

Indian Church of Christ – Kerala Region

Presents

God of
Mighty Miracles - 2

Quiet Time Inspiration on Miracles of OT

Nov-Dec 2012

Consistency Journal:

(Use this columns to see how you follow the challenges of each day.)

Day 1.....	Day 21.....
Day 2.....	Day 22.....
Day 3.....	Day 23.....
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1. Out of nothing

Genesis 1:1-3

God is an amazing creator. He is the provider and sustainer (Acts 17:24-26). The wonder is that he created everything out of nothing.

Creating everything out of nothing – is beyond our perception or imagination. It's like explaining to a blind person color 'red' – how could you explain it? And that is why it takes faith to please God. The universe or "heavens" or sky that we see with our eyes is wonderful. It is a great thing to go into a planetarium and watch closely into the heights of God's celestial creations. Yet it is even greater to look into the depth of our heart to see how much of God we see there in those depths and voids of our heart and life.

Heaven, where God dwells is wonderful. It is awesome. But it is just that we can't see it and so to perceive it. I feel the need of faith, like the Apostles were, to see myself living a life that is pleasing and acceptable before God in this lost world. Remember Jesus said; the wickedness of this world is a killer of our faith and the destroyer of goodness in us. We need faith, and we need it more and more in increasing measures as we face each day. The perfect place to look for faith is the scriptures and especially miracles.

God is the Lord over even 'nothing'. If you think your life is "nothing" – God is still the master over it. Look at the stars. He can make wonders to the proportion of this universe, out of your 'nothingness', when you acknowledge it and take it to God. God is awesome. Let's mould a new era in our walk with God.

Prayer Idea: Go out, see the nature and praise God for his creations.

2. The amazing man

Genesis 1:26-28

God created man in a special way and his creation is marvelous in his eyes. He created us with the ability to love him and love others. God gave the ability to take care of ourself and all the other created things. God unlocked the secret of creation to man. He gave us the authority to rule over. We can think and feel, can know and be known, can love and be loved, can distinguish right from wrong. Truly we are created in his image and likeness. We are wonderfully and fearfully made (Psalm 139:14).

God's individual plans for our life reveals still more of his heart and his desire to love us, bless us and care for us. Every sunrise reveals that, every drop of rain declares that, every change of season shout that aloud, every child born into this world affirms that, every breeze state that, every dawn murmur that, every dusk blast that, every flower verbalize that, every food grain announce that, every angels sing about it, every heroes of faith herald that. Through the birth, life, death, resurrection and assurances of Jesus God proclaimed this ultimate truth. His love towards man is new every morning (Lam 3:23)

God wants us to have an incredible relationship with him. He gives us honor and respect. His eyes range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. (2 Chronicles 16:9). Does it take a lot of ranging for God to find you this morning? Let us make God proud that he created us.

Prayer idea: Meditate on the special ways how God initiated for a personal relationship with you. Praise God for that.

3. The rainbow of God's faithful promises.

Genesis 9:8-17

God remembers the covenant he made with Noah and he holds on to it. God is always faithful to the promises he made. God fulfilled the promises he had given to Abraham - that through the barren womb of Sarai, he would make Abraham into a great nation, children as countless as the sands on the sea shore. God fulfilled the promise he had given to the Israelites through Moses - that he would give those Egyptian slaves a promised land, where milk and honey flows. God fulfilled the promise he had given to Isaiah, 700 years later - that he would give a Savior to redeem the lost, sinful world through Jesus. We are looking forward for the promises of God in our lives - that we would inherit heaven if we follow the footsteps of Jesus, his son.

As we are awaiting the promises of God to fulfill in our lives, let us ask ourselves - how faithful are we, when it comes to the promises we made. When we accepted Jesus as our Savior and Lord, we had given many promises to God. Are we keeping those promises in our life? Or are we looking at God and the fulfillment of HIS promises only?

