

• A 21 Day Devotional •

Red Letters

Reflections on the words of Jesus

Introduction

In several translations of the Bible, the words of Jesus as well as Old Testament prophecies speaking of Jesus, were printed in red. The reason for this was to help engage readers with the word's of Christ. I believe the words being printed in red also give a special weight to them. My prayer is that as you explore a few of the teachings from the lips of Christ that it will stir a desire in you to serve Him, cherish Him and love Him all the more.

DAY ONE

It is Written

1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." 4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Matthew 4:1-4 NIV

It is Written

Matthew 4:1-4 NIV

There are a few things we must observe about the tempter. The first is that he, in himself, cannot force any course of action upon us; he may only present us with a temptation, an opportunity if you will. The decision to act upon this temptation lies solely in our hands.

Another observation we must be aware of is that this tempter exploits our weaknesses. You will notice that he comes to Jesus after He had not eaten for forty days and forty nights. The first thing the enemy tempts Him with is what? Food. The tempter set before Him the thing His body craved most. We all have weaknesses and draws toward sinful passions. Be it self-righteousness, gossip, drugs, pride, lust, alcohol, theft, or hatred and violence. Our enemy has studied mankind and knows to bait us with the things we have the greatest weakness for.

Jesus' response to the tempter is a profound truth we must grasp and put into practice in our own lives each and every day. Jesus was quoting the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy to teach us that first; the way to fight the tempter is by the strength that comes through the promises of God found throughout the pages of Scripture. Secondly, Jesus teaches us that what truly fills us, satisfies us and brings us life, more than food ever could, is living in obedience to God's Word, the Bible. We live on every word that comes from the mouth of God.

The tempter comes, lies he's carried,
But in my heart Your word I've buried.

His bait he casts in hopes I've bitten,
But all he hears is, "It is written."



DAY TWO

The Blessing of Poverty

3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
Matthew 5:3 NIV

The Blessing of Poverty

Matthew 5:3 NIV

Apart from the grace of God, we are spiritually bankrupt. The good news is that the greater understanding that we have of this reality, the more that we can access the strength of God. Those who suffer in poverty are reliant upon the good will of others to sustain them. Each of us, no matter how wealthy or how poor we are materially, are equally dependent upon our Heavenly Father spiritually. The truth of the matter is that we are not only dependent on Him for spiritual matters, we are dependent on Him for life and breath and strength.

28a "For in Him we live and move and have our being"
Acts 17:28a

Are you leaning on your own strength today? Are you dependent upon your own self in your decision-making? It is only in the realization of our dependence on the Lord that we may walk in this blessed state; it is only in this realization that we may unleash the riches of the kingdom of heaven into our hearts and our world. One day we, the poor in spirit, will stand with our gaze fixed solely on this Jesus as inheritors of this kingdom.

Whether I be clothed and fed
Or naked and hungry,

I know full well, apart from Your grace
I am but dead and empty



DAY THREE

The Satisfaction of The Starving

6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Matthew 5:6 NIV

The Satisfaction of The Starving

Matthew 5:6 NIV

No one savors the taste of food like the hungry and none can treasure the satisfaction of water, but the thirsty. The promise here for the children of God is one that is precious and powerful. No matter how ravenous your hunger for the Lord's presence or how deep your thirst for the working of His Spirit in your life, you will be filled! There is no end to His supply to those who come with hungry hearts. Moreover, it is His supreme joy to meet that need.

It is safe to say that your Christian experience, or the lack thereof, can be measured by the extent of your longing for all that God is and all that He has for you. The question now stands, "Do you hunger? Do you thirst?" The answer is, "Yes. But for what?"

1 As the deer pants for streams of water,
so my soul pants for you, my God.
2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.
When can I go and meet with God?
Psalm 42:1-2

You will grant the fullness,
You will grant our Fill.

For all who want,
For all who will.



DAY FOUR

Vision Impaired

8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see god.
Matthew 5:8 NIV

Vision Impaired

Matthew 5:8 NIV

Sin is a cataract, infecting the eyes of our hearts and clouding our vision of the Almighty. Our ability to see and know God in ever increasing ways is in direct proportion to the purity of our hearts. This sobering truth should move us to examine our inner selves. It should move us to plead with God as the psalmist David did.

