

WEEK NINE

—Sunday—

It is in this time of personal worship your salvation becomes real! I praise you for this privilege!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“O Lord, save us; O Lord, grant us success. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. From the house of the Lord we bless you. You are my God, and I will give you thanks; you are my God, and I will exalt you. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever” (Psa. 118:25,26,28, 29). When I consider this Psalm as a part of the songs sung at the feast of the tabernacles I get a fresh meaning for my heart. Tabernacles was to commemorate your care and protection in the forty years of wandering. There is no better cry in this wilderness journey than “O Lord, save us; O Lord, grant us success.”

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

If there ever was a timely text, this is it! We immediately relate these words to our Lord as he rode into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey. “None can truly cry, ‘Save, I beseech thee,’ as those who have already participated in salvation; and the most prosperous church is that which most imploringly seeks prosperity” (*Spurgeon*). So it is that we who hail you as our King most imploringly ask that we might yield again today to your Lordship. *We are your house* — if any praise or adoration comes from your house it will be from our hearts through our mouths. I want to pause and recount your qualities in this text for which I praise you: (1) salvation; (2) success; (3) a personal God; (4) a generous giver; (5) good; (6) loving; (7) everlasting. Praise your name.

How do you personally relate to this quality of God? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

This shall be a seven-fold confession: (1) Lead me to the brink of hell — or open just a crack in the door of heaven that I might appreciate what it means to be

saved. Forgive my dullness. (2) Forgive my perpetual desire to equate success with *things*. (3) How very, very impersonal you are to me at times — what an admission! Forgive me. (4) My asking over and over again belies my appreciation for what you have already given — forgive me. (5) Do I believe that you are *absolute goodness*? I do — but increase my faith. (6) All that you do or permit to happen is working together as an expression of your love — I want to believe this at night as well as the day. (7) I really cannot grasp the meaning of “everlasting” — help me!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

All hail the pow’r of Jesus’ name!
Let angels prostrate fall:
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of all.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

¹⁵When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?”

“Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”

¹⁶Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you truly love me?”

He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”

¹⁷The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my sheep. ¹⁸I tell you the truth,

when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.”

¹⁹Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, “Follow me!” — *John 21:15-19, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

It is a homey comment, but it was after breakfast — after the apostles had eaten that Jesus took up the serious subjects in his conversation. When Jesus used the word “love” in verse 15 he spoke of the *agape* love you have for us. He asked Peter if this was the kind of love he had for him above that of any of the other six men present. Peter did not use the same word for love, but said in essence: “You know that I am your good friend.” Jesus is commissioning Peter in the presence of all. “Feed my lambs” i.e. the new Christians. The second time Jesus uses the same exalted word for love — Peter does not use it but repeats his friendship. This time Jesus asks him to feed the mature Christians — or “sheep.”

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I hope I have represented just what happened on that memorable day on the shores of Galilee — I feel as if I can hear him say to me: “do you love me?” My Lord is only asking Peter, and myself to love as he loved. In the long ago a poet penned these words that speak so eloquently to my heart:

I took Love to task: “Behold,” I said,

“How many a weary one
hath only straw to lie upon.”

“There will I lay my head,” said Love,
“’Tis straw I ask.”

I took Love to task: “Behold,” I said,

“How many thorns there be to rend and pierce
with treachery our lives.”

Love bent him down and took the thorns
and made of them a crown!

I took Love to task: “Behold,” I said,

“Yon gibbet with its burden dread.

“Hate reigns.” Love answered me,

“I found a throne like that on Calvary.”

I said to Love, “Thy law is much too hard,
I cannot follow thee.”

Love stretched forth mighty arms and said,
“Come, child, I’ll carry thee.”

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the priority on love given by our Lord. (2) Thank you for Peter’s willingness to declare himself publicly. (3) Thank you for the part we have in the commission to feed the lambs. (4) Thank you for the wonderful admission of Simon that his Lord knew all things.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, ‘Follow me!’ ” We wonder how old Peter was when he heard these words? He was probably about 40 to 45. We do not know when he died — it would seem from the record here that he was dead when John wrote in 90 A.D. Tradition has it that Peter obeyed the great commission and preached in Pontus and Galatia, even Bithynia and Cappadocia. He was crucified head downward in Rome, i.e. according to the same tradition.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Can I look into each verse and find a request for prayer? (1) Protect me from comparisons with others who are not responsible to me but to you. (2) Am I providing your food for your lambs? (3) I want to hear your words to me as did Peter — “do you truly love me?” (4) What real personal care do I give to your sheep? (5) I do want to embrace to my heart the little phrase “Lord, you know all things.” (6) Prepare me for the limitations of old age. (7) You know the kind of death I will die — prepare me for it.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

