

WEEK SEVEN

—Sunday—

Men and women have disappointed me time after time — but there truly is “no disappointment in Jesus.” I want to find this out all over again — just now.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man” (Psa. 118:8). Praise your wonderful name our trust in you is never misplaced. There is no disappointment in you! All your promises are “yea, and amen.” You have total provisions for fulfillment. All men could find all their lives completed and fulfilled in you. In the first place you understand our need better than we ourselves. In the second place, you want to help us more than we want to ask help. In the third place, there is nothing or no one who could stand in your way of fulfillment. How very much better it is to put our trust in you. Just for today will I be ready to say: I trust in you with all my heart and lean not on my own understanding? May it be so.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

For me. How often have I been disappointed by man! How often have I been a disappointment! How often have I found abundant satisfaction in you? Shall I say ten thousand times ten thousand? Yea, more! It is good to lean back and soak up all the meaning of these words from you: “It is better . . .” — indeed, indeed it is. So much better to relate all my life to you than to men. “To trust in the Lord . . .” Since our trust is in your character we have no hesitancy or fear. *Trust* is a strong word. I put my whole weight upon you. I release all hold and give it to you. Oh, how much better it is!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

How often have I been frustrated and upset because I put my confidence in man? The first man to disappoint me is the one writing these words. The one who fails to fulfill is the one who appears before you. Dear Lord, how I do seek your forgiveness. How I

long to make my promises in the context of what you have promised me and others through me. I have perhaps disappointed myself more often than I have anyone else. It is so good to look forward to a time and a place where there will be no disappointments. Dear God, I want so to purify my heart and cleanse my hands that men can put confidence in me and find faithfulness. Help me. Forgive me. Empower me. “*Dishonor to parents.*” I have been guilty of this. I have sought your forgiveness earlier. But even now I know I cannot repair the harm I did. You have forgotten it; why should I remember it? I know in first honoring you I will find the resources to honor all others.

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

O worship the King, all glorious above,
And gratefully sing His wonderful love;
Our Shield and Defender, the Ancient of days,
Pavilioned in splendor, and girded with praise.

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

HIS WORD

Three days after arriving in the province, Festus **25** went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem, ²where the chief priests and Jewish leaders appeared before him and presented the charges against Paul. ³They urgently requested Festus, as a favor to them, to have Paul transferred to Jerusalem, for they were preparing an ambush to kill him along the way. ⁴Festus answered, “Paul is being held in Caesarea, and I myself am going there soon. ⁵Let some of your leaders come with me and press charges against the man there, if he has done anything wrong.” —Acts 25:1-5, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Who was (is) this man Festus? He seems to be almost totally ignorant of yourself or your Son. He seems to know little or nothing of your law. How well he represents most of the rulers of this world! For

whatever reason, he does save the life of the apostle. We know that one reason is your infinite goodness and fulfillment of your eternal purpose. How I would have liked to ride in the chariot of the governor from Caesarea to Jerusalem! But you were there! How did Festus view the task given to him? Just another job? He no doubt saw much that held his interest. He must have asked questions of those who did not side with the Jews or Rome and could give him some balanced view of the prisoner Paul. Did Festus know of the plot to kill Paul? The Jews were not interested in a trial or justice. Hatred and jealousy knows no rules! Dear Lord, how did you relate to the scene in Jerusalem?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

For more than 40 times I have attempted to lead others to see this text — now I want to look at it as if I had never seen it before! Caesarea was where the palace of the governor was located; but everyone knew the real center of rule was Jerusalem. It was an all-day ride from the busy seaport to the crowded streets of the holy city. How radically changed are both places today! No wonder Ananias and the priests wanted to ambush Paul. They knew from at least two attempts that their charges would not stand examination. I am so glad that Jesus is my attorney at your right hand and Satan's efforts will be no more successful — "Who can lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" Can I then, like Paul, expect some unreasonable attempts of Satan to "ambush" my faith? Praise your name he will be no more successful than the high priest!

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the willingness of Festus to face the issues as they were, and not to lie or kill. (2) Thank you for your interest in all affairs of men — in this case to preserve the life of your servant for a few more years. (3) Thank you for the strength of Festus' refusal in the face of urging from those who could hurt him politically. (4) Thank you for the open decision as to who was right and who was wrong. (5) Thank you for the preservation of Luke's account over all these years. It is as fresh today as when the first "lover of God" read it. (6) Thank you there is *always* a way out of every trial, every temptation. Dear Lord, I want to find it each time! (7) Thank you for history (his story) that tells us over and over again who is right and who is wrong!

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"... come with me and press charges against the man" We could indeed level several charges, but they could all be to the glory of our Lord. We could charge Paul with a love that would not let go of his kindred. He even wanted to go to hell on their

behalf — if such would save them. We could charge him with a great sympathy for the poor and hungry. He obtained money from the "despised" Gentiles to help the weak and unfortunate among the Jewish population in Jerusalem and Judea. We could charge him with a deep worship commitment. Paul wanted to spend time with the Lord in prayer and praise and meditation. Dear Lord, give us men like Paul!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Paul no doubted prayed while Festus talked to the chief priests in Jerusalem. Requests do arise from this text. (1) Lack of knowledge and lack of communication destroy so much. Deliver me from such problems. (2) Determined evil men are such a threat — give me humility and courage. (3) Thank you that some men will not be intimidated — I want to be one of them. (4) Did Festus already know of Paul's innocence? What problems politics produce! At the same time such is no problem with you. May I learn a lesson here. (5) May I appreciate more fully than ever what measure of justice we have in our courts. (6) Is there a particular purpose in Luke's inclusion of this exchange? Give me wisdom to know. (7) Paul was not afraid of death but he wanted to live — why?

