

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 29 (July 16-22, 2017)

Christians are called to be the salt and light in this evil world in which we temporarily live (Matthew 5:13-16). For the next two weeks, I will explore some Scriptures that will assist us in successfully fulfilling our calling.

Sunday, July 16 (read Colossians 3:1-4; reprinted from January 27, 2017)

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. (Colossians 3:1)

My motto for the past 15 years has been KLUFROG (Keep looking up—fully rely on God). Today's text is one of the best reminders of that concept. God's command is for both our hearts and our minds to be focused on Him. To the extent that we do that, we will have **peace** and enjoy **rest**. It took me a long time to realize that He goes before me and that He will clean up after me! I sometimes act as though I have to make something good happen, instead of depending on the One who sent me. A dead person can't accomplish a single thing (v. 3); therefore, it is time to focus on eternal matters and not so much on earthly things. We will be glad we did when He appears in His glory (v. 4)!

Monday, July 17 (read Romans 12:1-2)

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. (Romans 12:1)

Many people will never hear what you say, but they will watch your life very closely. If there is a conflict between what you say and how you live, they will believe what they **see**, not what they hear. Someone has said, "What you do speaks so loudly that I cannot hear what you are saying." Getting your body in touch with God's Word begins with changing your **mind** about sin. As long as you believe the world's lie, "I was born that way," you will never present your body to the Lordship of Christ. The good news is this: When you do set your mind and your heart on living for Jesus (yesterday's devotion), you will know and understand the will of God for your life (v. 2). You will find joy unspeakable and full of glory, because you will be worshipping the One who died for you!

Tuesday, July 18 (read Hebrews 12:1-3)

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:2)

Chapter 11 of Hebrews gives some wonderful examples of our forefathers who persevered **by faith** against all odds. They are the witnesses who surround us and encourage us as we suffer for our faith. (Persecutions are coming soon to a place near you!) We must let go of anything or anybody that keeps us from running the race marked out for us (v. 1). Of course, our perfect example is Jesus, so we must focus on Him (KLUFROG). Our earthly spiritual giants from the past were sinners saved by grace, just as we are (v. 2). Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father to intercede for all the saints on earth (v. 3; see also Hebrews 7:24-25), so we are not fighting the battle alone. If you are obeying yesterday's text, you will clearly know and understand the race marked out **for you**. It will not be the same as the one He has marked out for anyone else.

Wednesday, July 19 (read Revelation 2:1-7)

“Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love.” (Revelation 2:4)

In today’s text, Jesus is dictating a letter to the church at Ephesus. He compliments many things about the church (v. 1-3), but He then warns them that they have turned away from their first love (v. 4). Many Christians have done the same thing! At the start of their spiritual journey, they focus on Jesus and His Word, but somewhere along the way, they substitute activities for true worship. Their conversations have turned from what the Lord has done for them to what they are doing for the church. Notice that it is Jesus, not Satan, who takes away their standing as a church (v. 5). What about you? Is your love for the Lord growing or is your love for church activities growing? Those of us who will eternally eat from the tree of life should be leading others to **Jesus**, not just to our church (v. 7).

Thursday, July 20 (read Philippians 4:4-7)

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! (Philippians 4:4)

People are attracted to those who are happy and joyful, even as they go through the storms of life. A Christian who knows the One who holds the future, should be the happiest person on earth. As I am writing this devotion, a shooting of a congressman has taken place in Alexandria. Politicians are using the moment to spread their personal agendas. How can we remain calm in the midst of such turmoil? “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God” (v. 6). Are you joyful? Are you gentle? Do you pray about everything with thanksgiving? If so, “the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (v. 7).

Friday, July 21 (read Philippians 4:8-9)

Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:9)

Not using the teachings of the Bible, a group has emerged calling themselves The Positive Thinkers. They teach that if you’ll think good thoughts, you will deliver positive energy into the room. Of course, like most of Satan’s distractions, their teaching has an ounce of truth in it, but the fallacy of it is this: Only Jesus is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy. All other positive thoughts are based on man’s ability to create something positive from something negative. This closely parallels salvation by works, instead of salvation by faith in Him alone. As in the case of Paul or any other teacher, my devotions, sermons and Scripture texts are worthless unless you apply them to yourself (v. 9); however, if you do make personal application, you will experience the **peace of God** (v. 7) as you worship the **God of peace** (v. 9).

Saturday, July 22 (read Philippians 3:17-21)

But our citizenship is in Heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables Him to bring everything under His control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body. (Philippians 3:20-21)

In our politically correct society, there are many, even in the church, who live as enemies of the cross of Christ (v. 17-18). In fact, the cross has been removed from many “seeker sensitive churches,” because it is offensive to the newcomer. Instead, a doctrine of “Health and Wealth” has emerged, especially with TV preachers. Some people say that I am too focused on the rapture of the true Church, but I tell them this: “I’m not looking for an event. I’m looking for a Person!” The printed verses above tell us to get excited about the soon coming of the King of Glory. It is He who will complete the work we started when He transforms “our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body” (v. 21).