



**COLLEGE HEIGHTS
BAPTIST CHURCH**

PRACTICALLY SPEAKING

Daily Scripture Readings for
August 5 - September 15

PRACTICALLY SPEAKING

“When are we going to use this in real life?” is a popular refrain in high schools across the country. Students are uninterested in school because they are convinced that what they are learning has no practical effect on their future (Side note: those subjects actually do have a very important role to play in each student’s future).

Many people today have the same thoughts about church. “That’s great for you and your life, but I’m too busy to have my head in the clouds thinking about that stuff.” There is a growing feeling among people that they just can’t apply the Bible to their everyday life. Over the next six weeks, we will be looking at Bible passages which speak to everyday problems. How is the Bible practically speaking to me?

WEEK 1 - WORRY

Monday, August 5 - Philippians 4:4-7

This week we are going to see the advice that the Bible gives us about worrying. The stresses of life can be overwhelming. There are just not enough hours in the day to get everything done. When you are working on work, you worry about not spending enough time with family. When you are spending time with your family, you worry about work. Some days you feel as if you can’t win. Our scripture today tells us what to do with these worries of life. Whatever is worrying you, give it over to God. By giving your concerns and worries to God, a peace will come over you that is unlike any peace we can find on this earth.

You might say that this is too idealistic. Or what does Paul (writer of Philippians) know about worry? When Paul wrote Philippians, he was in prison. He didn’t know if he would ever be released. He didn’t know if he would be executed. He didn’t know if he would have a meal that day. Paul had every reason to worry and instead he showed joy. Joy is mentioned sixteen times in Philippians. Joy in the midst of suffering is a key theme throughout the short four chapter letter. What does Paul tell us to do when faced with worry? Give it to God and have joy in the Lord, always! What are you worried about today? Pray right now for God to give you peace about the situation and “rejoice in the Lord, always; again I say rejoice!”

Tuesday, August 6 - Matthew 6:25-34

You can't look at the issue of worry without visiting this passage today from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. When it comes to the issue of worry, we need to remember the priorities we should have in our life. That's the point of this passage. Our main priority in life is being a citizen of the Kingdom of God. Our primary relationship must be with God. When that is our focus, everything else will fall into place. Does that mean that all of the things you are currently worried about will magically take care of themselves? Probably not. But when we reorganize our priorities, we realize what is most important, and the worries we thought were extremely important are put in their proper context. God takes care of the birds and the flowers. He will take care of you too. So put your focus on the reason you are on this earth: to worship God.

Wednesday, August 7 - Hebrews 1:1-6, 14; 2:1-4

We begin a study of Hebrews tonight at 6:30 p.m. Hebrews is a book that can be difficult to understand because we are unfamiliar with the images and metaphors found within the book. In addition, Hebrews can be difficult because the arguments made in the book are very detailed, which makes it hard to read. Hebrews is a letter that creates a balance between God's grace and God's demands. It is a book that calls for rigorous faithfulness. Come tonight as we start this series by looking at portions of Hebrews 1-2 to discuss how much allegiance we actually give to Jesus and how much more we should give to Him.

Thursday, August 8 - 1 Peter 5:6-9

By nature, I'm a worrier. I know it. My family knows it. My kindergarten teacher knew it. This is not an exaggeration. At a parent-teacher conference in kindergarten, the teacher told my parents that my worry was going to lead to an ulcer by high school. That result didn't happen, but worry has always been a struggle for me.

Our passage today is one that convicts me of my sin of worry. When the rubber meets the road, worry means that you don't trust God. Worry means that you have not humbled yourself before the Lord and allowed him to be God. What does that mean, practically speaking? It means that when you are worried about the medical procedures or doctors' appointments, you really don't think God is going to take care of you. It means that when you are worried about how you are going to pay that bill, you don't remember that God provided for Israel for 40

years in the desert, he will provide a way through this as well. God cares for you. I hope you realize how awesome that is! The God who created this world. The God who is all-powerful and all-knowing cares about little, seemingly insignificant me! What do we do with this realization? Submit yourself to God. Focus on prayer and your relationship with God. And don't worry about everything else.

