**Scripture Reading: John 1:1-23**

**Focus Verse: John 1:23**

***“The Way of the Lord…”***

The word that is translated “way” in our focus verse was used in three ways by the writers of the New Testament. First, it was used to describe an actual road, or path taken by travelers. Second, it was used to describe the journey that one might make down that road. Finally, this word was used to describe the way that one walked down their chosen path. By that, I mean to say that this word could be used to describe the way, or manner of life, of the one doing the walking. We will see some of all of this as we follow the paths that Jesus walked while reading through the Gospel of John. We will learn much about the way (the paths that He physically walked) and the way that He walked them. Although the Bible points out many similarities between John the Baptist and Jesus, John refers to himself as a “voice” (from a Greek word from which we get our English word “phone”) while Jesus was referred to as the actual “Word” (from the Greek word *logos*). In our own times, we might choose to say that John was simply *a* *messenger* while Jesus was *the Message*!

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Read** verse one again and **realize** that you are at the “beginning” of a marvelous journey through one of the best loved books of the Bible. **Tell** someone about your new devotional guide today and **invite** them to take the walk with you. **Volunteer** to discuss these daily readings with them. You might find yourself responsible for someone changing their “way” as a result of your efforts.

**Scripture Reading: John 1:24-51**

**Focus Verse: John 1:34**

***John’s “Testimony”***

The word that is translated “bare record” (KJV) or “testify” (NIV) in our focus verse is a very important word in John’s Gospel. It is found 31 times in this book and only three times in all of the other three Gospels. For the record, this Greek word is found in 75 places in the New Testament, with 44 (59%) of them being in the books penned by John. John the Baptist said, “I saw” (KJV) or “have seen” (NIV) and testify to the fact that Jesus is the Son of God. This word for “testify” will become another very important word as we read through the Gospel of John and “see” the paths that Christ walked while in this world. We will find this word more times in John (19) than all of the other gospels combined. John the Baptist here used this word in the past tense, so we understand that he is referring to something that he saw in Jesus long before any miracles were ever performed or any sermons were ever preached. Jesus and John the Baptist were cousins, so this reference may have been in regards to some things that one boy had witnessed in the life of the other. Whatever the case, it is clear that John the Baptist was not afraid to *speak up* about what he had *seen*!

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Ask** yourself, “What kind of testimony am I giving about Christ?” Have you “seen” enough to cause you to come to some definite conclusions about who He is? Boldly “**bare record**” of Him to someone you speak with today by sharing a personal testimony about something that you have found to be faithful and true about Jesus!

**Scripture Reading: John 2:1-23**

**Focus Verse: John 2:11**

***The First Miracle!***

In today’s reading we find that the path that Jesus followed led Him to a wedding in Cana of Galilee. We know that Jesus visited this city at least twice in his earthly ministry (John 4:46). The exact location of Cana is not known, but it was near Nazareth. This town is mentioned only in John’s gospel. When the host ran out of wine, Mary made mention of the need to Jesus. Some believe that Mary made this comment to Jesus because she expected him to perform a miracle for someone who was obviously a close friend or associate. However, that is not likely the case since verse 11 clearly tells us that this was the “beginning” (KJV) or “first” (NIV) miracle that Jesus performed. Even though Mary had probably witnessed some things that caused her to think that she was raising no ordinary child, there is no reason to believe that she was aware of his miraculous powers at that time. Jesus commanded the servants to fill six large pots with water. After they had filled them, He then told them to take some of the water from the pots to the host. The host was surprised at the quality of this new wine and commented to the bridegroom that it was the usual custom to serve the best wine first! This first miracle was a manifestation of Christ’s glory and resulted in his disciples growing in their faith. Wine is often symbolic of joy in the New Testament. When Christ is glorified his people always experience great joy!

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Praise** God for the joy that He has brought into your life! **Thank Him** for your marriage, your spouse, and your family. Verbally e**xpress** your gratitude for those closest to you by **telling** them how much you love and appreciate them.

**Scripture Reading: John 3:1-17**

**Focus Verses: John 3:1-2**

***A Crossing of “Paths”***

Our focus verses describe a night when Jesus crossed the path of a ruler of the Pharisees named Nicodemus. Whether or not this was the first time that they met, we are not told. However, the things that Nicodemus said to Jesus clearly indicate that Nicodemus had at least heard many things about Jesus. There have been several explanations offered as to why this man came to meet with Jesus at night. Some say that he was a timid man and that, as a religious leader, he was afraid of the criticism that might come as a result of being seen in public with Jesus. It is important to remember that Nicodemus later boldly confessed to knowing Jesus before the other Pharisees (John 7:50-51). Others think that it was a result of their very busy schedules that caused these two men to have to cross paths well after the end of some busy day. Whatever the case, their paths did cross and, at least eventually, the life of Nicodemus was forever changed after he became what may have been the first person ever to hear the words of John 3:16!

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Notice** that it was what Nicodemus “knew” about Jesus that caused him to “come” to Jesus. His first conclusion was that Jesus was a “teacher” (KJV) or “Rabbi” (NIV). However, it is clear that he believed Jesus to be more than that. What he had heard about Jesus led to him knowing Jesus as his own personal Savior! **Speak up** and let people hear something wonderful about Jesus from you today. Who knows? Maybe they will “come” to Jesus, too!

**Scripture Reading: John 3:18-36**

**Focus Verse: John 3:36**

***Life’s Greatest Decision***

Verse 22 of our reading tells us that, after going up to Jerusalem (see John 2:13) the path that Christ followed eventually led Him into Judea. This verse seems to imply that Jesus was actually baptizing people, but we will later read in John 4:2 that Jesus did not do any of the baptizing. John the Baptist was preaching and ministering in Judea at the time. From what this New Testament prophet is quoted as saying in our focus verse, it is clear that he fully understood God’s simple plan of salvation! The difference between being saved or lost really came down to whether or not one chose to receive or reject Christ as Savior. The kind of unbelief that is described here is intentional and not a result of ignorance. Those who have never heard of Jesus have not had the opportunity to reject Him. The kind of unbelief that dooms a person to hell is the kind of intentional rejection that is based upon a decision to not believe what the Bible says about Who Jesus is.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Review** John 3:16 & 18 and see how clear it is that what we do about Jesus determines our eternal destiny! **Determine** to be the kind of Christian that will cause others to make the right decision about Jesus!