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What messages arise from this text? (1) "Change is the one consistent ingredient of life." (2) "Religion is no indication of morality." (3) "Men moved by passion will go to almost any lengths to gain their objective."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Urban Evangelization — Points for prayer: (1) *The mobilization of a trained and efficient work force.* Christian workers, in general, fear the cities, especially the less comfortable slums and inner cities, and do not know how to handle the high costs, complexities and tensions of city ministry. (2) *The essential and effective use of all modern methods of communication.* Millions need to be confronted with the claims of Christ in as short a time as possible. No one medium can achieve this, but a combination of all in a concerted effort could decisively change the spiritual climate of a city.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Day is dying in the west,
Heav'n is touching earth with rest;
Wait and worship while the night
Sets her evening lamps alight
Through all the sky.
Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts!
Heav'n and earth are full of Thee!
Heav'n and earth are praising Thee,
O Lord most high!

WEEK SEVEN

—Monday—

I am glad for the confidence you give me that right — not wrong — will win! I need this time of worship to confirm this fact.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked shall perish” (Psa. 1:6). Dear Lord, you are a participant in the way of the righteous — but you have no part or participation in wickedness; therefore his way shall perish.

How wonderful that you can and do participate with men in everything they do. Your knowledge of our lives is intuitive, i.e., you have an experiential knowledge of every part of life. The only reason the way of the wicked comes to nothing is because you are not in it. It is both amazing and humbling to contemplate your participation in all that I am and all you can give. I do not come to get, I come to praise and worship you. At the same time, man is such a needy creature. To worship before Someone who knows everything and is able to do everything is an awesome thought.

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

He *knows* my way. Dear, dear Lord, I am trying to assimilate this truth. You are a constant participator in all I am. I know you love me, but to be present in all I think, this is shocking. I have known this before, but I haven't known it. For today: you will be, and are personally knowledgeable of all that will happen. No wonder I can claim the promises of the earlier verses of this blessed psalm: “He is like a tree planted by brooks of water, which giveth its fruit in its season, and whose leaf fadeth not; and all that he does will prosper.” Since you are in me and with me the life and energy to produce fruit are from you — you are indeed the “water of life.” How delighted I am to claim that my life will never lose its color. I am almost afraid to express the next promise — and yet I am sure you said it. I'm sure you mean it — I'm sure I want it. “All that he does will prosper.” Dear Lord, how precious you are!

How do you personally relate to the omniscience of God, and God who knows all?

CONFESSION OF SIN

“The way of the wicked shall perish.” The wicked could ultimately himself perish, but *right now the way of the wicked shall come to nothing*. How many times have I found this true? Dear Lord, I have lost my way because it was not *your* way. “Little is much if God is in it.” But much is nothing if he isn't. Oh Father, I want so much to give you the steering wheel of my life! I want so much to let the water of life soak through the substrata of my heart. Help me, forgive me, indwell all I am!

“Loss of first love.” How better could I describe my need? I return to the intimacy I want with you and you want with me in every part of this day. I want to — help me!

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

I am Thine, O Lord,
I have heard Thy voice,
And it told Thy love to me;
But I long to rise in the arms of faith,
And be closer drawn to Thee.
Draw me nearer, nearer, blessed Lord,
To the cross where Thou hast died;
Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord,
To Thy precious, bleeding side.

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

HIS WORD

⁶After spending eight or ten days with them, he went down to Caesarea, and the next day he convened the court and ordered that Paul be brought before him.

⁷When Paul appeared, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many serious charges against him, which they could not prove.

⁸Then Paul made his defense: “I have done nothing wrong against the law of the Jews or against the tem-

ple or against Caesar.”

⁹Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, said to Paul, “Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and stand trial before me there on these charges?”

¹⁰Paul answered: “I am now standing before Caesar’s court, where I ought to be tried. I have not done anything wrong to the Jews, as you yourself know very well. ¹¹If, however, I am guilty of doing anything deserving death, I do not refuse to die. But if the charges brought against me by these Jews are not true, no one has the right to hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar!” — *Acts 25:6-11, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Blessed Lord, read this again into my heart! Festus is such a poor judge before whom to stand. He is self-seeking and ignorant. But you can use anyone and everything to your own advantage. How very, very good it is to decide everything on adequate evidence! You have given me more than enough reason to accept your intervention in the affairs of men, of your present presence in every circumstance. The three areas of law-breaking are interesting — speak to me through them! (1) The law; (2) the temple; (3) Caesar.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

In the above I have tried to look at myself as you see me. In this expression I want you to speak to me in the deepest needs of my heart. It is before your court I stand to be tried! How delighted and confident I am when I remember there is nothing Satan can bring against me and support with evidence. He is indeed the great accuser, but none of his charges can be proven! Bless your holy name! At the same time I am not unwilling to receive your judgment in my life. I want to repent toward and because of yourself! How strong a word it is to say that *no one, no one* has a right to turn me over to Satan. I have the supreme judge on my side — it is to him that I appeal! No one has a right (including the devil) to hand me over to bondage and death. How gladly I appeal to you and your dear Son. How eagerly I exercise the rights of my heavenly citizenship.

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

(1) Thank you for a confrontation with Satan — he cannot and will not make any of his lies stick. (2) Thank you for Paul’s perception of the wiles of the devil. (3) Thank you that no trial or temptation will come my way that has not been used by Satan on man for centuries — there is always a way out. (4) Thank you for Paul’s wisdom in knowing just when to exercise his rights and when to give them up. (5) Thank you that in the area of moral choice we have no rights — that are all given to you. (6) Thank you for the defeat of the evil men in religious robes.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“I appeal to Caesar!” This was the unique right of a Roman citizen. It saved the life of Paul. How much of our life do we owe to Caesar? Without the benefits of democracy we would lose many things — perhaps even our lives. At the same time we remember that democracy is a fruit of Christianity. I am glad to respect our government, but my appeal is first of all to King Jesus! I claim the right of my heavenly citizenship, to be judged by him.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

