

# WEEK FOUR

## —Sunday—

*I need this time of preparation for my work in your vineyard. Prepare me dear Lord.*



### PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

*Employer.* How very good it is to be your employee. I gladly claim my place in your task force, in your grand enterprise. Oh, dear Lord, it is *good, good*, to be in your presence today. I want to follow your directions, but most of all to get acquainted with the One for whom I work. Please, please help me as I start to work for you. The eternal value of the job we have to do, the beauty and blessedness of our work itself, to say nothing of the incalculable value of the precious eternal persons who are the end product — all are overwhelming in thought.

*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 hesitate to relate myself to you as an employee. As you well know I struggle with my own selfish ambition — my own ideas and projects. I want every one of them to be yours. I would like to back right out of the whole effort if the effort would proceed on its own, but then you know my need and I am delighted to work for you. I will repent just as often as I need to, but you can not save the world nor educate your children with good intentions, nor can you with selfish introspection.

*How do you personally relate to the employment of God, and God who is employer? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.*

### CONFESSION OF SIN

The above has much repentance and confession in it and I want to reinforce all my decisions, and confessions. I want to hide *nothing, nothing* — as a plain matter of fact, I know I cannot and do not. If you can work through me, do so — I am open — ready — and in the process, cleanse me of (hidden to man) sins and the obvious ones. Oh, dear Lord, forgive. How you know I need it and how I do claim your

cleansing and freedom and cleanness.

*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 have found a friend in Jesus,  
He's everything to me,  
He's the fairest of ten thousand to my soul;  
The Lily of the Valley, in Him alone I see  
All I need to cleanse and make me fully whole.  
In sorrow He's my comfort, in trouble He's my stay,  
He tells me every care on Him to roll:  
He's the Lily of the Valley, the Bright and Morning Star,  
He's the fairest of ten thousand to my soul.

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

### HIS WORD

<sup>19</sup>and after taking some food, he regained his strength. Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. <sup>20</sup>At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. <sup>21</sup>All those who heard him were astonished and asked, "Isn't he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn't he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?"

—Acts 9:19-21, NIV

<sup>15</sup>But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased <sup>16</sup>to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man, <sup>17</sup>nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus. —Galatians 1:15-17, NIV

### READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How could you do it? Set a man apart from birth? What power! What purpose, what love! I believe I

was set apart from birth — I believe *all* men have been. All men have been called by your grace too, but most men are like those with Saul on the road — hear a noise, but hear no voice or see no One! Only one who is sensitive and responsive and willing could or would hear or see. Only one who was “kicking against the goad” — i.e., resisting your work in his conscience — could be or will be open to hear or see.

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

### READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Why did Saul go to Arabia? I do not know — no one else knows either — but we can all relate this to ourselves and tell why we would go to Arabia. I would go there (if I were Saul) to pray and preach — to develop the capacity of receiving revelation from yourself — at the same time to tell the glad, exquisite, good news to all who would listen — to all who would pause and hear that God so loved that he gave. I would want to be above — unhurried and uncluttered with the One who loves and lives and is in and through and around and behind and before all things. Before he left he found the usual response of those who have ears and do not hear, eyes and do not see.

### READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

How good it is to thank you: (1) For the overcoming love that sent Jesus. God in human form. Lord, I believe, but I can never know the depth of love, the eternal meaning of all you meant when you sent him. (2) That you can reveal your Son — not only in history — but in man, in even me! (3) He is revealed to be preached — if he is not preached the purpose of his revelation is defeated. Oh, God forbid. (4) We need not consult with man about what you have already said — man's counsel is not to obtain your revelation, or to affirm it, or to deny it, or to modify it. Those who loved him before we did can give us much, but there is nothing to be added to what you have already said or to what you already are! (5) Men seldom understand — You always understand. (6) Love — true love — Christ's love, must be present to do anything anywhere with anyone.

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

### READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

*“I did not consult any man.”* This needs to be understood — I want to understand it! It means: (1) Man cannot interpret my personal relationship with you — only yourself as revealed in your Son and your word can do this. (2) Even those who have had a similar experience have not had your experience and can add nothing but confusion to your inquiry. (3) Our Lord, my Lord set me apart — not man — I am answerable first, last and always to you. I am indeed answerable to man — our Lord was to his parents — to Moses and the Law — to the apostles as he served and taught them — but the first and final court of appeal was you — is you — always will be you.

### READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

The requests from Galatians 1:15-17 and Acts 9:19-21 are full of meaning: (1) Keep me “set apart,” always aware of my new birth. (2) Reveal your Son in me. (3) Dear God, make my preaching effective! (4) Help me to first consult your word before I consult *any* man about *anything*. (5) Those who have been preachers for a long time can help me, but not like you can. (6) May I be enabled to so preach Jesus as your Son that men will hear and heed.

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

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

As I speak to you in prayer I hear you through your word: (1) “Remember, you are called, saved and serve through grace.” (2) “Do not be so impressed with men — they are not your masters.” (3) “Speak boldly regardless of the response.”

### INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

*Philippines* — Points for prayer: (1) *The growing churches need prayer.* a) *Rapid growth* can lead to inadequate discipling and “poorly born” Christians. Pray for spiritual depth. b) *Funding* is difficult due to the poverty of churches and, all too often, there is dependence on US funds. c) *Leadership* is inadequate. Praise God for many fine leaders, but they are too few. Pray for the 100+ seminaries and Bible Schools from postgraduate to primary level. TEE programs are many and vital if run well. Many of the better qualified Christian workers emigrate to the USA. d) *Fellowship across high denominational barriers.* The existence of many churches experiencing growth leads to competition. (2) *Ideological conflict increases in the midst of this growth.* Escalating violence between government and Communist guerilla forces is involving civilians and churches. Pastors have been killed, and rural churches closed. Pray that Christian leaders may both prepare believers for suffering for the gospel, and speak out to address the ills of society that provide the soil for Communist ideology to take root. Compromise of the truth in acquiescing with the status quo, or going along with violence, is easy. Pray for revival in the Church; such could save the Philippines from disaster.

### SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

A Friend I have, called Jesus,  
Whose love is strong and true,  
And never fails howe'er 'tis tried,  
No matter what I do;  
I've sinned against this love of His,  
But when I kneel to pray,  
Confessing all my guilt to Him,  
The sin-clouds rolled away.  
It's just like Jesus to roll the clouds away,  
It's just like Jesus to keep me day by day,  
It's just like Jesus all along the way,  
It's just like His great love.

# WEEK FOUR

## —Monday—

*Failure has never happened to you anywhere anytime. You can keep me from falling. I bow before you for your help.*



### PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

*Cannot fail.* I can, but *he can't*. Praise your wonderful and holy name. How more than encouraging it is to know you cannot and will not fail in any area of life — all your promises are “yea and amen” — all your plans will and do find fulfillment — all your judgments are right. How comforting when I know of your essential being! How strong and confident you are — how *all-knowing* — when I confide in you no word you have given shall fall to the ground. Bless and praise and wonder!

*Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.*

### PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

*Cannot fail for me.* Let me stand back and shout “glory, and honor, and power.” When I consider even one of your promises to me — that I will be released from this body and share in the excitement and beauty of your presence — and such a promise *cannot* fail. That no temptation has ever taken me — or will ever come my way without the way of escape — that I *can* endure it if I will *only, only* trust you. I am most humbly aware of your total provision for my life, here and hereafter.

*How do you personally relate to the faithfulness of God, and God who cannot fail? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.*

### CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear Lord, dear Lord! Receive my frank and candid confession that I need to be washed and made clean within. To come to the Lamb who can and does take away the sins of the world is a joy and privilege. Dear Lord, deliver me from any hardening of my heart, keep me always sensitive and responsive. I am glad to die and have my whole life hid with you in my Lord, and hid with my Lord in you.

*What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now.*

### SING A PRAYER TO GOD

There is a name I love to hear,  
I love to sing its worth;  
It sounds like music in my ear,  
The sweetest name on earth.  
Oh, how I love Jesus,  
Oh, how I love Jesus,  
Oh, how I love Jesus,  
Because He first loved me!

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

### HIS WORD

<sup>22</sup>Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Christ.

<sup>23</sup>After many days had gone by, the Jews conspired to kill him, <sup>24</sup>but Saul learned of their plan. Day and night they kept close watch on the city gates in order to kill him. —Acts 9:22-24, NIV

### READ HIS WORD TO HIM

The reasoning process by which Saul proved the deity of your Son offers such an example to me and to all Christians. Religious people can be confused — ill informed — or misinformed — but these religious people can be and will be convinced. (Praise the Lord for this assurance.) How I appreciate this encouragement, but it is a warning as well — there are those — there have always been those who will not (or cannot) understand — and in the name of religion will conspire — if not to kill at least to oppose. Praise your name, you are always present. If we are not delivered from it we can be delivered while in the midst of it.

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

### READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

*Read this word for myself* — indeed I can and to some extent I do each time I read the text. Dear Lord,

how is it that my zeal is not so intense? The constituents of my day would not look with favor on my challenging the Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, to say nothing of the Catholics or Episcopalians. The issue is not the deity of Jesus, but it is serious — such as liberalism or salvation — such as division or One Body. Dear God, give me desire and boldness. Help me to grow more and more powerful (in your strength, not mine). I do not want only to baffle people, I want to win them to your dear Son.

*It is so important that you 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) For your word — a sword, a mirror, a fire, a hammer, a light. May I use it for all these purposes in teaching others. (2) Jesus is the Messiah — oh, the beauty of the thought! (3) There is an Arabia to which each of us can go to teach and prepare. (4) That you can frustrate the hatred of men. (5) That there is someone who loves us and watches on our behalf — both man and yourself. (6) I can learn of men's plans to defeat your work and take appropriate action. (7) It is sometimes right to run from the problem — when bodily harm is a real threat.

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

### READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

*Then Saul went to Arabia.* We learn from Galatians 1:15-18 that it was three years before he left Damascus for Jerusalem, we would assume he spent over two years in Arabia. What did he do there? There are some things I do not believe he did: (1) He did not get a new or special revelation he did not have in Damascus. He was filled (I believe baptized) with the Holy Spirit at Damascus. (2) He did not attend some school of eastern scholars to obtain new understanding. What *did* he do? (1) He preached and taught all he found there, and the country was populated with several large cities. (2) He did find much time and a good place to meditate and reorient his life.

