinguishing himself above others in the brutal Roman martial arts. Not exactly the résumé you'd expect for becoming one of the Bible's great heroes of faith.

The base of this faith is the centurion's understanding of the authority of Jesus. When we understand the authority of Jesus, we understand the deity and sovereignty of Jesus – and our understanding of God and Jesus changes, and our prayer changes.

EXAMINE YOURSELF ...

1. What is your understanding of Jesus' authority? In which areas are you living by His authority and which are the ones you are NOT living by His authority?
2. How is your daily Bible Study? Does your life reflect that you are obedient to the Bible? If so, how?

ASSIGNMENT ...

1. Make a list of things you have authority on – family / relatives / church / ministry ... Please detail the authority God has put in each of these areas.
2. Now reason out with the authority of Jesus – on how it is so much possible for Jesus to heal and handle every situation that comes on your way.
3. Also reason out with the authority of Jesus, those areas of life – why Jesus would not bring about the healing or handling as you desired?

DAY 20 - SIMON OF CYRENE

20-01-2016

Read: Matthew 27: 32, Mark 15: 21-22 and Luke 23: 26.

Jesus had been up all night and day. He had been forced to march in chains from Gethsemane to meet Annas and then to meet Caiaphas, and then to Pilate. He had been led to Herod and back to the governor. He had been flogged and beaten by the soldiers. His exhaustion and blood loss must already have been severe. He was made to carry a crossbeam on which he would be crucified. It weighed 30 or 40 pounds and was strapped to the victim's shoulders.

In his condition, Jesus was unable to carry this heavy wooden beam. So "a certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross" (**Mark 15:21**). With this surprise, another person enters the narrative.

Cyrene was located in northern Africa, where Tripoli, Libya is today. No doubt Simon had traveled from that far off land for Passover, saving for years in order to make the pilgrimage. This would be the highlight of his year, perhaps his life. He brought his sons with him for this once-in-a-lifetime experience.

It is not difficult to imagine Simon's initial reactions to being compelled into this service:

- Surprise in being singled out; out of so many around... why me?
- Annoyance with this unplanned sudden change in his original plan I have not planned to face this
- Reluctance to be associated with a man who was pronounced criminal in the eyes of the Roman authorities & Jewish religious leaders;
- Embarrassment in being the focus of attention in bearing the cross meant only for convicts.

Simon's experience and ours may be vastly different but the reactions are often the same.

This leads us to a reflection on how we handle carrying our inevitable crosses. The cross was unexpected for Simon; the cross is often unexpected for us, as well. He could not refuse the cross and, ultimately, neither can we. While we will never know for sure the answers to the questions we wondered of Simon in the aftermath of his encounter with Jesus, we can use similar queries to examine ourselves:

- Do we see through our crosses knowing (unlike Simon at the time, he was helping Jesus) that if there is no cross there is no resurrection?
- Do we get from those with whom we interact, especially family and friends, support and help through our struggles, or are they becoming blocks to our

spiritual growth? In any case, do we become examples of patiently bearing the cross ?

- Do we invoke the Holy Spirit, patiently waiting for his assistance in our trials, and then letting him work in us to perfect us? Knowing difficulties will come, do we pray regularly to endure such challenges in the spirit of Paul who : **"Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ on behalf of his body, which is the church" (Col 1:24)?**

- Do we eagerly tell of the blessings we received for having endured the trial, or do we hasten to put the entire experience behind us? Moving forward, do we, as Simon may well have done, allow the experience to change us, and allow us to grow closer to Christ, sharing our witness with family (especially our children), friends, and those whom we encounter?

Following Christ, Moving Forward. **Luke 9:23 Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me"**

Notice again what we are told about Simon of Cyrene in Luke: **"after laying the cross on him, they made him carry it behind Jesus" (23:26)** Most likely, we wish (and hopefully pray) that the burden will be removed. And there is nothing wrong with asking God for relief. If the Lord reduces our pain, we should be quick to acknowledge it, and give thanks to him for the healing. If God does not take away the pain, we need to understand that he may be using it to help us grow in faith or hope or love or completely surrender to his will.