What a momentous decision it was to appeal to Caesar. In this are occasions for prayer: (1) Wasn’t it sad that Paul was forced to reiterate the circumstances of his innocence? Only when it was a fruitless, useless effort did he appeal to Caesar. What does this say to me? (2) Paul’s relationship with the Jewish law was one of blamelessness; I want to be that innocent with the laws of our land. (3) May I keep your temple, my body, as the sanctuary of your presence. (4) May I stand in just the place you want me for your witness today. (5) I deserve to die eternally, but my Lord took my place. Help me to tell someone else. (6) Deliver me from the plots of evil men.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Give me ears to hear: (1) “You are on trial every day.” (2) “You bear testimony for me every day.” (3) “The right of appeal to me is always open.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

The Lord’s Return The last prayer in the Bible is “Come, Lord Jesus” (Rev. 22:20). Peter tells us that we should be “looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God” (II Pet. 3:12). How better can we do it than by praying for the fulfilment of Gen. 12:3; Rev. 7:9-10 and Matt. 24:14? Pray for: (1) *The speediest possible evangelization of the world* — of every unreached people group, city and nation. (2) *Your part in achieving this.* What is God’s will for your life? In the coming year are you willing to do whatever He commands regarding the need of the world? Is it possible God is calling *you* to a specific ministry in praying, supporting, or even personally going to the ends of the earth for your Master? (3) *Your local church’s part.* Pray that your fellowship may grow in missionary zeal and commitment.

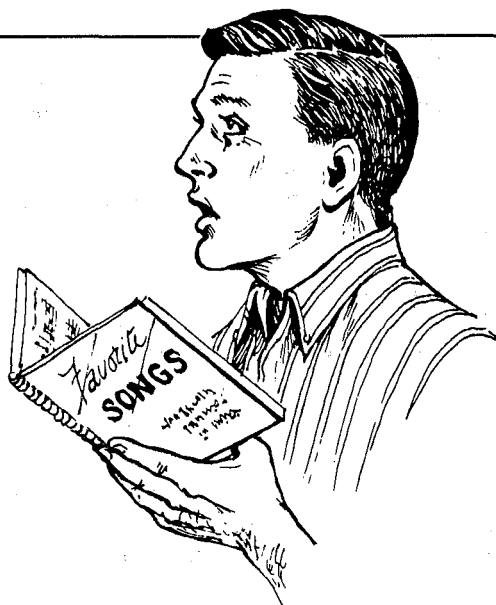
SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

God the Omnipotent! King, who ordainest
Thunder Thy clarion, the lightning Thy sword;
Show forth Thy pity on high where Thou reignest;
Give to us peace in our time, O Lord.

WEEK SEVEN

—Tuesday—

Even now you are “giving us the nations” — what shall we do with them? How we do need to repent — help me — I worship before you for this purpose.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Ask of me, and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession” (Psa. 2:8). What quality of God is here seen? It is kingliness or majesty. The whole Psalm seems to be Messianic — it is our dear Lord who is addressed. God is saying to Jesus, “Ask of me, and I will give you the nations for your inheritance.” Did Jesus ever ask? Oh, yes he did. On the cross he asked in blood! The nations of the world belong to him! The uttermost parts of the earth are his possession! Dear God, how can I possibly express myself in any kind of praise or wonder or worship? As I stand beneath the cross I realize that two billion people alive on this earth have never heard they belong to you! If men just knew who you are and what your Son did, wouldn't they believe and be saved? We will never know until we tell them!

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

Read and apply to yourself! I praise you for this amazing quality! How can I sit idly by while millions have never heard? The fact of the matter is we have tried to do something about this overwhelming need. A young man in India reaches hundreds who have never heard. Our dear son, Chris, was in Santiago, Chile for this purpose. We did all we could to get the Pictorial Book of Acts in at least ten languages of 100,000 copies. But all of this is so small and impersonal. Dear God, are you speaking to me? Do I have ears to hear? I have helped to prepare several hundred young people who have gone to tell this good news. Yes, yes, but still the nations of the world have really not been told! Their cry seems but a distant sorrow. Dear God, break my hard heart!

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

CONFESSION OF SIN

I sat in homes yesterday sharing the good news that all men belong to you by right of purchase. It seemed so very good to do this! At the same time, I want to confess how guilty I feel most of the time for not doing this. Is not the preparation of others for this task and the teaching of the saved also important? I know I cannot do it alone — but I want to feel like I should! Forgive me for my complacency!

“Evil suspicions.” How easy it is to enter your sphere of action. Why should I think ill of any man? You are hurt more than I am — I turn it over to you. You decide their motives and act appropriately.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

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!

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

HIS WORD

¹²After Festus had conferred with his council, he declared: “You have appealed to Caesar. To Caesar you will go!”

¹³A few days later King Agrippa and Bernice arrived at Caesarea to pay their respects to Festus. ¹⁴Since they were spending many days there, Festus discussed Paul's case with the king. He said, “There is a man here whom Felix left as a prisoner. ¹⁵When I went to Jerusalem, the chief priests and elders of the Jews brought charges against him and asked that he be condemned, ¹⁶“I told them that it is not the Roman custom to hand over any man before he has faced his

accusers and has had an opportunity to defend himself against their charges." —Acts 25:12-16, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

You were present in that council that day! There is never a decision made without you. In the choices of men of state, kings and princes and potentates, you are not left out — even if they intend to do so. Most especially is this true when a decision is being made concerning one of your servants. How I do wonder what they said — but these you know. Paul's wisdom was from heaven — it was transparent; it had no shadow to cast by turning. His appeal was accepted. When the Caesar before who he was to appear was Nero, Paul's prospects for a fair trial were not too bright. But then there were many days yet ahead. Was this a delaying action on Paul's part?