**Scripture Reading: John 4:1-18**

**Focus Verse: John 4:14**

***Living Water***

According to John 4:3, the Lord’s “path” now led him out of Judea for a return visit to Galilee. The shortest route for this trip was going to lead him through Samaria (verse 4). This story is a wonderful reminder that God’s leadership and timing are very important keys to success in our ministering to those who need to meet the Savior. It also serves as a reminder that we are to minister to all people everywhere – regardless of their social status or sinful condition. We just read about Jesus witnessing to Nicodemus, a very powerful and influential religious leader. We now find him witnessing to a woman who had been married five times before and was now living with a man who was not her legal husband. Nicodemus was a Jew while this woman was a Samaritan. In spite of their obvious differences, they had one thing in common in that they both needed to meet Jesus! Jesus spoke to this woman about two different kinds of water. The first, like the water from the well where they met, could only satisfy one’s physical thirst for a short time. The second water of which Christ spoke could serve as a continual source of spiritual satisfaction. And the best part was that you drink of this wonderful “living water” (KJV) and then take the well with you! It took this woman a while to fully grasp what Jesus was saying, but when she got it, she really got it! Not only did she drink of this water, her testimony led many others to come running out to meet Jesus.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Refuse** to see any meeting as coincidental. **Be aware** of those around you and **seek** out ways and opportunities to make the love of Christ visible to others through kind words or deeds. **Share** some living water with a thirsty soul today!

**Scripture Reading: John 4:19-38**

**Focus Verse: John 4:35**

***The Fields***

Perhaps no other one verse better helps us to understand what Jesus meant by His earlier statement that, “The field is the world,” (Matthew 13:38) than our focus verse for today. When the Samaritan woman left Jesus and returned to town, she left her water pot at the well but carried a spring of living water with her. As she began to testify about what Jesus had told her, she invited all to “Come and see” Jesus. If you wanted to capsulate the words of John 4:28-30 to see the simplicity of her message, it would read something like this: “The woman went and said, ‘Come’ then they came.” Upon seeing the people coming to Him, Jesus referred to them as fields that were “white” (KJV) or “ready” (NIV) for harvest. This statement had a literal and a spiritual meaning. Whether the field was sown for wheat or barley, it was typically four months before the sown seed could be harvested as wheat. Jesus had sowed the Gospel seed just hours before this moment, and there was already a great “harvest” of people rushing toward Him and His disciples. These men were about to benefit from a harvest that came as a result of the seed that someone else had previously sowed.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Imagine** hundreds of people rushing to come and learn about Jesus and salvation! **Thank God** today for the many people that laid the foundation for the work of *the* church and, specifically, *our* church. **Express** gratitude to some of our long-time members today and let them know that their work is greatly appreciated.

**Scripture Reading: John 4:39-54**

**Focus Verse: John 4:45**

***The Nobleman’s Son***

After spending two days with the Samaritans that had believed because of the witness of the woman He met at the well, the Lord’s “path” now led Him back to Cana of Galilee where he met a “nobleman” (KJV) or “official” (NIV) whose son was sick. We are not told if this man was a Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, or what kind of official that he was. Jesus saw only a man in need. Some believe that the comments of Jesus in verse 48 would indicate that the man was a Jew, since they were the ones that sought signs and wonders from him. This was to be the second miracle performed in Cana of Galilee and the first of the recorded healing miracles. Some have said that the two miracles performed at Cana are significant due to the fact that the first was performed at a wedding and the second was performed to bless a home and family. The man’s son was near death and the poor father begged Jesus to come and heal him. Jesus said, “Go your way. Your son lives.” The man believed Jesus and began the journey back to his home. Imagine his great joy when his servants met him along the way with the news that his son was alive and well! After inquiring about the time of day that the boy began to show improvement, the man soon realized that his son was healed at the same hour that Jesus had spoken his promise to him. As a result of this blessing, the man, along with all that were in his house, believed on Christ.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Remember** to faithfully pray for those who are sick or ministering to their sick loved ones. **Pray** for those who will soon be equipped to launch our “Cancer Care Fellowship” and ministry here at our church. Today, e**ncourage** someone who is sick through some random act of kindness. **Let them know** that you are praying for them.

**Scripture Reading: John 5:1-24**

**Focus Verse: John 5:1**

***Back to Jerusalem***

There were many people healed by the power of Jesus during His earthly ministry. However, there were only seven Sabbath Day healings recorded in the gospels. This was the first of those Sabbath healings and marks the beginning of the constant conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders of His day. This miracle was performed in Jerusalem at a pool of water called Bethesda. The pool was surrounded by five covered porches. It was in these shaded areas that people would lay their physically afflicted loved ones hoping for a miraculous healing. The people believed that an angel would come and “stir” the waters from time to time and that the first person to get in the water after this stirring would be healed. There is no biblical record of any of these healings having ever taken place and, therefore, no reason to believe that the stories of such healings were anything more than legend. Desperate people will cling to any hope given. In this case, real hope came to the rescue. Jesus healed one of these desperate people by merely speaking to him - telling him to rise, take up his bed, and walk. Being aware that the man had obviously been healed on a Sabbath day, the Jewish leaders took issue with the man, questioning him about the person who would tell him to do something that clearly violated Sabbath laws. Their angry reaction is clearly described in verse 18!

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Refuse** to become discouraged when people do not always react positively to your efforts to minister. **Realize** that there are always going to be critics! **Remember** that Jesus loved and served while continually being called to task by the religious leaders.

**Scripture Reading: John 5:25-47**

**Focus Verse: John 5:32**

***Testimony***

Today’s scripture reading is special in the sense that every word that we read was a direct quotation of Jesus! If you have a “red letter” version of the Bible, you will see that every word of our reading is in “red,” and because of that, every word should be “read” carefully! Depending on which translation you have, you will see the word(s) “witness” or “testimony” several times in this passage. These words trace back to a Greek word that is used in noun and verb form. It is used in noun form 14 times in John’s Gospel compared to only three times in all of the other gospels combined! However, this word is found in verb form 33 times in John’s Gospel! One phrase in John 5:32 contains the word in both verb and noun form. Speaking of His Father, Jesus said, “I know that the witness (noun) which he witnesses (verb) of me is true” (NKJV). It is clear that a “witness” was something God *had* and something that God *did*. The same was true about Jesus. It was also true about John the Baptist and it *should* be true about us!

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Decide** to be a witness or testimony of what God can do in an individual’s life today. **Remember** that the word “witness” represents both something that you *are* and something that you *do.* Jesus firmly believed that His witness was sometimes in *words* and sometimes in *works* (John 5:35).