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

### READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How good to ask from your word and know we shall receive: (1) Give me wisdom as I study the Old Testament evidence of the Messiah. (2) Teach me patience with men who will not believe. (3) Give me the same grace our Lord had with men who hated him. (4) What did Paul do in Arabia? (I expect you to help me to find out.) (5) Thank you for all blessed accidents — your providence! (6) How can I help those who are persecuted today? (7) Keep me aware that you guard me and all your children — day and night.

*Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.*

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

What do you say to me in these words? (1) "Baffling people does not necessarily win them." (2) "The devil conspires to kill the zeal of Christians today." (3) "Greater is he who is in you than he who is in the world" (I John 4:4).

### INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

*Poland* — Points for prayer: (1) *The land is very open for Christian work*, but few pastors have a vision for evangelism. Many areas of the country are without an evangelical witness. Pray that many hearts may open for the message of the gospel. (2) *The Roman Catholic Church is very powerful*, and has successfully blocked all attempts by the atheist government to deprive it of its independence and freedom to work through its churches and institutions. The election of a Polish pope has further strengthened the power of the Church. Many Communist Party members remain RC. The Church is really the center of Polish nationalism and culture in the face of Russian imperialism. [Note: the events of 1989 have further strengthened the influence of the Catholic Church.] The Church is very conservative, and the effects of liberal theology and the charismatic movement are still small, but both Vatican II and the caution of the hierarchy in recent troubles are provoking greater freedom of thought and action among young Catholics. (3) *Many thousands of young people* have turned from a nominal Catholicism to new life in Christ through the OASIS movement with Bible study groups and camps. Pray for this evangelical movement within the Catholic Church. There were 150,000 members in 1983.

### SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Jesus has loved me — wonderful Savior!  
 Jesus has loved me, I cannot tell why;  
 Came He to rescue sinners all worthless,  
 My heart was opened — for Him I would die.  
 Glory to Jesus — wonderful Savior!  
 Glory to Jesus — the One I adore;  
 Glory to Jesus — wonderful Savior!  
 Glory to Jesus, and praise evermore.

# WEEK FOUR

## —Tuesday—

*The glazed eyes — the “change of subject” attitude — the apathetic look NEVER happens with you. This being so I gladly worship you.*



### PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

*Always interested.* Oh, wonder of all wonders! This must surely be the ultimate of your beautiful qualities! That you will always listen to every man, everywhere, in every language, that you will always be attentive and never tired. What a wonder of all your qualities! I do not have the adequate words, but I surely do have the joy and praise and exuberance to tell you again and again how I and all your children appreciate your constant interest.

*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

That you take an interest in me is a great source of amazement. An interest and concern about my character is, I am sure, your first concern, although all I am and do are integrated. I love you and want to so live and think that we can share in all I do. I know how very ignorant my efforts and thoughts appear, but then, there is no “put down” in your nature! Bless your holy name!

*How do you personally relate to the interest of God, and God who is always interested? Speak it out or write it out.*

### CONFESSION OF SIN

I am just as glad to confess my sin. I have no rationale for it (or them). I simply lay them before you and ask that you cast them in your sea of forgetfulness. I could worry and fret over my repeated sins — I am truly sorry — and I do not want such, but I confess with Paul that “the evil I would not that I practice,” but such being so “it is Satan who dwells within.” Free me! Let me loose! Cleanse and forget! Praise and glory — I accept your 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

More about Jesus would I know,  
More of His grace to others show;  
More of His saving fulness see,  
More of His love who died for me.  
More, more about Jesus,  
More, more about Jesus;  
More of His saving fulness see,  
More of His love who died for me.

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

### HIS WORD

<sup>25</sup>But his followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall.

<sup>26</sup>When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was really a disciple. <sup>27</sup>But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus. —Acts 9:25-27, NIV

### READ HIS WORD TO HIM

I wonder if you have a sense of humor? Surely the incongruity of Saul's coming and leaving has occurred to you. I feel almost irreverent to thus express it, but he did come in as a lion and left as a lamb! Here begins the lessons on “how many things he must suffer for my name's sake.” Saul had “followers” even in these early days of his service to you. What a price he had to pay for the pearl of great price, but it was more than worth it all. How I do appreciate each word of your revelation.

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

### READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I want to travel with Saul. I want to feel as he felt —

to pray with him. What mixed emotions filled Saul's heart! Great discovery! of both the mind of God and of man: of how infinitely merciful God was and how merciless man could be. Thank God for Barnabas. Oh, how I want to be like him! Full of concern and love — when others doubted, he trusted, when others were afraid he was trusting. When and where had Saul and Barnabas first met? In Jerusalem? Barnabas knew the apostles — they probably had the gift of discernment hence they would trust Saul, or did they trust the words of Barnabas?

*It is so important that you 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, thank you for: (1) Daring friends who will risk their own lives to help. (2) A basket and a rope to be used for such a precious cargo. God supplies the little things as well as what we consider big things. (3) Disciples in Jerusalem who act like disciples everywhere. It gives us all identity with others to see their human qualities. (4) Saul who had seen the Lord. How I believe I can see Him through his words and the words of many others, and through the eyes of my heart. (5) Fearless preaching in the name (authority) of Jesus. (6) Every one of the twelve apostles. Oh, where shall we find twelve "sent ones" for today? (7) A place for Saul to stay and talk and pray and love and thank you.