Friday, August 9 - Isaiah 26:1-6

As we read our last Scripture on worry, I want to make something clear. We should not worry because God will take care of you has been the theme this week.. This statement is 100% biblically accurate. But don't twist the statement. Relying on God does not mean doing nothing. It means living and doing as God asks you, and then not worrying about life because you are inside the will of God. That's what we see in our reading today. The righteous nation has been allowed to enter the walls of the city. The lowly, poor, and needy have been allowed to conquer the mighty. But there is work to be done. There is victory to be won. We don't need to worry because God should be our focus and when our focus is on God, nothing else can take away our joy. "Let us trust in the Lord forever, for in the Lord God, you have an everlasting rock."

Saturday, August 10 - 1 Peter 3:13-16

Tolerance is a word that gets used a lot in our world today. But what does it actually mean? How does tolerance play a role in our Christian faith? What does the Bible say about tolerance? How can we witness to others in a tolerant way? Is that even possible? Join us tomorrow night as we finish our series on "What does the Bible say about...?"

Sunday, August 11 - Psalm 13

WEEK 2 - GOSSIP

Monday, August 12 - Proverbs 11:12-13; 20:19

If you think the problem of gossip stopped after high school, you are very wrong. If you think the problem of gossip only applies to one gender, you are very wrong. If you think gossip is not a problem in the church, you are very wrong. What is the definition of gossip? It's talking about other people without their knowledge or permission. Many times, the one telling the story does not

have all of the facts. Too many friendships and, yes, churches have been hurt because of gossip. What is the practical advice to avoid gossip? Do not associate with gossips. When someone tries to start telling you gossip, stop them and let them know that you do not want to be part of this.

Tuesday, August 13 - Romans 1:28-32

God does not think that gossip is a small issue. Reread the passage from today in Romans. Do you see the vices Paul singles out along with gossip? This is quite a list! Verse 32 hits the nail on the head. We know that gossip is wrong, but we love to hear the latest gossip. An entire entertainment industry is built on people wanting to know the latest gossip. Simply put, gossip is wrong. It's sin. And whether it's in your work, family, church, neighborhood, or any other group you are part of, as Christians, you are called to avoid it.

I want you to pray right now for God to protect you from gossip. Ask God to give you strength to speak out for what is right if that is necessary. Ask God to give you strength to keep your mouth shut and not participate in speaking gossip. Paul doesn't mince words in our passage in Romans. Gossip is a serious issue to avoid.

Wednesday, August 14 - Hebrews 3:7-4:13

How can we be saved? The answer I think is clearly said in Romans 10:9: "if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." What does it mean to "believe in your heart?" Our passage for today and for our study tonight helps us to understand what "believe in your heart" means. Tonight, we will discuss "confirming real faith through obedience." I hope you will join us.

Thursday, August 15 - Proverbs 21:23

Do you know the time when gossip rears its ugly head the most in church? You'd think maybe the hushed whispers in the hallway or the glances and laughs in the youth department. It's not either of those places. No, the place gossip is told most is prayer request time in Sunday School and Prayer Meeting. Not to be harsh to any of you, but is prayer the motivation behind the request or is it to tell everybody what you know and "give the dirt" on someone else? Prayer request time quickly becomes story time and the purpose of petition and intercession is secondary.

Our passage today is good, practical advice. When you don't gossip, you can't get in trouble for gossip. It's that simple. Let this be the advice for you next time during prayer time. Ask for prayer for others. Don't engage in gossip.

Friday, August 16 - James 3:1-12

"From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so" (James 3:10).