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I wonder how Luke obtained the very words Festus spoke to King Agrippa? Did the Holy Spirit tell him? Did Festus later become a Christian and tell him? Did Bernice or Agrippa give their decision for Christ a second thought and later tell Luke what was said? All of these could be true. The point is that they are true as they stand! These words speak to me: (1) The monotony of a prison confinement is never mentioned. (2) Frustration and griping over an unjust sentence does not once appear in one word of Luke's account. (3) No harsh criticism of the political "weasel" words of Felix or Festus are mentioned. Dear Lord, dear Lord, what have I to complain about?

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

Yes, yes. (1) Thank you for the many decisions of the councils of men that were inadvertently your decisions for the eternal good of men. (2) Thank you for the means of going to Rome — whether at Paul's expense or the government's. (3) Thank you for unusual opportunities to speak on your behalf — these are by your intent and not accident. (4) Thank you for King Agrippa and for Bernice. I do not know more about them than appears in the text (except some facts (?) of history). You know them; they represent so many today! (5) Thank you for the "Roman customs" — some of them based on your jurisprudence in the Old Testament. (6) Thank you for "the customs" of our land which include so much of your law of fairness and right of trial. (7) Thank you most of all for the dear man Paul who is my constant example in a hundred ways.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Festus discussed Paul's case with the king." Wasn't Paul known to Festus or Agrippa before they met together to talk over his case? We believe he was. This was why the subject intrigued both men. What did they say, i.e., beyond the fact that Paul was a

prisoner without a charge? Did they know just why there was such hatred of just who this Jesus of Nazareth might be? Why was there such deep opposition to Paul? Did either man seriously investigate the resurrection of our Lord? Perhaps it is idle to imagine the personal interest of these men, but then you are knowledgeable of all they said. Will we all one day know when we stand before you in judgment?

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Reaction to Paul's appeal to Caesar can move us to prayer: (1) For the following qualities of character necessary to endure the tedious monotony of political confusion we pray: Godlike patience. (2) For the long view of the whole picture. (3) For understanding that all men are important you. (4) For my Lord's kind of love that is willing to "endure all things." (5) For a willingness to sincerely pray for these men in high places. (6) For the conversation that Paul knew would take place between Festus and Agrippa. (7) For God's decision to operate through the decision of these men.

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 verses? (1) "Be careful about your choices — some of them are irreversible." (2) "You never know to whom you can speak on my behalf — be ready." (3) "It could be you will be in a place of confinement — realize that much can be done from this place that can be done in no other way."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

The World — Points for prayer: (1) *The harvest of people into the Kingdom of God in recent years has been unprecedented.* Never in history has such a high percentage of the world's population been exposed to the gospel, nor the increase of evangelical Christians been so encouraging. The rate of ingathering in many areas outside the West has been spectacular. The share of the percentage of "all Evangelicals" in the Third World has steadily increased this century. (2) *The dramatic breakthrough in China since 1975 is hard to quantify.* Reliable estimates are that 45-50 million people may have come to faith in Christ since then. This increase, if substantiated, would mean that evangelical believers have increased in the Third World from 74 million to 174 million, or an average annual increase of 9%.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

"Man of Sorrows," what a name
For the Son of God who came
Ruined sinners to reclaim!
Hallelujah! what a Savior!

WEEK SEVEN

—Wednesday—

All I want to be you already are! You are indeed my ultimate goal! How good it is to reestablish this acceptance of yourself!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“But thou, O Jehovah, art . . . my glory, and the lifter up of my head” (Psa. 3:3). Bless your name forever! How good it is to rejoice in your presence! I claim for all men what David claimed for himself. David said you are his *character* — we understand the word “glory” to refer to essential being. The psalmist is claiming God as a model of character. He is saying “all I want to be you already are.” God is the ultimate goal of all men in character development. Of course there are some qualities that are exclusively yours — but there are many, many qualities we all need and can share. How wonderful it would be to live in a world where all men were full of generosity! Dear God, I do want to see just how we can reflect your nature by seeing it demonstrated in your dear Son.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

You are my character model and at the same time “the lifter up of my head.” This whole psalm is couched in the context of a battle scene. I have been wounded by the enemy. I have fallen in the field. The wound is deep and painful. I expect any moment to see the grimacing face of my enemy as he draws his sword to slay me. Instead I look into the dearest, kindest face I have ever seen. I feel a support under my head. I sense the surge of healing strength throughout my body. I am raised up and in his strength “I will not be afraid of ten thousands . . .” Dear Lord, how I praise you for the daily strength you give me — for the very personal help you offer me. It is my head in your hand.

How do you personally relate to the glory of God, and God who is our example?

CONFESSION OF SIN

Dear Lord, you have surely not been the model of my character development, i.e., in every circumstance. It is abiding in your word that produces this change. It is abiding in your Son that enables me to abide in

you. Forgive me for finding a model for imitation in anyone — or anything but yourself! Why should I want anyone else? Once again the tracks of the evil one are discovered. I can and do resist him — but my greatest victory is in my attraction to you. Forgive me for shutting myself off from the power of your love. “Love of money.” It would be so easy to say, “I do not love money” — but the love of what money can do is the love of money. I want to ask you for what I need — not money!

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

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!

HIS WORD

¹⁷“When they came here with me, I did not delay the case, but convened the court the next day and ordered the man to be brought in. ¹⁸When his accusers got up to speak, they did not charge him with any of the crimes I had expected. ¹⁹Instead, they had some points of dispute with him about their own religion and about a dead man named Jesus who Paul claimed was alive. ²⁰I was at a loss how to investigate such matters; so I asked him if he would be willing to go to Jerusalem and stand trial there on these charges. ²¹When Paul made his appeal to be held over for the Emperor’s decision, I ordered him held until I could send him to Caesar.”

²²Then Agrippa said to Festus, “I would like to hear this man myself.”

He replied, “Tomorrow you will hear him.”