23 Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.

24 See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.

Psalm 139:23-24 NIV

Day after day we must submit ourselves to the cleansing floodwaters of the Spirit of God. Is there an area in your life God has pointed out that is clouding your ability to see Him? Don't wrestle against the arm that washes you, but yield to it with joy! For the cleaner you are, the greater you will see and the greater you see, the cleaner you will be.

Purer and cleaner is what I want to be each day,
so lead me O Lord in Your perfect way.

My heart cries, "Clean me! Clean me, please!"
for You alone I long to see.



DAY FIVE

Salt of The Earth

13a You are the salt of the earth.
Matthew 5:13a NIV

Salt of The Earth

Matthew 5:13a NIV

There is a wide array of truth found in these seemingly simple words.

Salt Flavors

You would be hard pressed to find a recipe that doesn't call for some measure of salt. The reason for this is that salt enhances flavor. In the same way, our lives should enhance every environment we are a part of. There should be greater peace in our homes, there should be greater joy in our schools, there should be greater productivity in our workplaces, and there should be greater encouragement in our friendships, all due to our presence.

Salt Thaws

There is a chemical reaction that happens which causes salt to eat through ice. The hearts of people have been frozen and hardened by sin, disappointment, grief, anger, and every other pain under the sun. There should be a reaction that takes place when we come into contact with these individuals. The love of God in us can soften the hardest heart.

Salt Heals

Our world is sick with pride, hatred, self-sufficiency, the love of money, lust, and violence. Salt carries natural healing agents. We are called to bring healing to a hurting world. We are called to counteract moral decay in our culture.

Salt Causes Thirst

Salt makes us thirsty. Our lives should create a thirst for God in others. When we are around people who do not know Jesus, our words and our actions should cause a thirst to rise up inside of them for the living water we have. Our lives should also cause those who know Jesus to want Him more!

Lord, cast my life on the cold at heart,
Use me now to break apart,
Their pain, their anger, their sin decay,
That they would follow Your everlasting way.



DAY SIX

Lighthouse in The Night

14 You are the light of the world..
Matthew 5:14a NIV

Lighthouse in The Night

Matthew 5:14a NIV

Jesus came into the world proclaiming, "While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." (John 9:5) Now He has gone to heaven until the time of His appointed return. He has filled us, His disciples, with His very Spirit. He has now called us, "the light of the world." What a high calling!

We are lighthouses in the night. We are built up, filled with light, and placed upon a hill for all to see. When a man or woman is being thrown about on the waves of life and all seems lost, there we are, a sign of refuge, shining bright in the deepest night. We will not be perfect, but by God's grace, even in our weakness, He will shine through us. He establishes us as a sign of hope for others. Dear Christian, live worthy of that calling. Beware of attitudes and actions that would cause others in need to take no notice of you because you don't seem to possess anything they need.

On troubled seas all hope seems lost,
By sin and sorrow my soul is tossed.

There upon the waters rise,
A place of refuge before my eyes.

The tempest no longer must I fight,
For there it is, a lighthouse shining in the night.



DAY SEVEN

Persistent in Pursuit

14 “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

Matthew 7:7-8 NIV

Persistent in Pursuit

Matthew 7:7-8 NIV

When writing or speaking, a person will often use repetition to stress an idea and make their point clear. Asking, seeking, and knocking differ in action but are essentially the same in nature. Here, Jesus combines these three distinct actions together to convey one truth; "He (God) rewards those who diligently seek Him." (Hebrews 11:6)

Jesus is teaching us to be persistent in pursuing Him. We don't ask for something if we don't feel that we have need of it. Let me tell you, we have great need of God's power and presence today in all that we do.

We don't seek someone we don't care to find. We don't knock on the door of someone we don't care to see. May your heart be moved to seek and to see Jesus today! When you don't feel like seeking Him, then you must command your soul to feel differently about the matter.

8 Awake, my soul!

...I will awaken the dawn.

9 I will praise You, Lord, among the nations;

I will sing of you among the peoples.

Psalm 57:8-9 NIV

You must command the sun to rise on your soul.

Wake up O my lazy soul,
On God Almighty you will bestow,
All glory and honor and blessing and power,
For He is worthy in every hour.