Let us remember the promises we made before God today when we pray and let's us make those decisions are followed through, faithfully in our life.

Prayer Idea: Meditate on the covenant we made with God and pray through it.

4. A foolish genius

Genesis 32:22-28

Even after doing something foolish, it feels horrible when someone calls us 'fool', we can not accept it. We like to be known as wise, strong, able, righteous etc. We like to be praised. On the other hand, Abraham left everything and set himself out to an unknown land, when God called him to do it. With response to another call, he almost killed his only son, the one who is born after a long wait of 100 years. A thorough fool, in the eyes of the world.

Abraham obeyed God, never looked at the consequences of it. So many times we think, analyse, weigh carefully with all our wisdom and knowledge to find out as much excuses

as possible to see how we can avoid following a godly advice or direction. And then we give it an explanation - we are being 'wise' as a snake. Never bothered about the dove in us! We are truly wise when we make ourselves to follow the word of God as if we are a fool according to the ways of the world. On par with the man who build his house on the rock.

Most of us were called a fool, when we started our life as a disciple of Jesus. They said that we are wasting our life for 'some prayer meeting' or 'some church', because we followed the scriptures whole heartedly, without turning to left or right, without making those 'calculations'. When we decided to go to Thrissur on a mission team, taking with us two children of ages 2 and 3, many people said it might not be a wise idea. You will lose your job, how will you live, who is there for a support etc. so many questions arised? Today, when we look back, we are sure that the decision we made was the best and the wisest. God's ways are the ways of wisdom - spiritually and physically. He will never let his faithful ones to live in shame.

When Abraham was willing to give up his son for God, God blessed him with children as numerous as the sand on the sea-shore and the stars in the sky. Let us trust in God and obey his words sincerely. May God bring forth so many disciples of Jesus from a single you. Let our children of obedience shine like stars.

Prayer idea: Think about the 'foolishness' of all the great men and woman in the Bible and pray through their life.

5. "Unless you bless me!"

Genesis 32:22-28

This incident is a turning point in Jacob's life. All the while thus far he had to go through the consequences of his sinful nature ie. deceit. Now he came to a point that he wanted to reconcile with Esau. Jacob wanted blessing. What kind of blessing he wanted? We are not sure. May be the one God promised in Bethel. But God is changing his name, rather reputation, from Jacob (deceiver) to Israel (soldier of God). That itself is a wonderful blessing. That means God approved Jacob's change in life & character, plus a bunch of other blessings.

Having a son like Joseph was a blessing. Brothers & sister, like Jacob we might also have weaknesses and flaws in our character. In spite of all these weaknesses do you believe that God loves you and he would bless you? Yes, God can. But God wants to see the desperation in your attitude. "Unless you bless me I would not stop praying. I am determined". But put all efforts to change what you need to change.

"Be desperate for a change; be desperate for a blessing"

Prayer idea: Our identiy or reputation in God has changed ever since we became a disciple. Find out at least 10 scriptural change in our identity in Christ. (Ex. formerly we were foreigners and aliens, now we are fellow citizens). Kindly share with others!!!

6. God's gift to Joseph

Genesis 41:41-44

God blessed Joseph with lots of honour & respect from the Egyptians. All through Joseph's life he faced rejection and has endured many hardships. First of all from his brothers, then from pharaoh's household, in jail and many more.

What helped Joseph to endure so far and not give up easily? I am sure he believed in God's goodness. First of all we also need to believe that in all things God works to the good for you. God is working, planning & scheming for our ultimate good.

You are surrounded by God's goodness; not because of who you are, but because of 'who he is'.

We have to trust that God's goodness is yet to happen in our life. Let God's goodness lead you to surrender and repentance. When we are motivated by God's goodness we can feel safe to surrender who we are to him & his purpose.

In Joseph's case God had a great plan for him of putting him in charge of the whole land of Egypt. God wants to make it good for many. Joseph also learnt to trust what God has in store for us in heaven rather than we try and push to attain it all here & now. God's goodness reminds us that we are created for something higher.

