



## LGC Daily Devotion Guide 2011

Week 15

April 11-April 17, 2011

### I. Adoration

#### (1) Invocation Prayer

“Grant, O Lord, that in Thy wounds we may find our safety, in Thy stripes our cure, in Thy pain our peace, in Thy cross our victory, in Thy resurrection our triumph; and a crown of righteousness in the glory of Thy eternal kingdom.” In Jesus Name, Amen. (Jeremy Taylor, 1613-67)

#### (2) Adoration through Psalm 67

(We'll use this Psalm, not for today's Bible reading, but for the sake of focusing our thoughts on God)

- Read slowly this passage at least three times and each day gather one thought about this psalm that points to God's character and translate it into a prayer of adoration.

### II. Confession

Pause now and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you your sins and ask for forgiveness.

### III. Thanksgiving

List, one by one, things for which you should give thanks.

### IV. Scriptural Reflection:

We shall continue with the third mark, the Gospel. We have selected passages from the Scripture that tie in with the nuances of each major point of these chapters. (As our reflection coincides with Lent, these selections happen to speak mostly of God's love manifested in Jesus Christ, and can also be used to usher you into our Lent meditation.) Read slowly and reflectively the assigned passage twice at least and consider the questions below each day:

#### The Gospel: Introduction

#### April 11 The Westminster Confession of Faith Theme: Sound Doctrine of the Gospel

Today, we would reflect on The Westminster Confession of Faith, which is a Reformed confession of faith, in the Calvinist theological tradition. Although drawn up by the 1646 Westminster Assembly, largely of the Church of England, it became and remains the 'subordinate standard' of doctrine in the Church of Scotland, and has been influential within the Presbyterian churches worldwide.

In 1643, the English Parliament called upon "learned, godly and judicious Divines", to meet at Westminster Abbey in order to provide advice on issues of worship, doctrine, government and discipline of the Church of England. Their meetings, over a period of five years, produced the confession of faith, as well as a Larger Catechism and a Shorter Catechism. For more than three centuries, various churches around the world have adopted the confession and the catechisms as their standards of doctrine, subordinate to the Bible. We shall follow *Nine Marks*, to consider chapter two of the Confession:

#### Chapter II

#### *Of God, and of the Holy Trinity*

- I. There is but one only, living, and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions; immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute; working all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will, for His own glory;

most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin;

the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him; and withal, most just, and terrible in His judgments, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.

Questions for reflection:

- a. What is the key teaching about God in this section?
- b. Underline all the words, “most”, and reflect on how important it is for God to be the “most”.
- c. How do all these infinite attributes of God contribute to His dealings with humankind?

II. God has all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of Himself; and is alone in and unto Himself all-sufficient,

not standing in need of any creatures which He has made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting His own glory in, by, unto, and upon them.

He is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things; and has most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them whatsoever Himself pleases.

In His sight all things are open and manifest, His knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to Him contingent, or uncertain. He is most holy in all His counsels, in all His works, and in all His commands.

To Him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience He is pleased to require of them.

- d. What might present the greatest challenge to atheists in this section?
- e. What are the implications to you concerning the fact that God is the source of and has absolute dominion over all created beings?
- f. Having considered the above, do you agree with Mark Dever that “The Gospel is not simply that God is love?”

- g. Other than love, what are the other “good news” about God to you?

III. In the unity of the Godhead there be three Persons of one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.

- h. The word, person, is derived in the early centuries from a Latin word which means “mask” in that one actor plays several characters on the stage by wearing different masks. But the actor remains the same person. How does the use of this word, person, by the early fathers, help our understanding of our Triune God?
- i. What is the main message for you today?

**The Good News is not simply that Jesus wants to be our friend  
April 12 Mark 8: 27-33**

**Theme: Not just a friend or example**

- (1) Simply scan through the preceding two chapters. What has Jesus done and what have the disciples learned about who Jesus is?
- (2) At this point, if you were one of the disciples and Jesus asked, “Who do you say I am?” What might your answer be?
- (3) Presumably, many of the people also witnessed many of the things Jesus said and done. Why would their answers be different from that of Peter?
- (4) Look up Matthew 16:17. What additional insight have you gained in this respect?
- (5) Having affirmed who He is, what did Jesus begin to emphasize in v.31? Why did Jesus choose such an occasion to begin to tell them about his suffering, death and resurrection?
- (6) Of his suffering, death and resurrection, what do you think Peter zeroed his focus on and why?
- (7) Do you now understand why Jesus warned them not tell anyone about who He is in v.30?