In these last words of my Lord I can hear him speak to me: (1) “Your love for me is measured in what you give to the lambs and sheep.” (2) “I may ask you several times in several ways to prove your love.” (3) “I know how and when you will die — don’t worry about it.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Libya — Points for prayer: (1) *No open evangelism is possible.* The last missionary outpost was closed in 1960. There is not one known group of Libyan Christians. No witness to the Berber or southern oasis peoples has ever been attempted. Pray Libya open for the King of Kings. (2) *The Christian Community is large, nominal and foreign.* There are some lively groups of evangelical Christians among the Western oil experts (Union and Anglican Churches), Korean construction workers (Presbyterians) and Pakistani laborers; but few are able to communicate with the indigenous majority. The tense political and security situation also hinders any witness by believers. Pray that the Word of God may have free course among both the expatriate communities and the indigenous peoples.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

I have a Savior, He’s pleading in glory,
A dear loving Savior, though earth-friends be few;
And now He is watching in tenderness o’er me,
But O that my Savior were your Savior too!

WEEK NINE

—Monday—

*Calm my heart — give me your grace —
enlighten my understanding. All of this
I expect in this time of worship.*



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Blessed are they whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the Lord. Blessed are they who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart” (Psa. 119:1,2). In the past year and this one it shall be my purpose to look deeply into every verse in this longest of all the songs. What a rare blessed experience it is! Spurgeon said something full of meaning that I want to lift up as a meditation of praise before you: “Lovers of God’s holy words (and I surely count myself as one of them) are blessed because they are preserved from defilement (vs. 1), because they are made practically holy (vs.2 and 3), and are led to follow after God sincerely and intensely (vs. 2). It is seen that this holy walking must be desirable because God commands it (vs. 4) therefore pious souls pray for it (vs. 5), and feel that its comfort and courage must depend upon obtaining it (vs. 6)” (*ibid* Vol. VII, p. 11).

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

I do lift these words up to you in a real desire to know the depth of meaning you have in them for my heart. I praise you for the blessedness you have promised over and over to the man whose life is the practical transcript of your will. In this first verse we find a benediction for all of life. This is the fundamental principle for every circumstance facing us. Thank you.

How do you personally relate to this quality of God? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

I want to look again into these blessed words. (1) It is possible to be “blameless” or you would not so often call me to it — forgive me and lift me. (2) You have a constant interest in my walk — your commandments

are NOT grievous — I *can* walk according to your law — enable me! (3) There is no repetition here — even if at first reading there seems to be — you ask me to: (a) *acknowledge* you in my ways; (b) *walk* according to your law; (c) and *keep* your statutes. Dear Lord, forgive me for my lack of seeking you with my whole heart.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Open my eyes, that I may see
Glimpses of truth Thou hast for me;
Place in my hands the wonderful key
That shall unclasp, and set me free.
Silently now I wait for Thee,
Ready, my God, Thy will to see;
Open my eyes, illumine me,
Spirit divine!

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

²⁰Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, “Lord, who is going to betray you?”) ²¹When Peter saw him, he asked, “Lord, what about him?”

²²Jesus answered, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me.”

²³Because of this, the rumor spread among the brothers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die; he only said, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?”

²⁴This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true.

²⁵Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of

them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written. — *John 21:20-25, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Did Jesus leave the seven men when he completed his encounter with Peter? So it would seem. At least in some manner Peter was following him and John followed after Peter. Peter turned to see John and impetuously asked: "Lord, what about him?" Jesus had just foretold Peter's future. He wanted Jesus to do the same for John. It was natural but it was out of order. The answer of Jesus has troubled his disciples ever since he gave it. John in commenting on it 60 years later does not explain it — but only repeats the words. Following my Lord is *the point* of his message to us — as to them.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I am so much — so very much like Peter as related to my fellow servants. How often have I asked: "Lord, what about him?" The reasons for my asking are about as varied as the possible reasons for the question of Peter. John in some sense remained alive until Jesus came. Is it possible we could also in some sense remain alive until he comes again? Of course if we are alive at his second coming we already know what we shall do — but in this other sense how shall we react? Was Jesus referring to his appearance to John on the lonely isle of Patmos? We then should react like John and welcome his presence with us — yea, *in us!*

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you that I can turn all my anxiety about my brother over to you. (2) Thank you for the beautiful example of devotion I see in both these men. (3) Thank you for the priority my Lord placed on following him. (4) Show me ways to follow him for today — thank you for the answer. (5) Thank you that I really do not have a choice if I want to obey you — I *must* follow you. (6) Thank you for the use of the term "brothers" — i.e. "the brotherhood." (7) Thank you that we can expect our Lord's return as surely as did "the brothers."