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

### READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

*"But they were all afraid of him."* How the fear of man does work a snare: (1) A snare to fellowship — we could have such a wider, sweeter fellowship if we loved and trusted one another. (2) A snare to the work of God in our lives — God could have overcome this problem if someone had only asked him (thank God for Barnabas). (3) A snare to what God is doing through someone else — we will really never know if we do not trust. (4) A snare to the mercy God has in the lives of others — we will never know until perfect love casts out this fear.

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

### READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

There are requests I would never have considered if I had not found them in this text: (1) Give me the courage and humility I see in Saul. (2) Grant me the willingness to suffer as found in Paul. (3) Help me to be as creative in overcoming Satan. (4) If I should be misunderstood give me persistence. (5) Lead me to some friend like Barnabas. (6) Thank you for the gift of discernment found in the apostles. (7) May my change from serving self to serving my Lord be as complete as Saul's.

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

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

There are several things you want to say to me from this text — give me ears to hear: (1) "I give grace to the humble." (2) "Even good men make mistakes." (3) "There is always someone who will trust you and understand."

### INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

*Portugal* — Points for prayer: (1) *Political and economic upheavals over the last several years* have brought unprecedented changes, including greater freedom for the gospel than ever before. Yet Portugal's economic plight has caused difficulty for many, and the increasing crime wave is causing deep concern. Pray for peace and stability for the land. Pray for government leaders who must make many uncomfortable decisions to safeguard the future; they need wisdom and determination. (2) *The religious freedom since 1974 has given many new opportunities for evangelism* through open-air evangelism, house visitation, literature, etc. Evangelicals have grown numerically, but the effort could have been greater. The growth of cults such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons has been dramatic. Pray for a great mobilization of believers for outreach in this day of opportunity. (3) *Evangelical churches* have, generally, not grown fast, with the exception of the Assemblies of God and a few smaller groups. Praise the Lord for the steady increase in the number of evangelical churches (815 in 1980 to 930 in 1983). Pray for more pastors and full-time workers to be raised up, and for more effective discipling and outreach. Lack of cooperation, quarrels and divisions have hindered more rapid growth.

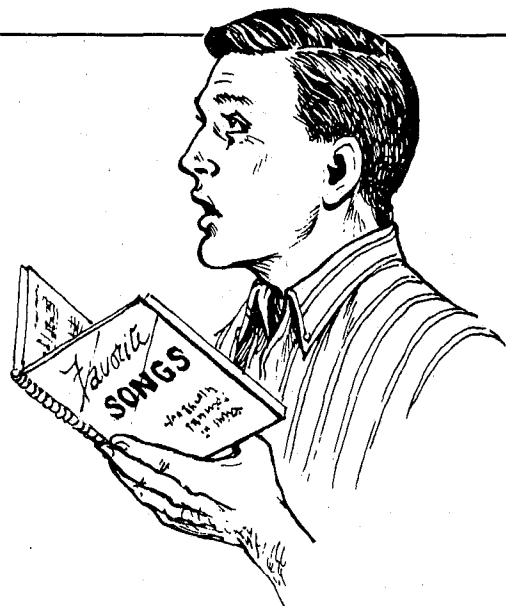
### SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

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 FOUR

## —Wednesday—

*That you want me is most exciting! I come into your presence to find out why.*



### PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

*Wants you and me.* How glad I am to be wanted — most especially by the great God of the whole cosmos. I realize you want every man, woman and child who has been born or will be born on this earth. You want them because they were brought into being for yourself. How I do praise you for your plan for every life. None escape unnoticed or unwanted.

*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

*Wants me* — Since I twice belong to you I am most glad to give myself to you. Use me, cleanse me, direct and fill my life. I do so want you. I love you and worship you in deep humility and wonder. Dear God, move in my life. I am trying to be sensitive to your desires.

*How do you personally relate to the love of God, and God who wants you and me? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.*

### CONFESSION OF SIN

Deceit and bitterness — I have sinned, I am a sinner in both areas. Please change me, forgive me! Dear God, I do want to change. I have changed and I am being changed — an openness to your presence and love is doing more for me than anything else. Praise you — I accept my cleanness. I want to be deeply moved to repentance.

*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

My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;

I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.  
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand,  
All other ground is sinking sand.

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

### HIS WORD

<sup>28</sup>So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. <sup>29</sup>He talked and debated with the Grecian Jews, but they tried to kill him. <sup>30</sup>When the brothers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

<sup>31</sup>Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord. —Acts 9:28-31, NIV

### READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Dear God, I want to look at these words as if I had never before seen them — as if I was a brand new convert! How generous and thoughtful it was for the apostles to offer Saul a place to stay in Jerusalem. Was it in the house of John Mark? How vastly familiar and yet unfamiliar every place in the city looked to Saul! Boldness is a byproduct of reality. When something or someone is as important as was salvation and our Lord, it *must* be, it *will* be shared. The apostles had to hear of the attempts to kill Saul from someone else other than Saul. Did it mean so little to him that he would not even mention it? Surely the love, devotion, total surrender of Saul is a beautiful example for me.

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

### READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I have read this word for myself too much — I want



you in it — in all of it. I have pondered a long time as to the meaning of the little phrase, “the church . . . was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord.” Just what is involved here? How can I — and others — “be encouraged by the Holy Spirit”? Is this a direct operation of the Holy Spirit on the human spirit? Or is this indirect in the sense of using words? We are encouraged in two ways (perhaps more): (1) Through what we sometimes call a “fortuitous set of circumstances.” The Holy Spirit could be the Person behind the arrangement of these circumstances. (2) *Through words* of promise — or information to direct and explain — such is the ministry of the spirit in the word he has given us. Before his words were written they were spoken — and no doubt repeated orally.