Prayer idea: God has a plan for you. What are your plans for God? Now and for future?

7. The call from the burning bush...

Exodus 3 : 1-10

This was not an ordinary day for Moses. He led the flock to the far side of the wilderness which happened to be the mountain of God. He was wonder struck by the scene where a bush was on fire but it did not burn up. It was indeed a strange sight for him. He could never believe that it was God who was in the bush and that God was waiting for him. God wanted to assign him with an important yet difficult task - to deliver his people from Egypt. What a great call? A call to change his life and career. From tending sheep to leading people to the 'promised land'. It is just like Jesus called his disciples and said 'I will make you fishers of men'. God has called each one of us and given us the assignment to deliver his people from the bondage of sin.

God said 'I am concerned about their suffering'. 'And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me'. God is concerned about all the people in this world and he wants to save each one of them. He doesn't want anyone to perish. And he has assigned the task to us. But, are we doing it sincerely? Moses was not confident about his mission. He asked God 'Who am I' and God said 'I will be with you'. Today, we may be having the same thought 'Am I capable of doing it' 'Do I have the qualification, knowledge, strength, spirituality, etc.' God doesn't need all these things to use you. The only thing he wants in you is 'humility'. God asked Moses to take off his sandals which is an act of showing humility and respect. Today God

is asking us to remove the sandals of 'pride', 'self righteousness', 'ego', 'selfishness', etc. so that he can make use of us.

When I look into my life, I can see that whenever I tried to do things with my strength and knowledge I could never succeed. But whenever I felt 'I am weak' and 'I can't do anything', that is the time God used me in an incredible way. So humble yourself before God and he will use you to accomplish his task.

Prayer idea: Think about all the 'calls' you have in your life, name them, and see how you fare in all that. (like a father, husband, wife... etc etc)

8. Moses and God

Exodus 4:1-14

God was behind Moses, he did not want to leave Moses just like that, God's intentions about Moses are clear. God is so patient. God explained to its best so that Moses is thorough. God is a God of transparency. Just like a father train his child to swim, God trains Moses, and give him signs to make sure Moses questions are answered.

Even after giving all the signs and promises, Moses still complains about his inability to talk fluently (v 10). And God is upset. His question in v 11 is like "what do you think about me, Moses? Who do you think I am?" Does 'familiarity breeds contempt' apply to us when it comes our time with God? In personal Bible studies, Prayer times, family prayers, mid-week devos, giving tithes etc. do we really respect God and his time? Do we take God for granted, because he is patient and graceful? Let us decide to be different.

Moses still had more questions to God (v13). I can't read his mind at this moment. Is he hard hearted? Or is he being thorough? Is he a coward? I can't figure out. But one thing I appreciate in Moses is his openness. The question looks ridiculous, yet for Moses, it was important to ask that query. Abraham had questions, Gideon had, David had, Habakkuk had, Job had; good they had question, good they asked those questions, because God has answers.

God created you. He gave you strengths and weaknesses, out of his wisdom, so that he can use you.

Prayer idea: Think how to use your weaknesses to bring glory to God, not as excuse for your sins.

9. The parting Red sea

Exodus 14:10-22

After the exodus started into the wilderness, Isralites was chased by the army of Pharoah and it looked like they were caught in between the sea and the devil. Scared to death, they were complaining against Moses, but God parted the Red sea and made the Isralites to

pass by leaving the men of Pharaoh to drown in the sea. Let's us focus on the words of the Israelites at this point. They said that it would have been better for them to remain in the land of slavery and allow their life to ebb away rather than facing these challenges in this wilderness.

They forgot their God and the miracles he had done to set them free from the land of slavery.