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down." There are multitudes who have testified to the love and grace of our Lord — but we know nothing about them because they did not write it down. How eternally important it is to *write it down*. I do not necessarily enjoy writing — but I do enjoy communicating with generations yet unborn — or at least providing the possibility of doing so. It is

not in my talents in writing but in the message I write that I take pride. I am proud of my Lord! I want everyone to know him.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

I want also to lift up my requests before your throne: (1) Deliver me from comparing myself with myself or others. (2) I want to rejoice in the faith and love of others. (3) I want to hear the words of Jesus "what is that to you" as if they were indeed spoken to me. (4) Deliver me from asking questions that have no answers — at least no answers in this life. (5) Keep me committed to written communication.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

The last words of anyone are important — how much more so are these last words of my Lord — speak to me through them: (1) "Curiosity is good when it is directed toward questions that have answers." (2) "There are 'brothers' or a 'brotherhood' today — you are a part of it." (3) "Are you ready if I should come today?"

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Libya — Point for prayer: *Alternative means for preaching the gospel:* a) *Radio*. One of the only ways of directly reaching Libyans. *Trans Word Radio* (Monaco) is the key station for the area. *Radio School of the Bible (North Africa Mission)* is one of the most profitable programs. Follow-up is virtually impossible. Pray for eternal fruit. b) *Literature and cassettes* may enter only by devious means. Pray for the conversion of the censors! Bible Correspondence Courses by mail rarely get through. c) *Libyans overseas*. Refugees from totalitarianism, diplomats, students and businessmen could be introduced to Christ by believers in other lands.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Come, ye sinners, poor and needy,
Weak and wounded, sick and sore;
Jesus ready stands to save you,
Full of pity, love and pow'r.
I will arise and go to Jesus,
He will take me in His arms;
In the arms of my dear Savior,
O, there are ten thousand charms.

WEEK NINE

—Tuesday—

I need forgiveness — strength for my willingness — grace for my love. This I expect to find!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“They do nothing wrong; they walk in his ways. You have laid down precepts that are to be fully obeyed. Oh, that my ways were steadfast in obeying your decrees! Then I would not be put to shame when I consider all your commandments” (Psa. 119:3-6). The ideal is before us — in the sight of men we might do nothing wrong — but how limited is the view man has of us — or we of them. We know in our hearts how far from the mark we fall! In the complete fulfillment of your precepts is the fulness of joy — satisfaction. We know both the precepts and the promise — but the ability to do so is not there.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

This is the prayer of the psalmist — a request for heaven’s ability to carry out heaven’s law. So do I pray: *“Oh, that my ways were steadfast in obeying your decrees.”* Unless you invade my will — my motivations — it shall not be done. But I remember the wonderful promise that if I work out you will work in! In my desire to work out my salvation you are all the while working in to accomplish your good pleasure in me. It is for such a personal interest and involvement I want to praise you today. In this promise “I shall not be put to shame when I consider all your commandments.”

How do you personally relate to this quality of God? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

In an objective consideration of several men and women I could say of them, “As far as I know ‘they do nothing wrong — they walk in your ways’ ” — but such is not at all their estimate of themselves. I can relate very easily with them. Such is not my estimate of myself! My ways are not steadfast. I need

— so much — your forgiveness! I praise you for the victories you have given — but I must also freely — fully admit that I am terribly ashamed of my willful failure in obeying your commandments. However — it is a sudden joy to know all is washed and cleansed and new — such is your forgiveness! Bless your name!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

I hear the Savior say,
 “Thy strength indeed is small,
 Child of weakness, watch and pray,
 Find in Me thine all in all.”
 Jesus paid it all,
 All to Him I owe;
 Sin had left a crimson stain,
 He washed it white as snow.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

¹⁶Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age.” —Matthew 28:16-20, NIV; read also I Cor. 15:6; Mark 16:15-18.

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

We agree with many who say in essence: “The meeting attended by so large a number as stated by

Paul was most probably that which Jesus had appointed, and could be held on an appointed mountain without attracting the attention of unbelievers. The commission in Mark may perhaps be reckoned the same as Matthew's." Dear Lord, although unnamed by the gospel writers I want to join that crowd of 500 who saw our Lord after his passion. I will almost involuntarily fall at his feet in worship.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

"... but some doubted." Who were they? We need not look further than the mirror. It isn't that we do not believe he is alive after his suffering — but it is all so new — strange — different. Our Lord confirms such wavering faith with two facts: (1) His universal, unlimited authority — yea, his cosmic authority — not only over all the earth but all authority also in heaven. (2) That there would be signs or miracles to accompany their efforts in spreading the glad tidings. The book of Acts is a historical fulfillment of such a promise.

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for everyone of the twelve apostles — so human and yet so faithful. (2) Thank you for the unnamed multitude who also gathered to see him. (3) Thank you for those who obeyed his marching orders. (4) Thank you for the many women who were undoubtedly among the crowd. (5) Thank you for the many appearances of my Lord, all of which make his claims so real. (6) Thank you that I can claim the same faith today that these men had in the first century. (7) Thank you most of all for your very self which makes all this possible.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." The command to go is based squarely on the authority of Jesus. He could have said "Go because you see the terrible need" — or "Go because of the value of the message you have to give" — or even "Go because in going you will be fulfilled." All of these fall short of the motivation behind his authority. If we really believe (as the disciples did) that our Lord does indeed have all authority both in all of heaven and over all of earth then we will obey him — and not before. Having authority and expressing authority are two very different things. His authority is understood and accepted in the preaching of the gospel. How essential then are we disciples!

