

1st July: Jeremiah 39:1-18

You can take the man out of Babylon, but you can't take Babylon out of the man! We may have never set foot in the ancient city of Babylon, but we know all about the spirit of Babylon! The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately corrupt (17:9). This is the spirit of Babylon, the spirit of disobedience, the spirit which is at work in every one of us: All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Ephesians 2:2; Romans 3:23). Is there any hope for us? We cannot change ourselves: Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard its spots? Neither can you do good who are accustomed to doing evil (13:23). We can, however, be changed by God. To those who trust in Him, the Lord says, I will save you (18). God wants to bless you. Put your trust in Him. Let His blessing flow into your heart (17:7).

2nd July: Jeremiah 40:1-16

The Lord your God pronounced this evil against this place; the Lord has brought it about, and has done as He said. Because you sinned against the Lord, and did not obey His voice, this thing has come upon you (3). We hear a great deal today about the feel good factor. People need to get a good feeling: Give them a pat on the back. Make them feel good about themselves. There's not much of a feel good factor in Jeremiah's preaching! The people must have been wondering, Where did they dig him up from? He has nothing good to say about anyone or anything. We must rise above the sarcasm of those who have no time for the Word of the Lord. We must ask, Where did Jeremiah's message really come from? This is what the Word of the Lord says: The Word came to Jeremiah from the Lord (1).

3rd July: Jeremiah 41:1-42:6

Terrible things were happening! Things were going from bad to worse. What next? - The people were wondering where it would all end. What are we to do when everything seems to be getting totally out of control? There is one thing we must never forget. It is the most important thing of all. We must pray to the Lord our God. We must ask Him to show us the way we should go. He will show us the thing that we should do (42:2-3). It's time to stop complaining and start praying. What a Friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear! What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!... Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere? We should never be discouraged. Take it to the Lord in prayer!... Jesus knows our every weakness. Take it to the Lord in prayer! (Mission Praise, 746).

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4th July: Jeremiah 42:7-43:7

Do not go to Egypt (19). We may never set foot in the country known as Egypt - but the spirit of Egypt may be in our hearts: Who is the Lord, that I should obey Him? (Exodus 5:2). Egypt is an attitude of the heart. It is an attitude of rebellion against God. We must say No to Egypt . We must say No to the spirit of rebellion against God. For God s people, Egypt was a place of slavery, a place from which they needed to be set free by God (Exodus 2:23-25; 3:7-10). Each of us must choose how we will live. We can remain in the place of slavery - slaves of sin - , or we can be obedient from the heart , stepping out from that place into the place of freedom, the new life of the Spirit - the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death (Romans 6:17-18; 7:6; 8:2).

5th July: Psalm 115:1-18

Not to us, O Lord, not to us but to Your Name be the glory because of Your love and faithfulness (1). God loves us. He loves us with a faithful love, an everlasting love , a love that will not let us go . His love never comes to an end . Nothing can separate us from His love (Jeremiah 31:3; Lamentations 3:22-23; Romans 8:38-39; Church Hymnary, 677). What have we done to deserve such love? Absolutely nothing! We are sinners . We do not deserve to be loved by God. We have done nothing to earn His love. Love begins with God. It comes from Him. How do we know that He loves us? Have we proved ourselves worthy of His love? No! - God shows His love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us . To God be the glory! (Romans 5:8; Church Hymnary, 374).

6th July: Psalms 116:1-117:2

I love the Lord... I will call on Him as long as I live (116:1-2). Our love for God is to be a lifelong love. It is to be the love of our life. What are we to do when our love for God grows weak? We must remember His love for us - Great is His love towards us. The faithfulness of the Lord endures forever (117:2). When we find it difficult to keep on loving God, we must remember how much He loves us. When we feel live giving up on loving God, we must remember that He never gives up on loving us. He loves us when our love for Him is strong. He loves us when our love for Him is weak. In love, He reaches out to us. He brings us out of our weakness and into His strength. Let His strong love reach you in your weakness and give you His strength: Loving Him who first loved me (Church Hymnary, 450).

29th September: Psalm 139:1-24

Through Christ our Saviour, we are led in the way everlasting : God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son (24; 1 John 5:11). God s great purpose of eternal salvation seems too wonderful - too good to be true ! It is a thing most wonderful, almost too wonderful to be, that God s own Son should come from heaven and die to save a child like me, and yet I know that it is true... (6; Church Hymnary, 385). God has a glorious future planned for us. We can hardly even begin to take it in: Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain . We know that no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him yet we rejoice in this: God has revealed it to us by His Spirit (6; 1 Corinthians 2:9-10). Lead me in the way everlasting! (24).

30th September: 3 John

Some people do a lot of good. Others do a great deal of harm. Diotrephes thought he was a big star . He loves to be first . He likes to put himself first . He wasn t a star . He was a disaster! He took nothing to do with God s servants. He did not acknowledge the authority of Christ s apostle. He was gossiping maliciously about God s servants. He did not make people feel welcome . He drove people out of the church (9-10). Demetrius was very different. He was well spoken of by everyone - and even by the truth itself . He wasn t just popular. He was real, genuine, true. There was a ring of truth about him. These were no empty words of flattery. God s true servants said, We also speak well of him (12). What kind of person are you?

26th September: Ezekiel 35:1-15

You will be desolate, O Mount Seir, you and all of Edom. Then they will know that I am the Lord (15). The people of Edom knew the Lord as their Judge. There is a much better way of knowing the Lord. We can know Him as our Saviour. Those who refuse to come to Jesus Christ, trusting Him as Saviour, place themselves under God's judgment. They are condemned already because they have not believed in the Name of God's one and only Son. They will know the Lord as their Judge - but they could have known Him as their Saviour if they had submitted to God's saving purpose for their lives: God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him (John 3:17-18). Each of us must choose. Do you know Christ as Saviour, or will you face Him as Judge?

27th September: Ezekiel 36:1-38

I will look on you with favour (9). Through Christ our Saviour, God looks upon us with favour. Here are some words which will help you to rejoice in the wonderful grace of Jesus which is greater than all my sin, the wonderful grace of Jesus which reaches me (Crusader Hymns, 106). Let me introduce you to a friend called Grace. Doesn't care about your past or your many mistakes. He'll cover your sins in a warm embrace. Let me introduce to a friend called Grace. His grace reaches lower than your worst mistake and His love will run further than you can run away. He believes in lost causes when common sense would just give up. He believes in lost causes and changes people with His love. There's nobody too far gone, no one beyond His reach. He believes in lost causes cause He believed in me. Let Jesus be your Joy!

28th September: Ezekiel 37:1-28

It was a valley of dry bones (1-2). Then, the Lord changed everything - I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live (5). What a difference the Lord makes! Breathe on me, Breath of God. Fill me with life anew (Church Hymnary, 103). What happens when the Spirit of the Lord breathes new life into the Church of God? - The Church that seemed in slumber has now risen from its knees and dry bones are responding with the fruits of new birth. Holy Spirit, we welcome You. Let the breeze of Your presence flow that Your children here might truly know how to move in the Spirit's flow. Holy Spirit, we welcome You. Please accomplish in us today some new work of loving grace, we pray. Unreservedly, have Your way. Holy Spirit, we welcome You (Mission Praise, 274,241).

7th July: Jeremiah 43:8-44:14

The Word of the Lord came to Jeremiah (43:8). The Lord speaks His Word to those who are prepared to make time for listening to Him. Come to God's Word, praying that it will be a lamp to your feet and a light to your path. Come with the prayer, Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in Your Word. See that you live according to His Word: I have hidden Your Word in my heart that I might not sin against You (Psalm 119:105,18,9,11). Pray that God will speak to you. Listen to what He says to you (1 Samuel 3:10). Say to them, This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel says... (43:10). Don't keep God's Word to yourself. Share His Word. We are not to listen to God without also speaking for Him. We must remember that we cannot really speak for Him unless we are also listening to Him.