We were created in the image of God. We were created to have a relationship with God. That includes praising God with our words. But it is with that same mouth that we sing "Holy, holy, holy" on Sunday morning, that we also demean and embarrass others with our gossip. This should not be. Our words can set ablaze a confrontation so great that it will ruin people forever. Here is my last advice on gossip. If anything you are about to say starts with "I'm not sure if I should say this...", "I don't mean to be a gossip, but...", or "it may not be my place to say...", just stop talking. Don't let your instrument of praise to God also be an instrument of gossip for Satan.

Saturday, August 17 - 1 Corinthians 15:58

Be praying for our Neighborhood Cookout tomorrow. Pray that people will come. Pray that we will be able to have great conversations with guests. Pray that God blesses our work.

Sunday, August 18 - Psalm 14

WEEK 3 - LONELINESS

Monday, August 19 - Psalm 25:16-21

Loneliness is prevalent in our world today. While our society is more connected than ever before, surveys show that people in our society are lonelier than any previous generation. Loneliness can mean a lot of things. It can, of course, mean living alone and having no one to share your life with. But you can be surrounded by people all of the time and still feel lonely. Consider our reading today. I read David's words here and envision people always around him. After all, he is the king! Do you think a king is ever alone? Even though he is continually around people, he is lonely because his adversaries surround him and they want harm done to David.

When you feel lonely, know that you are never alone. God is there for you. Verse 20 tells us that God is one we can take refuge in. We can seek safety. We can seek community. Verse 21 tells us that David is waiting on God. "Waiting" could also be translated as "hoping" or "expecting." This is not a waiting where we aren't sure if salvation is coming. It is a waiting where we can expect God to deliver us from our loneliness and affliction. How does God deliver us from loneliness? Two ways. One, with the assurance that He is always present with us and helping us in our time of need. The second way is sending His people to those who are lonely.

If you are lonely today, pray for God to give you comfort and have community with Him. Also, give a Christian friend a call just to talk or go to lunch. If you are not feeling lonely today, reach out to a friend who might be feeling down or lonely. Let this be the push you need to do God's work on this earth.

Tuesday, August 20 - James 1:27

Overall, the book of James is a great challenge to most Christian readers. We take seriously the principle of salvation through the free gift of God as we should. James challenges us to a point where we may start to question if James believes in salvation by works instead of salvation by faith. I don't think he does, but he does stand firm in a belief that the outflow of our salvation by faith should be works.

Our one verse today speaks to the work we are supposed to do. Taking care of orphans and widows is said to be true, pure religion. Another way to say it is if you think you are a Christian, let's see what you are doing. When we think of people who are lonely, these groups of widows and orphans should come to mind. It is our Christian duty to take care of these people who may not have family around to take care of them. Who is someone you can reach out to today just to let them know you are thinking about them? Who is somebody you can pray for? Read this verse several times. God doesn't just want our singing and prayers. God doesn't just want us to read our Bibles. God wants us to take care of one another and have true community with each other. Where there is authentic community, loneliness is not found.

Wednesday, August 21 - Hebrews 4:14-5:10

To what extent do you actually rely on Christ? Do you find it easy to trust Him, or do you end up putting more trust and hope in human things? Tonight, we

will discuss relying on Christ because he is our High Priest. Christ is before God on our behalf. We can trust in him. Let us talk about relying on Christ tonight.

Thursday, August 22 - Ephesians 1:3-7

Throughout my childhood, I was always one of the smaller kids in my class. This made itself known mostly on the playground or during P.E. when it was time to pick teams for whatever game we were playing. I was consistently among the last kids chosen. Being chosen last is absolutely demoralizing. Just writing this is giving me post-traumatic stress from those events that were twenty years ago. The playground can be a lonely place.

What can give us all great joy is our passage today. It tells us that God chose us! God adopted us! We don't have to worry about the factions, cliques, and groups of this world. We don't have to try to be popular or fit in with our peers. God accepts you for who you are! He didn't choose us after we did anything. He chose us before the foundations of the world. How awesome! How wonderful! Ultimately, we can know we are never alone.