In the case of Simon, Jesus used his own way of the cross to draw Simon to himself, an encounter Simon would not have had otherwise, and possibly an encounter with Christianity in which he would have never engaged. Simon may never have come to pay attention to the Gospel message had he not crossed paths with Jesus. As a result, Simon's sons may not have become active as Christians (who knows how many lives they changed?).

In your God allows you to have crosses which you can bear, are you grateful & have positive attitude as carrying them with Patience will change your life for eternity.

DAY 21 - THE CRIMINAL ON THE CROSS

21-01-2016

Luke 23:26-43

He was an unnamed character, a criminal, but one who makes us look deep into our hearts. The three of them were publicly paraded, carrying the cross on their backs, with a description of their crimes displayed, as a warning to all others what happens to those who live like them!

As they all hung on their crosses, his attention was caught up by this man named Jesus, who had healed the blind, the lepers, and the lame, stopped the storm, and even brought the dead back to life! But now he was nailed and hanging on the cross, fighting for every breath just as helpless as he himself was!

As he listened to the crowds jeering, challenging this man to bring down Elijah, to get down from the cross, prove indeed he is God, he too resented him and sneered at him.....He could have surely averted the horror of their death by crucifixion by doing a miracle for him and his other friend as well! He could have brought down lightning on his tormentors, or let an earthquake set them free?! Did he somehow lose his super powers?!

Then the possibility that he, "The King of Jews", actually would have chosen to die this death struck his heart.

Then he heard him saying " **Father forgive them, for they know not what they do**" ! He became convinced that if he is able to forgive and pray for those who were tormenting and murdering him, he is God!

His face was distorted, bruised and bleeding, eyes torn in pain yet so filled with compassion. The criminal's heart melted, struck with remorse. This innocent man's ability to love his torturers convicted him. His mind flooded with the horrors of his own sinfulness, his selfishness, his disregard for God or man, unsatisfying desire for power, his numerous cruelties,...That face reminded him of all the faces that had hurt, all the eyes that had cried, all the hearts that had broken because of his own atrocities. This man, choosing to be broken on the cross, actually brought healing to the broken hearted.. .. He recalled how he forgave, showed compassion, and transformed the lives of the sinful woman, the woman caught in adultery, Zacchaeus, sinners and tax collectors....He desired that 2nd chance from Jesus too. His tears of remorse, flowed down for his own wasted life, mixed with the fear of death and eternal fire of Hell.

Suddenly the other criminal loudly insulted Jesus. Immediately, he rebuked him indignantly for not fearing God. He humbly begged Jesus to remember him when he came into his kingdom. Those words reflected the changed heart within him.

Now he cried in unbelievable joy and gratitude as he received Jesus' promise to take him to paradise, experiencing divine forgiveness and amazing grace!

We know that this criminal also joined In reviling Jesus at first (**Mt27:39-44, Mk15:32**)

All he was selfishly concerned was how the situation could be turned to his advantage, not understanding or caring about the salvation of the whole world. Do we blaspheme God when things do not go according to our way, or our prayers are not answered! Do we revile God in our response to those "bad situations" in life? Do we complain, grumble, and question God?

But the admirable thing about this criminal is that at the cross, he repented. Are we convicted by the cross daily? Is the cross the center of our daily life or is it reserved for communion time on Sundays?

As in **2Cor 5:14-15** are we daily compelled to deny ourselves, walk the extra mile, sacrifice our energy, resources, and time by the cross of Jesus?

This criminal later took responsibility for his sins, and accepted the just judgement. Do we take responsibility for our sins, shortcomings and mistakes? Or do we blame others, justify & fight to prove ourselves, instead of accepting and confessing our sin?

I have many times refused to accept my mistakes, argued and defended myself instead of accepting or initiating to apologise with my husband and my children.

Another great thing about this criminal is that he spoke up boldly the truth about Christ, and rebuked his friend for not fearing God. He spoke up despite pain, death, or crowds jeering. Do we speak up the truth? Do we share our faith boldly, despite the repercussions? Or do we fear being rejected or being different? Does tiredness, sickness or discomfort stop us from sharing our faith? Are we convinced that nothing can stop us from sharing our life and the Word?