*It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.*

### READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

I thoroughly enjoy expressing this time of prayer and worship! Thank you: (1) That Saul and the twelve could get together in Jerusalem and talk and pray into the hours of the days and nights of two weeks. (2) That Saul was willing to be a true witness(martyr) in Jerusalem — that he probably went back to the Grecian synagogues to undo what he did with Stephen. (3) That surprise of a pleasant kind is always possible in your work. (4) That men can praise you because of each other. (5) That brothers can care for our lives more than we do. (6) That Saul could receive counsel and act upon it. (7) That church growth is a byproduct of the encouragement of the Holy Spirit and walking in the fear of yourself!

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

### READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

Let's gather around your word and think together: Saul had a need that Barnabas met. He became such a good friend to Saul and Saul became more than a friend to Barnabas — so it can be with friends today. Saul stayed in Jerusalem just 15 days — it only took this long to stir up a riot — and a revival! Praise our Lord for the devotion of your bondservant Saul. The Grecian Jews of the synagogue of “the freed men” became a place of bondage to Saul, but then he understood it — a few brief years before he had led such an opposition against Stephen.

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

### READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Paul always obtained a response — in the reaction here there are several requests: (1) May I be as generous to those I do not know as the apostles were with Saul. (2) Give me the holy boldness I need. (3) Give me fearless courage necessary for debate. (4) May I learn more and more how to effectively “preach the faith.” (5) Help me to praise you instead

of men. (6) May I be ready to heed the advice of my Christian brothers who know you and love me. (7) How I want to see the church today strengthened and encouraged by the Holy Spirit!

*Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.*

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

What are you saying to me through these verses? (1) “Speak out boldly for me.” (2) “It is not necessary that all men agree with you.” (3) “Please live in the fear of myself.”

### INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

*Puerto Rico* — Points for prayer: (1) *A great harvest has been gathered into Protestant churches this century.* Widespread evangelism, a large missionary investment and many institutions have resulted in a large proportion of the population deserting the once dominant Catholic Church. The fastest growth has been among Pentecostal groups, Seventh Day Adventists and Baptists. (2) *The impact of Anglophone North American culture on the Hispanic Puerto Ricans has been far reaching.* This has created fertile soil for change, but also an identity crisis that affects politics, the Catholic Church and mission-church relationships among Protestants. Pray for the maturing churches and their leadership. A missionary vision is lacking. (3) *Less reached groups:* a) *Chinese* (2,000). A small Christian fellowship meets, but the majority are unevangelized. b) *Slum dwellers in the cities* live in a hopeless poverty trap. (4) *Overpopulation and unemployment have forced over 1.5 million Puerto Ricans to emigrate to the USA.* Sixty per cent live in New York where they form the lowest income groups. Many live in Hispanic ghettos where frustration has driven many to violence, drugs and immorality. Pray for all specifically ministering to this community.

### SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

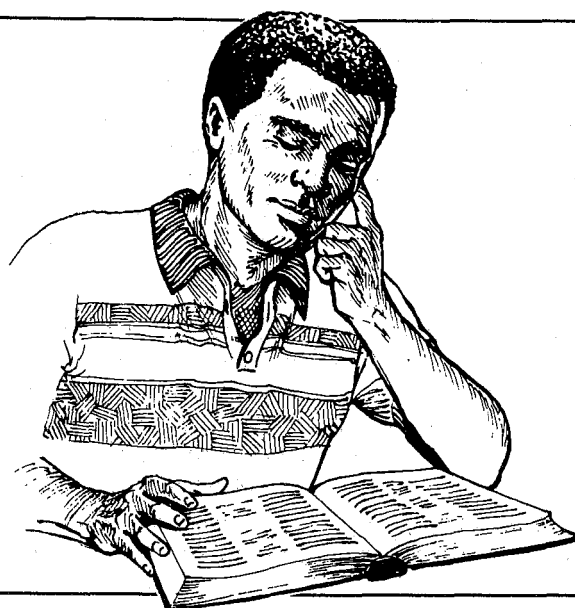
Crown Him with many crowns,  
The Lamb upon His throne;  
Hark! how the heav'nly anthem drowns  
All music but its own!  
Awake, my soul, and sing  
Of Him who died for thee;  
And hail Him as thy matchless King  
Through all eternity.



# WEEK FOUR

## —Thursday—

*Ah, to live in the light is what I want!  
The light you give is energizing! It is  
like heaven. Help me just for today!*



### PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

*Light-giver.* Dear Lord, when you said, “Let there be light” we received the physical light we presently have. When you sent “the light of the world” we were given light all about us — within us and above us, behind us, ahead of us. How beautiful is light! Sparkling, scintillating, diffusing and spreading everywhere — so may your dear Son be in my heart and mind.

*Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.*

### PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Light-giver for me! All the light I have or want on any subject I get from you — either directly from your word, or indirectly from your children who have used the intelligence you gave them. Praise your name! I am so, so glad for the light that constantly comes into my life through my study of your word — but more — by him, my Lord, who is the Light of my life.