Tori Kelly sings a Christian song titled "Never Alone." These are some of the lyrics of the chorus. "But I know somebody, He calls me His own, I can hear heaven singing out, Oh-oh-oh, you're never alone, Oh-oh-oh, you're never alone." There are days that can feel lonely. Trust in the Lord who chose you and the one who is crying out "You're Never Alone."

Friday, August 23 - John 15:12-17

There is a popular praise and worship song named "Friend of God." This very simple song expresses a deep understanding of our relationship with Jesus. "I am a friend of God. He calls me friend." In an earlier devotion, I told you that people today have never been lonelier. According to a May 2019 Fox News article, the average American has 3 friends who they would call "life-long friends." That's enough to have good relationships and shared life. But when one of those people move away or pass away, there is a void in your life that usually doesn't get filled with other friends. It is filled with emptiness and loneliness. These can be trying times in your life, but I want to give you hope. As Christians, as followers of Jesus, we have a friend in God. He is always there. He has made known to you who God is. And a promise that we have from Matthew 28:20 as well. "I am with you always until the end of the age." We are friends of God. He calls us friends.

Saturday, August 24 - Matthew 6:22-24

Tomorrow night, we will begin a new sermon series discussing How to Become a Spiritually Healthy Family. While the discussion will often focus on parenting and grandparenting, there will be great study from the Bible about how to be a spiritually healthy family, whether you are a family of 1, a family of 2 with no children, or a family of 12. We start tomorrow night by looking at the dysfunctional parenting style of being “double-minded.”

Sunday, August 25 - Psalm 15

WEEK 4 - TIME-MANAGEMENT

Monday, August 26 - Psalm 39:4-5; James 4:14

How did you spend your time yesterday? How are you going to spend your time today? This week, we are going to focus on the practical matter of time-management. Many years ago, my parents were looking to join a gym. The whole family was getting a tour of the facilities, and when we came to the end of the tour, the owner of the gym said “do you have the time to commitment to being here regularly?” My dad answered “we will make the time.” Then the gym owner responded in a way I will never forget. He looked at us and said, “You can’t make time. You can only use time. Do you have the time to be here regularly?”

Your life is finite. Our passages today tell us that life is short. Are you spending your time wisely? What are your priorities in life? Where is God on that list? Does the time you spend with God reflect His position on your list of priorities? Pray that you use your time in the way God wants you to. There are only 24 hours in a day. How are you using them?

Tuesday, August 27 - Ecclesiastes 3:1-15

In our readings yesterday, we reflected on the realization that God must be the priority in your life and the time you spend with Him should reflect that. The reason you should devote your time to Him is that God is the one who determines time and timing. There is a time for everything in life, and it is by God’s design when those events occur. God is the governor and maker of time. God is outside of time and “endures forever.”

Make no mistake. This passage tells us to enjoy life. A life with God and giving Him priority is a life that can be enjoyable. It is the gift of God to enjoy the produce of this life. There is a time for everything. A time to work and a time to play. A time to serve and a time for sabbath. God has given us this great life to live. Let us be grateful to Him by standing in awe of God and using our time in the way God intends.

Wednesday, August 28 - Hebrews 5:11-6:12

Where are you in your walk with Christ? Do you need the foundations of the faith taught to you again? When we compare our Christian faith to human life are you still a baby needing milk and someone to feed you? Or are you ready for solid food and know how to feed yourself? Let's talk about how we can mature in our Christian faith tonight. See you at church.

Thursday, August 29 - Exodus 18:13-26

Praise God for fathers-in-law! Moses was being ineffective in his work. He was being overworked in areas where others could make decisions. Moses' father-in-law gave him advice to create a structure to allow other leaders to help Moses with the burden of making decisions for the Israelites. This reorganization worked and allowed Moses to use his time more effectively and allowed Moses much needed rest.