**Scripture Reading: John 6:1-15**

**Focus Verses: John 6:1-2**

***Feeding the Five Thousand***

Today we see that Jesus did not allow His path to be obstructed by natural barriers – such as lakes or oceans – and that He sometimes employed conventional means to reach the places where He chose to minister. There is something very distinctive about the miracle we are reviewing today. Other than the resurrection of Jesus, it is the only miracle recorded by all four of the gospel writers. While many of us cannot relate to being blind or deaf, or being possessed by demonic spirits, we can all relate to being hungry. John clearly points out that many of the people who were now following Jesus were doing so because of the miracles that He was performing. The fact that the Passover Feast was near probably had a lot to do with the size of the crowd on this particular day. Jesus questioned Philip about how enough bread could be acquired to feed such a large crowd. Many scholars believe that “acquisitions” was a task assigned to this apostle. We are told that Jesus only asked Philip in order to “test” (NIV) or to “prove” (KJV) him. Obviously, Philip had already been thinking about how he was going to feed this gathering, for he responded that the money on hand would be enough to provide only one small piece of bread for each person. Andrew approached Jesus with a young man who had a lunch of five loaves of bread and two small fish. I always smile when I read about these two fish being “small” and wonder just how “big” a fish would have to be for two of them to feed so many people. But you know what Jesus was able to do with so little! He fed everyone until they were full and they still had twelve baskets of food left over!

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Thank** God for the “little” things that He uses to bless your life daily! Every time you see a piece of bread, **remember** just how big God is and what He can do with the littlest of things that are given to Him.

**Scripture Reading: John 6:16-33**

**Focus Verse: John 6:19**

***Walking On Water***

Yesterday we saw Jesus crossing a lake by conventional means – but today we see that He was not bound by conventional means! Immediately after the miracle of the loaves and fishes, the disciples got into a boat and headed back to Capernaum. Jesus did not join them in the boat. Soon the disciples were caught in a terrible storm. Mark recorded the time of the storm to be somewhere about “even” – or between 6:00 and 9:00 p.m. Jesus came to them, walking on the water, sometime during the fourth watch – or between 3:00 and 6:00 a.m.! We are not told why, but the disciples were left to struggle in this storm for many hours before Jesus came and calmed it. But the storm which the disciples sailed against was nothing compared to the storm that was soon to come to their hearts when they looked and saw someone walking toward them on the water. Jesus calmed their fears with a spoken word. He said, “It is I, be not afraid.” Every time that Jesus did something new and different before His followers, He reminded them to “fear not!” When He asks us to do something unconventional for Him, we should be willing to *step up* and *step out* to walk in ways that we never imagined possible!

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Be willing** to try something different for the Lord! Do not be afraid to “get outside the box” or “outside the boat” if that is what becomes necessary to accomplish His will.

**Scripture Reading: John 6:34-51**

**Focus Verse: John 6:35**

***The Bread of Life***

Today’s Scripture includes the first of the seven “I am” statements of Jesus that are recorded by John. The literal translation for “bread of life” is “bread which *provides* life.” Jesus declared that anyone who ate of that bread would never hunger again! The word “hungry” in our verse has two meanings. It is first found in the New Testament to describe the physical hunger that Jesus felt after fasting for 40 days in the wilderness (Matthew 4:2). It was next used to describe the spiritual hunger of those who came to hear Him preach the Sermon on the Mount. When Jesus speaks of those who “come to Him,” He is speaking of those who believe in Him and place their full faith in Him. When people come to Him in faith, they will never again hunger for what was missing before they came to Him! It is obvious that Jesus was speaking of satisfying our spiritual hungers and thirsts and that He was declaring His divine ability to meet our every spiritual need on a permanent basis. Those who receive Him as Savior shall never hunger or thirst again! There is a satisfaction found in His spiritual bread that can never be found in the realm of the physical life.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Believe** that Jesus can satisfy your every spiritual need and **ask** Him to do so. **Seek** His help in some spiritual need and write it down here so that you can come back and adequately praise Him for doing so after that need is met!

**Scripture Reading: John 6:52-70**

**Focus Verse: John 6:60**

***A Hard Saying***

It is clear from the first verse of our reading that the unbelieving Jews could not grasp the spiritual truth that Jesus was trying to present with His “Bread of Life” message. Many of the religious Jews wanted to fully understand a teaching prior to accepting or obeying it. If you look back at John 3:4 & 9, you will see that after hearing Jesus teach on the new birth, the first word out of the mouth of Nicodemus was, “How?” It was the same with these men who overheard this teaching of Jesus about bread that could provide eternal satisfaction! They began to argue amongst themselves over the “how” issue! But instead of softening His message, Jesus began to teach even stronger truth. Verse 60 indicates that not just “some,” but “many” of his disciples considered this to be a hard “saying” (KJV) or “teaching” (NIV) and verse 61 records the fact that they “murmured” (KJV) or “were grumbling” (NIV) about it. Verse 64 clearly teaches that “believing” (faith) is the distinguishing factor between those who are merely *followers* and not true *believers*. Verse 66 contains some of the saddest words in the Bible! From the time that Jesus began to deliver these hard truths, many of those who were merely “followers” turned back and discontinued to “walk…with Him” (KJV) or to “follow” Him (NIV).

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* Hard sayings bring us to ask some hard questions! **Ask** yourself, “How far am I willing to go for Jesus?” **Commit** to following Him through even the most trying situations. You will never regret being faithful to the One who has been so faithful to you!

**Scripture Reading: John 7:1-15**

**Focus Verse: John 7:1**

***A Change of Plans***

Our focus verse begins with “After these things” (KJV) or “After this” (NIV) and reveals that our Lord’s path kept Him in Galilee for some time after many turned back as a result of His difficult teachings on suffering. It is hard to imagine that the Lord’s activity might be hindered by the unbelief of those who claim to be His followers, but here we see an indication that it is entirely possible that it could happen. This verse also reveals that He avoided going into “Jewry” (KJV) or “Judea” (NIV) for a while. Here, just like in 5:1 and 6:1, the Scriptures note the passage of time without identifying exactly how much time actually passed. However, the Scriptures do provide enough information to make some determination on how much time had elapsed since the negative reaction to that teaching. We are told that the events mentioned in chapter six took place just before Passover (6:4), and that the events recorded in chapter seven took place just before the Feast of the Tabernacles (7:2). Since Passover was celebrated in April and the Feast of Tabernacles was held in October, we can deduce that approximately six months passed between the events recorded in chapters six and seven.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Pray** that the Lord will never have to alter His schedule simply because we are not willing to be faithful in following Him. **Realize** that *our* obedience plays a very important part of how, and when, *He* intends to minister to those in need.