8th July: Jeremiah 44:15-45:5

Egypt was to be a place of punishment. To those who remain in the place of rebellion, God says, I will punish you in this place. This is His Word of warning. We don't need to remain in the place of rebellion and punishment. We can return to Judah, the place of obedience and blessing (28-29). This is not about places we will find on a map of the world. It's a call to look into the secret places of our hearts. We must ask God to search our hearts. What will He find when He looks into our hearts? Will He find rebellion? Will He find obedience? God wants us to leave the place of rebellion and punishment. He wants us to return to the place of obedience and blessing. Search me, O God, and know my heart!... See if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting! (Psalm 139:23-24).

9th July: Jeremiah 46:1-28

Egypt rises like the Nile, like rivers whose waters surge. He said, I will rise, I will cover the earth, I will destroy cities and their inhabitants (8). The spirit of rebellion against God is very powerful. Many lives have been destroyed by the attitude of proud unbelief: Who is the Lord, that I should obey Him? (Exodus 5:2). We must take our stand against this attitude. We must stand up for the Lord. We see the world going from bad and worse. We must continue to believe the Word of God. When we are filled with fear, He comes to us with His Word, Do not fear... Do not be dismayed... When we feel the spirit of rebellion sweeping over us, God comes to us with His promise: I will surely save you out of a distant place. He gives us peace and security - Do not fear... I am with you (27-28).

#### 10th July: Jeremiah 47:1-48:17

The day has come to destroy all the Philistines... The Lord is about to destroy the Philistines... Woe to you, O Moab! The people of Chemosh are destroyed (47:4). That seems like ancient history - nothing to do with us! What about this? - A curse on him who is lax in doing the Lord's work! (48:17). The Bible may have been written many centuries ago - but it still has a great deal to do with us! We miss the point if we read the Bible as no more than a book of ancient history. God is still speaking to us through His Word. He is still calling us to sit up and take notice. He is still demanding our attention. We must not be lazy in the work of the Lord. We are to be faithful servants of the Lord. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord... your labour in the Lord is not in vain (1 Corinthians 15:58).

#### 11th July: 1 Peter 1:1-25

On earth, we have trials. In heaven, we will have salvation (3-9). In our journey from trials to salvation, from earth to heaven, we are to live a life of holiness and love. In this life of obedience to the truth, we must never forget that we have been redeemed with the precious blood of Christ (15,22,18-19). We must never take pride in our obedience - boasting is excluded. All that can be said about ourselves is this: all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. What makes the difference? What is it that changes us? What is it that sets us on the pathway of holiness and love? We have received the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. Our faith is in Him (Romans 3:27,23-25). He makes the difference. He changes us. He makes us holy. He fills us with His love.

#### 12th July: 1 Peter 2:1-25

Being God's own people is a great privilege - you have received mercy. It is also a great responsibility - declare the wonderful deeds of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light (9-10). God's people are described as strangers in the world (11). We must not think of ourselves as superior - a cut above the rest. We are not! In ourselves, we are strangers - without God in the world. There's nothing special about us, There's something very special about what God has done for us: In Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ (Ephesians 2:12-13). As those who have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of our souls, let's point others to Him who bore our sins... that we might die to sin and live to righteousness (24-25).

#### 23rd September: Proverbs 24:15-34

Though a righteous man falls seven times, he rises again (15). We are kept by the power of God. We do not raise ourselves. It is the Lord who is able to keep us from falling. He knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations (1 Peter 1:5; Jude 24; 2 Peter 2:9). When our faith is tested by fire, we must pray that God will give us His victory: Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace (1 Peter 1:6-7; Daniel 3:17). When our strength is almost gone, the Lord comes with His Word: My grace is sufficient for you. My power is made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9), Amazing grace!... Through many dangers, toils and snares, I have already come. His grace hath brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home (Mission Praise, 31).

#### 24th September: Ezekiel 33:1-33

Ezekiel was to be a watchman for the house of Israel: whenever you hear a Word from My mouth, you shall give them warning from Me. He was to warn the wicked to turn from his way (7-9). This is the warning of love. God loves us. It is because He loves that He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. In His love, He shows us our sin so that we might come to Him with a real confession of sin: Our sins are upon us. In His love, He creates in us a desire for His salvation: How then can we live? In His love, He calls us to return to Him: Turn back from your evil ways. He loves us. He does not want us to die: Why will you die? (10-11). In love, God shows us our sin - The wages of sin is death - and calls us to receive His free gift - eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23).

#### 25th September: Ezekiel 34:1-31

God speaks to us in love. He says, I Myself will be the Shepherd of My sheep (15). We rejoice in His love. We say, The Lord is my Shepherd (Psalm 23:1). Jesus is our Shepherd. He is the good Shepherd. He laid down His life for us that we might receive the forgiveness of our sins. Christ died for our sins. He - the Righteous - died for us - the unrighteous - to bring us to God (John 10:11; 1 Corinthians 15:3; 1 Peter 3:18). He is the great Shepherd. He was raised from the dead. Through His resurrection, we receive eternal life. He says to us, Because I live you will live also (Hebrews 13:20-21; 1 Corinthians 15:4; John 14:19). He is the chief Shepherd. He will come again with the unfading crown of glory for His good and faithful servants (1 Peter 5:4; Matthew 25:21).

20th September: Ezekiel 32:1-32

Pride goes before destruction (Proverbs 16:18). Pharaoh, king of Egypt was arrogant and ruthless: You are like a lion among the nations; you are like a monster in the seas, thrashing about in your streams, churning the water with your feet and muddying the streams (2). Soon, it would be the day of his downfall: The sword of Babylon will come against you... Pharaoh and all his hordes will be killed by the sword (10-11,32). Don't be like the rich fool - You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry. He couldn't have been more wrong! - God said to him, You fool! I will demand your life from you tonight! God is warning us: This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich towards God (Luke 12:19-21).

21st September: 2 John

Look to yourselves, that you may not lose what you have worked for, but may win a full reward (8). Don't let things slip. Build on the work that has already been done. This will not be easy - many deceivers have already gone out into the world. Such people do nothing but harm. They are wreckers. They will destroy the work of God - and think nothing of it. They are antichrist. They are doing wicked work (7,10). When God's work and God's glory are at stake, we dare not be too easy-going. The anything goes attitude will undermine the work of God - if we're not careful. A charge to keep I have, a God to glorify... To serve the present age, my calling to fulfil... Arm me with jealous care, as in Thy sight to live; and O, Thy servant, Lord, prepare, a strict account to give (Revised Church Hymnary, 518).

22nd September: Proverbs 24:1-14

Wisdom is sweet to your soul. If you find it, there is a future hope for you (14). How do we find wisdom? We read the written Word of God, seeking God's promised blessing: The law of the Lord is perfect and revives the soul. The Lord's instruction never fails, and makes the simple wise. As we read God's written Word, keeping our eyes fixed on Christ, the living Word of God, we discover that He is the Wisdom which is sweeter than honey and we rejoice in Him, our Hope of glory - You believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls (John 1:1-2,14; 1 Corinthians 1:30; Psalm 19:7,10; Colossians 1:27; 1 Peter 1:8). Ask God for wisdom. Seek and you will find (James 1:5-8; Matthew 7:7).