The penitent criminal showed a contrite and humble heart and accepted the grace that Christ offered him, at the very last moment of his life. Do we still hold back from accepting this grace? Do we live in guilt, shame and fear, not forgiving ourselves? Do we feel compelled to "do enough good deeds" to somehow earn forgiveness? Do we freely offer others the grace that is offered to us?

Application:

1. Write down if you have any grudges towards God, or if you resent Him for any reason. Meditate and pray through scriptures, and get help for your heart.
2. List down how you can be more like Christ in your daily living because of the cross. Identify your sins you have not taken responsibility for. Confess, and apologise to the concerned people.
3. Today pray and share your faith boldly with someone you have always held back from sharing, or radically share the truth of God's word to someone.
4. If you have not accepted God's grace and struggle with guilt about yourself, decide to open up and get help. If you are holding back from forgiving someone, get help to resolve your relationship.

DAY 22 - THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH

22-01-2016

Acts 8:26-40

Today, we have an example of someone who clearly heard God's instructions and immediately obeyed. Philip obeyed Jesus' instructions and left Jerusalem and went to Samaria to preach the Good News. Crowds of people saw God's power working through Philip and when they heard the Good News about Jesus they believed in Him. Because Philip obeyed Jesus' instructions, many lives were changed in Samaria.

While in Samaria what did the angel of the Lord instruct Philip to do?

(Go south to the road, the desert road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.) Philip received instructions and didn't hesitate to obey. He immediately obeyed this message from God. He didn't ask questions or argue with God. He didn't tell God he would do it later, he went immediately where God told him to go.

What is your response when God clearly tells you what to do? Do you obey immediately or do you make excuses and delay your obedience to God's instructions?

No matter how old we are, how would we ever know if the God of the universe is speaking to us? We would know, because what we think He is saying to us would have to be in agreement with what the Bible teaches. As he traveled down the desert road he heard the rumbling of horses carrying a chariot, coming in his direction.

Sitting in that chariot was a man all the way from Ethiopia. He was an important official, the treasurer for Candace, Queen of Ethiopia. This man had travelled all the way from Ethiopia to Jerusalem to worship God. This man was not yet a believer in Jesus, but he was a man who was seeking God and wanted to do what pleased Him.

As Philip hears this man reading God's Word, he has the wisdom to know the right thing to ask. When we are obedient to God's instructions, He gives us wisdom to know what to say in those circumstances.

The passage the Ethiopian was reading from Isaiah 53.

Philip began by using this passage of Scripture and told him the Good News about Jesus.

Because Philip explained the Scriptures to this man, he now understood. He got baptized. This Ethiopian man's life was changed forever because he believed in the Lord Jesus.

Think about how many people's lives he went on to transform, because of his faith in Jesus.

We do not know how God is working in the lives of those around us. This week, let's pray that each day we listen carefully for God's instructions and be quick to obey what He tells us to do.

Application

- Listen to the voice of the spirit
- Follow the Spirit and reach out to someone that is influential
- Write down some of the obstacles in your life that is stopping you from obeying God's Word

23-01-2016

DAY 23 - DORCAS/TABITHA

The way to get meaning into your life is to devote yourself to loving others. We know the life of Christ. We learn about the life of all his friends. As he lived and died he made sure they all learnt to devote their lives to others. You know, everyone in this world knows they are going to die. But the sad thing is no one believes it. If you know you're going to die and you're prepared for it, then you will be more involved in your life while you're alive. That's the story of Tabitha or Dorcas. In Greek it means a "gazelle". Her life teaches to value the life of Jesus.

Acts 9:36-42.

It talks about Tabitha and that "she always did good", "she always helped the needy". Sometimes we read this, feel good and then just move on to the next scripture. I thought –She ALWAYS did well? It doesn't say SOMETIMES but ALWAYS. Now if you are mothers and you have children at home can you ALWAYS be patient? Be Always good? It doesn't seem possible. You are married. Are you ALWAYS good to the husband, always respectful, ALWAYS loving? How is that possible? You live in a neighbourhood. Are you ALWAYS good to the neighbours, ALWAYS good to the landlord, ALWAYS good to the tenants? How can you be like that? If you're a mother-in-law or a daughter-in-law - Always good to each other? It seems impossible! But this woman "always" did good. It made me think. The first thing we learnt about her is:

1. She created a family - It's not clear if she had a family of her own but she did create a circle of loved ones around her. Now it became quite clear to Tabitha that she needed a family because she knew she was going to fall sick. Family is not about having kids, a husband - it's not about that. Family is an experience. Tabitha was so accommodative in her life. She was the most respected person among the Christians in Joppa.