*How do you personally relate to the light of God, and God who is the light-giver? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.*

### CONFESSION OF SIN

Why, oh why, do I want to walk in darkness — in any form? Forgive me, I am so strongly drawn to the light — bless the Lord. Cleanse me, forgive me, help me. Move in my conscience to a deeper repentance. Let *all* bitterness be totally rooted out! Give me the sweet, deep peace I need and want.

*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

Sweetly, Lord, have we heard Thee calling,

“Come, follow Me!”

And we see where Thy footprints falling  
Leads us to Thee.

Footprints of Jesus, that make the pathway glow!  
We will follow the steps of Jesus where’er they go.

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

### HIS WORD

<sup>32</sup>As Peter traveled about the country, he went to visit the saints in Lydda. <sup>33</sup>There he found a man named Aeneas, a paralytic who had been bedridden for eight years. <sup>34</sup>“Aeneas,” Peter said to him, “Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and take care of your mat.” Immediately Aeneas got up. <sup>35</sup>All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

<sup>36</sup>In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which, when translated, is Dorcas), who was always doing good and helping the poor. —Acts 9:32-36, NIV

### READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How I would like to have been one of the saints in Lydda when Peter paid a visit! I know you were present at that time — and yet *now* you are present — indeed, you live in the *Eternal Present* — so you were present here and there all at the same time (for there is no time with you). What an amazing thought! To have been in bed for eight years and then all at once to “immediately” obey the command “get up” — is beyond my comprehension! As wonderful as this was to Aeneas it was not for his sake alone that the command was given, but for all those who lived in the city of Lydda and the plain of Sharon. Dear God, I believe.

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

### READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How shall I relate to this miracle and to the many others in this Acts account? There are several questions I ask myself. Dear God, help me, help me with

the answers. Since I have the same message and people here in Joplin have the same need, why do we not have the same credentials to confirm our message? *Answers:* a) Peter was an apostle, but Philip wasn't and he did the same. b) But the apostles laid their hands upon Philip — so they did, and by the apostles' hands such miraculous signs were given (Acts 8 & 19). But simply because the hands of the apostles were laid on Philip are we totally sure this is how he obtained this power? We are assuming at best. Is it an assumption beyond question? Give me wisdom to answer aright.

*It is so important that you 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, thank you: (1) For Peter's visit to me on this day so far removed from Lydda and the first century. (2) For Aeneas — whom I will one day see (will it be soon?) and ask him just what he thought and felt and said and did — and because there will be no restriction, it will be easy to do, i.e., of time, space, etc. (3) That men and women turned to the Lord — turned from the vain things of their lives and associations. (4) That you are helping me to project myself back to that time and place and become a participator with them. (5) That total surrender is possible! The Lordship of Jesus can be and must be and will be a reality with me. (6) For dear saints who love you better than life. (7) That helping the poor is "doing good" by your standards.

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

### READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

*"All who saw him turned to the Lord."* Why? Because they saw obvious evidence of the power of God — at least they believed Peter when he told them the source of this miracle. Because they had an Old Testament background that prepared them for such signs associated with God's men. Because they knew Aeneas and his condition — they knew him before the miracle and they knew him afterwards. Because they wanted to believe, they wanted to worship an all powerful, all caring, all knowing God — and they did.

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

### READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Aeneas and Dorcas are saying much to me — what should I ask of you? (1) Give me the love necessary to see people as "your holy ones." (2) I need to do much more visiting — help me. (3) Help me to see the potential of wholeness in every man. (4) May I learn the lesson of faith in the healing of Aeneas. (5) Turn me more and more to yourself. (6) Send women like Dorcas into our fellowship. (7) You see the importance of deeds of physical help — open my eyes, change my values.

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

There are surely several things you say to me here. What are they? (1) "Healing was a means — the end was teaching." (2) "Help people in every way you can." (3) "The poor are still with you — help them."

### INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

*Qatar (One of the Gulf States)* — Points for prayer: (1) *There are no known Qatari believers.* Pray for the expatriate Christians who have contact with Qataris that they may have the opportunity to share their faith. (2) *The expatriate communities* have been drawn to the country for material gain. Pray that the witness of the small groups of believers among Indians, Pakistanis, Egyptians and Westerners to their own communities may be fruitful. Little has been done to reach out to other unevangelized minorities such as the Iranis, etc.

### SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Face to face with Christ, my Savior,  
Face to face — what will it be?  
When with rapture I behold Him,  
Jesus Christ who died for me.  
Face to face I shall behold Him,  
Far beyond the starry sky;  
Face to face in all His glory,  
I shall see Him by and by!

# WEEK FOUR

## —Friday—

*There is indeed "honey in the rock." I bow before you to receive my portion.*



### PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

*Honey giver.* This is such an attractive quality of your character! Honey is sweet — i.e., to the taste — you are sweet and pleasant to all the senses of man. Honey is nourishing — how very nourishing you are to all, and for all our needs! Dear God, you do indeed and in truth know and meet every need. Honey is made from the body of the bee — your goodness and sweetness and strength has been given to us through the body of your dear Son. Honey produces energy. How I praise you for your life-giving qualities!

*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

*Honey-giver to me.* How much more sweet — indeed all sweetness comes to me because of you. If my nature has qualities of endearment — you are the source. How full of energy and nourishment I have found you. I surely praise you for this quality. I owe my very life to you. When I think and contemplate the fact that all I have comes through the body of your Son, I am full of sorrow and joy. Praise your dear Self!