13th July: 1 Peter 3:1-4:6

The world is preoccupied with outward appearances. As Christians, we should be more concerned with our inward attitude. In your hearts reverence Christ as Lord. Pray for His attitude - a tender heart and a humble mind (8,15; 4:1). We believe the Gospel - Christ died for our sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring us to God. Let us share the Gospel - Be always ready to give... a reason for the hope that is in you. How are we to share the Gospel? - with gentleness and respect (18,15). We must get the attitude right - so that nothing will hinder our prayers (7). We need more than the right prayers - words that sound good. We need the right attitude. The blessing will not come because our words sound good. It will only come when our attitude is right.

14th July: 1 Peter 4:7-5:14

In all the service we offer to God, there is to be the offering of worship: To Him be the glory and the power for ever and ever (4:11; 5:11). We will not learn to serve God unless we are learning to worship Him. There is a form of religion which denies the power of God - These people honour Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me (2 Timothy 3:5; Matthew 15:8). They go through the motions - but their hearts are not in it! We must pray that God will deliver us from this kind of thing: O for a heart to praise my God! A heart from sin set free; A heart that always feels Thy blood, so freely shed for me (Church Hymnary, 85). Religion is about respectability. Salvation is about renewal: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me (Psalm 51:10).

15th July: Jeremiah 49:1-22

Afterwards I will restore the fortunes... (6). Sometimes, when you're going through a particularly difficult time, you may wonder, Will this ever end? God speaks to us His Word of encouragement. There will be an afterwards. There will be a restoration of our fortunes. The Lord will not cast us off for ever. Though He brings grief, He will show compassion according to His steadfast love. He does not willingly bring suffering or grief to anyone (Lamentations 3:31-33). There will come a time when we will be able to look back at our most distressing circumstances and say from the heart, God meant it for good (Genesis 50:20). In our most testing and trying times, God is teaching us to say, with confidence in Him, We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him (Romans 8:28).

16th July: Jeremiah 49:23-39

I will restore the fortunes... in days to come (39). God is calling us on to His future, a glorious future, a future full of heavenly and eternal glory. We look ahead to days to come . We look ahead to the greatest Day of all - the Day of Christ s Return. It will be a glorious Day - the Day He comes to be glorified... in all who have believed . What a glorious Day it will be - the Day of the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ , the Day of our being gathered to Him : The Lord Himself will come down from heaven... We will be with the Lord for ever . Get ready for Christ s Return. Don t be like those who perish . They do not obey the Gospel of our Lord Jesus . They refuse to love the truth and be saved . Have faith in Christ and be saved (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; 2:1,10,13-14; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18).

17th July: Jeremiah 50:1-28

The people... will go in tears to seek the Lord their God... They will come and bind themselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant that will not be forgotten (4-5). God is calling us to come to Him. He is calling us to commit ourselves to Him. We are to come to the Lord with tears : Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation (2 Corinthians 7:10). Our commitment to the Lord is not to be a half-hearted thing. It is to be a whole-hearted dedication of our lives to Him. God loves us. He has blessed us so much. He has drawn us to Himself. He has heard and answered our prayer for salvation. How are we to respond to such love? We must give ourselves to Him as a living sacrifice . This is our spiritual worship . It is holy and pleasing to God (Romans 12:1).

18th July: Jeremiah 50:29-46

The arrogant one will stumble and fall (32). God s Word warns us - Pride goes before... a fall ; Arrogance will bring your downfall (Proverbs 16:18; 29:23). We must not trust in ourselves. We must put our trust in the Lord - Our Redeemer is strong. The Lord Almighty is His Name (34). We must not boast of ourselves. Salvation is not our own doing . We must boast of the Lord . Salvation is the gift of God (1 Corinthians 1:31; Ephesians 2:8-9). When we are tempted to take pride in ourselves - Lord, I thank You that I am not like other men... (Luke 18:11-12), we must come to the Cross of Christ, praying the sinner s prayer - Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner (Luke 18:13) - and boasting only of the Lord - God forbid that I should glory except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ (Galatians 6:14).

17th September: Psalms 137:1-138:8

How can we sing the songs of the Lord while in a foreign land? (137:4). It is not easy to keep on worshipping the Lord when so many show no interest in worshipping Him. What are we to do when our faith seems so weak and we are on the verge of giving up? Ask the Saviour to help you, comfort, strengthen and keep you . What will we find when we come to the Lord, looking to Him for strength? He is willing to aid you. He will carry you through . God gives us strength - You answered me when I called to You. With Your strength, You strengthened me (138:3). To him that o ercometh, God giveth a crown. Through faith we shall conquer, though often cast down. He who is our Saviour, our strength will renew. Look ever to Jesus. He will carry you through (Church Hymnary, 482).

18th September: Ezekiel 30:1-26

The day of the Lord is near... A sword will come against Egypt... The day of Egypt s doom is sure to come (3-4,9). We must not take God lightly. We can t do what we like and get away with it. We must not trample the Son of God under foot . We must not treat Christ s blood as an unholy thing . We must not insult the Spirit of grace . We must not forget: It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God . God is speaking to us concerning the Day of the Lord , the Return of Christ: He who is coming will come... . He speaks His Word of warning: Those who shrink back are destroyed . He speaks His Word of promise: Those who believe are saved (Hebrews 10:29,31,37-39). When Christ comes, will He find faith...? . Search my heart, O God... (Luke 18:8; Psalm 139:23-24).

19th September: Ezekiel 31:1-18

Pharaoh, king of Egypt had the appearance of majesty - Who can be compared with you in majesty? - yet he was brought down (2,18). There is one Majesty who will never be brought down - Our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the same yesterday and today and for ever . He will receive glory for ever and ever .To Him alone, the Father says, Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever (Hebrews 13:8,21; 1:8). This is real Majesty! Majesty, worship His Majesty. Unto Jesus be glory, honour and praise. Majesty, Kingdom authority, flows from His throne unto His own. His anthem raise. So exalt, lift up on high the Name of Jesus. Magnify, come glorify, Christ Jesus the King. Majesty, worship His Majesty, Jesus who died, now glorified, King of all kings (Mission Praise, 454).

14th September: Psalms 133:1-134

God sends His blessing when His people gather together for worship: How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! (133:1,3). Many people like to think of themselves as believers, yet they show no interest in worshipping God, together with His people. What does God's Word say about this? - Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another... (Hebrews 10:25). Praise the Lord, all you servants of the Lord who minister by night in the House of the Lord (133:1; 134:1). Some people never miss a Sunday morning service - but they always miss the Sunday evening services! They are missing out on so much of God's blessing. May the Lord... bless you... on Sunday evenings as well as Sunday mornings (134:2)!

15th September: Psalm 135:1-21

Praise the Lord (1-3,19-21). The Lord is good... The Lord is great (3,5). In our worship, we focus on both God's greatness and His goodness. God is great in power: Great is our Lord and mighty in power (147:5). He is also great in love: How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! (1 John 3:1). When we praise the Lord, singing of His greatness, let us not think only of the greatness of His power: I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder, Thy power throughout the universe displayed. Let us think also of His goodness, the greatness of His love: And when I think that God His Son not sparing, sent Him to die - I scarce can take it in, that on the Cross my burden gladly bearing, He bled and died to take away my sin (Mission Praise, 506).

16th September: Psalm 136:1-26

His love endures for ever. This is the great message contained in every single verse of this Psalm. It's a message worth repeating - over and over again! God's love is an everlasting love - I have loved you with an everlasting love (Jeremiah 31:3). God's love is an unfailing love - My unfailing love for you will not be shaken (Isaiah 54:10). Let us give thanks to God for His love (1-3,26). In His love, the Lord has provided for us an everlasting salvation. His salvation will last for ever (Isaiah 45:17; 51:6). We must not be like those who refuse to love the Lord - Pharaoh... great kings... mighty kings... (15,17-20). Those who reject God's love will not receive eternal life. Their future will be very different - the raging fire that will consume the enemies of God (John 3:16-18; Hebrews 10:26-27).