And that's what the bible talks about in **Ephesians 5:21-33**. If you are not going to love and respect the other person you're going to be in a lot of trouble. It's very important in marriage to have a common set of values and convictions. And what do I think is the biggest value? Biggest value is 'your belief 'in your marriage.

Do you have belief in your marriage? Do we value our family, our children, and our spouse? Who will be at your bedside, wanting you to live even after you die? Everybody missed Tabitha. She died. But then the sisters just couldn't let her go. They wanted her alive. How many of our people will want us alive after we are dead? Will your loved ones miss you after your death? We've really got to think -are we creating those memories. That's exactly what Tabitha's life was all about.

2. She put all her energy into people -Did you notice how devoted to people she was? Peter was a great apostle. He was in Jerusalem. But this woman was so important to her church that Peter had to come down from Jerusalem. They wanted Peter to see what a great Christian they had in their church. She valued unconditional love. That's probably the only thing she believed in as a Christian. And imagine what times those were in the 1st century church. Many were being killed for being a Christian, their properties, snatched, many taken as prisoners to Rome. It was dangerous to be a Christian. In the middle of all that she said "I should live for others".

Love is very different. No negotiations. Love is when you are as concerned about others situation as you are about your own.

What does Christ say in John 15:9-13 ?

Offer others what you have. It's not about money but about time. It means concern. It means your sharing ability. Entertain others. Devote our lives to something that has purpose and meaning. Tabitha didn't keep anything for herself. She only gave. She just had an open heart to give to people. Sometimes we wonder why should I listen to others problems I have enough problems of my own. But you know it's worth it. To make them smile when they have a problem, to listen to them it's really worth it. When they don't have hope and you open the bible and teach them a few things – there is a meaning to them.

3. She needed others to survive - Even though she built a community of people she loved, she still was very needy of people. She had no regrets in her life. There was no self-pity in her life. That's why when she died people really missed her. Then I thought if she was a bitter, resentful, angry person do you think people would have wanted her back alive? It would be interesting to know what people think of us when we are dead. I would want to open my eyes for a minute and see and hear what people think of me. That would reveal a lot about our life.

Sometimes we don't want people in our lives. We become resentful and unforgiving. Sometimes we don't forgive others because we can't forgive ourselves. What are some things we need to forgive ourselves for? We need to forgive ourselves for the things we didn't do in our lives. Or for the things we didn't do better in our lives.

Death ends a life but not relationships. Today inspired by Tabitha, Do you realize that you may have wasted your time worrying and doubting? People act as if death were contagious. It is but natural to die. All that we have to do is make

peace with life as long as we have it in us, and then create that memories-leave this world after having touched and nurtured people's hearts with our love inspired by Christ.

Challenge: Specifically encourage your family today. Take out time this week to encourage 1. a colleague 2. a neighbour 3. a relative 4. a friend 5. a stranger

24-01-2016

DAY 24 - THE PHILIPPIAN JAILOR

Read Acts 16:16-40

Paul had helped save this demon possessed woman in Philippi. Her owners caused uproar in the town. Paul and Silas were stripped, beaten with rods, severely flogged and thrown into the prison. The Philippian jailor was commanded to guard them carefully. He in turn put these severely wounded and bleeding men into the inner cell, held down by stocks and chains. Paul and Silas sang hymns and prayed praises to God. The prisoners there were listening to them. What a time and place to preach and worship!