- (8) If the people knew who Jesus was, what would their expectations be?
- (9) The way the gospel is being proclaimed today, what do most of the seekers desire from knowing Jesus (the things of men)? What might be missing in their expectations (the things of God)?
- (10) What is the main message to you today?

#### April 13

#### Mark 8: 34-38

#### Theme: Cross before Glory

- (1) If anyone would like to come after Jesus in those days, whether the people or the twelve, what did they want?
- (2) In order to come after Him (i.e. be His followers), Jesus lays down clearly three conditions:
  - a. Must deny oneself
  - b. Take up one's cross, and
  - c. (physically in those days) follow Him all the way (to the cross)

What do you understand as to the meaning and implication of each of the above three conditions?

- (3) Jesus goes on to explain why He would impose the above in v.35. Why would Jesus equate following Him with "losing" one's life?
- (4) For those who would not choose the three things above, Jesus implies that
  - a. V.36: they would be choosing to gain the world
  - b. V.37: they would be losing their souls
  - c. V.38: they would be choosing to be ashamed of Jesus
 Why would that be the case?
- (5) What is the main message to you today and how can you apply it to your life?

#### April 14

#### Psalms 107: 1-3, 10-22

#### Theme: The "Economic Language" of the Gospel--Redemption

This psalm vividly pictures human conditions without God from four practical angles: (a) a life of drifting (vv. 4-9), (b) a life under bondage (vv. 10-16), (c) a life sickened by sins (vv. 17-22), and (d)

a life not under our control (vv. 23-31). We shall focus on (b) and (c) today in our reflection.

- (1) In v.2, what does the psalmist call those who are rescued from the foes?
- (2) Why does the psalmist not use the word, rescue, but the word, redeem?
- (3) What are the implications, if one has to be redeemed?
- (4) Who is the foe from which we are redeemed? And by what have we been redeemed?
- (5) Vv. 10-16 describe a life under bondage of mankind:
  - a. What is the cause of human bondage?
  - b. What kind of bondage are people in?
  - c. What is the turning point that may lead to deliverance?
  - d. How does the psalmist liken such deliverance to?
- (6) Vv. 17-22 describe a life sickened by sin:
  - a. What is the cause of human afflictions described here?
  - b. The psalmist vividly describes what sin can lead to in a person's life. Have you seen or gone through such an experience before?
  - c. What is the turning point that may lead to healing?
  - d. The psalmist does not go on to describe the post-healing life; can you fill in with your own rendition and follow the psalmist to praise God in v.21?
- (7) Reflect on God's deliverance and healing in your life. What does the term, redemption, mean to you?
- (8) What is the main message to you today?

#### April 15

#### II Corinthians 5: 14-21

#### Theme: The "Relational Language" of the Gospel — Reconciliation

- (1) Within the context of the passage, what does Christ's love compel Paul to do?
- (2) Why is Christ's love so powerful as to compel Paul?
- (3) How did we regard Christ in a worldly way before?
- (4) One of the marks of a new creation in Christ is to turn from our former worldly way. Examine yourself to see if you have done so?

- (5) What does it mean that we have become the righteousness of God?
- (6) Instead of emphasizing that God has redeemed us, Paul focuses on God having reconciled us and the world to Himself. How does reconciliation differ from redemption and what is their connection? Why does Paul emphasize on reconciliation here?
- (7) As a new creation, what is our role in God's work of reconciliation?
- (8) What is the main message to you today?

**April 16**

**Romans 3: 21-31**

**Theme: The "Forensic Language" of the Gospel--Justification**

- (1) What is the definition of sin given in this passage? What does it really mean?
- (2) If God is a just judge, what would we get as a result of our sins?
- (3) Why does Paul say that Jesus demonstrated God's justice through his redemption?
- (4) Paul uses the forensic language of justification to describe our salvation in Christ, how does it differ from "redemption" in terms of emphasis, and what is their connection?
- (5) The way of justification apart from the law, according to Paul, has been made known by the Law and Prophets: what is this way of justification and how did the Law and Prophets testify to it?
- (6) How does this way of justification differ from other religions of the world, especially Buddhism?
- (7) If a non-believer challenges you saying that the biblical way of justification is too easy, too cheap and that we cannot leave it to God to do everything, what will your answer be?
- (8) What is the main message to you today?