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

I want to stand with the eleven on the hill in Galilee and hear him speak to me — I then can better speak to you through him in prayer: (1) May I take as seriously all your commands as the eleven did. (2) I am glad to worship you dear Lord, teach me how better to express my worship. (3) Remove all doubt from my mind through a demonstration of just who you are — I want to read again the whole record of your life. (4) May your will be done on earth even as it is now being done in heaven. (5) How I do want to be your teacher — i.e. teach on your behalf — but you will first need to teach me.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I yield to your authority — gladly do I do so — speak to me: (1) "The nations are yet waiting for someone to teach them." (2) "You have more reason to go today than ever before — there are more people." (3) "... surely I will be with you always to the very end of the age."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Liechtenstein — Points for prayer: (1) *Liechtenstein is one of the last remaining vestiges of the Holy Roman Empire.* Few have ever heard of the necessity of a personal faith in Christ. (2) *There is not a single fully evangelical fellowship functioning in the country.* The three Protestant congregations are liberal or Adventist; there are several committed believers within these. In 1985, the first open evangelistic campaign ever held was organized by an international team of British, Norwegian and Swiss believers. It was an exciting beginning with some seeking the Lord. Pray that groups of committed believers may emerge as a result.

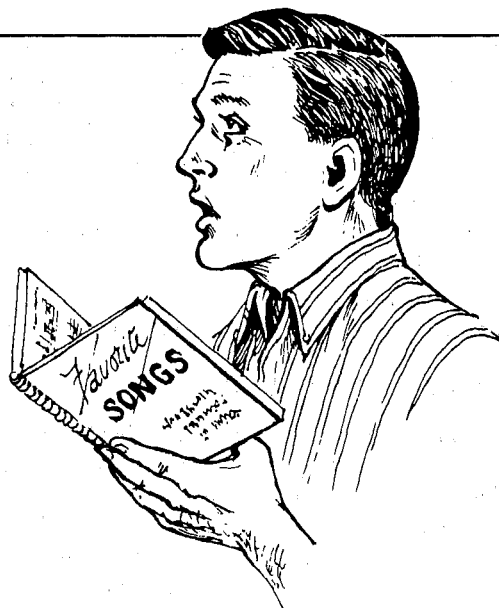
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing power?
 Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
 Are you fully trusting in His grace this hour?
 Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
 Are you washed in the blood,
 In the soul-cleansing blood of the Lamb?
 Are your garments spotless?
 Are they white as snow?
 Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

WEEK NINE

—Wednesday—

What a needy person I am. How very much I long for your peace to guard my heart. I enter worship to find your answer.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“I will praise you with an upright heart as I learn your righteous laws. I will obey your decrees; do not utterly forsake me” (Psa. 119:7,8). “From prayer to praise is never a long or a difficult journey. Be sure that he who prays for holiness will one day praise for happiness. . . . He cannot but promise praise while he seeks sanctification. Mark how well he knows upon what head to set the crown. ‘I will praise thee’ ”

(Spurgeon, *ibid*, p. 18). My cause of praise is in response to what happens to us as we worship you. Produce through your love and forgiveness operating through your word an “upright heart.” Human dignity has its source in yourself. Praise and adoration is surely due!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

“We must learn to praise, learn that we may praise, and praise that we may learn.” In our learning we will praise and in our praising we will be learning. What a beautiful reciprocal action you have placed in these qualities. However — “Zeal which spends itself in singing, and leaves no practical residuum of holy living, is of little worth” (*ibid*). In the midst of this high resolve is the blunt fact that we so often fail in our commitment. Resolution and dependence are the twin qualities of holy living. It is difficult to understand how some men separate grace and forgiveness from the Old Testament text — we would all be “utterly forsaken” if it were not for your mercy and lovingkindness which endure forever.

How do you personally relate to this quality of God? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Confession comes easy in the presence of your laws or decrees. My heart has not always been upright. Consi-

dered in the light of your absolute standard of what is right it has *never* been upright. I am ever learning and really never coming to a knowledge of the truth. My obedience — or at least my attempts at obedience — are a joke! I.e. if compared to what I find in total obedience. If I did not know you are Love and Mercy and full of compassion I would be utterly forsaken. All you have from or in your children is a sincere desire to do your will. I do praise you that such a desire springs eternal from my heart to yours.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Come, Thou Almighty King,
Help us Thy name to sing,
Help us to praise.
Father, all-glorious,
O'er all victorious,
Come and reign over us,
Ancient of Days.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

⁴⁴He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.”

⁴⁵Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶He told them, “This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.” —Luke 24:44-49, NIV; read also Acts 1:3-8; I Cor. 15:7.