- How do you view Paul and Silas's persecution? Why did God allow his people to go through such pain?
- Think and meditate about a time when you were persecuted for doing God's work?
- What do you think about Paul and Silas' singing and praying at that time of the night while they were wounded, tired, sleepless and very uncomfortable, held down by stock and chains?
- Do you pray and worship through your pain and distress?
- What were Paul and Silas praying for? Did they pray for freedom? If so why didn't they leave the place when God broke their chains and opened the prison doors? After the magistrates allowed them to go why did they not leave?
- God performed a miracle that day. What was that miracle? Was it the earthquake? Was it the salvation of the pagan jailor's family?
- How did Paul and Silas use God's miracle?
- What was the question the Philippian jailor asked (**Vs 29**)?
- How did the jailor know that Paul had the answer to his question(read **Vs 17** to get an idea of what Paul and Silas were preaching in Philippi)
- What was Paul's answer?
- What did he do after hearing God's word?
- Why did he do it?

- How different was his approach to Paul and Silas once he repented?
- Why did he and his family get baptised that very night? Why not wait for a better time and place? (Perhaps on a Sunday when the whole Philippi church can gather together). When is the best time to get baptised?
- Now that we have reached thus far what do you think Paul and Silas were praying in the night for?
- How do we witness and preach to people? Do we witness to save?
- Who are the people we are witnessing to and praying for today?

APPLICATION

- Write down the names of people you have been praying for or want to reach out for salvation?
- Pray that God will provide you opportunities, courage and miracles to reach out to them.

25-01-2016

DAY 25 - APOLLOS

Read Acts 18:24-28, 19:1;

Apollos was an evangelist, apologist, church leader and a friend of the apostle Paul. He was from Alexandria in Egypt, the second most important city in the Roman empire, the home of a great university with a thriving Jewish population. Apollos was a scholar, orator and debator and after coming to know about Jesus' life, His crucifixion and resurrection, he became fully equipped and begun to share about Jesus in manners described as "eloquent," "competent in Scriptures," "fervent in the spirit." He also "spoke and taught accurately," and "taught boldly in the synagogue".

Far from his home in Alexandria, Apollos preached about Jesus in Ephesus. He was a learned man but did not have the complete understanding of baptism. He needed someone to help him understand the Gospel more completely.

Priscilla and Aquila heard Apollos speaking in the local synagogue and invited him to their home - choosing a wise mentoring approach. Rather than correcting him in public or openly challenging his teaching, they fostered a relationship with him in the context of a loving fellowship. They guided Apollos by clearly explaining God's Word to him.

This couple did not just go home and criticize the preacher. They did not gossip with their neighbours about how Apollos was getting things wrong. Rather, they went to him directly and invested in him, reaching out in love and gaining a friend and a partner in the ministry of the Gospel.

Apollos learnt from Priscilla and Aquila and he went on to preach with greater vigour and accuracy. He was corrected in a way that encouraged and strengthened him for effective ministry.

How would our communities / churches be if we chose to guide others in more loving fellowship? Choose to come alongside and invest in people's lives!

What are great qualities can we learn from Apollos?

Do you have a humble spirit when you are wrong and corrected ?

Are you bold like Apollos to preach the Gospel?

How helpful was Apollos in Achaia (**Vs 27,28**)? Are you of great help in the ministry you are part of? How can you be of better help in the **ministry**? **Can** you talk to others about how much more you can help out in the ministry?

Prayer

Lord, give us compassion for one another so that we can speak the truth in love. May we offer correction in encouraging ways. Help us to invest in one another and care enough to correct in love. Help us to have a humble spirit to accept when I am corrected. And please, guide me so that I can be of great help to all who are in my ministry. Amen.

26-01-2016

DAY 26 - TYCHICUS A DEAR BROTHER

Tychicus is one of Paul's companions in the New Testament. He is mentioned five times (**Acts 20:4, Col. 4:7, Ephesians 6:21, 2Timothy 4:12, Titus 3:12**)

Tychicus joined Paul in his 3rd missionary journey(**Acts18:23- Acts21:26**) along with 6 other men in **Acts 20:4** including Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundas, Gaius, Timothy and Trophimus. He travelled with Paul all the way to Jerusalem ,encouraging and strengthening churches. This was a huge commitment for Tychicus but he chose to go on this extremely dangerous Mission. He was willing to go and serve away from his family, city and people.

How does your commitment to God look like at this point in life?