19th July: Psalm 118:1-29

The Lord is my Strength and my Song. He is my Saviour (14). Knowing that Jesus Christ is our Saviour gives us a song to sing: Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine... This is my story, this is my song, praising my Saviour all the day long. Knowing that Jesus Christ is our Saviour, we sing His song with strength, committing ourselves to His service, earnestly seeking to win others for Him: We've a story to tell to the nations, that shall turn their hearts to the right... We've a song to be sung to the nations, that shall lift their hearts to the Lord... We've a message to give to the nations, that the Lord, who reigneth above, hath sent us His Son to save us... We've a Saviour to show to the nations... (Mission Praise, 59,744). Don't keep your Saviour to yourself. Share Him with others. Win others for Him.

20th July: Psalm 119:1-24

The way of blessing is the way of obedience (1,9,11,17). Many will choose the way of disobedience - influential people sit together and slander me. We must choose the way of obedience - Your servant will meditate on Your teachings (23). Following Jesus Christ will not be easy. We see many people turning back from following Him. We are tempted to join them. We feel the pull of the world. We must not take our eyes off Jesus. We must not return to the world's way of living. We must remember all that Jesus has done for us - He loved us and gave Himself for us (Galatians 2:20) - and recommit ourselves to following Him: I have decided to follow Jesus... The world behind me, the Cross before me... Though none go with me, I still will follow... No turning back, no turning back (Mission Praise, 272).

21st July: Psalm 119: 25-48

Revive me according to Your Word (25). How does God revive us according to His Word? He gives us His salvation: Let Your unfailing love come to me, O Lord - Your salvation according to Your Word (41). He gives us His strength: My soul is weary with sorrow. Strengthen me according to Your Word (28). He gives us a change of heart: I have chosen the way of truth; I have set my heart on Your laws... I run in the path of Your commands, for You have set my heart free... Give me understanding, and I will keep Your law and obey it with my whole heart... Turn my heart to Your testimonies... (30,32,34,36). He gives us new life: When someone becomes a Christian he becomes a brand new person inside. He is not the same anymore. A new life has begun! (40; 2 Corinthians 5:17).

22nd July: Psalm 119:49-72

God's Word makes such a difference! When everything seems so hopeless, we turn to God's Word and we find that there is hope (49). When we are going through a time of terrible suffering, we turn to God's Word and we find comfort (50,52). When everything seems to be going so badly, we must keep on reading the Word of the Lord: The wicked have laid a trap for me, but I do not forget Your law (61). Through His Word, God is teaching us to see His purpose in our sufferings: The punishment You gave me was the best thing that could have happened to me, for it taught me to pay attention to Your laws (71). God is showing us what is really important: The law that You gave means more to me than all the money in the world (72). He is teaching us to see His love in every part of our life (64).

23rd July: Psalm 119:73-96

We rejoice in God's constant love. This is our comfort - God keeps on loving us no matter what's going on in our lives. We may be going through really hard times - Men persecute me with lies... They have almost succeeded in killing me. There's one thing that never changes - God's constant love. He loves us in the hard times as well as in the happy times. His love inspires us to keep on loving Him when we feel like giving up in despair (76,86-88). We see many changes taking place in our world. Sometimes, we wonder, Where is God in all of this? Has He abandoned us? Can we keep on trusting Him and rejoicing in His Word? When our minds are full of negative thoughts, we must remember God's Word - Your Word, O Lord, will last for ever... Your faithfulness endures through all the ages (89-90).

24th July: Psalm 119:97-120

Throughout life, we have to make choices. Some choices are relatively straightforward. Others are very much more difficult. Some choices don't affect the rest of our life very much. There are, however, choices which affect the whole of our life. There is one choice which is more important than any other - Choosing the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour. Those who refuse to choose are double-minded (113). They can't make up their mind. They know that they should be following Christ - but they are still in love with the world. They are lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God (I John 2:15; 2 Timothy 3:4). Make your choice. Say to the world, Away from me, you evildoers, that I may keep the commands of my God. Say to God, I have decided to obey Your laws until the day I die (115,112).

11th September: Ezekiel 28:1-26

You were on the holy mount of God... You were blameless in your ways... You sinned... I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God (14-16). This is much more than the long time ago story of the king of Tyre (12). Here, we catch a glimpse of the spiritual forces in the heavenly realms. We read about war in heaven. We read about the downfall of Satan. God's Word is warning us: Our struggle is not against flesh and blood. We face a much more powerful enemy - Satan. He disguises himself as an angel of light. We must not be fooled. He is no angel of light. He is a roaring lion. He is prowling about, looking for someone to devour. We shall overcome him by the blood of the Lamb... (Ephesians 6:12; Revelation 12:7-9,11; 2 Corinthians 11:14; 1 Peter 5:8).

12th September: Ezekiel 29:1-21

In God's dealings with Egypt, we see both His wrath - Egypt will become a desolate wasteland - and His mercy - At the end of forty years... I will restore the fortunes of Egypt (9,13-14). God's wrath is His response to Egypt's pride - Because you said, The Nile is mine; I made it, therefore I am against you (9-10). In His merciful restoration, God places His restraint on Egypt's pride - It shall be the most lowly of the kingdoms, and will never again exalt itself above the other nations (15). We come to God as sinners. We confess our sins, praying, In wrath, remember mercy. He saves us by His mercy. His way of salvation - through Jesus Christ our Saviour - is a constant rebuke to our pride: This is not your own doing. It is the gift of God (Habakkuk 3:2; Titus 3:4-6; Ephesians 2:8).

13th September: 1 John 5:1-21

What a great blessing we receive through faith in Christ - Every one who believes that Jesus is the Christ is a child of God (1). Our life as God's children is not a life of tranquillity. We face conflict, real conflict - a battle. In this spiritual warfare, we have God's promise of victory. In verse 5, we have a question: Who is it that overcomes the world but he who believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God? The answer is contained in the question. Our victory is in Christ. We are not victorious because our faith is so strong that we couldn't possibly fail. Many times, we fail. We take our eyes off Christ - and we are defeated. What are we to do? - when temptations seem to be so many and so powerful. When you feel so weak, let Christ be your Strength. With Christ within, the fight we'll win.

8th September: Ezekiel 26:1-21

I am against you, O Tyre... You will be no more... You will never again be found... (3,21). God's Word is spoken against us: There is no-one righteous... All have turned away... There is no-one who does good... All have sinned... (Romans 3:10,12,23). God speaks His Word against us so that every mouth may be silenced (Romans 3:19). He wants us to stop making excuses for ourselves. He wants us to start listening to what He has to say to us. For the city of Tyre, the situation was hopeless. For us, there is a Word of hope. Jesus Christ has come to seek and to save the lost. Jesus Christ has died for our sins (Luke 19:10; 1 Peter 3:18). Through faith in Jesus Christ, we hear God's Word of forgiveness: I will remember their sins no more (Romans 3:22; Hebrews 8:12; 10:17).

