

EVERY DAY WITH JESUS (January 3-10)

Savor a segment of the gospel each day so that you may...

"...grow in the grace and knowledge of our LORD and Savior Jesus Christ." (II Peter 3:18)

MONDAY, January 4; Please read: John 8:31-41 **Questions:** 1. What is one of the fundamental marks of being a disciple of Jesus? 2. What is the result of possessing this authentic mark of discipleship? 3. Is there a difference between being descendants of Abraham and being Abraham's children? **Possible answers:** 1. "*Holding to Jesus' teaching*" is an indispensable mark of discipleship. 2. When you hold on to what Jesus says you know the truth and that truth results in genuine freedom. From from everything evil forever! 3. Yes! There's a difference. Being a descendant of Abraham is a simply a matter of ancestry being his child is a matter of faith – faith in the Savior God promised and then sent. **Prayer:** LORD JESUS, teach us to tenaciously hold to Your truth so that we may truly be Your disciples who know Your truth and enjoy Your precious freedom. AMEN!

TUESDAY, January 5; Please read: John 8:41-58 **Background:** These verses present some of the most powerful commendations of Christ and condemnations of His enemies. Remember, the words I AM were the Name for God, the GOD WHO IS. **Questions:** 1. What conviction made these particular Jews smug and secure? 2. Upon what did they base their conviction? 3. Whose children does Jesus say they are? 3. From more than two thousand years away Abraham saw Someone and something that these people who claimed to be His children refused to see – explain. 5. Who is Jesus emphatically claiming to be?! **Possible Answers:** 1. They were smug and secure in the confidence that they were children of God. 2. Their conviction was physical not "faithical". 3. Jesus lets them know they are the devil's brood! 4. Abraham saw that God would send a Savior to take away His sin and give him eternal life. His descendants couldn't see their sin therefore they couldn't see their Savior. 5. Jesus is confessing His claim to be the true and eternal God; the Son of God equal to the Father; the God in Whom Abraham believed. **Prayer:** Jesus, like Abraham we rejoice at seeing Your day – the day in which You earned salvation for Him and for us. Keep us living in and sharing this faith to Your glory until we see that glory. AMEN!

WEDNESDAY, January 6; Please read: John 9:1-34 **Background:** You gotta love the courageous confession of faith you are about to read! **Questions:** (Verse 3) Jesus answer to the disciples' question might be the answer to all human history – what is it? 2. This story is of course true. Can you find a continuous thread of authentic human nature in the account? 3. What does the formerly blind man clearly see? **Possible answers:** 1. The first sin and all sin since, as well as all the consequences of sin, are opportunities for the LORD to display His glory and grace. 2. Your answer might be a better one; but, one answer is this: throughout the story you have people suspecting that the blind man and the One who healed him are both frauds. 3. He sees that Jesus is from God and Jesus' enemies are not. **Prayer:** Jesus, give us the eyes of this formerly blind man so that we clearly see You; then, give us his courage that we confess You before all as the only Savior sent from God. AMEN!

THURSDAY, January 7; Please read: John 9:35-41 **Questions:** 1. What does the statement "*when He had found him*" say to you. 2. Listen to Jesus question in verse 35, have you ever used a similar question with someone? Is there someone of whom you might gently ask this question at this time? 3. Why did Jesus, and why would you, ask someone this question? **Possible Answers:** 1. Jesus knew that the man had been thrown out of the synagogue by the religious "misleaders". Jesus had compassion on him, He lovingly searched for him to comfort him in his aloneness and to lead him to faith and salvation. 2. Answers will vary. 3. A question like this might be asked to bring up the most important subject there could be – faith in Jesus. **Prayer:** Dear Savior, give us a heart like Yours that cares about all who are lost and lonely, cares enough to seek them out and to gently lead them to You as their Savior. AMEN!

FRIDAY, January 8; Please read: John 10:1-10 **Background:** Shepherds in some locations keep their sheep in a sheepfold at night. It is a walled or fenced enclosure where the sheep are safe from predators. There would often be a guard on watch at the gate so that intruders could not enter and so that the rightful shepherd could usher his sheep either in or else out to pasture when he so desired. The Biblical picture immortalized by Psalm 23 was dear to the Old Testament believers as it is to us. **Questions:** 1. In verses 1-6, identify who is being represented by the sheep; the thieves and robbers; the rightful shepherd? 2. What reciprocal relationship do you find between a shepherd and his sheep? 3. What is the key relationship for true shepherds and genuine sheep? **Possible Answers:** 1. The sheep are the people of God, the thieves and robbers are false religious leaders who prey upon the sheep; the rightful Shepherd is Jesus. (Some persons take the shepherd in this section to be faithful pastors in the church - the Latin word “pastor” means shepherd - in the church while the thieves and robbers would represent false teachers.) 2. A good shepherd knows his sheep and the sheep know him. 3. The key relationship for shepherds and the sheep is faith in Jesus, the Good Shepherd. **Prayer:** Dear Shepherd, thank You for the faithful shepherds who take care of your precious flock. Help them to be faithful and then cause the sheep to follow them as they lead to You. AMEN!

SATURDAY, January 9; Please read: John 10:11-21 **Questions:** 1. How far will a good shepherd go in his commitment to his flock? 2. Why does Jesus deserve the title GOOD as in the Good Shepherd? 3. What perspective does verse 18 give on the circumstances of Jesus’ betrayal, condemnation, crucifixion, burial, and resurrection? 4. Who are these “*other sheep*” to whom Jesus is referring? **Possible Answers:** 1. A good shepherd is willing to risk and give his life to protect the flock entrusted to his care. 2. Jesus deserves the title good because He willingly gave His life for His flock. 3. Jesus was in control. He was not a helpless victim but a willing sacrifice and ultimately a victorious Savior. 4. They are persons from outside the people of Israel, people who will hear and believe in Jesus and by virtue of that faith become the sheep He shepherds. **Prayer:** Dear Savior, please accept our worship and praise as the Good Shepherd who lovingly and willingly sacrificed His life for His sheep. Grant that we may in turn lovingly and willingly follow You as You lead us through earthly life to our heavenly home. AMEN!

SUNDAY, January 10; Please read: John 10:22-42 **Questions:** 1. What is an essential characteristic of Jesus’ sheep? 2. What is an essential characteristic of Jesus as our Shepherd? 3. What claim is Jesus clearly making in verse 30? 4. If persons weren’t willing to accept Jesus’ words as proof that He is God, what proof should they have accepted? **Possible Answers:** 1. Jesus’ sheep listen to Him. 2. He knows each of us personally and completely. 3. Jesus is clearly claiming Himself to be God equal to the Father. 3. Jesus’ works emphatically proclaimed Him to be God. **Prayer:** Dear Jesus, comfort us with the fact that You know us. Encourage us with the fact that You love us. Inspire us with the fact that we receive eternal life from You. Then, enable us to follow You faithfully. AMEN!