**Scripture Reading: John 7:16-32**

**Focus Verse: John 7:17**

***Getting Our “Master’s” Degree***

Verse 15 of yesterday’s reading revealed that the Jews “marveled” (KJV) or “were amazed” (NIV) at the teaching of Jesus and wondered where He had attained His knowledge. In their society, a person either learned at one of the rabbinical schools or they were self taught. Jesus introduced them to a third option by declaring that He was “God taught.” After that, Jesus stated that anyone who chooses to do the will of the Father “shall know” (KJV) or “will find out” (NIV) whether what Jesus taught was from God or whether He was just speaking as a man. When we choose to be obedient to God, He gives us more and more assurance that we are going in the right direction and doing the right things. In other words, when we choose to obey God *completely* we will learn to serve Him more *confidently*. Verse 18 indicates that knowledge that comes *from* God results in bringing glory *to* God. Self-exaltation can never bring glory to God. The true goal of all believers should be to honor and glorify God. When we learn how to serve and glorify God from the teachings of Christ, we are truly getting our “Master’s” degree!

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Read** your Bible daily and with the deliberate intention of learning from Jesus. **Commit** to doing what you already know and you will soon find that you will be more confident about knowing what to do!

**Scripture Reading: John 7:33-53**

**Focus Verse: John 7:37**

***A Bold Announcement***

After the Feasts of Passover and Pentecost, the Feast of Tabernacles was the third of the great annual feast celebrations for Israel. This feast was to be a reminder to the people of the divine care and provision that their ancestors received from God while they marched through the wilderness on their way to Canaan. Since this feast lasted seven days but had a final assembly on the eighth day, it is not certain as to whether the announcement that Jesus made on the “last” day of the feast about anyone who was thirsty coming to Him to drink was made on day seven or eight. We can learn though, that at least one week had passed between the events of John 7:9 and 7:37. Each morning of the feast, at the time for the offering of the daily sacrifice, some of the priests filled golden vessels with water and took them to the temple. At the appropriate time in the ceremony, this water was poured out before the congregation as a reminder of the miraculous supply of water that God gave His people as they wandered through the wilderness. It is not hard to imagine what the people thought when Jesus stood and made His announcement about His being the source of water for anyone who was thirsty! Since the tradition was that a priest would stand while reading from God’s Word and then sit while teaching on it, the fact that Jesus “stood” when He made this announcement was an indication that He was speaking on the behalf of His Father.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* Ask God to give you the boldness required to speak the truth about Who Jesus is and what He can do for those who will respond to His invitation to come to Him and drink of the water of eternal life.

**Scripture Reading: John 8:1-19**

**Focus Verse: John 8:12**

***Five Startling Contrasts***

Another of the great “I Am” statements follows the meeting between Christ and the accusers of the woman caught in the act of adultery. This statement introduced a series of contrasts that Jesus presented to those who had been listening to Him teach in the temple (verse 2) and those who had accused her. When Jesus stated that He was “the light of the world” He was carrying over from His teachings on the Feast of Tabernacles where large lamps kept burning as a reminder of the pillar of fire by which God led Israel through the wilderness. Jesus then made the first of five startling contrasts by speaking of light and darkness. Light speaks of God and His divine leadership. Later, in 1 John 1:5, John would declare that, “God is light.” Thus, Jesus was making a very definite statement about His being one with the Father. He went on to declare that those who followed Him would “not” (KJV) or “never” (NIV) walk in darkness. Darkness speaks of death, ignorance, and sin, while light speaks of life, knowledge, and holiness.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* When Christ presented this contrast to those who were listening, He was actually offering them a choice to walk with Him in Light or without Him in darkness. We all have the opportunity to make that same choice today. **Choose** wisely and then try to be of assistance to those you meet who are facing that same decision.

**Scripture Reading: John 8:20-40**

**Focus Verses: John 8:23 & 34-36**

***Contrasts Two and Three***

Jesus followed His teaching on the contrast between *light and darkness* with teachings on the contrasts between *heaven and earth* (verses 21-30) and *freedom and slavery* (verses 31-40). Again, the “them” (KJV) of verse 23 is the mixed crowd that gathered in the temple to hear Him teach (verse 2), which included those who had brought the adulterous woman to Him. Jesus said, “You are from ‘beneath’ (KJV) or ‘below’ (NIV) and I am from above.” He further defined this contrast by describing “below” as “this world.” In more simple terms, Jesus was saying that they were born of the *flesh* and He was born of the *Father*. If they were going to fully understand Him, they would have to be born again! Jesus then spoke of His power to set men free from the slavery of sin by speaking God’s truth to them. Notice the short memories of these Jewish people as they declared that they, as Abraham’s seed, were never “in bondage” (KJV) or “slaves” (NIV) to anyone. Jesus overlooked their selective memory and kept to His point. He told them that they had been slaves to sin (verse 34) but that He had come to set them free (verse 36).

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Refuse** to be like the Jews in this story. They chose not to recall the 400 plus years that they had been in bondage to Egypt. **Realize** that the only way to be free from the entanglements of this world is to be born of the world above.

**Scripture Reading: John 8:41-59**

**Focus Verse: John 8:44**

***Two More Contrasts***

Jesus continued to teach by mentioning the contrast between *those who were children of God* and *those who were children of the devil.* In our focus verse, Jesus had some pretty sharp things to say about the “father” of those who do not believe on Jesus. When we remember the words of John 1:12, we realize that only those who “receive Him” can become “children of God.” The deciding factor regarding one’s spiritual condition depends entirely on whether he or she receives or rejects Jesus. The final contrast presented by Jesus was that of *honor* and *dishonor* (verses 49-59). Jesus said, “I honor my Father and you dishonor me” (verse 49, NIV). They dishonored Him by calling Him a Samaritan and claiming that He was demon possessed. They eventually became so filled with hate that they picked up stones to kill Him. In light of these five contrasts, we must ask ourselves five questions: 1) Am I walking in the light or in darkness? 2) Am I depending on just my physical birth or have I experienced the new birth? 3) Am I one of God’s free sons or one of the devil’s slaves? 4) Am I walking and living like a child of God or a child of the devil? 5) Do I honor or dishonor Christ by the things that I say and do on a daily basis? The final contrasting question is simple: Am I saved or not? It is one thing to be religious and another thing entirely to have a relationship with Jesus Christ!

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Commit** to being the kind of Christian that causes no confusion as to where you stand and Who you follow! **Be distinctively Christ-like** in the way that you live and in the way that you treat others.