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

We do not know the physical circumstances of your Son's appearance. It was probably in Jerusalem — sometime after he appeared to James (I Cor. 15:7). It would be well to project ourselves back to the wonderful short record of Jesus' coming to his own half-brother James. Jesus had three half-brothers — how is it he did not appear to Judas or Simon? Perhaps it is idle to speculate. The epistle James wrote might give us some hint. Here was a man who once convinced would put his whole life into what he believed. He could not imagine faith without works. Dear Lord, I want to be like him.

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How much I wish I could have heard my Lord's conversation with Peter or James — but such appearances and conversations are intentionally private. I can know what he said to the eleven during the forty days — and in particular what he said on this special occasion. How detailed must have been the discussion of the references made by Moses, the prophets and the Psalms concerning him. There are only 12 appearances recorded by the gospel writers. Were there others? Did he linger long with these men as he opened their minds that they might understand the Scriptures? We believe he did.

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the very evident inspiration of the Scriptures as found in fulfilled prophecy. (2) Thank you that we have in written form the things you told your apostles while with them — how eternally important they are! (3) Thank you that you can and do open our minds today that we too might understand the same texts. (4) Thank you for the suffering of my King in my place. (5) Thank you for the wonder of his resurrection. (6) Thank you for my Lord's present office of intercession. (7) Thank you for repentance and remission or forgiveness of sins.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"I am going to send you what my Father has promised. . . ." By a reference to Luke's second treatise (1:4) we learn that specifically the promise of the Father was the Baptism in the Holy Spirit — or the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. Generically there were so many things Jesus could send from the Father — or the Father could send through his Son. Such as: (1) the confident hope of eternal life; (2) a place prepared for us in his house; (3) the Holy Spirit to live in our bodies; (4) forgiveness of all our sins. How expedient then was it that Jesus return to heaven. If he had not died, rose again and ascended

to your presence none of these eternal blessings would be ours. Thank you for what he did!

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

It is real joy to pray with these verses as a guide: (1) I want to rejoice in the fulfillment of each promise made concerning our Lord. (2) Grant me time and motivation for reading the books of Moses that I might see him. (3) The prophets say so much to me — grant wisdom as I read their words. (4) I count it a rare privilege to each day read a portion of the Psalms — I often read of you and rejoice. (5) By your presence and your wisdom open my mind in understanding what I read in your book. (6) Enlighten my mind as to the vast importance you have placed on the city of Jerusalem.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

As I pause at your feet speak to me from these verses:

(1) "Even my twelve apostles could not serve until they were 'clothed with power from on high' — you too must be equipped to serve." (2) "All things necessary for the salvation of the whole world have been fulfilled — except my commission." (3) "The Scriptures await understanding by most of the world yet today."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Luxembourg — Points for prayer: (1) *The land is Catholic by tradition and culture;* revolutionary changes in the Church elsewhere have passed it by, and few have clearly heard the gospel in their own language. Pray for the spiritual liberation of this land. (2) *Evangelical Christians are a very small minority* within the already small, but nominal, Luxembourg and foreign Protestant community. There are more Jehovah's Witnesses than born-again believers. Pray for the small fellowships of the Free Church, Menonites, Assemblies of God and Baptists, and for the four Reformed Congregations. Pray that there may soon be a strong indigenous body of believers as most are scattered and lack real fellowship. There is a handful of expatriate Christian workers in the country and some who make visits from surrounding countries.

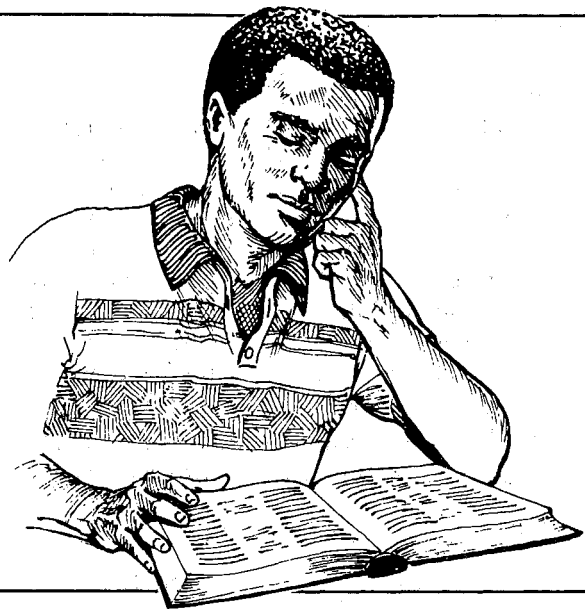
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Speed away, speed away on your mission of light,
To the lands that are lying in darkness and night;
'Tis the Master's command; go ye forth in His name,
The wonderful gospel of Jesus proclaim;
Take your lives in your hand,
to the work while 'tis day,
Speed away, speed away, speed away.