Too often, we think we are the only ones who can complete the task. This leads to poor time-management and affects all aspects of our lives. In addition, thinking you are the only one who is capable of doing the work borders on the sin of pride. All of us need to delegate responsibilities. As church members, we are one body working together to serve the Kingdom of God. We need to work together and trust each other to do the work. The moment we start to think we need to do everything because no one can do it, we have failed to cooperate with each other. Let all of us use our time more effectively by spreading out the work among each other.

Pray today for God to search your heart if there is any pride you need to get rid of. What work are you not allowing others to serve in? In addition, pray for God to reveal to you if you are serving enough. What work could you be involved in to serve alongside others who feel overworked?

Friday, August 30 - Matthew 25:14-30

In our parable today, notice the way the first slave goes to work with the five talents. Verse 16 tells us he goes “at once.” The second slave goes “the same way” with the two talents. They do not waste any time going to use the money the master gave them. When the master returns, he gives them the same affirmation. It doesn’t matter that one made more money than the other. They used the money and time given to them wisely. The third slave is a different story. After burying his coin, he is called a lazy slave. In the Kingdom of God, we are called to be effective with the resources we are given and that includes our time. We are to use what has been given to us. I think that is the best way to interpret Matthew 25:29. To those who have used their time and resources effectively, God will give you more responsibility because you have been deemed trustworthy. To those who have wasted their time, even the opportunities they had to serve in the Kingdom will be taken away. Pray for God to allow you to use your time in the manner God wants. Pray for him to give you strength and desire not to be lazy, but to serve the Kingdom effectively.

Saturday, August 31 - Galatians 2:19-20

Being a spiritually healthy family means recognizing our freedom in Christ. Too often, we feel enslaved to the pressures of the world. The world tells us we must have the latest and greatest device all of the time. That kids are not happy if they do not have that one thing everybody else has. Our kids will say the same thing. As parents/grandparents, what do we do? The best thing we can do as adults is remind children (or others we are in a relationship with) that we can have freedom from the need of stuff because of the life we are supposed to live for Christ. Let’s talk more about the “I can’t say no” dysfunctional lifestyle tomorrow night.

Sunday, September 1 - Psalm 16

WEEK 5 - HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Monday, September 2 - 2 John

On this Labor Day, it is appropriate we begin discussing the practical matter of work relationships and family relationships. All aspects of your life are built upon relationships. You cannot have success in a given area unless you

have good relationships with others working/living alongside you. Second John is a master class in how to have appropriate relationships with others. This will be our text coming up on Sunday. As you are reading, notice the way John speaks to “the elect lady and her children.” Notice the way he gives praise to the good work they are doing, as well as criticism for what they need to do better.

Relationships are built on trust and trust cannot be built if each person in the relationship doesn't believe some form of love is in the center of the partnership/group. Love of your work colleagues is obviously going to be different than love of your family. Nevertheless, if the other person or the group doesn't believe you have their best interests in mind (an example of love), they will not build the relationship necessary to be successful. Let's talk about healthy relationships this week and living our best lives with each other.

Tuesday, September 3 - Titus 2:1-15

Do you consider yourself an older man or woman? Are you a younger man or woman? That should cover most of us. If you find yourself in one of these four groups, our passage today has instructions for how to live your life. According to the characteristics you are supposed to exhibit, how are you doing? In case you were wondering, in Greek the words for “older man” or “older woman” were normally used for people sixty years or older. If we want to have successful relationships, these excellent words from Paul to Titus tell all of us what to do. To be honest, no matter what group you find yourself, you should practice all of the characteristics in Titus 2:1-10.

The last five verses give us the reason why we are to act as described in the first ten verses. We are to live dedicated, devoted, righteous lives because of what God has done for us. We renounce selfish desires and instead, are selfless to follow the example of Christ. What selfish desires do you need to give up? Pray today for God to make it clear where you are being selfish and confess that sin to God. What attribute from the beginning of Titus 2 do you need to work on most? Call a Christian friend today, and ask them to pray for you to have this characteristic strengthened in you. Let us work together to build each other up and build stronger relationships in our lives.