*How do you personally relate to the sweetness of God, and God who is divine energy? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.*

### CONFESSION OF SIN

I come to your throne to receive grace and help, to be made clean, to lose all guilt. How foolish is foolish talk! Forgive me! Praise you for the desire to open up and pour out all my guilt and sins. Dear God, I want to be clean! pure! whole! I know you in the Person of your Son as seen in the beautiful record of your word.

*What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now.*

### SING A PRAYER TO GOD

What a friend we have in Jesus,  
All our sins and griefs to bear!  
What a privilege to carry  
Ev'rything to God in prayer!  
O what peace we often forfeit,  
O what needless pain we bear,  
All because we do not carry  
Ev'rything to God in prayer!

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

### HIS WORD

<sup>37</sup>About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room.

<sup>38</sup>Lydda was near Joppa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him, "Please come at once!" — *Acts 9:37,38, NIV*

### READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Oh yes, yes. Dorcas did what all of us will do — died! After she had left her body (which is the real definition of death) her body, not Dorcas, was washed and laid out for burial. Thank you that I will never be buried. How clearly does this text say what you want all men to hear and see. Only you can help in the time of death. I wonder what Dorcas saw and heard before Peter arrived, i.e., in the brief time she was apart from her body? It is idle and *wrong* to speculate! It was very far better than being in the body — it was to be in your home — it was in the Paradise of the Unseen World (Hades), but as to personal response we will ask you all about it when we get there. What we need to know is before us in your word.

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

### READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

One day someone will wash my dead body — one day

I will be out of this clay tabernacle — one day there will be no more days for me! Praise your name. I have a great desire to even now depart this house, since I know how very far better it will be! God's man has the only help available at the time of death. How important the preacher feels when he is called to assist at the funeral — he knows he has the sole source of comfort and strength. Preacher, "come at once."

*It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.*

### READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

How easy it is to thank you at such a time: (1) For dear ones who truly love us and will miss us. (2) For the lasting value of good works in the lives of others who will live longer than we will. (3) For God's value system that says: robes and other clothes are important. (4) That you are at work all the time — arranging the proximity of Lydda and Joppa — it was no accident that Peter was nearby — you knew it before he left Jerusalem. (5) That Peter had nothing more important to do than to help those who grieved. (6) That Peter had left all to follow him — even when our Lord was with you. (7) That you told Peter what to do and when to do it (how else could he have acted "by faith"?).

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

### READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

Does God raise the dead today? It is not because he lacks the power to do so. It is not because he has changed his mind that "it is appointed unto man once to die." Let's say God does raise the dead today, we then must ask why would he do it? Here are some possible answers: (1) He wants to demonstrate his power and love and personal interest in man — how many people will he need to raise and under what circumstances? Will all men draw the same conclusion from the miracle? How will this prove more than the records of Dorcas, or the widow of Nain's son, or Lazarus? (2) That he wants to prove his word through his messengers is true. Hasn't this already been done? Is there another word from him other than that in his word, the Bible? Aren't the *credentials* given with the word? The word was spoken (and later written) and the signs accompanied the word. What will raising the dead prove about his word that has not already been proven? Please do not side-step the issue, *answer the questions!*

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

### READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Death prompts many requests: (1) Remind me all over again that I am not the body. (2) Help me to accept your will in sickness and death. (3) Help me to bring your own comfort to those who have lost loved ones. (4) May I be prepared to be interrupted today as

pleases you. (5) Give me grace to know what is urgent and what is not. (6) I want to see death as overcome by our Lord — help me. (7) May I appreciate much more fully my good health.

*Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.*

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

Speak to me: (1) "Life is brief — live and work today." (2) "The best of people die — for reasons best known to me." (3) "Do not wait for a better time — serve me today."

### INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

*Reunion* — Points for prayer: (1) *The great spiritual need* is underlined by widespread alcoholism (much rum is made), loose morals and witchcraft. There is also much poverty — especially in the highlands. Catholicism is the stated religion of most people. This is still a pioneer field for missions. (2) *Mature leadership* for the young and rapidly growing churches is a priority. The Evangelical Church commenced a Bible school in 1984. Pray that this school may make an impact on all the five French-speaking island territories of the Indian Ocean (Reunion, Mauritius, Comores, Seychelles, Madagascar). (3) *Unreached peoples*: a) *The Chinese*. Many are nominally Catholic; only one known born-again believer. b) There are no churches functioning among the *Comorian* or *Malagasy*, or among the Hindu *Tamil* and Muslim *Gujarati Indians*. (4) *Christian literature and Bibles* have been widely distributed in the past 10 years through the Bible Society, Scripture Union, and Evangelical Church. There is one small Christian bookstore.

### SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Down at the cross where my Savior died,  
Down where for cleansing from sin I cried,  
There to my heart was the blood applied;  
Glory to His name.  
Glory to His name,  
Glory to His name;  
There to my heart was the blood applied;  
Glory to His name.

# WEEK FOUR

## —Saturday—

*In ways I do not know — and in ways I do know you protect me. I bow to receive your protection for today.*



### PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

*Protector.* Amen! You are in truth my only protection from the evil one — and from myself and from my enemies and my friends. What is true of me is true of all men upon this little sphere. Praise your name, we will never know the terrible things that could have happened to us, and didn't because you guarded and protected us. Bless your name, which is power and love, the essence of mercy.

