



Team

Bible Studies

Introduction

The bible passages have been specifically written into each reading so that if you decide to study this as a group it is as easy as possible to follow along. The translation used is the NIV if you use a different translation, I would encourage you to take time at the end of each bible passage to look over your own translations and discuss any differences in language. And how that affects the rest of the passage.

DAY 1

Read the following psalm and think upon it

Psalm 96

Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth.

Sing to the Lord, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day.

Declare his glory among the nations, his marvellous deeds among all peoples.

For great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods.

For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens.

Splendour and majesty are before him; strength and glory are in his sanctuary.

Ascribe to the Lord, all you families of nations, ascribe to the Lord, glory and strength.

Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering and come into his courts.

Worship the Lord in the splendour of his holiness; tremble before him, all the earth.

Say among the nations, "The Lord reigns."

The world is firmly established, it cannot be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity.

Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it.

Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them; let all the trees of the forest sing for joy.

Let all creation rejoice before the Lord, for he comes, he comes to judge the earth.

He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his faithfulness.

What aspect of God's character stands out to you? Maker of the world? The judge? His holiness?

Why are you here on mission? What is your personal reason or purpose for being here?

What moves of God have really shaken you? Either in a good way or bad. What conclusions have you come to after these occasions?

Sing to the Lord a new song! We are called as men and women of Christ to go into all the world and preach (Matthew 28). In this psalm we are given the same message but presented differently. Sing to the Lord a new song, what have you not been singing about that you really should be? Overcoming illness miraculous provision, all these trials of life which usually end up with us singing God's praises.

But what about the bit before the deliverance? When all is rubbish and we cannot see how he is at work? Or afterwards when there is just mess and it seems as though God lay dormant and still does?

As you step onto the mission field this week you will be speaking and LISTENING. To people on all stages of their walk. 10 to 1 says they'll never remember your words, but they will remember your actions. As men and women of Christ we are not called to gloss over the rubbish, but to see it for what it is and to tell the nations of our short comings and problems. But then to act as the people we know we are called to be, to sing his praise and declare it is well, because even though I don't know where God was. I lay down my right to know and I take up the cross of Christ Jesus for I

know he called me. Maybe in us there are still things which get our motor running that really shouldn't. Are you at peace with God? Is there any questionable areas in our lives?

Pray together now, ask the holy spirit to enter into every part of you and search out anything that could get in your way this week. Be open and transparent listen to those around you and live as Christ lived in humility and in transparency.

Day 2

Read Isaiah 44 verse 24-28

"This is what the Lord says you're Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the Lord, the Maker of all things, who stretches out the heavens, who spreads out the earth by myself, who foils the signs of false prophets and makes fools of diviners, who overthrows the learning of the wise and turns it into nonsense, who carries out the words of his servants and fulfils the predictions of his messengers, who says of Jerusalem, 'It shall be inhabited,' of the towns of Judah, 'They shall be rebuilt,' and of their ruins, 'I will restore them,' who says to the watery deep, 'Be dry, and I will dry up your streams,' who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please; he will say of Jerusalem, "Let it be rebuilt," and of the temple, "Let its foundations be laid."'"

And Matthew 7 verse 15-23

"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"

What do you think Jesus was driving at with these words?

How close are you to God? How do you determine that?

How do you come to making decisions? Do you believe it's important to ask God's advice for everything? Even what to make for dinner or whether to buy something?

This passage of Isaiah is incredibly real. This passage is seen to come to fruition. Jerusalem and the temple rebuilt and the people returned.

However, looking at history with hindsight what is the fruit of this? A temple rebuilt a people returned but with even stronger walls. A religious faction that in sighted corruption and evil. Father do you know me? When Jesus came, he called the oppressed by name.

Father do you know me? These words of Jesus become even more potent as we read other passages of scripture. He knows us inside out. He calls beggars by name he calls his own disciples by name. He calls people that haven't even seen him before by name. His deciding to disown is a calculated thought out decision.

The question isn't 'Father Do you know me?'. It's 'Father do I know you?'

Why are you here? On this mission? Do you know truly the father that calls you? Do you allow compassion turn to judgement? Talking about people turn to gossip?

You know why you're here. You know the God you serve you stand on the threshold of his kingdom.

You stand on this audacious stage calling people to make a choice not to sell God to people. But to translate in ways they understand. If you would not say something about someone to their face then don't say it behind their back. If

someone is a human don't talk down to them. Sin crouches at the door you're here to call Christ to stand between us and that door.

Stand together hold each other's hands pray for strength that judgement and hatred no matter how trivial will stay at bay and that the cross of Christ crucified will fill you that you may love what he loves and hate what he hates.

Day 3

Read 1 Kings 18 verse 6-46

So Obadiah went to meet Ahab and told him, and Ahab went to meet Elijah. When he saw Elijah, he said to him, "Is that you, you troubler of Israel?"