Put yourself in Tychicus's shoes- knowing that going with Paul could be dangerous to my life, would I have gone? What missionary journeys have I taken to build the kingdom of God? Would I go and serve God in another city and help build the church even if I am not the main church leader? Would I go on a missionary journey at this point in life? Where is God calling me?

It must have been awesome for Tychicus to be in the company of such great brothers like Paul the apostle and Luke the doctor. One can imagine the impact this company of brothers had on each other.

What is the company of people I am hanging out with? What influence they are having on me?

Read Ephesians 6:21-22 and Colossians 4:7-9

Paul is in prison along with other brothers. Tychicus is sent as a messenger to other churches to inform them about Paul and others in prison and how they are doing and to encourage them.

Paul describes Tychicus as - " a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord."

What do other brothers or sisters see me as or what would they say about me? A dear brother/sister ? A faithful servant in the Lord? A faithful minister? A fellow servant in the Lord?

What do I need to change today?

Read 2 Tim 4:12 and Tit 3:12

When Paul thought about sending someone to a church, Tychicus was one of the faithful brothers he chose. He was reliable and trustworthy. His name being mentioned here communicates that Tychicus was one of the key devoted servants of the early Church.

How serving am I? What is holding me back? Is it others or is it YOU doing the work?

There are so many little ways one can serve – praying with another brother, visiting others, encouraging, serving those who are sick, comfort the mourning, preparing food , inviting others home, ushering, helping in hall set up, decorations.....start serving today!

Challenge : Sign up to be a missionary. Go on a mission trip to another city (One week, One Month, One Year – you pick) to evangelise and to strengthen the brothers and sisters there.

27-01-2016

DAY 27 - TITUS

Introduction: Titus, a gentile (Greek), one of Paul's converts and a considerable help to Paul in his ministry. Titus along with Timothy and few others seems to be the key men on whom Paul relied on for tough tasks and spiritual support.

Key events - post conversion:

- **Gal 2:1-3** – Accompanies Paul to Jerusalem as a visible example of God's grace to gentiles.

- **2 Corinthians 8:16-18** – Chosen by Paul as his own representative to deliver the challenging letters to the Corinthian Church.
- **Titus 1:4-5** – Left behind in Crete to build and disciple the Church.
- **2 Timothy 4:10** – Last records show him serving at Dalmatia

Questions to ponder:

1. Of all the gentile converts ,why did Paul choose Titus to accompany him to Jerusalem?
2. Considering the challenges that Paul was addressing to the Corinth Church (through his letter) why do you think he chose Titus to deliver and also relied on him to carry the response back?
3. Why did Paul trust Titus to replace him at Crete?
4. How would you explain the relationship between Paul and Titus?
5. Write down three outstanding characters of Titus that made him a capable and resourceful leader?

Application:

- How can we be a visible example of God's transformation to a spiritually dead world?
- What character of Titus would you like to imitate?
- How can we be resourceful for the Mission?

28-01-2016

DAY 28 - SILAS

Growing strong through every Storm

We meet Silas in the Scriptures in **Acts 15:22** where he was an active leader in the early Church of Christ. The Church was going through a storm of confusion [false teaching] spread by the Judaic Christians, forcing the Gentile converts to get circumcised in order to be saved. Silas was chosen to communicate the Council's decision to the Antioch church along with Paul & Barnabas; and **verses 30-32** talks about how they were used by God like prophets to encourage and strengthen the brothers & sisters in the Antioch church. Silas was not amongst the most famous leaders of the early church; he probably was,

until now, an unsung hero who served the Church. But we see that he was willing to serve in lower position and accompany Paul and Barnabas to accomplish God's plan.

Do you see the heart of Silas ? Not bothered about position, not man focused but God focused.

The Kingdom was first priority in his life. (**Matth.6:33**)

Do you see him giving his best or just hanging around with the rest?

Think about it. How can you encourage and strengthen the brothers and sister in the church?

Will we stand strong like Silas amidst the different storms of life or in other's lives that we know?

The story doesn't end there. Silas was chosen for another mission to accompany Paul on his second missionary journey. **Acts 15:40**.. Silas was as determined as Paul to preach the Gospel.