WEEK NINE

—Thursday—

To will is present, but to do that which is good is not. Help me — deliver me. My worship is my strength through you.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. . . . Praise be to you, O Lord; teach me your decrees. With my lips I recount all the laws that come from your mouth” (Psa. 119:9,12,13). To every young man who has become a Christian (not necessarily every young man who has joined a church) such a question faces him. He wants to keep his way pure — as pure as he can. We see another facet of your wonderful character — you can and do keep us pure. How? “By living according to your word.” But this becomes nothing more than an idle axiom without your presence to help us.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

I can say with the psalmist: “Praise be to you, O Lord,” you have indeed taught me. I have been so many times a very reluctant student but you are a persistent teacher. There *must* be a reciprocal action here or nothing is taught or learned. I want to gladly acknowledge that it is your instruction and not my recounting of your laws that causes learning to happen. By your providential arrangement of circumstance you have so often placed me in the environment where I could learn your laws — where I could take heed to your decrees. I have found the promise of pureness so very true!

How do you personally relate to this quality of God? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

I had not known sin except by the law. “For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, ‘Do not covet.’ But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire” (Romans 7:7b,8). Every

man, young or old, has experienced this bondage. Who shall deliver us? The answer of Paul is my answer: “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (He shall deliver us). It is not only through forgiveness — but by his indwelling presence in the person of the Holy Spirit — by creating a desire to do your will we come to know by living what your will is in our lives.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

All the way my Savior leads me:
What have I to ask beside?
Can I doubt His tender mercy,
Who through life has been my Guide?
Heavenly peace, divinest comfort,
Here by faith in Him to dwell!
For I know, whate’er befall me,
Jesus doeth all things well;
For I know, whate’er befall me,
Jesus doeth all things well.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

⁵⁰When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them.

⁵¹While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. ⁵²Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. ⁵³And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God. —Luke 24:50-53, NIV.

¹⁹After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. ²⁰Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it. —Mark 16:19,20, NIV; read also Acts 1:9-12.

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How exceedingly familiar are these words to me. I have led forty classes of students in as many years through a careful look at every word. At the same time they are new and fresh and alive — they shall never lose their power because they come from your heart to mine. It was “before their very eyes” these momentous events took place. The two men (angels) in white knew the eleven better than they knew themselves. And so it is today. What a glorious promise that he will come back in the same way he left. I look for him even now!

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I see him as he lifted up his hands to bless these men — dear living Savior bless me — even now! What great joy filled their hearts — what eager anticipation as they waited for the coming of the Other Comforter. The words of Mark are most significant: “Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by signs that accompanied it” (Mark 16:20). These men did not work by themselves — you were with them — in them — ahead of them — above them. It is such a comfort to know we are workmen together with you and you with us!

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the definite geographical location of the place of his ascension. (2) Thank you that I can return in my imagination to that very time and place. (3) Thank you that I have as much reason — or more — to worship you today as they did on the Mount of Olives. (4) Thank you that we can indeed “pray without ceasing” — we surely have reason to do so. (5) Thank you for every day I have been able to worship you in the meditation on the life of my Lord.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“And they stayed continually at the temple praising God.” This at least included the Jewish hours of prayer — i.e. 9 A.M., 12 noon, and 3 o’ clock in the afternoon. Did they go at other times into the temple just to personally spend time worshipping? We like to believe they did! How often do we today refer to the church building as the Jews did the temple. A constant reference to the meeting place as “the house of God” — even when we know it is not — is a self-defeating attitude on our part. We individually and collectively are the house of God. But this is not the worst problem. We equate attendance at public meetings with faithfulness. We can as the temple of God be continually blessing and worshipping your name.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

In these last words of the gospel accounts we can surely find reasons for prayer: (1) Dear Lord, bless me in meeting the needs of my heart for today. (2) I am anxious to share the glory you have with your Father — keep my hope bright. (3) Lead me into more meaningful worship in the hours of this day. (4) I want to press on to the new Jerusalem with great joy! (5) How I need a deeper sensitivity toward your coming again. (6) Maranatha — even so come Lord Jesus.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

It has been a long journey from the first reference in the gospels to this present hour — you have said so many precious things to me through these words — what do you say here? (1) “Have you been looking into heaven and all the while forgetting the lost world around you?” (2) “I could come today — perhaps in the next hour.” (3) “Return to the tasks of this day with the great joy of my coming on your heart.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Macao (Portuguese Overseas Province, returning to China in 1999) — Points of prayer: (1) Unreached peoples: a) The nearly 200,000 refugees from the PRC and Vietnam have suffered much and are open to the gospel. b) The 12,000 Burmese refugees still use their home language. There is now one growing church among them. c) the Macanese and Portuguese are staunchly Catholic, but have little personal experience of the gospel. d) Those in the entertainment industry — so full of vice. (2) The Protestant Church is small, introspective and weakened by emigration and high turnover of leadership. What a mission field for Hong Kong Christians! Macao’s first Bible school was opened in 1982 and has 16 students. (3) Macao was the first base for Protestant missions in China. Today it is one of the most needy but open fields for missions in Asia. Witnessing in this idolatrous, sinful territory is not easy.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

It may be at morn, when the day is awaking,
When sunlight thro’ darkness and shadow is breaking,
That Jesus will come in the fullness of glory,
To receive from the world “His own.”