9th September: Psalm 132:1-18

Let us go to the Lord's House; let us worship before His throne (7). God is calling us to worship Him. We are to gather together as His worshipping people. As we gather for worship, we remember that the Lord is King. We do not only give Him the praise of our lips. We give Him the praise of our lives. We do not only sing to Him. We live for Him. We come before His throne with this prayer, Take my heart - it is Thine own; It shall be Thy royal throne. God hears and answers our prayer. He gives us His strength. We rise to His challenge: Rise up, O Church of God! Have done with lesser things; Give heart and soul and mind and strength to serve the King of kings (Church Hymnary, 36,462,477). The service of worship comes to an end. Let our service of living begin - and never end!

10th September: Ezekiel 27:1-36

Your wealth... will sink into the heart of the sea on the day of your shipwreck (27). We will sink if we don't keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. We must not allow ourselves to get weighed down. We must not become entangled in the world's way of living. We must throw off everything that hinders our spiritual growth. Jesus is the sure and strong Anchor for our lives. He will keep us from sinking. Let us look to Him and learn from Him: Do not lay up treasures on earth... Lay up treasures in heaven (Hebrews 12:1-2; 6:19; 2 Timothy 2:4; Matthew 6:19-20). Will your anchor hold in the storms of life...? We have an Anchor that keeps the soul, steadfast and sure while the billows roll, fastened to the Rock which cannot move, grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love! (Church Hymnary, 412).

25th July: Psalm 119:121-144

The entrance of Your words gives light (130). The Word of God brings light into our lives. Sadly, many people love darkness rather than light. They refuse to come to the light. They prefer to remain in the darkness. They refuse to listen to what God is saying to them through His Word. Then, when things are not going so well for them, they blame God. They say, It's all Your fault! Things could have been so different. They could have learned to spend time with God. They could have learned the lessons of faith which are found in God's Word. They could have learned to cope with life's difficulties. They could have been filled with the strength of the Lord. They would not be complaining against Him. They would be rejoicing in Him: He has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light (1 Peter 2:10).

26th July: Psalm 119:145-176

With my whole heart I cry; answer me, O Lord! (145). God is calling us to pray. There is nothing more important than this. If other things have become more important in our lives, we need to think about the way we are living. God wants to send His blessing into our lives: Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you (Matthew 7:7). His blessing will come to those who seek him with their whole heart: You will seek Me and find Me when you seek me with all your heart (Jeremiah 29:13). If we do not ask, we will not receive: You do not have, because you do not ask (James 4:2). God's blessing is not given to those who are half-hearted. God is calling us to love Him with our whole heart: I long for Your salvation, O Lord, and Your law is my delight (174).

27th July: Jeremiah 51:1-33

Lift up a banner in the land! Blow the trumpet among the nations! (27). God calls us to be His witnesses. If we are growing in our fellowship with the Lord, we will want others to know what they're missing. We will want them to know how much blessing they could enjoy - if they put their faith in Christ and begin to walk with Him day-by-day. Let us give our testimony: The Lord is my Banner, His banner over me is love (Exodus 17:15; Song of Solomon 2:4). Let us make sure that our trumpet gives out a clear call, calling people to come to Christ. We must point them to Christ, calling them to trust Him as Saviour and obey Him as Lord. We must show them the way to true happiness: Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey (Mission Praise, 760).

28th July: Jeremiah 51:34-64

When you get to Babylon, see that you read all these words aloud (61). God's Word is not to be kept within the place of worship. We are to take His Word to Babylon. We must speak His Word in the places where He is not worshipped. We are to call people to turn from their sinful ways. We are to call them to return to the Lord. This will not be an easy message to speak. Many people won't want to hear it. We must warn people that by neglecting God's salvation, they are placing themselves in danger of His judgment. We must speak of the Day when everyone of us must answer to God concerning the way we have lived our lives (Hebrews 2:3; 4:13). We must call on people to believe in the Lord Jesus and be saved (Acts 16:31).

29th July: Jeremiah 52:1-34

We need a portion for each day... all the days of our life (34). When we pray, Give us this day our daily bread, we must look beyond our physical need for food. We must remember our spiritual need for the Bread of life: Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word of God (Matthew 6:11; John 6:35; Luke 4:4). Day-by-day, we should pray for spiritual feeding: Break Thou the Bread of life, dear Lord to me, as Thou didst break the bread beside the sea. Beyond the sacred page I seek Thee, Lord. My spirit longs for Thee, Thou living Word! Thou art the Bread of life, O Lord, to me, Thy holy Word the truth that saveth me. Give me to eat and live with Thee above. Teach me to love Thy truth, for Thou art love (Mission Praise, 64).

30th July: Psalm 120:1-121:8

Deliver me, O Lord, from lying lips (120:2). God calls us to believe the truth, love the truth and follow the truth. We are to be people who do what is true (2 Thessalonians 2:10-11; 3 John 3-4; John 3:21). How can we be such people? We must keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. He is the Truth (Hebrews 12:2; John 14:6). When we are tempted to turn away from the pathway of truth, we must remember this: My help comes from the Lord. We must remember God's promise: The Lord is your Keeper... The Lord will keep you from all evil. God's promise is not only for this time. It's for evermore (121:2,5,7-8). This gives us glorious hope as we keep on looking to Christ, eagerly awaiting His Return (Hebrews 9:28).

5th September: 1 John 3:19-4:21

God is greater than our hearts. When you are deeply aware of your sinfulness, remember - God loves you. God's Word is brutally honest - about us: The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? God's Word is wonderfully encouraging - about His love for us. He knows everything about us - and He still loves us: God shows His love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us (3:20; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 5:8). What a great Saviour we have. He is without sin - yet He is the Friend of sinners. He receives sinners. He came into the world to save sinners (Hebrews 4:15; Luke 15:2; 1 Timothy 1:15). Whenever we start getting too full of ourselves, too full of our own importance, we must remember: He first loved us (4:19) - before we ever thought of loving Him!

6th September: Ezekiel 24:1-27

I will punish you because of the way you lived (14). God is calling us to think about the way we are living. He wants us to leave behind the old, self-centred way of living. He wants us to begin a new life, a life that is centred on Him. Real change comes from God. We must pray that He will change us - Change my heart, O God. Make it ever true. Change my heart, O God. May I be like You. We must pray for a deep work of the Spirit of God in our hearts - Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me... Break me, melt me, mould me, fill me... We must pray that we will become more like Jesus - Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me, all His wondrous compassion and purity. Oh, Thou Spirit divine, all my nature refine, till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me (Mission Praise, 69,613,410).

7th September: Ezekiel 25:1-17

We read here about God's judgment upon sinful nations - Ammon (1-7), Moab (8-11), Edom (12-14) and Philistia (15-17). God speaks to us. He says to us, You will know that I am the Lord (5,7,11,17). He speaks to us as our Judge. He speaks to us about sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:8-11). We are sinners. God is righteous. There will be a Judgment. This is God's way of showing us how much we need His love. He shows us how much we need to be saved so that we might learn to be truly thankful to Him for the Good News of His love, the Gospel of our salvation - God so loved the world that He gave His only Son...; Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; Christ died for our sins (John 3:16; 1 Timothy 1:15; 1 Corinthians 15:3). Let us rejoice in God our Saviour (Luke 2:47).

2nd September: Ezekiel 21:1-32

We read here about the time of final punishment (25,29). God's Word speaks to us about eternal punishment as well as eternal life: Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not have life, but will remain under God's punishment (Matthew 25:46; John 3:36). God loves us. He sent His Son to be our Saviour. He calls us to put our faith in Christ (John 3:16-18). He speaks to us His Word of promise - Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved - and His Word of warning - How shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? (Hebrews 2:3). God is calling us to flee from the wrath to come (Luke 3:7). We must turn from sin - Turn away from your sins and live - and turn to Him - Turn to Me and be saved (18:32; Isaiah 45:22).