**Scripture Reading: John 9:1-21**

**Focus Verse: John 9:11**

***A Man Born Blind***

It is no coincidence that this miracle comes just after Jesus had declared Himself to be “The Light of the World” and had so much to say about walking in darkness (John 8:12). This miracle is special in the sense that no one brought this man to Jesus. Our Lord noticed this man as he went about His daily activities. Probably after seeing Jesus look at this man, His disciples asked about the man’s blindness and if sin was its cause. When Jesus responded that neither this man nor his parents sinned, He was not crediting them with having lived perfect lives. He was simply stating that this man’s blindness had not come as a punishment for some past sin. Jesus then repeated His claim to being “The Light of the World” (verse 5). In the performing of this miracle, Jesus put a mixture of saliva and mud on the man’s eyes and told him to go wash it off at the Pool of Siloam. You might wonder why Jesus made mud and put it on the man’s eyes. The answer is found in our text. When this man was presented to the Pharisees, it was determined that Jesus had “made mud” on the Sabbath Day! The Pharisees did not praise God for the miracle that stood before them, but criticized Jesus for “working” on the Sabbath! They had their own ideas and expectations about how and when God’s work should be done and they were not pleased that Jesus was not fitting into their box.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Refuse** to limit God to man’s expectations! **Believe** that He can do all things for those who will only believe. **Share** a personal testimony about the Lord’s blessings with someone that you meet today.

**Scripture Reading: John 9:22-41**

**Focus Verses: John 9:32 & 33**

***A Man Born Blind (Part 2)***

The first part of this amazing story can be divided into two sections: *A Cure* (verses 1-7) and *a controversy* (verses 8-21). It is obvious that neither the Pharisees nor the parents of this young man were able to explain what had happened to cause him to suddenly be able to see. It is important to note that this man did not simply *regain* his sight. He had been blind from birth (verse 1) and now he could see! The second half of this story can also be divided into two sections: *A Conclusion* – that Jesus was obviously a man who came from God (verse 33), and *a confession* – that Jesus was the Son of God (verses 35-38). This young man dared to reach his own conclusions about Christ, even in the face of opposition and at the risk of being cast out of the synagogue. The religious leaders tried to pressure the young man into withdrawing his testimony about Jesus healing him. However, there was one thing that he knew: He once was blind but now he could see (verse 25)! Imagine the anguish felt by the Pharisees when the new man with his new sight and salvation remarked, “Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, He could do nothing” (verses 32-33, NIV)!

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Be prepared** to face some opposition if you boldly proclaim Christ as your Savior. **Stand** **firm** on what you know that He has done for you and **refuse** to argue beyond what you know from your own personal experience.

**Scripture Reading: John 10:1-21**

**Focus Verse: John 10:21**

***A Very Good Question***

Today’s reading finds a third occasion where people were divided after listening to the teaching of Jesus. The first time was back in 7:43 after Jesus announced that He could provide streams of living water for those who believed in Him. The second time was in 9:16 when the Pharisees argued that Jesus could not be from God because He had healed the blind man on the Sabbath Day. Others questioned how He could do such miraculous things if He were not from God. Verses 19-21 of today’s reading find the Pharisees once again divided when some claimed that Jesus was demon possessed and others asked, “Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?” That was a question that went without an answer. Not one of the Pharisees continued to argue or offered an explanation to the argument that Jesus certainly didn’t talk or act like a man possessed by a demon! If you read verse 21 again carefully, you will see that what Jesus *did* was beginning to cause people to pay more attention to what He *said*.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Live** in such a way that your lifestyle adds value to you words. **Remember** that *how* we speak to others can either empower or diminish our witness. **Practice** saying the right *things* in the right *way* and you will find that a lot more people are willing to listen.

**Scripture Reading: John 10:22-42**

**Focus Verses: John 10:33 & 39**

***Again?***

The statement concerning the Feast of Dedication in verse 22 provides another time marker for us. Since this feast was held in December, that meant that about two months had passed since the events discussed in John 7, and eight months had passed since the Passover Feast that was mentioned in chapter six. Today’s Scripture reading opens with Jesus walking a very familiar path. He was walking in the temple area. When we read the gospels, it doesn’t take long to establish the fact that Jesus was regular and faithful in attending temple services and spending time in the temple area. It is amazing to read that, even after all that these people had seen and heard, they were still questioning who Jesus was and whether or not He was the Christ (verse 24). After another question and answer session, they “again” picked up stones to stone Him (verse 31, NIV). This time, in verses 32, 34, and 36, Jesus asked them a few questions. Angered at their inability to answer Him, they “again” tried to seize Him, but to no avail (verse 39). It is not clear if they tried to seize Him so that they could stone Him or to arrest Him. Whatever the case, it is clear that the enemies of the Lord were not easily discouraged and that they were determined to withstand Him until the very end.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Remain** faithful to God even if your path is often crossed by those who oppose and reject your witness and testimony. **Refuse** to allow what people say to or about you to keep you from saying what you should be saying to them about God! Verse 42 clearly indicates that there are people that will gladly receive the message 0f Christ.

**Scripture Reading: John 11:1-28**

**Focus Verse: John 11:7**

***Back to Judea***

Today’s Scriptures find Jesus leaving Jerusalem and taking the path back to Judea. The story begins with Jesus learning that His friend, Lazarus was sick and then, eventually, going to Bethany to be with this beloved family. There are several things to learn from this story that helps to do some “reputation repair” to some of the characters specifically named in these verses. First, Martha, who is often vilified for being too busy with serving people to serve the Lord, is clearly shown to be a woman of deep knowledge of the Scriptures and commitment to Christ. Second, Thomas, who is most often remembered for his doubts and fears, is shown as a brave, committed disciple who was willing to die with Jesus rather than allow Him to return to Judea alone. All of us, like Martha, have at some time been overcome with the burdens of service and have expressed our frustrations with others. And none of us are any more exempt than Thomas from the kinds of doubt that plagues those who are challenged to believe the impossible. One of the things to note about today’s verses is that they clearly reveal that risks can be associated with even the most God-defined path.

**Prayer Emphasis**

* **Avoid** the temptation to be judgmental or critical of others. **Pray** for those who are frustrated due to the heavy burdens that they are called to bear and at least **offer** to help them carry their heavy load. **Seek** to be a source of relief to someone today by at least offering to help carry their heavy load.