"I have not made trouble for Israel," Elijah replied. "But you and your father's family have. You have abandoned the Lord's commands and have followed the Baals. Now summon the people from all over Israel to meet me on Mount Carmel. And bring the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table."

So Ahab sent word throughout all Israel and assembled the prophets on Mount Carmel. Elijah went before the people and said, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him."

But the people said nothing. Then Elijah said to them, "I am the only one of the Lord's prophets left, but Baal has four hundred and fifty prophets. Get two bulls for us. Let Baal's prophets choose one for themselves and let them cut it into pieces and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the Lord. The god who answers by fire—he is God."

Then all the people said, "What you say is good." Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose one of the bulls and prepare it first, since there are so many of you. Call on the name of your god, but do not light the fire." So they took the bull given them and prepared it. Then they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon. "Baal, answer us!" they shouted. But there was no response; no one answered. And they danced around the altar they had made.

At noon Elijah began to taunt them. "Shout louder!" he said. "Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened." So they shouted louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, until their blood flowed. Midday passed, and they continued their frantic prophesying until the time for the evening sacrifice. But there was no response, no one answered, no-one paid attention.

Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come here to me." They came to him, and he repaired the altar of the Lord, which had been torn down. Elijah took twelve stones, one for each of the tribes descended from Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord had come, saying, "Your name shall be Israel." With the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord, and he dug a trench around it large enough to hold two seahs of seed. He arranged the wood, cut the bull into pieces and laid it on the wood. Then he said to them, "Fill four large jars with water and pour it on the offering and on the wood."

"Do it again," he said, and they did it again. "Do it a third time," he ordered, and they did it the third time. The water ran down around the altar and even filled the trench. At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: "Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. Answer me, Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again."

Then the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench. When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, "The Lord—he is God! The Lord—he is God!"

Then Elijah commanded them, "Seize the prophets of Baal. Don't let anyone get away!" They seized them and Elijah had them brought down to the Kishon Valley and slaughtered them there. And Elijah said to Ahab, "Go, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain." So Ahab went off to eat and drink, but Elijah climbed to the top of Carmel, bent down to the ground and put his face between his knees.

"Go and look toward the sea," he told his servant. And he went up and looked.

"There is nothing there," he said.

Seven times Elijah said, "Go back."

The seventh time the servant reported, "A cloud as small as a man's hand is rising from the sea." So Elijah said, "Go and tell Ahab, 'Hitch up your chariot and go down before the rain stops you.'" Meanwhile, the sky grew black with clouds, the wind rose, a heavy rain started falling and Ahab rode off to Jezreel. The power of the Lord came on Elijah and, tucking his cloak into his belt, he ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel.

Besides the obvious that God is the one and only what message do you think is being portrayed here?

Ponder the verse where Elijah has to outrun the chariot. Read the verses around it to what do you notice/observe?

What do you think is the significance of Elijah using the Lords shattered altar and slaughtering the prophets in the Kishon Valley (This is the same place Deborah won her mega battle.)?

In this passage the thing that sticks out most to me is Elijah tucking his cloak into his belt and running. He causes this almighty storm and then legs it as fast as possible.

For many of you. You are called to short term mission, commando style war. You get into a place you do a job and you run, fast.

For many you will never see the good you have done. You'll never see the fruit of the smile you gave or the answer to the prayer you said.

I went on a short-term mission to Indonesia, we prayed for some people and we smiled at a lot of natives. But that was pretty much it. But we went to learn I learnt how to make bricks, fix nets and how to cut coconut. We saw many encouraging and wonderful things. We prayed for one man and had pictures of him on a motorcycle. Two weeks before we came, he had been offered a job as a traveling pastor. We prayed up and down the road of the village for rain for God's blessing. That night it rained HARD. Transpired the next morning it had rained only where we had walked. Rain for about 200 yards and then bone-dry ground.

You may never see the storm that follows your mission but remember you're here for a short time to cause a storm.

Pray now together ask the Lord to show you three goals, three things he wants you to do before you leave this place.

Day 4

Read 1 Kings 19 verse 1-18

Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, "May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them."

Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, Lord," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep.

All at once an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat." He looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again. The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, "Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you." So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he travelled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God.

There he went into a cave and spent the night.

And the word of the Lord came to him: "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

He replied, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."

The Lord said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by."

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.

Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

He replied, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."

The Lord said to him, "Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet. Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death any who escape the sword of Jehu. Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and whose mouths have not kissed him."

Do you remember any times that God woke you up?

What is it about the body of Christ that you find the most attractive?

We come again to this picture of Elijah running. This bloke must have been seriously fit. The thought of running for a bus is enough to make me breathless let alone a 40-day hike. Why on earth would you hike 40 days just to get to a mountain.

I always see these sorts of passages getting split up. Focusing either on the 40 (Which incidentally is the number of testing) day hike. Or the fact that God shows up in whisper rather than storms.

But have you ever put the two together? You have to go through severe trials for the whisper.