O Lord Jesus, how long, how long
Ere we shout the glad song, Christ returneth!
Hallelujah! hallelujah! Amen,
Hallelujah! Amen.

WEEK NINE

—Friday—

*I so need your power to enable me.
Worshiping before you is the answer to
this need!*



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Power: It will not be difficult to praise your wonderful self for your stupendous *power* in the physical world. The ten million galaxies testify to your infinite *power* — the smallest flower — and every molecule of matter has an eloquent voice. Pervasive — omnipotent — wonderful — eternal — reoccurring is your power. Bless your total beautiful person.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Power. For *me!* How I need this quality for myself! According to your everlasting power and divinity — according to the power that worketh in me, both to will and to do! Oh, to know your wonderful presence in and through and above. *Power* to live as well as do — to be all you want me to be.

How do you personally relate to the power of God, and God who is Power? Speak it out or write it out.

CONFESSION OF SIN

How easy it is to lie! Dear God, I am guilty — forgive — cleanse — remove! To misrepresent in any way is a lie! To claim more than is really a fact — to mix desire with truth is a lie. Dear, dear God, wonderful Savior. I claim thy cleansing blood! Oh, to always match words and deeds with reality! “Thou desirest truth in the inward parts.” This is where lying begins — forgive and set a guard on my lips.

What personal sins do you want to confess? There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Are you weary, are you heavy-hearted?
Tell it to Jesus, tell it to Jesus;
Are you grieving over joys departed?
Tell it to Jesus alone.

Tell it to Jesus, tell it to Jesus,
He is a friend that's well known;
You've no other such a friend or brother,
Tell it to Jesus alone.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

1 In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach ²until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. ³After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. ⁴On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” ⁶So when they met together, they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”

⁷He said to them, “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.

⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” —Acts 1:1-8, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I want to praise you for making your appearances so convincing — not only to those present, but for all who would come after them. I gladly read the record of Luke — praise you for such a beautiful treatise. I am convinced you are alive — you do live to love me and plead my case with our Father. Dear Savior, speak to me about your rule in the hearts of men. What would it be to eat with One who was alive from the dead? Wonder of wonders!

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I want to read this text all over again. Here are his words to his apostles about their soon-coming baptism in the Holy Spirit — as they waited in Jerusalem. What a wonder must have filled their hearts. I am not greatly surprised at the question of the apostles — perhaps I would have asked it too. Is our Savior saying the Holy Spirit is the motivation for talking about him? Wasn't it the resurrection that opened their mouths? The Holy Spirit gave them the power of speaking just the words God wanted (our Lord wanted), but his being alive after his suffering gave them (and me) the reason to speak. Dear God, I will witness of my living Lord today.

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Thank you: (1) I can be a "Theophilus" or a lover of God. (2) The gospel of Luke and the book of Acts is written to me today. (3) My Lord is alive and sees and hears *right now*. (4) For the wonderfully convincing proofs of his resurrection. (5) That he so thoughtfully made appearances: at night, in the morning, with 500, with one, in many, many varied circumstances. (6) He ate with them — a ghost does not eat. (7) The patience of my Lord with my ignorance and mistakes as with the disciples.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

My Lord chose me and you even as he did the twelve. Jesus spent all night in prayer before he chose the twelve. If we were examining their lives and backgrounds we might be tempted to think his prayer did him no more good than some of ours. But we know we are wrong — we are limited — we are faithless (about his prayer and ours). He looked at the whole person — the twelve men were all available. It wasn't their ability — it was their willingness. Dear Lord, I am willing, and I know you will make me more and more willing as I am willing to be willing. When I am thus yielded, you will work through me — and even in spite of me.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Let him speak to you and tell you what he wants. Pause before him and *ask!* (1) I do want to know everything my Lord did and said. (2) I want to learn all you taught your apostles. (3) I want to accept totally the evidence of your resurrection. (4) Dear God, may your kingdom — your rule — be in me. (5) I want to understand more fully the baptism in the Holy Spirit. (6) I want to be as patient with ignorant misunderstanding people as you were. (7) Dear God, I want to accept your "times and seasons" in my life. (8) I want the power to witness.

**READ HIS WORD AND
WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS**

Pause with me before his throne of grace. What has he said to you in the last few minutes? (1) "You are 'God's lover' (Theophilus) today." (2) "You are his chosen one — his 'sent one' for today in your world." (3) "You can be and should be convinced of his being alive now."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Madagascar — Point for prayer: *Praise God for increased freedom for Christians* as the country moderates its Marxist rhetoric. Pray for this generation to be fully evangelized and for economic and political conditions that further this.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Come, friends, sing, of the faith that's so dear to me,
Revealed through God's Son, in Galilee;
He brought peace on earth
and good will to the sons of men,
Go tell it to the world, her King reigns again.
I am so happy in Jesus,
Captivity's Captor is He;
Angels rejoice when a soul's saved,
Some day we like Him shall be,
Sorrow and joy have the same Lord,
Valley of shadows shall sing;
Death has its life, its door opens in heaven, eternally,
Christ is King.