*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

Protector of myself. I know you have stretched forth your hand and said to Satan — "This far and no further." You have led me into the ways of pleasantness, i.e., in which I presently walk and protected me from so many unhappy incidents and events. You have kept me from the tongues of those who would lie and cheat and deceive. Bless your wonderful name. How you have hidden me in the shelter of my dear, wonderful Lord — the rock in a weary land!

*How do you personally relate to the protection of God, and God who is protector? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.*

### CONFESSION OF SIN

As I look over the list in your word I am convinced I am implicitly guilty of most of them and explicitly guilty of several. I confess indeed my specific sins, but "foolish talking," "empty words" — they too need to be examined and repented of. Dear God, how good to be whole and clean and free! A liberty wherein the blood of your Son has set me free!

*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

Abide with me, fast falls the eventide;  
The darkness deepens; Lord with me abide:  
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,  
Help of the helpless, O abide with me!

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

### HIS WORD

<sup>39</sup>Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them.

<sup>40</sup>Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. — *Acts 9:39,40, NIV*

### READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How often (millions of times) have men traveled with Peter from Lydda to Joppa and walked up the steps and entered the upper room into the presence of the dead body of Dorcas? But on this day I want to share your presence in that room. How every eye focuses on the still form of the body, on the unusual, but how different is your view of this scene! Your devoted servant is already enjoying the wonder of your presence — to return her spirit to her body would be no advantage. But because it would prepare many to enter life rather than eternal death, you grant (and even prompt) the prayer of Peter.

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

### READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

How good were the good works of this good woman, but how temporary — how soon forgotten — or were they? We and two millennia of readers have not

forgotten them! Somehow I want to believe that no good deed done in the spirit of the One who did the menial tasks of the carpenter's shop will ever be forgotten. You have already indicated you have the ability of instantaneous recall in returning to the mind of the apostles all that Jesus taught them — via the Holy Spirit. For those to whom it could mean appreciation or understanding, I want to believe every thoughtful deed and word will be returned in the world to come.

*It is so important that you pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.*

### READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

Amen! Thank you: (1) For the widows who would never cease talking of the resurrection of Dorcas (oh, that the resurrection from trespasses and sins might mean as much to everyone). (2) That someday we too will be able to talk to Dorcas and the widows and Peter and smile and rejoice. (3) That Peter did not want to obtain the praise of men (women) — the miracle happened while he was alone in the room. (4) That prayer is associated with the miracle since it identifies and focuses the source. (5) That true dependence and humility is seen in the words and posture of Peter. (6) That Dorcas never said anything about what she saw and heard while her body was dead and she was in the spirit world. (7) That I have been raised from a worse death and greater loss.

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

### READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

Shall we raise the dead today? Oh, how I want to project myself back to the time and place of the writing of these words. I notice no "ordinary Christians" did this; it was an apostle. There was no wide scale, wholesale raising from the dead — only the leaders of the body did it: Stephen, Philip, Peter and John the apostles. Why? Why? Because they were speaking the word of the Lord and these signs were their credentials. The miracles proved or confirmed their word. All Christians went everywhere preaching the word, but no miracles are associated with them. Why? Why? Because they were giving a testimony and not a body of teaching that needed confirmation.

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

### READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Going to a funeral moves all of us to ask questions — and offer petitions: (1) Give me patience and love to answer calls for help. (2) Open my eyes to see that investment in lives is what lasts. (3) May I have as tender a heart as Peter. (4) Break my heart over the heart-break of others. (5) Let me know again just how final death is. (6) Move me to prayer in the presence of need. (7) Thank you for your interest in the sad scene.

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

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

What do you say in the presence of death? (1) "Dorcas was with me, not the widows or Peter." (2) "I sent her back to help people believe there is no death." (3) "Prayer is the most powerful force in the universe."

### INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

*Romania* — Points for prayer: (1) *The authorities have used every possible means to control the churches* — infiltration of informers, falsely accusing pastors and church leaders, and blackmailing them to conform to government demands in exchange for reduced persecution. Many leaders in the larger churches are therefore servile to the state. Pray for all Christian leaders in their unenviable situation. (2) *Persecution of all groups who refuse to conform has been particularly severe* — and the level of pressure has gradually increased between 1974 and 1986. Especially persecuted are the evangelical Orthodox "Lord's Army," Baptists, Brethren and Pentecostals, because of their vigorous evangelism and refusal to compromise the Truth. Pray that Western leaders may make the right representations to the government to adhere to international agreements on religious freedom. The ethnic minority churches are also under great pressure — Lutherans (German) and Reformed (Hungarian and German) in Transylvania. (3) *The forms of persecution are many* — blackmail, limitations on church buildings, baptisms, and youth work, violent disruption of meetings, destruction of "illegal" church buildings, heavy fines, imprisonments, enforced exile, dismissal from work and frequent house searches. Pray for our suffering brethren, that they may stand firm in the Lord and continue their courageous witness.

### SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

I will sing the wondrous story  
Of the Christ who died for me,  
How he left His home in glory  
For the cross of Calvary.  
Yes, I'll sing the wondrous story  
Of the Christ who died for me,  
Sing it with the saints in glory,  
Gathered by the crystal sea.