I struggle with depression; things have been really bad recently with medication and I keep finding myself in the question of where are you God? I had to call a doctor the other day the outcome of that phone call sent me into a full on melt down. I just couldn't cope. I hit a door and was in floods and floods of tears. All I could say was 'where are you?' I was at work in a garden at the time and kept asking the same question. Then for a brief moment, a few seconds the sun broke through the shade, and I felt this peace.

You go onto the field with different backgrounds, you go to a people with different backgrounds and at different stages in their lives. You are there as living testament to the choices we make in life.

The different faith stages you are at brings diversity reassurance, and peace. Celebrate in that teach people that diversity. Show them the differences within Christ's family.

Do not tell people to worship in the storms but to seek the still small voice of God who loves them and calls them by name. Comfort those who are lost it's not helpful to simply be told by someone to sing in the storm it's a concept you have to learn for yourself. But point to the scriptures that encourage it.

You're here to preach and teach. Preach the message of love but teach how to apply it.

Day 5

Zechariah Chapter 3

Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan[a] standing at his right side to accuse him. 2 The Lord said to Satan, "The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke

you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?" Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. 4 The angel said to those who were standing before him, "Take off his filthy clothes." Then he said to Joshua, "See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put fine garments on you." 5 Then I said, "Put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the Lord stood by. 6 The angel of the Lord gave this charge to Joshua: 7 "This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'If you will walk in obedience to me and keep my requirements, then you will govern my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you a place among these standing here.

What's the point of the turban?

Who do you think Jeshua represents? (Remember he's the high priests) Who are the people surrounding him?

In this chapter we see Jesus doing what he does best. Forgiving, but not just forgiving. Caring so much about how we are seen to the world that he changes us to.

Do you think he simply forgot the turban? A chap wandering around in new clothes and a dirty hat would stand out a mile off. So why then was it left to the prophet who had the vision to say; give him a new hat?

God has sent us to do the laundry.

I do not believe God forgot about the turban. I believe he wants us to take part in the restoration. He wants us to see the need and call out the filth. To bring it into the light that it may be changed.

As you go into the battlefield ahead go with clear conscious for you are following the actions of the one who sent you. Do not try to sell Jesus.

For this isn't a one-time wonder, you're not calling people to the easy paths or even the hard paths.

No, you're simply sent to point out that their hat is dirty and you know a good laundrette.

Discuss together what you think this looks like practically.

Oh Christ who has called us by name, call us now once more. To not see the actions but the roots. Almighty father let us see with eyes of the spirit that we will see what is filthy and point it out. Give us great strength and determination always to do what is right in your eyes.

Day 6

Isaiah 6

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. 3 And they were calling to one another:

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."

4 At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

5 "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty."

6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. 7 With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for."

8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?"

And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

The all-powerful all holy awesome God who is encapsulated in the Old Testament is seen within these verses. A God of such intense holiness that even the very presence of sin is unacceptable.

Remember this.

Remember this is the God you serve. You go with no rights to be pushed and shoved by all. And you must let them. For you serve such a great God he's so huge so incredible he lowers himself to the form of an outcast. And allows himself to be whipped humiliated and hung on a tree. Remember that as you step onto these streets.

Nothing that happened to Christ was an accident. The pain and the future plans were weaved into the tapestry of this earth from its foundation.

Remember his greatness and your sin in comparison. \Each day call out for the holiness of God. Call him to cleanse the streets and wash this place with fire. Ask him to show you his holiness at work for it may surprise you. Give thanks at ALL times and in ALL situations because if you can't. How do you expect those you talk too, to listen?

Nothing has happened by accident, in life bad things happen that we can't explain, don't try to. Take up your cross and follow the one who sent you. As you talk to people let them know the truth that's all you can do.

Pray your socks off and hope for the best.

Day 7

Isaiah 52:7-10

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!" 8 Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices; together they shout for joy. When the Lord returns to Zion, they will see it with their own eyes. 9 Burst into songs of joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem, for the Lord has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem. 10 The Lord will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God.

You are ambassadors of the living God. You submit to the rules of this world but they do not control you. You are soldiers: some are called to enforce peace others are called to destroy, others are called to build defences and homes.

Ask God which role is yours and don't be afraid to carry it out.

Remember you're here to crush Satan so don't have mercy on him. But make him pay for all the worlds suffering make him pay in blood save from the fire those he has caught. For God's sake remember this is people's souls you're fighting for their lives are on the line.

Almighty and everlasting father who has called us his children and servants to this communion table. Give us the humility to kneel on ground ruled by darkness and declare your light, help us commit ourselves so completely to you that even the shadow of death may not overtake us. Help us to speak the grace of the slain lamb, the truth of judgement and life everlasting.

Finally, be strong in the lord. Acknowledge you wear the full armour of Christ, remember him. Remember him even when you've forgotten him. Let your hearts not tremble from fear but expectation. For God is on the move.



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