**Scripture Reading: John 11:29-57**

**Focus Verse: John 11:39**

***“Take Away the Stone!”***

Jesus has been led to the tomb of His beloved Lazarus. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. You can well imagine that this moment was charged with emotion. Jesus was deeply moved. Mary was crying and Martha was concerned that her brother had been dead for four days and that the stench of death was within the tomb. Nevertheless, Jesus commanded that the stone covering the grave be removed. He had promised Martha that her brother would rise again (verse 23). He was now ready to make good on that promise! They took away the stone and Jesus began to pray. He did so, more for the sake of those listening and watching, than He did for Himself. After He prayed, he commanded His friend to, “Come forth!” This command was met with an immediate, obedient response. Lazarus came out. His hands and feet were still wrapped in grave clothes and his face still shrouded with a cloth. Although Lazarus still *looked* very much like a corpse, *he was alive*! Jesus commanded that the wrappings be removed from the body of Lazarus so that he could once again be free to move about and pursue life. Many of the Jews who witnessed this miracle ran, in faith, to Jesus while others ran to the Pharisees to report what they had seen and heard. You would think that this glorious miracle would have been the final piece of evidence to convince everyone of who Jesus was. Instead, we find them setting a plot to end His life.

**Prayer Emphasis**

* **Believe** that Christ can still do the impossible. **Share** your belief in His amazing power with someone today. **Pray** for someone who truly needs a miracle and **let them know** that you have prayed for them and that you are believing with them.

**Scripture Reading: John 12:1-25**

**Focus Verse: John 12:1**

***Time Marches On***

Verse one is a time marker that reveals that it is now time to celebrate another Passover. This indicates that a full year has now passed since the events recorded in John 2. Even though the chief priests were plotting to kill Him, Jesus visited in the home of one of his disciples who was giving a supper in the Lord’s honor. Lazarus and his sisters were there also. After the meal, Mary used some expensive perfume to anoint Jesus. Even as the sweet fragrance of the oil filled the room, Judas Iscariot was filled with contempt and questioned why this oil would be used for such a purpose when it could have been sold and the money used to help the poor. Matthew’s Gospel reveals that Judas considered this loving use of the expensive mixture to be a “waste.” How sad is it that on this one occasion that someone did something kind and generous for Jesus, we see it declared to be a “waste” by one of Christ’s own disciples! Jesus went on to say that they would all have many opportunities to do good works for the poor, but their opportunities to do things for him were quickly passing. Matthew includes our Lord’s commendation for Mary’s actions and His declaration that this deed would be known and told among those who believe the Gospel whenever and wherever it is preached.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Realize** that the Lord’s time on earth was quickly coming to an end as He continues on His path to Jerusalem and the cross. **Recognize** that our time is also short and that we should **remain committed** to a life of diligent, faithful service to Christ.

**Scripture Reading: John 12:26-50**

**Focus Verse: John 12:28**

***A Voice from Heaven***

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record the fact that a voice spoke from heaven just after Jesus was baptized. Although John does not record that event, he is the only gospel writer who records this heavenly utterance. At a moment when the Lord’s heart was “troubled,” (verse 27) God was faithful to send a word of confirmation and affirmation from heaven! Some of those who were there heard only a loud sound because they thought that it might have been thunder. Others actually heard a voice, but did not recognize it to be the voice of God. However, the One who needed to hear from God most assuredly did. We can trust God that He will not leave us without direction and comfort as we walk our path for Him. There are only three Gospel records of God speaking in an audible voice from heaven and at least one *recorded* in Acts 11 and one and another *recalled* by Peter in 2 Peter 1:18. Revelation contains at least seven times where a voice spoke from heaven. However, the next big thing on God’s great horizon is the voice that we will soon hear when “the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout” (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Believe** that God will not leave you without the appropriate words of comfort and encouragement when they are needed. **Allow** God to use you to speak such words to your fellow believers and church members when you are given the opportunity to do so.

**Scripture Reading: John 13:1-19**

**Focus Verse: John 13:1**

***Love We Can “See”***

Our focus verse records the fact that it is, once again, Passover time. This indicates that another year has passed since the events of John 6 and that two years have passed since the events of John recorded in John 2. This is the same Passover that is referenced in John 11:55 and 12:1 with the difference being that in 11:55 we are told that it was “nigh” (KJV) or “almost” (NIV) Passover and in 12:1 it was “six days” before this same Passover. This verse tells us that Jesus “loved” his disciples and that He now wanted to “show” (NIV) them just how much He loved them! To express this kind of love, Jesus chose action over words! Only John includes this wonderful expression of love in his story of our Lord’s life and ministry. Jesus took the role of a lowly servant by putting a towel around His waist, filling a basin with water, and then washing the feet of His disciples. A kind, loving word can do wonders for our souls, but a kind, loving act is something that we are likely never to forget. When we read John’s Gospel carefully, we will see that he mentions the word “love” only six times in chapters 1-12 and then 31 times in chapters 13-17! It is apparent that the Lord spent a great part of His time with the disciples teaching them how to serve others and then spent His last few days with them teaching them how to serve one another in love!

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Express** Christian love to someone today. **Practice** kindness – *verbally* and *visibly –* to others. **Allow** God’s Word (the Light) to teach you how to love others. (These words of emphasis came directly from the Prayer Emphasis on this same day in our last devotional. Some things are worth repeating!)

**Scripture Reading: John 13:20-38**

**Focus Verse: John 13:35**

***The One True Indicator***

Pay careful attention to the words of today’s focus verse! Jesus said, “By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another” (KJV). He did not say “by these things” but rather by “this one thing.” And then note that He said that this one thing will be a sign for “all men” to see. While it may be that the world can see our flaws and failures, they should always see that we choose to love one another in spite of our many flaws and failures. Our love for one another is not just an indicator for those who believe. It is an indicator of *who* we are, and *Whose* we are, to every person in the world. When we are disappointed by the actions of another believer, or when we have definite and distinct differences of opinion, we should always remember that the whole world is watching how we choose to react to those disappointments and differences. The world has no right, or reason, to expect us to be perfect, but it does have the right to expect us to love one another in spite of our imperfect state. When our *attitudes* or *actions* toward one another are motivated by anything less than love, we create situations where the message of Christ and the church may be hindered.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Note** the word “if” in our focus verse and **realize** that it is entirely possible for believers to be hindered by acts and attitudes that do not express the kind of love that Jesus had in mind. Be intentional in your efforts to **avoid** any words or deeds that do not fulfill this great command.