3rd September: Ezekiel 22:1-31

I looked for a man... but I found none (30). God is looking for people who will be faithful in prayer. What happens when God's people refuse to pray? God's Word leaves us in no doubt - I will pour out My anger on them... bringing down on their own heads all they have done (31). What a tragedy! The people refused to pray - and there was no blessing from the Lord: You do not have, because you do not ask God (James 4:2). Things could have been so different: If My people, who are called by My Name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land (2 Chronicles 7:14). God wants to bless us. We must pray for His blessing. Ask and it will be given to you... (Matthew 7:7-8).

4th September: Ezekiel 23:1-49

Because you have forgotten Me and turned your back on Me, you will be punished for all your sin (35). We are to remember the Lord. We must not forget Him. We must not let the Word of God go in one ear and out the other. We must be doers of the Word as well as hearers of the Word (James 1:22-25). Let's put the past behind us and make a new beginning with God: Return to Me, and I will return to you (Malachi 3:7). Have mercy on me, O God... Cleanse me from my sin... Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation (Psalm 51:1-2,10-12). Let this be the prayer of your heart and the blessing of God will flow into your life.

31st July: Psalm 122:1-124:8

I was glad when they said to me, Let us go into the House of the Lord (122:2). Why do we go to the House of the Lord? We go to give thanks to the Name of the Lord (122:4). We seek His mercy for our past sins: Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us! (123:3). We seek His help for our future temptations: Our help is in the Name of the Lord... (124:8). As we receive mercy and help from the Lord, we worship Him: Blessed be the Lord (124:6). In our worship, we look to the Lord of our God, drawing encouragement from His Word: The Lord is on our side - In Him we have the victory (123:2; 124:1-5). Rejoicing in God's blessing, we pray for others: May they prosper who love You (122:6).

1st August: Lamentations 1:1-22

Jerusalem had fallen into hard times - she who once was great among the nations... has now become a slave (1). The explanation for this sad situation was not hard to find - Jerusalem has sinned greatly and so has become unclean... (8-9). Could things be turned around? Could there once again be blessing? There was a way back to God - the way of being honest before Him. They needed to look seriously at their way of life and think seriously about their attitude towards the Lord. They were not to adopt an arrogant attitude - There's really nothing wrong with us. We're doing all right. They were to come to God with a real confession of sin: The Lord is righteous, yet I rebelled against His command... O Lord... I have been most rebellious (18,20). God's blessing will begin again when we confess our sin.

2nd August: Lamentations 2:1-22

Jerusalem's fall into hard times was not just one of those things that happens. God's people brought it on themselves. They did not take God seriously - but God continued to take them seriously. They ignored God - but God did not ignore their disobedience to Him. They sinned against God - and He was angry with them: How the Lord in His anger has set the daughter of Zion under a cloud! (1). This was not just a case of glibly saying, The good times will come again. They needed to recognize why the bad times had come: The Lord has... carried out His threat (17). The Lord had warned His sinful people. Judgment was on its way - if they refused to listen to Him. Now, in the time of His judgment, God is still calling us back to Himself: Cry aloud to the Lord! (18-19). Will we return to Him?

### 3rd August: Lamentations 3:1-24

There are times when it seems nothing is going right for us: I am the man who has seen affliction... (1-3). In such times, we must remember this:

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases. His mercies never come to an end. When we find ourselves in circumstances of great distress, we must learn to look beyond the things that are happening to us. We must learn to look to the Lord and say, Great is Your faithfulness. It will not be easy to see God at work in our lives when everything seems to be going wrong. We must be patient as we wait for the blessing of the Lord to return to our lives. We must put all our hope in the Lord, trusting in His precious promise: The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the soul that seeks Him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord (22-26).

### 4th August: Lamentations 3:25-42

In our grief, we must not forget the compassion of God (32). He understands us. He cares for us. How do we know that God loves us?

Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). This is the greatest demonstration of God's love for us. How can we doubt God's love for us when we think of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, dying on the Cross for us as our Saviour? When we think of God's love for us, we must remember that He calls us to love Him. We are not to take God's love for granted - God loves me. I can do what I like. We are to appreciate God's love - God loves me. I will love Him. God loves us. Christ died for us. How can we say, I'll do what I like? How can we refuse to be changed by His love? Let us examine our ways and turn back to the Lord. Let us open our hearts to God (40-41).

### 5th August: Lamentations 3:43-66

You came near when I called You... O Lord... You redeemed my life (57-58). We wonder, Will God answer my prayer for salvation? Yes! At the Cross of Christ, we learn that God loves us and answers our prayer. You did not wait for me to draw near to You, but You clothed yourself in frail humanity. You did not wait for me to cry out to You, but You let me hear Your voice calling me. And I'm forever grateful to You, I'm forever grateful for the Cross; I'm forever grateful to You that You came to seek and save the lost.

Thank You for the Cross, the price You paid for us, how You gave Yourself so completely, precious Lord, precious Lord. Now our sins are gone, all forgiven, covered by Your blood, all forgotten, thank You Lord, thank You Lord (Songs of Fellowship, 631; Mission Praise, 632).

### 30th August: Ezekiel 20:1-26

What great things God did for His people, Israel. He brought them out of the land of Egypt. He led them to a land flowing with milk and honey (6). Think of what God has done for us. He has brought us out of our sin and into His salvation: He called you out of darkness into His marvellous light (1 Peter 2:9). Saved by the Lord, Israel was to live for the Lord: I am the Lord your God. Obey My laws and My commands (19). We have been saved by the Lord: You have been saved by grace through faith. This is not your own doing. It is the gift of God. He calls us to live for Him. We have been saved... for good works. Our good works are to bring glory to our Father in heaven. Let us walk in the light, rejoicing in our Saviour - the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin (Ephesians 2:8-10; Matthew 5:16; 1 John 1:7).

### 31st August: Ezekiel 20:27-49

Here, we have a clear statement of God's purpose for our lives: Through you I intend to display My holiness for all the nations to see (41). He wants other people to notice that we are different. He wants them to see that we have been changed by Him: As the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like Him (2 Corinthians 3:18). This is to be our testimony: What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought since Jesus came into my heart!... I have ceased from my wandering and going astray since Jesus came into my heart! And my sins which were many are all washed away since Jesus came into my heart! (Mission Praise, 748). May God help us to live as a new creation, being renewed every day. Make it your aim to live for Him and please Him (2 Corinthians 4:16-18; 5:9,15,17).

### 1st September: Proverbs 23:19-35

Keep your heart on the right path (19). How are we to do this? We must seek truth, wisdom, instruction and understanding (23). We must give our hearts to Christ. He is the Truth (John 14:6). We must open our hearts to Christ. He is our Wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:30). Opening our hearts will mean opening our Bibles. Giving our hearts to Christ will mean giving time to reading God's Word. As we read the Scriptures, we will receive instruction. We will learn about salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. We will receive instruction for right living (2 Timothy 3:14-17). As we read God's Word, we must pray that the Holy Spirit will give us understanding (1 Corinthians 2:9-13). Be filled with the Spirit. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly (Ephesians 5:18; Colossians 3:16).

27th August: Ezekiel 18:1-32

The soul that sins shall die (4). If a man is righteous... he shall surely live (5-9) What hope is there for us? If we look with honesty into our own hearts, we discover this dark truth concerning ourselves: None is righteous... All have sinned (Romans 3:10,23). Is there any Good News for us? Is there a way that leads to eternal life? Suppose there is a truly good man, righteous and honest... (4). Is there such a man? Is there a man concerning whom God says, That man is righteous; he will surely live (9). Yes! There is! Who is this man? What does the Word of God tell us about him? He is Jesus Christ, our Saviour. He died for our sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring us to God (1 Peter 3:18). We put our faith in Him. He gives us eternal life. We pass from death to life (1 John 5:11-13; John 5:24).