**April 17**

**Ephesians 4: 8-9, 6: 10-20**

**Theme: The "Military Language" of the Gospel--Deliverance**

- (1) We know that Satan is like a prowling lion (I Peter 5:8), what is Satan's purpose as a lion?

- (2) But Paul points out here that Satan is more than a lion, but one that has many "schemes". Can you think of the most common schemes that Satan use to "devour" us? What would be the most fundamental reason why we fail to put on the armor suggested by Paul?
- (3) How important it is for us to recognize that we are fighting against "flesh and blood"?
- (4) Putting on "the full armor of God" implies that we cannot miss even one of them: reflect on the following statements and see how each of them might speak to you:
  - a. The belt of truth: if we do not put on our belt of truth with our lives, we will be like the king with his invisible clothe—a foolish soldier
  - b. The breastplate of righteousness: if we do put on our self-righteous plate instead of God's, our lives will be marked by defeats more than victories—a miserable soldier
  - c. The shoes of the gospel of peace: if we do not walk with the shoes of the gospel all the time, we will be soldier on AWOL (absence without leave)
  - d. Shield of faith: if we do not exercise faith in our daily battle, we will be a soldier who has lost all morale
  - e. Helmet of salvation: if we do not trust in our eternal salvation, we will be a soldier who cannot see the big picture of our war
  - f. The sword of the Spirit: if we do not immerse ourselves in the Word of God, we will be a soldier who has already raised our white flag
  - g. Praying in the Spirit: if we do not fight with fervent prayers, we are a sick and weak soldier who is on life support.
- (5) Which of the above describes you most fittingly?
- (6) What do you need to do today?

## V. Meditative Reflection

This week we shall continue to reflect on the ‘Nine Marks of a Healthy Church’, continuing with

### MARK THREE:THE GOSPEL

#### April 11

Please read from the second last paragraph on page 84 starting with “In the last chapter we.....” to the second paragraph on page 86 ending with “The Gospel is not simply that God is love.”

*Question for reflection:*

*Reflect in detail the “Westminster Confession”. How does it help you in your understanding of the Gospel?*

#### April 12

### THE GOOD NEWS IS NOT SIMPLY THAT JESUS WANTS TO BE OUR FRIEND

Please read from the third paragraph on page 86, starting with “Other times, the Gospel is represented.....” to the second last paragraph ending with “.....God’s way to bring us back to Himself.”

*Question for reflection:*

*Do you value Jesus as your friend? Why is it not enough in itself?*

#### April 13

Please read from the last paragraph on page 86, beginning with “Jesus begins to explain.....” to the third last paragraph on page 87 ending with “.....in his Father’s glory with the holy angels.”

*Question for reflection:*

*Read what Mark Dever has quoted from Mark 8:27-38. What can you detect the influence Daniel 7:13-14 has on Peter?*

#### April 14

Please read from the second last paragraph on page 87, beginning with “Jesus’ death if often presents as.....” to the first paragraph on page 88 ending with “.....Paul’s letter to the Galatians is about.”

*Question for reflection:*

*You may be surprised to know that there is an “economic language” used in the gospel. What is it? Why is it so called?*

#### April 15

Please read the second paragraph on page 88 beginning with “Along with such *economic* terms.....”.

*Question for reflection:*

*What does “reconciliation” mean to you concerning your relationship with God?*

#### April 16

Please read the third paragraph on page 88 beginning with “The New Testament also.....”.

*Question for reflection:*

*What do you understand by “justification” being used as a legal language in the gospel?*

#### April 17

Please read the fourth paragraph on page 88 beginning with “And there is *military* language.....”.

*Question for reflection:*

*These days, the use of military language is not politically correct. But to ignore the reality of spiritual warfare an be dangerous. Do you agree?*

**VI. A Time for Silence**

You have meditated much with your intellectual faculty today. Now have a moment of silence (the length is up to you, 5 or even 30 minutes), and ask God quietly, “Lord, is there any important message from you today that I might have missed? Show me, your servant is listening?”

**VII. Supplication**

Use the following chart to cover people and ministries that you want to remember before the Lord:

	Your family	Other people	Church Ministries	Other Ministries	City & World	Others
Sunday						
Monday						
Tuesday						
Wed						
Thursday						
Friday						
Saturday						

**VII. Benediction**

“Vouchsafe to us, though unworthy, a plenteous out-pouring of Thy Spirit to refresh Thy heritage; for Thy kingdom is now at hand, and Thou art at the door. Hear us, we beseech, O Lord. Amen.”  
(John Milton, 1608-74)