—Acts 25:17-22, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Is Festus telling the whole of the truth? Didn’t he

know more of our Lord than he indicated in his "speech" to Agrippa? Wasn't he being just polite and artful in his choice of words? At least Agrippa knew Paul and our Lord for almost the total extent of his life. Agrippa's father had killed James and imprisoned Peter. Since Paul was born almost the same time our Lord was Agrippa had been associated with Christianity all his life — in one form or another. How vastly important was the little drama about to be given!

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

"Some points of dispute about a dead man named Jesus, who Paul claimed was alive." I have read the evidence of his resurrection and I am glad to affirm with Paul that it is even as he said. Festus is not telling the whole truth — his reason for sending Paul to Jerusalem was to deliver him into the hands of the Jews. Am I at times any better than he? Do I always and in every place, with everyone always tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth? Dear Lord, open my eyes to see that nothing — utterly *nothing* is hidden from you. How little hidden was the governor's deception! Two thousand years have not hidden it! Dear Father, through the blood of your Son clear my record!

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the interest and a certain amount of fairness on the part of Festus. (2) Thank you that none of our Lord's accusers — nor Paul's accusers were able to establish a charge against him. Satan cannot today lay anything to the charge of "God's elect." (3) Thank you for the pleasant surprises Christians can offer those who have eyes to see. (4) Thank you for the world religion of our Lord — a Way of Life for all men. (5) Thank you we are still investigating the power of the good news. (6) Thank you for the unusual manner you took in taking Paul to Rome that he might testify there on your behalf. (7) Thank you that we can today still hear the wonderful defense of Paul before King Agrippa.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Tomorrow you will hear him." For every tomorrow of many years I have heard him. How eloquently, poignantly, yea, personally has Paul spoken to me! There is so much he has said that I really have not heard. Paul has spoken to me, and millions like me, of his conversion. It has become a pattern for all of us, i.e., by way of the wonderful change wrought in his whole life. This revolution was caused by three truths: (1) He saw our Lord for who he really is: King of kings and Lord of glory. Once we see him "even as he is" we shall never be the same. (2) Saul heard Jesus speak to him. Our Lord called him by name — this was a very personal, intimate encounter between Saul and our Lord. Once he speaks to you you cannot hear anyone else. (3) Jesus made Saul personally

responsible for either serving him or persecuting him. Such an encounter totally altered Saul from the inside.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

The problem of Festus poses some real questions for prayer: (1) How can we ever open the heart of a man like Festus? (2) King Agrippa knew much more about our Lord, yet how shall we reach him? (3) The prominence of Jesus and the resurrection is such an example for me. (4) Deliver me from pride that prompts deception. (5) Help me to listen to Paul as if I had never heard him before. (6) Some glad tomorrow I will be able to speak to Paul where there are no schedules or interruptions — help me to be ready. (7) May I prepare myself in prayer for each meeting of those who need our Lord.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

Speak to me words of comfort and challenge from this text: (1) "Guard your heart; it is easy to be deceived." (2) "Guard your heart; it is too easy to deceive others." (3) "Guard your heart; the deceiver is even now at work."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

The World — Points for prayer: (1) *The Muslim world is a major challenge*, but the last 10 years have been more encouraging than ever before. Despite the rise of Islamic fundamentalism Muslims have been more exposed to the gospel, and been more responsive to it, than ever before. It is still "the day of small things" (Zech. 4:10), but the number of converts out of Islam has increased, and for the first time churches have come into being in a number of Muslim cities and nations. The cracks in the seemingly impenetrable wall of Islam can be widened by prayer! (2) *Communist territorial gains have not been an ideological success*. On the contrary, Communist-inspired revolutions, wars and takeovers have opened up new opportunities for the Word of God to enter the hearts of hitherto unreached peoples that once were hardened to the gospel — both within those countries and among refugees from them. Yet the persecution and suffering of the Church in these lands has often been acute, and the burden carried by the believers heavy. Believers around the world must share it with them.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Glorious things of thee are spoken,
Zion, city of our God;
He, whose words cannot be broken,
Formed thee for His own abode:
On the rock of Ages founded,
What can shake thy sure repose?
With salvation's walls surrounded,
Thou mayst smile at all thy foes.

WEEK SEVEN

—Thursday—

You give me "the larger look" — you set me on a high place so I can see things as they really are. Such a place is just before me in the closet of prayer.



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

"Thou hast set me at large when I was in distress" (Psa. 4:1). How dear and kind an act is this! We all feel "hemmed in" at times. In these times you position me (us) in such a manner that we can get the larger look. How precious and thoughtful you are! Such a capacity is available to all men. There is no circumstance where this would not be true. Shall we imagine the very worst of all possible places for this to happen: a prison. Paul is a grand example of this. Narrowness or largeness is in the mind. Bless your wonderful interest in each of us. You can give us the breath of the world from a prison cell. You can transport us into the third heaven from such a confinement!

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

You have so often "set me at large" when I was "pressed on every side." Because I have lived long enough I recognize such feelings of confinement come from fatigue and boredom. A good rest for eight hours is sometimes the most holy thing I can do. It liberates me from myself! There is no way I should be bored — the best study of your word has yet to be written. The best record of how men can be won to your Son has yet to be established. How glad I am for the wisdom from above that opens my mind to vistas of thought and areas of service unheard of before! I believe you could do a much better job on someone else, but I praise you from the very depths for what you do through me.

How do you personally relate to the deliverance of God, and God who "sets at large"? Speak it out or write it out.

CONFESSION OF SIN

I have sometimes complained and wondered — it was when I was tired or bored, or both. The sin is not resting — not opening my heart to the needs of others all around me. Dear God, forgive me! Aloneness in any relationship can cause or be the environment for

selfishness — expressed in many sins. Since I know this, dear God, push me out into the main stream of life! I sin in not waiting — sometimes I sin by waiting. Oh, how I need the wisdom to know the difference! I have come to believe that failure to ask is a sin. "I have not because I ask not." I purpose from today onward to set up an asking service. Forgive me for being so selfish.

