

20:20 Vision Ministries -- Devotions by Roger Browning

Week 1 (December 30- January 5)

As we move into 2013, I want to continue the emphasis on Praying God's Promises. We give glory to our Lord by accepting and trusting His promises through His Word.

Sunday, December 30 (John 10:11, 14-15)

God's Word refers to Jesus as **The Good Shepherd, The Great Shepherd** and **The Chief Shepherd**. We will look at each of these in the first three devotions this week. "The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep" (v. 11). Jesus, alone, provides salvation because He willingly surrendered His life for us (see v. 17-18). When we accept His death as full payment for our sins, we become one of His sheep and He knows us intimately (v. 15). I want to remind you of this precious truth because it is the foundation for the rest of your faith. If anyone reading this has not accepted Jesus as his/her Savior, nothing else will be relevant. Read v. 27-30 in this chapter to make sure you qualify as one of His sheep. You will not find a better passage on the security we have in Christ!

Monday, December 31 (Hebrews 13:20-21)

The Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep (yesterday's devotions). Because of His blood shed on our behalf and His resurrection from the dead, we can experience the **God of Peace** living within us (v. 20). That same verse also introduces us to **The Great Shepherd**. His job is to produce on the outside what He has already given to us on the inside when we accepted His gift of salvation. He teaches us His will and qualifies us to get it done. Each believer can accomplish all that Jesus has called him/her to do because of His Spirit that is living within (v.21). All the glory goes to our Lord because He secures our salvation as **The Good Shepherd** and keeps us in His will as **The Great Shepherd**. We will conclude these thoughts tomorrow.

Tuesday, January 1, 2013 (1 Peter 5:1-4)

The first three verses are personal to everyone who is called to serve as a pastor of our Lord's flock. We must always be sure to put the flock's needs ahead of our own. Money should never be the main motive for switching from one ministry to another. We should always be willing to set a Godly example to those we are serving. Those who accept this calling and follow His lead will receive the "crown of glory" from **The Chief Shepherd** (v. 4). This application goes beyond the minister, however. **Everyone** who accepts salvation from **The Good Shepherd** and follows the teachings and leadership of **The Great Shepherd**, will be greeted by **The Chief Shepherd**. The presentation of the "crown of glory" will make every sacrifice worthwhile. Praise Jesus for His three roles in bringing you into Heaven! Happy New Year!

Wednesday, January 2 (Philippians 1:6)

I usually start each year in this marvelous little letter to the Philippians because of the many positive promises it contains. Last year, I asked you to read the entire book each day for a week. My emphasis throughout 2013 will be on claiming, trusting and praying God's promises. This one from Philippians is a great promise with which to start. Jesus, who provided salvation by His death, will also walk with you every day for the rest of your life on this earth. He places your name in the Book of Life on the day you receive Him as your Savior. He places his Spirit of ownership within you to guide you into all truth (see John 16:13). You can be confident in the permanence of your salvation if you have truly surrendered your heart to Him. Thank Him today for your security in Christ!

Thursday, January 3 (Philippians 1:20-23)

This could be the year when we meet **The Chief Shepherd** in the rapture of the church. If not, it may be the year when God calls **you** home. Today's promise is a comfort to all of us who are in the twilight of our journeys on this earth. Make it your goal to bring glory to Jesus no matter what happens this year (v. 20). A believer who dies will go immediately into His presence (v. 23). There is no such thing as "soul sleep" as some religions teach. The road ahead of us is much greater than the road behind us (v. 21) because Heaven awaits our arrival. Totally commit your heart to Jesus so that you will be a blessing to everyone you encounter on the pathways of life (v. 22). Thank God for His wonderful promise to bring you to His side when your days on this earth are over.

Friday, January 4 (Philippians 2:12-13)

I started to skip this wonderful promise because it is similar to Philippians 1:6 (Wednesday's devotions). I was afraid that you might read it, however, and dwell on v. 12 without including God's promise in v. 13. We should always allow **The Great Shepherd** (see Monday's devotions) to do His work within our hearts. We do this by obeying His known will while waiting for His next assignment. Obedience is the only way you can "work out your salvation with fear and trembling" (v. 12). The great promise follows to remind you "it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose" (v. 13). Relax! The Master is in charge! Just supply the willingness to be molded into His image. He promises to do the rest!

Saturday, January 5 (Philippians 3:17-21)

Many churches are ashamed of the cross and have taken it down or replaced it with a globe. Their leaders point out that unbelievers are turned off by the symbol of the cross, so they make their facilities "seeker friendly." Verses 17-19 should scare the daylight out of them! Believers have their citizenship in heaven (v. 20); therefore, we should focus on our **heavenly home**, not on our earthly possessions. God promises to "transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body" (v. 21). This does not mean that we shouldn't do everything we can to keep our temporary bodies healthy. It **does** mean that, no matter how much we exercise and eat right, these old bodies will lose the battle to death. That's when we can trust His promise to provide us **new bodies** that will last forever. Praise His wonderful Name!