**Scripture Reading: John 14:1-31**

**Focus Verse: John 14:1**

***“Believing” is “Trusting”***

Every verse in this chapter could be our focus verse for this day. We are reading this entire chapter because there is simply no good place in which it can be divided! Jesus urged His disciples to “believe” in Him (KJV) or to “trust” Him (NIV). When we read this chapter we see many characteristics of those who decide to “believe” or “trust” in the Lord. When we trust the Lord, we believe what He has told us to be true (verses 2 & 11). When we trust Him, we believe that He is Who He says He is (verse 10). The kind of trust that the Lord is speaking of here obeys His commands (verses 15, 21, and 23) and adds that a sure sign of not trusting the Lord is a refusal to be obedient to Him (verse 24). This kind of trust brings peace (verse 27) and joy (verse 28) in spite of our circumstances. This chapter concludes with one of the most important characteristics of those who truly “believe” and “trust” the Lord. It concludes with a reminder that trusting the Lord allows us to *get up* and *get going* even when we know that the path before us may be a very difficult one to walk.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* Tears always come to my eyes when I read of this fateful night in the lives of Jesus and His disciples. How difficult it must have been to keep on going even when they all knew that the going would be tough. We should all **ask** God for this same kind of commitment.

**Scripture Reading: John 15:1-27**

**Focus Verse: John 15:4**

***A Good “Reminder”***

John 15 is a very special chapter in the Bible because it is one of the few chapters that contain only words that are a direct quotation of our Savior! This statement can be made of only five chapters in the New Testament (Matthew 6 & 25, John 15, and Revelation 2 & 3). Matthew 5 & 7 come close and so do Luke 15 & 16 and John 14 & 15, but the few chapters mentioned earlier are the only ones where every word is a “red word” (in a Bible that prints the words of the Lord in red letters). Because of this, these *red words* should be some of the most *read words* in the Bible! Our focus verse reminds us to “abide” (KJV) or to “remain” (NIV) in Jesus. If Jesus felt it necessary to tell these men who had left all to follow Him that they should “abide” or “remain” in Him, then how much more should we be reminded to do the same! To translate the word as either “abide” or “remain” is absolutely appropriate. In the KJV it is translated “abide” 61 times and “remain” 16 times. However, in that same translation it is also found as “dwell,” “continue,” “tarry,” and “endure.” I hope that this helps you to understand what the Lord is reminding us to do! Since He refused to be distracted from doing His Father’s business, He has every right to ask us to serve our Father with the same kind of diligence and dedication.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Remind** yourself that the Christian who bears through the tough times and remains faithful to the Lord’s work is the Christian that will “bear fruit” for the Lord. At the same time, **be** the kind of Christian who reminds others to remain faithful in spite of difficult circumstances and situations. **Encourage** someone who is suffering difficult times today.

**Scripture Reading: John 16:1-33**

**Focus Verse: John 16:1**

***Staying on the Right Path***

Jesus spent much of the first years with His disciples sharing truths about *getting* on the right path. He spent most of His last days with them teaching them about the importance of *staying* on the right path. In our focus verse, we find Jesus telling His disciples that He is pouring so much teaching into their lives during His final days because He desires that they will “not be offended” (KJV) or “go astray” (NIV) due to the events that are about to occur. He speaks to them about some future events that will involve them when He tells them that they will be put out of the synagogues and that some people will think that they are doing God a favor when they oppose them even to the point of death! He then tells them about some things in His own immediate future – when He will be die and rise again to return to His Father in heaven. In the meantime, Jesus reminds them that He will send the Holy Spirit to walk their path with them and to be a divine Helper and Comforter to them. Jesus spent much of His earthly ministry “doing and teaching” (see Acts 1:1). Now, He is going to send His disciples out to do the same. But, He will not send them out without providing them a Helper. We would all do well to remember that we are to be “doers” of the Word, and the Holy Spirit is to help us in our doing! The work is not to be left to the Spirit. *He* is to help us to do what the Lord has commanded *us* to do. One of the ways that the Holy Spirit “helps” us is by His being a “guide” to us as we seek to walk our path according to God’s truth.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* As you **read** the Bible, **ask** the Holy Spirit to be your guide. A guide is someone that helps us to focus our attention on the important things that we encounter along our tour. Who is better able to do that than the Third Person of the Trinity?

**Scripture Reading: John 17:1-25**

**Focus Verse: John 17:1**

***The Hour Has Come***

We have made several references to “time markers” throughout these devotionals but there is no greater time marker than the one mentioned in our focus verse today. After Jesus had spoken the words contained in the verses prior to this one, He “lifted up His eyes” (KJV) or “looked toward heaven” (NIV) and spoke with His Father. Jesus told His Father that He recognized that His “hour” (KJV) or “time” (NIV) had come and He asked the Father to glorify Him so that He could, in return, glorify His Father. To translate the word either way is obviously correct and this same Greek word is translated both ways in multiple places in the KJV and the NIV. However, the most important word in our focus verse seems to be the word “glorify” and both translations use this word to express what Jesus intended to do in His last hours upon this earth. This same word is translated “honor” and “magnify” in other places in the KJV. Jesus is asking that as He walks these final most grueling steps of His path, that His Father strengthen Him so that He might walk them in a way that would glorify, honor, and magnify God.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Follow** the example of Christ by **praying** this same prayer daily. **Ask** God to give you the strength to **serve Him** in a way that brings glory and honor to His name. When we do that, we will surely walk our paths in a way that gives *maximum* glory to God and *minimum* glory to ourselves.

**Scripture Reading: John 18:1-21**

**Focus Verses: John 18:12 & 13**

***Arrested!***

Our focus verses report that soldiers “took” (KJV) or “arrested” (NIV) Jesus, bound Him, and took Him to stand before Annas the high priest. Five of Annas’ sons eventually served in this position as well as one of his sons-in-law. Caiaphas, the most often mentioned high priest in the New Testament, was that son-in-law. We are told that, after His arrest, Jesus was questioned by Annas. Verse 19 of our reading tells us that Annas questioned Jesus about two things: His teaching and His disciples. It is interesting to me that these two topics seem to rank as most important to even those who oppose Jesus. Even God’s enemies have a keen interest in what *the Bible says* and *what the believers do*. They are constantly looking for some reason not to believe – but they are most often convinced to do otherwise! Praise be to God! The word translated “took” or “arrested” means to “seize or take one as prisoner.” It carries with it the idea of making one a “permanent prisoner” by taking them in such a way that they will never escape! Little did they know that the “Greatest Escape” in history would eventually follow these first steps toward Calvary, the cross, and the tomb from which Jesus would be resurrected.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Realize** that the enemy may claim victory in some *battles*, but that the *war* has already been won by our Lord Jesus! When sin circumstances seem to have you bound, **believe** that it is only for a season and that Satan will **never** have complete victory in the life of a true follower of Jesus.