"Impatient." Why are we impatient? Because we simply are not ready to accept your timing. I do believe your will is revealed in the midst of our best efforts to do what we think is your will. Help me to patiently accept your refusals and changes in my best efforts.

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

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

I hear Thy welcome voice,
That calls me, Lord to Thee
For cleansing in Thy precious blood
That flowed on Calvary.
I am coming, Lord!
Coming now to Thee!
Wash me, cleanse me in the blood
That flowed on Calvary!

HIS WORD

²²Then Agrippa said to Festus, "I would like to hear this man myself."

He replied, "Tomorrow you will hear him."

²³The next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp and entered the audience room with the high ranking officers and the leading men of the city. At the command of Festus, Paul was brought in. ²⁴Festus said: "King Agrippa, and all who are present with us, you see this man! The whole Jewish community has petitioned me about him in Jerusalem and here in Caesarea, shouting that he ought not to live any longer. ²⁵I found he had done nothing deserving of death, but because he made his appeal to the Emperor

I decided to send him to Rome. ²⁶But I have nothing definite to write to His Majesty about him. Therefore I have brought him before all of you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that as a result of this investigation I may have something to write. ²⁷For I think it is unreasonable to send on a prisoner without specifying the charges against him.” — Acts 25:22-27, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How absurd to you must appear all attempts of man to elevate himself above other men — to say nothing of being an insult to the One to whom all praise and glory belongs. Why would Agrippa and Bernice put on such a show when all men know of their human frailties? It was all they had to offer. We are all so very, very fallible! Dear Lord, look in kindness and love upon us and open our eyes to see things not as they appear but as they are! You were in the audience room — essentially, *you are the audience* — it is before you and in your sight that we appear before men. You have told us through the pen of Paul what you saw when you beheld the man Paul! Thank you for this fresh look at your “sent one.”

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I do indeed want to sit in the audience and take a new look at Paul. Through the eyes and words of Festus, I will look at Paul. Paul has affected the whole Jewish community. Festus is saying there is not a man in all Jerusalem that has not heard of Paul. All have heard of Paul's faith in Jesus as the Messiah. What an example for me! How many in my city have heard of my Lord from me? It isn't who could have heard and didn't. The reputation of such a man ran ahead of him and prepared the heart of the king to listen with an attention he would not otherwise give.

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

Indeed, indeed. (1) Thank you for the opportunity the gospel had to influence those in high places. (2) Thank you that at all times even when men oppose and lay plans to kill your servants your word is not limited or hindered. (3) Thank you for all that has been written about Paul since that day when the governor had nothing to write. (4) Thank you for the unnamed persons in the audience before Paul. (5) Thank you for the letter Festus wrote to send with Paul to the Emperor. It evidently commended Paul in such a way as to obtain his release. (6) Thank you for the patience of Paul with the injustices of men.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“I think it is unreasonable to send on a prisoner without specifying the charges against him.” It was not only unreasonable, it was also illegal. Festus

would be in trouble with Nero. How many prisoners are condemned without proving the charges against them? Our Lord was the first one. Only those who have been falsely accused and condemned could truly identify with our Lord. Only someone who has been confined in jail could tell what it means to be shut out of and away from the mainstream of life. If life seems monotonous or boring to those who are not in prison, what must be the depths of depression of those inside? Paul experienced imprisonment but not depression or boredom — at least we do not catch the slightest hint of such from his letters.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

It is easy to see petitions related to this text: (1) Keep me aware of how fleeting is the pomp of men. (2) Open my heart to see how eternal is your honor. (3) Move me to remember all men in the incident and all men since will appear before your judgment seat. (4) I want to follow the example of Paul — wisdom from above. (5) I want to imitate his total confidence in your presence. (6) May I remember that truth has a wonderful way of rising to the surface.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

What can I hear from you in this text? (1) “All men deserve to die an eternal death.” (2) “All men can be saved from such a fate.” (3) “Paul left the example of how all men can be saved.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

The World — Point for prayer: *The extent of the unfinished task is enormous*, but we are making progress! Never before have we had such a clear picture of what remains to be done. We have a task which can be achieved! The Great Commission has two major goals: (1) *To preach the gospel to every creature* (Mark 16:15). It is estimated that possibly 60-77% of the world's population has had some exposure to the claims of Christ (depending on one's definition of what degree of exposure and understanding is needed). (2) *To make disciples of all peoples* (i.e., biblical nations) (Matthew 28:18-20). Many are praying that we may achieve our goal by AD 2000.

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 He conquered — 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 SEVEN

—Friday—

*I do so need to be taught how to bow —
to yield — to submit to your Lordship.
I take this time and place to do it!*



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Thou hast put gladness in my heart” (Psa. 4:7). How wonderfully true this is. You are the source of all joy and happiness! The optimism and delight we often associate with the word “gladness” all comes from you. Oh, when will all men know you? To have such delight in our hearts means we have first thought your thoughts. We *think* with our heart, we *meditate* with our heart, we *reason* with our heart. To have your gladness we must discover in your word the cause of joy and meditate on it. To have your gladness means we will or accept what you have thought. We *purpose* in our hearts, we *decide* with our hearts, we *choose* with our hearts. I not only understand what joy and gladness you can bring; I *want* it!

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Your gladness is in *my* heart; it could be and should be in every heart — but at least it is in *my* heart. I can open your word and read: “In peace will I both lay me down and sleep” (Psa. 4:8). My mind assimilates this information — that I can both lie down and I can sleep in confident hope of either tomorrow or heaven. My will accepts such a thought — indeed eagerly assents to this truth. My emotions become aroused — I feel a sense of wonder and appreciation — indeed, gladness fills my heart. My conscience approves of such a thought. Thus my whole heart is filled with your gladness. Praise your name, you have in 10,000 ways put gladness in my heart.

How do you personally relate to the happiness of God, and God who is source of gladness?