28th August: 1 John 2:18-3:18

Through faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, we receive eternal life (2-25; John 20:31). Our enjoyment of eternal life has already begun - we are God's children now. Our full enjoyment of eternal life is still to come: It does not yet appear what we shall be... We have begun to experience Christ's victory: The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. We look forward to our full enjoyment of His victory: When He appears, we shall be like Him... (2,8). Some will try to deceive us. We must keep our eyes on Christ - He laid down His life for us. We have received His love. We must show His love - Let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth (7,16,18). Do you believe in Christ? Live the life. Be a believer - in deed!

29th August: Ezekiel 19:1-14

There is real sadness here. It is the sadness of God - as He looks upon the sinfulness of His people. If we truly love the Lord, we will have great sadness when we see people turning away from the Lord and ruining their lives. We have joy in the Lord - Rejoice in the Lord always (Philippians 4:4). There is also great sorrow in our hearts when we think of those who refuse to come to Christ for salvation. This sorrow leads us to pray: My heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved (1,14; Romans 9:2; 10:1). Let us pray for our dry and thirsty land. Pray that God will come to our wilderness: He will come to us as the showers, as the spring rains that water the earth. Pray that people will return to the Lord. Pray that they will press on to know the Lord (13; Hosea 6:1-3).

6th August: Lamentations 4:1-22

No human king can even begin to compare with our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings (Revelation 19:16). The people of Jerusalem were full of confidence. They trusted their king to protect them from every invader. They thought Jerusalem was invincible: No one anywhere, not even rulers of foreign nations, believed that any invader could enter Jerusalem's gates. They were wrong. They thought it would never happen - but it did! The unthinkable happened! They captured the source of our life, the king the Lord had chosen. Why did it happen? God's Word gives us the reason: It happened because of the sins of her prophets and... priests. The king - the Lord's anointed - was unable to prevent Jerusalem's defeat (12-13,20). Praise God - We have a greater King: our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ!

7th August: Lamentations 5:1-22

You, O Lord, reign for ever; Your throne endures from generation to generation. We must remember this when we feel like we have been forgotten by God. When we feel like God has abandoned us, we must remember this: You, O Lord, are King for ever, and will rule to the end of time (19-20). We are not only to pay lip-service to the Lord our King. We are to crown Him as King of our heart and life. How are we to do this? We must pray, Bring us back to You, Lord! (21). God is looking for a real return to Him and a real difference in our lives. In your hearts enthrone Him. There let Him subdue all that is not holy, all that is not true... ; So let us learn how to serve and in our lives enthrone Him, each other's needs to prefer, for it is Christ we're serving (Church Hymnary, 300; Mission Praise, 162).

8th August: Proverbs 22:1-29

So that your trust may be in the Lord, I teach you today, even you (19). Many people say, It's not for me. They know that others have been greatly blessed through reading God's Word. Still, they do not take the trouble to read God's Word for themselves. They can't be bothered. Receiving God's blessing doesn't really matter that much to them. Don't miss out on God's blessing. God's Word is for you. It's not just for somebody else. It's for you - even you. Some people say, I'll read God's Word tomorrow. When tomorrow comes around, they're still saying the same thing - I'll read God's Word tomorrow! Sadly, their tomorrow never comes. They never get round to reading God's Word. They're missing out on so much. Don't say, I'll leave it till tomorrow. Read God's Word today.

9th August: Proverbs 23:1-18

Continue in the fear of the Lord all day long. Let reverence for the Lord be the concern of your life . To those who put Him first in their lives, God gives His great promise of blessing, There is surely a future hope for you. You have a bright future. Surely you have a wonderful future ahead of you (17-18). What a glorious future lies ahead of those who love the Lord: No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him (1 Corinthians 2:9)! We must not become short-sighted . We must look ahead to the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ . God has given us His very great and precious promises . Let us press on in faith , becoming more and more active and effective in our knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:3-11).

10th August: Ezekiel 1:1-2:10

The heavens were opened and I saw visions of God... The Word of the Lord came to Ezekiel (1:1-2). The Lord opens our eyes to see the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ (2 Corinthians 4:4). The Lord speaks to us and we must listen to Him: Speak, Lord, for Your servant is listening (1 Samuel 3:9-10). The Spirit came into me... Do not be afraid of them or their words (2:2,6). Through the Spirit, we receive wisdom - We have received the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand what God has freely given us - and strength - God strengthens us with power through His Spirit in our inner being (1 Corinthians 2:12; Ephesians 3:16). Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart... Be Thou my Wisdom, Thou my true Word... Be Thou my Battleship, Sword for the fight (Church Hymnary, 87).

11th August: Ezekiel 3:1-4:17

God speaks to us: The Word of the Lord came to me (3:16). We speak to God: Ah, Lord God! (4:14). We speak for God: When I speak to you, I will open your mouth and you shall say to them, This is what the Lord God says, Whoever will listen, let him listen... (3:27). How can we keep on listening to God, speaking to God and speaking for God? We need to be strengthened with the power of the Holy Spirit: The Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet (3:24). The Spirit is our Helper . He helps us to listen to God: The Holy Spirit will teach you all things (John 14:26). He helps us to speak to God: The Spirit helps us in our weakness (Romans 8:26). He helps us to speak for God: You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses (Acts 1:8).

24th August: Ezekiel 16:35-63

God calls His unfaithful people to listen to His Word: You prostitute, hear the Word of the Lord! (35). He speaks to them of sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:8). He shows them their sin - your filthiness and your nakedness (36). He speaks to them as the righteous God, the God of perfect holiness - Your eyes are too holy to look at evil. You cannot stand the sight of people doing wrong (Habakkuk 1:13). He warns them that there will be judgment: I will judge you (38). Why does God speak to us of sin, righteousness and judgment? This is His way of bringing us to repentance - I will make you stop being a prostitute - and salvation - My anger will be over, and I will be calm (41-42). Our sin is great, but our Saviour is greater - Wonderful grace of Jesus, greater than all my sin... Praise His Name! .

25th August: Psalms 130:1-131:3

We are not to pray to God with superficial words that don't mean very much to us. Our prayer is to be a real cry from the heart: Out of depths I cry to You, O Lord (130:1). We are to cry for mercy with a deep awareness of how sinful we really are: If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? (130:3). We must come to God with deep humility - My heart is not proud, O Lord (131:1). When we truly confess our sin, we receive God's unfailing love and forgiveness (4). In the Lord we have full redemption (7). It is for now - The vilest of offenders who truly believes, that moment from Jesus a pardon receives . It is for evermore - But purer and higher and greater will be our wonder, our transport, when Jesus we see! . Praise the Lord!... Give Him the glory! (131:3; Church Hymnary, 374).

26th August: Ezekiel 17:1-24

To those who adopt a rebellious attitude to Him, God speaks His Word of warning. They shall not escape His judgment (12,18). To those who abandon this attitude of rebellion, there is a way of salvation. In verses 22 to 24, we have a prophecy which looks forward to the coming of the Messiah, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This prophecy ends with God's promise: I the Lord have spoken, and I will do it . God has fulfilled His promise. He has sent His Son to be our Saviour (Matthew 1:22-23). We now await the fulfilment of prophecy concerning Christ's Return: I will come again ; This same Jesus... will come back ; The Lord Himself will come down from heaven . He says, I am coming soon . We say, Come, Lord Jesus (John 14:3; Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Revelation 22:20).