WEEK NINE

—Saturday—

*The wisest thing I have done is to enter
your presence with expectancy and joy.
This I do just now.*



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

Wisdom: How well does this word describe your very person. Wisdom is the best use of knowledge. You have put things together in every realm of life. How appropriate are your ways!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

You have been so very wise with me in all the years — yea, each day of my life. Whereas I cannot understand all the reasons yet it is a great source of comfort and strength to know you are working it out for my best interests. Praise your wonderful self that you are love — love and total WISDOM — what a combination!

How do you personally relate to the wisdom of God, and God who is Wisdom? Speak it out or write it out.

CONFESSION OF SIN

I freely and even gladly confess my need of cleansing. As often as my physical being needs soap and water for refreshment so does my spirit need confession and the blood of my Dear Lord to cleanse my conscience from dead works that I might rejoice in the Living God! I hide nothing — I am ashamed — but I am also forgiven. Praise his name! Rebuilding without repeating is the power of deep forgiveness.

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

In the secret of His presence
how my soul delights to hide!
Oh, how precious are the lessons
which I learn at Jesus' side!

Earthly cares can never vex me,
neither trials lay me low;
For when Satan comes to tempt me,
to the secret place I go, to the secret place I go.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

⁹After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.
¹⁰They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹“Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.” —Acts 1:9-11, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Oh, how beautiful to stand with the eleven and watch your Son be lifted into the air — to try to feel as they felt and see as they saw. I want to enter into every thought and reaction. To *know right now* there are ministering spirits called angels; right in this room they are helping me. I accept their message to the eleven. He (your Son, my Lord) *is* coming back — praise your name!

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Am I looking intently into the sky? I can and should — he will return as he went and I want to be found looking for him! O, Maranatha! “Even so *come* Lord Jesus!” I must be about my Lord’s business — but all the while I am asking if perhaps today he will come! Perhaps today! The same Jesus in the same way — praise your name!

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Delight, delight thyself in the Lord! Indeed I do. To thank him: (1) for being so visible — tangible — real and leaving no doubt that you were here and that you left. (2) A cloud came to add beauty and perspective. (3) The white clothes of the angels — beautiful purity — so attractive and uplifting. (4) They know my name — who I am — where I am — oh, thank you! (5) He will come suddenly — visibly — bodily — to his own. Wonder of thanksgivings.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

Notice how specific and personal all this account is: (1) “Their *very* eyes” — angels, our Lord and our Father are all interested in our very eyes, very ears and very brain — and very hands and your very feet — and mine. (2) They were looking *intently* — the focus of amazement and total interest — how good to give that same kind of interest to my Lord in prayer and the reading of his word. Dear Lord, help me never, never to lose the focus of amazement! (3) “. . . two men dressed in white stood *beside* them” — not just there — nor in heaven — but close to them — because they needed such close attention and proximity. He is “with me” — “beside me” — *right now!* and “in me” — and beneath me — and above me — and ahead of me — and behind me. I am comforted and secure!

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What requests arise out of this text? Make these as personal as possible. Such as: (1) May I lift my eyes often to heaven in expectation of his return. (2) I want to look at clouds with a new meaning — he will return on them. (3) May I see him with the eyes of my heart even as he is alive and full of power. (4) May I not hinder your angel’s ministry to me. (5) Help me be busy in what you have given me to do for today. (6) I believe the angel’s message — help my unbelief. (7) Maranatha — come Lord Jesus!

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Allow these words to penetrate your deepest consciousness. He says to me through this text: (1) “I am alive and personally interested in you.” (2) “Do not wait when I have clearly commanded you.” (3) “I could come back today.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Malawi — Points for prayer: (1) *Praise God for relative peace, freedom for the gospel, and receptivity of the people.* Surrounding lands have suffered from wars, famines, and restrictions on the preaching of

the gospel. Pray for future stability. (2) *Malawi is probably the most receptive country in central Africa.* Years of evangelical witness in many areas . . . and a multiplicity of prayer groups and house meetings are part of the reason. The gospel is reaching into every section of society, and in places there is a revival atmosphere. (3) *Full-time workers are too few to reap the harvest* and conserve it in the churches. The relative poverty of most rural congregations means that few can afford to support an adequately trained full-time pastor.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Crown Him with many crowns,
The Lamb upon His throne;
Hark! how the heav’nly anthem drowns
All music but its own!
Awake, my soul and sing
Of Him who died for thee;
And hail Him as thy matchless King
Through all eternity.