CONFESSION OF SIN

That I am not always glad is a confession of my failure to meditate on your word day and night! I read now again just as if I never read it before these precious words from you:

May you always be joyful in your union with the Lord. I say it again: Rejoice!
Show a gentle attitude toward everyone. The

Lord is coming soon. Don't worry about anything, but in all your prayers ask God for what you need, always asking him with a thankful heart.

—Philippians 4:4-6, Good News Bible.

Your peace and joy are always available. Bless your wonderful name! Forgive me!

“Unkindness.” How people look for kindness! How I look for it. How I *need* it! How I want to give it. It is but a return of the gift you have given me. There really is no reason in the face of your goodness and my sin for me to be unkind to anyone.

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

O worship the King, all glorious above,
And gratefully sing His wonderful love;
Our Shield and Defender, the Ancient of days,
Pavilioned in splendor, and girded with praise.

HIS WORD

26 Then Agrippa said to Paul, “You have permission to speak for yourself.”

So Paul motioned with his hand and began his defense: ²“King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate to stand before you today as I make my defense against all the accusations of the Jews, ³and especially so because you are well acquainted with all the Jewish customs and controversies. Therefore, I beg you to listen to me patiently.

⁴“The Jews all know the way I have lived ever since I was a child, from the beginning of my life in my own country, and also in Jerusalem. ⁵They have known me for a long time and can testify, if they are willing, that according to the strictest sect of our religion, I lived as a Pharisee. ⁶And now it is because of my hope in what God has promised our fathers that I am on trial today. ⁷This is the promise our twelve tribes are hoping to see fulfilled as they earnestly serve God day and night. O king, it is because of this hope that all the Jews are accusing me. ⁸Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead?

⁹“I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was

possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

¹⁰And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the saints in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. ¹¹Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. In my obsession against them, I even went to foreign cities to persecute them.

¹²“On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. ¹³About noon, O king, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. ¹⁴We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ ”

—Acts 26:1-14, NIV

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

How full of meaning are these few verses! How I do read these words over and over again to catch their meaning. I know you need not read words, since what happened centuries ago is as real and alive today as it was then. The exchange between Paul and King Agrippa is still happening! Just how much of the “Jewish customs and controversies” the King knew, and just how he responded to them you alone can know. Paul had such a great desire to tell of the power and purpose of his Lord! How I admire him! The close knit society of the Jews was a very large part of Paul’s life. You asked him to break away from it. Thank you for your goads in the lives of all your people.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

I tried unsuccessfully to read this text just to you and to look at it from your perspective. I kept seeing myself instead of you in it. It is because I have for such a long time identified with Paul’s experience: (1) In the very midst of very religious work I hear you call, and I actually find myself hurting your body, the church. Dear Lord, forgive me. (2) I have obtained what I thought was authority from “the chief priests” to pursue a project of my own — I was wrong — you stopped me. It hurt me in my pride and selfishness, but it helped you. Praise your name!

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for Paul’s open, generous attitude with King Agrippa. (2) Thank you for the record of Paul’s life from his youth to his manhood — in Tarsus and Jerusalem so like so many religious people today. (3) Thank you for the marvelous hope Jesus gives to life! (4) Thank you for the hundreds of prophecies and promises fulfilled in our Lord. (5) Thank you for hope — oh, how good it is to hope! How sure is our hope in him. (6) Thank you for the personal interest you took in Saul — calling him by his name in the language of his home and religion.

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

“It is hard for you to kick against the goads.” It is hard in several ways for anyone of us to oppose our conscience. Let’s notice a few of them: (1) Our conscience is our divine umpire (animals do not have a conscience). When the rules given to this umpire come from God, then to oppose him is to oppose God. (2) It is hard on us because our conscience represents our own best interests — to oppose the conscience produces depression — deep anger is one form of this depression. (3) When we reject our conscience we are stopping growth since we add to the rules from time to time. (4) We can sear our conscience and stop the whole process of spiritual sensitivity. All of this and more was experienced by Paul as he prepared for his encounter on the road to Damascus.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

Paul’s defense before Agrippa moves us to pray: (1) May I have the wisdom and courage to answer each man for the faith I have in yourself and your Son. (2) Thank you that there are no accusations Satan can bring against those in Christ Jesus. (3) Deliver me from present day Phariseism. (4) May the hope of eternal life be more real every day I live. (5) Open my eyes to see my Lord as I read your word. (6) May I examine my opposition in every area lest I be found fighting against my Lord.

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

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

As you spoke to Saul, you can speak to me through these verses: (1) “Listen to my voice every day as you read my word.” (2) “Living as a strict Pharisee did not save Paul.” (3) “I am touched with the hurts of my people.”

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

The World — Points for prayer: (1) *The effective functioning of local congregations.* Each should be an organism, a body. Each member has gifts to contribute to the upbuilding of the whole, yet rarely do congregations function in this way. This emphasis on “body life” has come into prominence in the past two decades. May every congregation be an effective body through which the Holy Spirit can work! (2) *Leadership is the key.* Ministers and elders need constant upholding in prayer.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

God the Omnipotent King, who ordainest
Thunder Thy clarion, the lightning Thy sword;
Show forth Thy pity on high where Thou reignest;
Give to us peace in our time, O Lord.

WEEK SEVEN

—Saturday—

I am so privileged to be able to identify with your analysis of right and wrong — of good and evil. I do that just now!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“Evil shall not sojourn with Thee” (Psa. 5:4b). We must be reminded from time to time, and even twice in a time, that we cannot and will not travel with evil and also travel with you. It is more than interesting to note that evil is considered an outsider, a visitor from another country. The footnote suggests the term “evil” could be (perhaps should be) translated “evil man.” Evil is not evil until someone does it. Evil is always the option or the opposite of what you have said. Evil companionship will (not might) corrupt good morals. Is it true that evil has an ally in us? I.e., in our flesh? I do *not* believe this. If we have an ally it is you — in the Spirit you have put within us — your own nature in us! What an ally!