Acts16:22-34 .. We read about another storm of persecution in the city of Philippi where they were beaten, flogged and thrown in jail. Instead of blaming God, we see Paul and Silas singing and praying to God.

In Thessalonica, they faced a crowd wanting to kill them.(**Acts17:4-5**) They ran to Berea only to face another opposition (**Acts 17:10-14**)

In Corinth, again they had to face the abusive Jews (**Acts18:5-8**)

In all these storms, Silas saw Jesus bigger and his Mission, mightier than any storms in his life.

In every storm, he could rejoice over the victory of souls gained than dwelling in the agony of physical pain.

How do we respond when we face trials and storms in our lives? Do we play the blame game?

Nothing much is concluded about Silas in the Scriptures except in **1Pet 5:12** where Peter mentions that he is a "Faithful brother".

Note that God uses unknown, unsung people like Silas to bring glory to His name. He desires to use you & me in the same way. Are you willing to submit to His will?

God desires our availability more than our ability. Silas was available for God's use in any and every situations. It did not matter to him in which position he was serving but he gave his best and was called "a good and faithful servant".

Assignment:

Pray and thank God for the worst storms you've faced are facing in your life that has only pushed you nearer to God.

Decide to make yourself more available for God to use you for His mission.

Decide to teach the Bible or sit in a study with new friends coming to your family group.

Encourage & strengthen someone today.

Let the Lord say of you... "Good and Faithful servant"

29-01-2016

DAY 29 - Dr.LUKE

HISTORY:

Definitely not a Jew but one raised in the Greek culture of that time. He is the only Greek convert who got a chance to be in the books of the Bible. He was certainly a doctor of that time and also a disciple and a companion of Paul in his Missionary journeys. As a writer of the Gospel of Luke, he records 35 parables altogether, 19 of which are only mentioned in his Gospel. Luke mentions six miracles of the Lord that no one else mentions. If the Holy Spirit had never inspired Luke to write, we would never have known about the Good Samaritan, the rich fool, the prodigal son, and the rich man and Lazarus.

The Book of Acts forms the essential link between the Gospels and the Epistles. Without the book of Acts, we would have no idea how the churches in the NT period (Rome, Corinth, Galatia ..) came about.

In the Book of Acts, there are 3 "We"-Sections, (**Acts 16:10 - 40, Acts 20: 5 - 21, Acts 27:1-28**). These are passages where Luke includes himself in the narrative because he was with Paul in his Missionary journeys.

CONVICTIONS:

1. Luke used his medical training and ability as a missionary as a tool to advance the Gospel. He could have used this to make a fortune for himself, but we see him having a heart for the Mission work.
2. We don't see Luke calling attention to himself but rather giving Glory to Jesus and the works of the Holy Spirit.
3. Luke demonstrated loyalty to his friend Paul. He stuck close to Paul in his darkest hours when every one else had left him (**2 Tim 4:11**). Going through times like this (**2 Cor 11:23 - 27**), how often would Paul have thanked God for a fellow labourer and loyal friend like Luke!
4. Luke was actively involved in Paul's ministry as a co-labourer (**Col 4:14, Philemon 24**) and used his own personal writing ability to effectively touch and impact the hearts of many. Not only changing lives, the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts did build up the body of Christ throughout the World.

5. Luke was submissive to the leadership of the Lord. He was committed to follow where ever the Lord led.

APPLICATION:

1. Are We Aware Of The Abilities / Talents God Has Blessed Us With?

lets list it and use it for the glory of god and his Church.

2. Luke's presence was a great encouragement for Paul. Can we decide and develop a partnership with our spiritual mentor to work together to do something that will bring glory to God?.

30-01-2016

DAY 30 - ONESIMUS - THE USEFUL

Philemon 10,11

Paul wrote this letter to Philemon to reintroduce a runaway slave of the latter-Onesimus (means useful). It is said that there were 60 million slaves in the Roman Empire during those days. And the ones who ran away from their master were treated mercilessly – like marking their forehead with a hot iron or worse, crucified to die. Onesimus was fortunate enough to reach Paul while he (Paul) was imprisoned in Rome and that changed his life. Being a disciple of Jesus, he became "useful", true to his name (**v11**).