Wednesday, September 4 - Hebrews 10:19-39

Luke 12:48 tells us “...to whom much has been given, much will be required...” This phrase should also be considered the theme of our verses in

Hebrews today. We have given a great gift by having Christ in our lives. When we stop to think of everything God has done in the past and what the Bible promises He will do in the future, it can give us the hope and perseverance to continue in the faith in the present. Because we have this great gift of God, we need to encourage others to keep the faith or start their journey with Christ at a point of conversion. Let's talk more tonight about "Staying strong in the faith and encouraging others to do the same."

Thursday, September 5 - Ephesians 6:5-9

Two passages in three days that discuss how slaves are to act with masters. What do we do with passages that discuss slavery in the Bible? I don't want this to be the main focus of your devotion today, but I did want to share a quick word. The Bible discussing slavery, while not condemning slavery, does not mean the Bible supports slavery. What is happening is that Christianity was such a small minority of the population in the 1st century that the best way to combat the cruelty of slavery was not to fight for emancipation, but to tell slaves and masters how to live Christian lives and treat one another fairly. In our passage today, telling the masters not to threaten their slaves would have been revolutionary in the relationship between the two.

While the relationship is not the same, I do think we can take some of the principles from Ephesians 6:5-9 and apply them to the manager/worker relationship. Workers would do well to work hard, as if they are working for God, even when no one is watching. Doing the right thing while no one is watching is the definition of integrity. All Christians must have integrity. Managers would do well to remember that in the eyes of God all people are equal, so you need to treat those who report to you fairly.

For many of you who are reading this, you no longer work a regular job. But, you do still have work to do, and there are people who do work for you. How are you treating others? How are you working? Is it with enthusiasm (verse 7)? Or do you begrudgingly do the work required of you? Pray for a spirit of enthusiasm today in your work. And remember, at the end of the day, we all serve the same Master in heaven.

Friday, September 6 - 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

In the 2014 movie *Frozen*, the main theme is Elsa, one of the main characters, learning how to control her magical powers. At the end of the movie,

she has the epiphany that love is the ingredient she has been missing. Not being scared of her powers but embracing the powers and not being anxious about but loving those around her is how to control her icy magic.

The secret ingredient for healthy relationships at work, home, church, and everywhere else is love. We talked about that as we looked at 2 John on Monday. Today's passage focuses on how we show love to all people. While read at many weddings, this is not a passage originally written for married couples. It is a passage written for the church. It is a part of Scripture that should be applied to all relationships. Think about a strained relationship that you have. Where did it fall apart? Did you or the other person not love in the way described in 1 Corinthians? At your work, when can you be more supportive of others and not rejoice in others' failure? At home, when can you be more patient and kind to your family? At church, when can you love by not insisting on your own way? This is how we should love each other. And when we live as this passage calls us to, our relationships will be successful.

Saturday, September 7 - 1 Thessalonians 5:18

Most of us had a picture of how our life would turn out. We had everything figured out and all would be perfect. How has that turned out for you? If you are like most, your life hasn't gone according to your plan. Tomorrow night, we will discuss how to let go of your perfectionism in your life and to do as our verse today tells us: "give thanks in *all* circumstances" (italics added).

Sunday, September 8 - Psalm 17:6-8

WEEK 6 - CHANGE

Monday, September 9 - Genesis 12:1-9

When I say that nobody likes change, I imagine I can use that phrase pretty literally. Sure, there might be a person here or there who enjoys anarchy in their life, but the vast majority of people are not happy about change. This is why change causes conflict for many groups and relationships. It's why even when a person changes for the better, it can cause consternation for that person and the family. When I was in a Family Counseling class in college, this example was shared. When a father is an alcoholic and decides to get sober, many times the family suffers more stress and even breakup than before because the family is

not prepared for the change. The family is used to functioning with an alcoholic father and when he gets better (changes), the family does not know what to do.