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Evil (or evil men) shall not sojourn with me (or you). Evil men can pay us a visit in various forms and manners: (1) Through books we read. However interesting and entertaining and even informative such books are, there is a subtle question being asked in a hundred ways: “Yea, hath God said?” “Is God really and truly in all?” To spend more time with the secular and sensual than we do with the sacred — and I am thinking of secular/sensual literature. (I know all things created and all of life can be sacred.) Such time and thought will lead into sin and worse than this, it will lead into an attitude of sin. We will begin to answer life’s questions from the evil man’s point of view. I want to spend hours and hours each day in what you have said! (2) When we choose the companionship of those who *never* or *very seldom* talk of you and your word, we are being influenced by evil men regardless if they are elders or preachers or professors. If you will not sojourn with evil men why should I?

How do you personally relate to the holiness of God, and God who abhors evil?

CONFESSION OF SIN

I am rebuked in my spirit when I read again what I

wrote. It sounds like I am saying I do not enjoy or seek out the company of sinners, i.e., lost sinners. Our Lord was a friend of them — how can I be so exclusive? Dear Lord, I cannot. But just how did our Lord establish friendships with publicans and sinners? Zacchaeus and Matthew would be examples of one and Mary Magdalene and the woman of Samaria would exemplify the other. What conversation was exchanged in the homes of the two tax collectors? How often did Jesus talk with Mary before she left all to follow him? Following her great discovery what did the Samaritan woman learn from our Lord? Dear God, break me away from just the “church folk.” Forgive me for exclusiveness!

“Rudeness.” How could a word better describe my attitude — at times — with those who need you so badly. Dear God, reduce me to the place of the Publican in the temple. I have been a Pharisee long enough!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Must Jesus bear the cross alone,
And all the world go free?
No; there’s a cross for ev’ry one,
And there’s a cross for me.

HIS WORD

¹⁵“Then I asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’

“‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,’ the Lord replied. ¹⁶Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. ¹⁷I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you ¹⁸to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’

¹⁹“So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven. ²⁰First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent

and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds. ²¹That is why the Jews seized me in the temple courts and tried to kill me. ²²But I have had God's help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen — ²³that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles." — *Acts 26:15-23, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

Of all the passages we have considered together, this one does seem to relate to you in a most direct manner. You spoke from heaven — it was a vision from your presence that changed Paul! There are so many things you said to Saul. I want to ingest each word. (1) "I am Jesus" — can it be?! The *same* One who walked the hills of Galilee and the streets of Jerusalem and slept in the house of Mary and Martha and Lazarus? The very *same* one! (2) "I have appeared to appoint!" Your appearances are not to make us feel good, but to make us "*servants*" — *slaves*. Gladly, gladly do I give myself to you. (3) You appear to enable us to witness — give our personal testimony. If you do not appear we have nothing to say! I believe the four gospels are your appearance to me and all men.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Dear Lord, I want to be a source of testimony to those whom you send me. I have, like Saul, an increasing testimony, not only of what I have seen and heard, but of everything I see and hear each day down the road of life. Your purpose for Paul is your purpose for me: (1) To open eyes. What a rich privilege — for today help me to do this! (2) To turn them from darkness to light! Just how bright and beautiful is the light into which we step and walk! (3) From the power of Satan — to the power of God!

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for the daily, heavenly vision we can have. (2) Thank you we are the ones to be obedient or disobedient. (3) Thank you that my job is to change men's minds by the preaching of the good news about your Son. (4) Thank you for your daily help in health, travel, food, raiment. (5) Thank you that our testimony is for all men.

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

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"But I have had God's help to this very day." Oh, dear Lord, how true this is! Your help has not all been known. Probably very little of it has been appreciated. How subtle is your help! Behind the scenes. How easy it is to attribute your help to some other source. We had "good luck" or "things" turned out well. The real truth is "every good and perfect gift

comes down from above." Dear Lord, I do want to acknowledge the true source of my blessings. I have been helped inwardly as well. You provide the peace of mind and heart that are so essential to getting anything done. You have given health of body and mind. Your mercies are fresh every morning.

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

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How I do lift my heart in these requests as I read these verses: (1) Teach me to be sensitive to how I can hurt you by hurting your body, the church. (2) Make me your servant today in some area of need. (3) I want to open my mouth and heart to witness for you — help me. (4) Rescue me from some of my well-intentioned friends. (5) Open the eyes of some who have heard of you from me. (6) Keep your heavenly vision ever before me.

Right here add your personal requests — and his answers.

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

I believe you can speak to me through this text: (1) "Men still must repent and turn to me." (2) "Repentance is produced through preaching." (3) "You have my help today as Paul did in the long ago."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

The World — Points for prayer: (1) *Spiritual depth* is rare in many congregations. Superficiality, an inadequate devotional life and worldliness are common. This highlights the need for effective teaching of the content, doctrines, and applicability to life and witness, of the Word of God in the mother tongue. (2) *Victorious optimism* is rare where evangelical believers are a small and despised minority. These believers are often introspective and timid, and hardly a mighty force for the pulling down of the fortifications of the devil. Believers need prayer that they may witness boldly and effectively. (3) *Purity of doctrine*. Too often believers' thoughts, prejudices and fears are molded more by the prevailing culture, philosophies, superstitions and religions of the society around them than by the Bible. Humanism in the West, Hinduism in India, etc., are examples. All such can rob Christians of their assurance, power and joy in the face of a hostile world, and sidetrack believers into secondary or irrelevant issues.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

A wonderful Savior is Jesus my Lord,
A wonderful Savior to me,
He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock,
Where rivers of pleasure I see.
He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock
That shadows a dry, thirsty land;
He hideth my life in the depths of His love,
And covers me there with His hand,
And covers me there with His hand.