**Scripture Reading: John 18:22-40**

**Focus Verse: John 18:25**

***Peter’s Denials***

Yesterday’s verses included the record of Peter’s first denial of our Lord (verse 17) and today’s verses contain the story of his second and third denials of Christ. All four of the gospel stories include this dark time in Peter’s life. I am convinced that the Lord gave us the Bible so that we could clearly see all that He desires us to be. I am just as equally convinced that He gave us the Bible so that we could see all that we might become if we do not keep our eyes focused on Him. It is obvious that Peter had his eyes on that gatekeeper when he first denied that he knew the Lord. It is also clear that his focus was on those who stood near him as he warmed his hands by the fire and the servant of the high priest who questioned him when he denied knowing the Lord the second and third time. As *painful* as this detailed record may have been to Peter, it is there because it is *profitable* for the rest of us. And, possibly, by reading this account, it may help *prevent* any of us from making this same terrible mistake. It is important to stay close to the crowd that will help you keep the conversation about Jesus and among whom you can boldly declare His name and your allegiance to it!

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Spend time** with people who love Jesus! **Hang** with the crowd that wants to talk about Him and not about others. If the group you are with requires that the name of Jesus be *excluded*, then it is one from which you should quickly be *excused*!

**Scripture Reading: John 19:1-21**

**Focus Verse: John 19:4**

***Pilate’s Testimony***

Pilate was far from being a friend to Jesus when he stated that he found “no fault” (KJV) or “no basis for a charge” (NIV) against Jesus. Just prior to that statement, we are told that he had Jesus “scourged” (KJV) or “flogged” (NIV). It was while Jesus was under his watch that our Lord was subjected to the crown of thorns, the mockery of the soldiers and the beating that He suffered at their hands. Proverbs 16:7 says that, “When a man's ways please the LORD, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.” No man’s ways ever more pleased the LORD (Jehovah) more than the ways of the man, Jesus! Even though Pilate had ordered that Jesus be severely punished, he had done so with the knowledge that there was no fault in Him! The word that is translated “fault” in the KJV is translated “cause” and even “case” in that same translation. What Pilate was saying to the people was that there simply was no “case” against Jesus. The only way that legal justice could have been served in the case that now stood before him, is if Pilate had dismissed all of the charges and thrown the case out of his court. In his heart, he knew that there was no justifiable reason for allowing Jesus to be condemned.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Acknowledge** Jesus as the one true example upon which our lives should be based. **Realize** that to walk in His steps, and down His path, may lead to many false accusations and occasions where you may not be treated fairly or justly. **Commit** to staying the course no matter the circumstances.

**Scripture Reading: John 19:22-42**

**Focus Verse: John 19:22**

***The King of the Jews***

Near the end of yesterday’s reading, we saw that Pilate had a sign fastened to the top of the cross of Jesus. On it were these words: “Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews”! He had that sign written in the three most prominent languages of that day. After the chief priests protested to the words on the sign, Pilate said, “What I have written I have written.” By that, he meant that he was not going to be persuaded by anyone to change his final opinion of Christ. There are many leading roles played in the verses that we read today. Pilate and the soldiers played a large role in these final hours of our Lord’s life. Mary, the mother of Jesus, and other faithful women were prominent in those same hours. John, the beloved apostle and the author of this book, had a leading role. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus both made bold and public stands for the Lord – even after they knew He was dead, having no idea that He would soon be seen alive again. They both risked their all on what they had seen and heard before they knew about the resurrection! But, the starring role, as always, belonged to Jesus! Three of his final seven statements are recorded in today’s verses, included the greatest victory cry of all time: “It is finished!”

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Ask** yourself, “What role am I playing in the church and God’s Kingdom work.” The pathway for every believer should be marked by devoted service to the Lord Jesus Christ! **Find** a place to serve Him in the church and be faithful to that place until “it is finished!”

**Scripture Reading: John 20:1-31**

**Focus Verses: John 20:30 & 31**

***The “Reason” for John’s Writing***

As I mentioned in an earlier devotional, the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000 and the miracle of the resurrection are the only two miracles recorded in all four of the gospels. As John begins to close his book, he mentions that there were many miracles that Jesus performed that were not mentioned in his account. However, he goes on to say that the miracles about which he did write were mentioned for one reason, that being, that people like you and I might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God! John’s purpose for writing about Jesus was evangelistic. It is from his gospel that we have some of the most evangelistic verses of all of the gospels. No verse could ever be more evangelistic in its appeal than our beloved John 3:16! John desired that all people would receive God’s free gift of salvation and eternal life. He knew that eternal life could be found only in one person – Jesus Christ! You might conclude that the Gospel of John so closely follows the path of Jesus because John knew that Jesus is the Great Pathfinder for any and all who will choose to follow Him.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Seek** to discover your “reason” for being included in God’s Kingdom work. **Take** the necessary actions to **learn** how to **serve** Him with the kind of attention and ability that He deserves. There is never a wrong month or time to declare that, “Jesus is the Reason for the Season!”

**Scripture Reading: John 21:1-25**

**Focus Verse: Every single one of them! ☺**

***Some Post-Graduate Studies***

Following Christ means that our path will always lead us to His school of ministry. Even after His resurrection, He continued to teach His disciples about obedience. From Him, they learned that it is best to obey Him even when His commands may go against what our nature – or our natural way of thinking – may lead us. They also learned that He knew more about *His* business than they did and He knew more about *their* business than they did! Whatever your life calling may be, walking your daily path with Jesus can help you to be more successful in your home, career, relationships, and life! Peter went to the Lord’s “graduate school” and learned that the most distinctive characteristic of those who truly love the Lord is that they will have a desire to help other Christians by delivering them daily bread from God’s Word. You will cross paths with many people on any given day of your life. As you meet these people, remember that none of those meetings are coincidental because God has a purpose for your path intersecting theirs! While I was first learning how to drive, I was often reminded to, “Watch where you’re going!” When we lose our focus we run a great risk of doing harm to others. What greater harm could there possibly be of missing heaven and experiencing hell? Live to see others get on the right path and you will be living a life worthwhile!

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Share** the gospel with someone today. If nothing else, try to **mention** Jesus to someone that you meet today. Their eternal destiny may hinge on how obedient you choose to be to Christ today! May the Lord bless you and may you enjoy walking your own personal Kingdom Pathway!