It is amazing how adverse we are to change. But the world is constantly changing and we need to be prepared for it. Our story today shows us how Abram (Abraham) reacted to God's call. He was asked to move from his father's house. We can assume Abram has stayed with this family all 75 years of his life. Not only did God call him to leave his home, He didn't tell Abram where he was going. Talk about a major life change! What did Abram do? Did he ask for more information? Did he say "let me think about it?" No. He went, just as God told him to.

Change is hard, but many times it is necessary. What is some practical advice for how to deal with change in your life? Trust in God and His plan. Do as God has commanded you and you will be blessed.

Tuesday, September 10 - Exodus 16:1-3

Do you know the term "hangry?" It's the combination of the words "hungry" and "angry" meaning, you get angry when you are hungry. In our reading today, the Israelites are hangry. In their moments of weakness, they believe that Moses has brought them into the wilderness just to die. They believe they were better off as slaves in Egypt. This sounds preposterous right? Like we said yesterday, change can cause anxiety and worry even when it is good change. For the first time in centuries, the Israelites are not slaves in Egypt. And yet they believe that they were better off as slaves.

We get into comfortable habits that are not healthy, but we feel safe. It's what we know and we fear what we do not know. So we stay in a bad situation because we are afraid of change. What we forget and what the Israelites forgot is that God is on our side. God just parted the Red Sea for Israel. God is about to provide manna and quail from heaven for Israel. God wants what is best for us. And God can lead us in that direction, but we have to make the decision to make a change and trust that God will take care of us.

Wednesday, September 11 - Hebrews 11:1-2, 32-40; 12:1-3, 12-17

How can we keep the faith? We can remember the godly men and women who have gone before us. The picture in Hebrews 12:1 is an ancient relay race where it is our turn to run. The rest of the team is cheering us on. They have run their leg and surround us to encourage us to remain focused on the prize set

before us. Who is a person in your life who you could add to this list of faithful followers of God in Hebrews 11? Thank God for that godly man or woman who encouraged you to keep the faith and run in perseverance. If you are willing, I hope you will share about them tonight.

Thursday, September 12 - 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

All of us understand that change is hard. Part of change is aging. We grow frustrated that we cannot do what we used to do with ease. Know this: our afflictions in this life are only temporary and our salvation in the Lord is forever. Do not lose heart or confidence in Christ as change encompasses your life. Even though it looks like the outside is wasting away, God is renewing us on the inside daily. Isaiah 40:31 tells us that God can renew our strength. What changes are happening in your life that you need prayer for? Pray for God to renew your inner strength and to not worry about anything else. Who do you know who can pray for you? Tell them today what you need prayer for and let them pray for you. Changes in life are hard, but when we give all troubles to God, He takes care of them.

Friday, September 13 - Revelation 4:1-11

The early church was going through terrible persecution toward the end of the first century. This is the time period when John was on the island of Patmos and received the vision found in the book of Revelation. This persecution was causing great upheaval in the church and upheaval means changes were happening. What is the start of the word of hope that God gives the people through John? It's a scene of worship. The entire vision of Revelation begins with worship of God on His throne. This gave the church comfort and hope. It can give us comfort and hope during moments of change as well. No matter what is happening in the world, no matter what is happening in your family, no matter what is happening in your life, God remains on His throne. His constancy on the throne is the reason we should always worship God, in times of tranquility and times of change. Give God your worship today. Sometimes when we are in the midst of change, we get busy and forget our purpose. Our main purpose is to worship God. I pray that you take the opportunity to fulfill your main purpose today.

Saturday, September 14 - 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

You are not in control. Let me say it louder for the people in the back. YOU ARE NOT IN CONTROL! Our discussion tomorrow night is about not micro-managing situations. You cannot be in control of every situation, and realizing that is healthy for you and everybody else around you. But take heart about not being in control. You can trust that God is in control and “God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom...” (1:25). People believe that God’s actions sending Jesus to the cross was foolishness. It is better to trust in God’s foolishness than people’s genius. Let’s talk more tomorrow night.

Sunday, September 15 - Psalm 18:1-3