21st August: 1 John 1:1-2:17

Jesus Christ died for our sins. This is Good News. It is not to be kept to ourselves - He died for the sins of the whole world. We have fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. We have fellowship with one another. These blessings are not to be kept to ourselves. We must share the Good News - the blood of Jesus, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin. We must seek to bring others into fellowship - not only with us but, with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ (2:1-2; 1:3,7). We are called to a life of obedience - he who does the will of God lives for ever. This obedience comes from our experience of God's love. The love of the Father leads to love for the Father: We love God because He first loved us (15-17; 4:19). Let's love the Lord - and do His will.

22nd August: Ezekiel 14:1-15:8

Some of the elders of Israel came to Ezekiel. He spoke the Word of the Lord to them: Repent! Turn from your idols and renounce all your detestable practices! (14:1,8). This may not have been what they wanted to hear. It was what God wanted them to hear. They did not want to hear this, but they needed to hear it. God was warning them what would happen if they did not make a real return to Him: I will make the land desolate because they have been unfaithful (15:8). God's Word demands a response. What will our response be? Will we say, We don't want the Lord to reign over us (Luke 19:14)? Will we be, like Peter, who took Jesus aside and began to rebuke Him... (Matthew 16:22)? Don't be like those who dismiss God's Word with arrogant pride. Listen to His Word, and let Him change you.

23rd August: Ezekiel 16:1-34

Without Christ, we are naked and dirty. He covers our nakedness and washes away our dirtiness (8-9). He is our Saviour. We must come to Him with this prayer: Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to Thy Cross I cling; Naked, come to Thee for dress; Helpless, look to Thee for grace; Foul, I to the fountain fly; Wash me, Saviour, I die (Church Hymnary, 83). God hears and answers this prayer. He has given us His promise: Whoever comes to Me, I will never drive away (John 6:37). When God has heard and answered our prayer for salvation, we have this joyful testimony: I delight greatly in the Lord, my soul rejoices in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness (Isaiah 61:10). We rejoice in this: He saved us by washing away our sins (Titus 3:5).

12th August: Ezekiel 5:1-6:14

Because you have defiled My sanctuary... I Myself will withdraw My favour (5:11). To those who despise His Word and treat the place of prayer with contempt, Jesus still speaks His Word of judgment: My House will be called a House of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves (Matthew 21:13). God is warning us: You have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Return to Me and change the way you think and act. If you don't change, I will come to you and remove your lamp from its place (Revelation 2:4-5). When God removes His blessing, there is nothing left but a desolate waste (6:14). Make sure you don't become like Samson - I will go out as at other times, and shake myself free. He did not know that the Lord had left him (Judges 16:20).

13th August: 2 Peter 1:1-2:10a

God has given us His very great and precious promises (1:4). God has a great purpose for us. He is preparing for us a rich welcome into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (11). The pathway to heavenly and eternal glory is not an easy one. Often, we will be tempted to settle for being ineffective and unproductive in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. There will be many distractions, drawing our attention away from Christ. We must keep our eyes on Him if we are not to become blind and short-sighted. We can so easily forget the most important thing - we have been cleansed from our old sins. It is so important that we keep looking to Christ, remembering what He has done for us and giving thanks to Him (1:8-9). The Lord will not fail us in our trials (2:9). Let's not fail Him!

14th August: 2 Peter 2:10b-3:18

Grow in Christ and give glory to Him. Centred on our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, our life is filled with grace and glory. From Him, we receive grace - From the fullness of His grace we have all received one blessing after another. From Him, we receive glory - I have given them the glory that You gave Me (3:18; John 1:16; 17:22). Where does this life of grace and glory begin? It begins with God. In ourselves, there is sin. In Him, there is salvation. He is patient with us. He waits for us to come to repentance. He shows us our sin so that we might learn to look to our Saviour - Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation (3:9; 2 Corinthians 7:10). Turn to the Lord. Let it be real. Let Him lead you in His pathway - the pathway of grace and glory.

15th August: Psalms 125:1-127:5

Those who trust in the Lord... cannot be moved... . When we put our trust in the Lord, we are like the wise man who built his house on the rock . His house did not fall because it had its foundation on the rock . When we do not put our trust in the Lord, we are like the foolish man who built his house on sand . His house fell with a great crash . Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labour in vain (125:1; 127:1; Matthew 7:24-27). Jesus Christ is the sure Foundation upon which our faith is built. He is the solid Rock , our mighty Rock of spiritual refreshment (1 Corinthians 3:11; 10:3-4; Church Hymnary, 10,411). Christ died for our sins... He was raised on the third day . Let us rejoice in Him: The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy (126:3; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

16th August: Ezekiel 7:1-8:18

This is what the Sovereign Lord says to the land of Israel: The end! (7:2). Why did God say, This is the end ? He had been taking a good look at what was going on among His people: the utterly detestable things the house of Israel is doing here, things that will drive Me far from My sanctuary (8:6). He came to this conclusion - This is the end of the road. It is the end of the time of blessing. It is now time for judgment : The end is now upon you and I will unleash My anger against you. I will judge you according to... all your detestable practices... (7:3-4). Why did God say, This is the end - the end of a time of blessing, the beginning of a time of judgment? The answer is clear: If there is no obedience, there can be no blessing. Disobedience can lead to only one thing - judgment.

17th August: Ezekiel 9:1-10:22

For many people, the time of blessing had come to an end and the time of judgment had begun. Some, however, would escape the judgment, They had been obedient to God. He protected them in the time of judgment: Put a mark on the foreheads of those who grieve and lament over all the detestable things that are done... Do not touch anyone who has the mark (9:4,6). They were marked out as God's faithful people. They had continued to worship the Lord when so many others were turning away from Him. For many people, life can be summed up in these sad words: The glory of the Lord departed (10:18). I looked and I saw... (10:1,9). In a time when many show no interest in the Lord, there are those who look to Him and catch a glimpse of His glory - the glory of the God of Israel was above them (10:19).

18th August: Psalms 128:1-129:8

Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in His ways (128:1). If we are to enjoy the Lord's blessing, we must fear Him and walk in His ways. Many people despise the place of worship. They pass by . They have no desire to know the blessing of the Lord . God warns us that we must not allow this attitude to grow in us: May all who hate Zion be put to shame . We must take care that our love for the Lord doesn't wither away. We must keep on praying that our love for Him will grow . If we place no value on the Lord's blessing, our lives will be empty. Come to the Lord with this prayer: The greatest thing in all my life is knowing You, loving You, serving You. I want to know You more, love You more, serve You more . He will fill your life with His blessing (129:5-8; Mission Praise, 646).

19th August: Ezekiel 11:1-12:16

God speaks to us about our sin - Son of man, you are living among a rebellious people - and His salvation - I will... put a new spirit in them... (12:2; 11:19-20). We must receive with humility, the bad news concerning our sin - The wages of sin is death - before we can receive, with gladness, the Good News concerning God's salvation - The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23). God wants each of us to be saved: The Lord... does not want anyone to perish; He wants everyone to turn away from their sins (2 Peter 3:9). To those who refuse to be saved, disregarding the bad news concerning their sin and closing their hearts to the Good News concerning God's salvation, God speaks His Word or warning: ... I will punish them for what they have done (11:21).

20th August: Ezekiel 12:17-13:23

Hear the Word of the Lord! (13:2). God's Word warns us: The time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths . When we see this happening, we must commit ourselves to the Lord, living as His faithful servants: As for you, always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil your ministry (2 Timothy 4:3-5). When people are looking for a feel good type of message, a message with plenty of entertainment and no real challenge, we must remember this: God's Word is to be used for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness... (2 Timothy 3:16-17).