Worthless past

God commanded the Israelites to treat their slaves fairly and the good ones were treated with dignity. But for Onesimus here, his reputation was bad. Probably theft (as **vs 18-19** suggests), laziness (**vs11**) and adding to all that, running away from the master through deceptive means. All that Philemon could think about his slave was to inflict the maximum punishment.

Oh, but when Onesimus got an opportunity to change his life in Jesus' name, he grabbed it!. How often do you dwell on your past (**Isaiah 43:18**) ? Do you think you have someone like Paul in your life who can help turn your worthless past into a priceless future? How vulnerable are you to change?

Worthy life

Onesimus wanted to go back to his native place and to his master to set thing right, leaving behind his newly found, though wrongly acquired freedom and comforts in Rome. That was very risky yet at the same time, very heroic - Scripturally. (**Matthew 5:9**)

Another unsung hero in this story is Philemon, who was willing to let go of his hurts and rights, and was willing to accept his runaway slave Onesimus as a dear brother. Philemon was expected not only to forgive his offender but also was commanded to accept this black sheep. Do you think it would've been easy for them both?

Like them, there are unsung heroes in the Church even today who let go of an offence, forgive a hurt - keeping their focus steadily on bringing glory to Jesus - and continually striving to save souls.

I believe, in the coming days, the persecution which destroys the Church would come from within in the form of unresolved relationships, issues and hurts. Do you have one like that? Do you see it destroying you already? Who do you think you can get help from?

Let us become real heroes with true courage and convictions- who would do whatever it righteously takes to resolve issues before the sun goes down, in order to make the Church glorious. (**Ephesians 4:26**)

31-01-2016

DAY 31 - EPAPHRODITUS

An attendant who risked his life

Scripture reading – Phillipians 2:25-30; 4:18

Epaphroditus played a key role in Biblical history, even if his name is not immediately recognizable. He is mentioned by name twice in the book of Phillipians, one of Paul's Prison Epistles. Epaphroditus is the one who delivered the original manuscript of Phillipians to its original recipients, the Church in Philippi.

Paul was under house arrest in Rome and the church in Philippi desired to send Paul, what we might call a "gift." Paul describes these gifts as an acceptable offering, pleasing to God. The Philippian believers gathered supplies and sent them to Rome in the hands of one of their own, a man named Epaphroditus.

Epaphroditus faithfully delivered the gift from his home Church and then went above and beyond the call of duty. In selflessly carrying out duties and tasks in fervour to serve the Lord by serving Paul, Epaphroditus became seriously ill and in fact, almost died. God graciously granted him health and Paul sent his friend back home with the newly penned book of Phillipians.

To the Phillipians, Epaphroditus was a messenger who delivered a package. To Paul, however, he was so much more: a "brother" (belonging to the same family), a "co-worker" (labouring toward the same goal), and a "fellow soldier" (sharing the same trials).

Epaphroditus was a man of obvious devotion, faithfulness, and self-sacrifice. He put "the interests of others" before himself and so, modelled the mind of Christ (**Phillippians 2:4-5**).

He laboured on Paul's behalf until his own health broke and even when he was sick, Epaphroditus took no consideration of himself ; rather, he was distressed because his Church had heard of his illness and he did not want them to worry.

Paul mentions Epaphroditus again near the close of his letter: "I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God" **Phillippians 4:18**. The very next verse is the oft-quoted promise that God takes care of those who put God first: "And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus".

Like Epaphroditus, when men and women give themselves fully for the sake of God's kingdom, many people benefit. Such a person is worthy of honour and his/her presence is cause for rejoicing.

Few questions to think about today in our quiet time:

- Paul describes Epaphroditus as a fellow soldier and a fellow worker. What are you known for in the Church?
- Epaphroditus risked his life to help and support Paul. In what ways are you supporting God's ministry and ministers even when that causes certain inconveniences to you?

Lets remember- Epaphroditus did not do anything for his own recognition or glory but for Christ. So we should be the same way.

Further reading for meditation : **Philippians 2:14; Colossians 3:17,23-24**