We can relate to this at times in our life. We fail to see a God who is waiting to receive us on the other shore of this life, after doing everything it takes to set us free from this Red sea of sin and sadness. He was willing to sacrifice his son on the cross for us to get citizenship in heaven. Yet when we face many incidents in life which challenge our faith, we do sometimes think that the life we lived 'before' was better than what we do now.

God is faithful and he will continue in his faithfulness, now and forever more in our life, no matter what we go through. Let's believe in the power of God in saving our souls and let's trust in his goodness. We will be able to see God been glorified in our life.

Prayer idea: Pray about the death of Jesus on the cross

10. Heavenly manna

Exodus 16:10-15

Unbelief has a short memory. Discontent has a slippery memory. They wish to get back to the flesh-pots, of which the savour is in their nostrils, and they have forgotten the bitter sauce of affliction. When they were in Egypt, they cried out loudly about their oppression, and were ready to give up anything for liberty. When they have got it finally, they were ready to put their necks to the yoke again, if only they can have their stomachs filled. Men do not know how happy they are till they cease to be so. Our present miseries and our past blessings are the themes on which unbelief harps. Let him that is without similar sin cast the first stone at these grumbling Israelites. The Red Sea is forgotten in a month.

The newness of freedom had worn off, and the hardship of the wilderness life had set in. The irony of their words is that the nature of their diet while in slavery was not as luxurious as they were claiming it was.

Israelites were stiff-necked people from the time they were taken out of Egypt. So God allowed them to go through immense troubles and problems throughout their journey to the promised land. Instead of taking 40 days to the promised land, they took nearly 40 years to reach there. God loves us and is our good shepherd, ready to sacrifice his life for his sheep. But our God expects obedience and gratitude from each one of us.

God was teaching Israel to be completely dependent on Him day by day. If they responded in faith, then He promised that He would provide for all their needs. This is why Christ connected Himself to the bread that God provided in the wilderness.

Are you like Israelites in your life journey? Are you complaining and grumbling on every problem facing in your life. Do you have short and slippery memory towards the things he has done in your life? Or do we understand that in all things God works for the good of

those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. [Rom 8:28] So let us pray to God to prepare us in advance, to face any situation, whether good or bad, in our life journey and be grateful always.

Prayer idea: What could be the worse thing/things happening to you? Pray that you would have enough faith to face any such unwelcoming event in life.

11. Show me your glory

Exodus 33:12-23

Moses has an array of questions pointed to God. Whom shall you send with me? Teach me your ways... Are you pleased with me..? How would anyone know that you chose me..? How am I different from these people?

God affirms him being pleased with Moses. Even then Moses said - now show me your glory. God said – I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you. But you cannot see my face!

God is real irrespective of how we feel about him. To mature your friendship with God, he will test it with periods of seeming separation. God feels a million mile away. David, “a man after God’s own heart’, frequently complained of God’s apparent absence (Ps 10:1, 22:1, 43:2). Of course God had not really left David and he does not leave you and me. He has promised repeatedly “ I will never leave you, nor forsake you (Deut 31:8, Ps 37:28).

In fact God admits that sometimes he hides his face from us. (Isaiah 45:15) This is a normal part of the testing and maturing of your friendship with God. Every Christian goes through it at least once, usually several times. It is painful; but it is absolutely vital for the development of your faith. (Job 23:8-10)

One major mistake people make in worship today is seeking an experience, rather than seeking God. God is always present even when you are unaware of him and his presence is too profound to be measured by mere emotions. Yes he wants you to sense his presence, but he is more concerned that you TRUST him than you feel him. Faith, not feeling pleases God.

Remind yourself what you know to be eternally true about God. He is good, he loves me, he is with me, he knows what I am going through, he cares, he has a good plan for my life. “Never doubt in the dark, what God told you in the light”.

Prayer idea: Try and list the eternal truths about God. Pray through it.

12. A violent Jordan

Joshua 3:1-17

The scripture here has enough inspiration to give us faith throughout our whole journey of life.

Sometimes when we look at the promised land of God, we think it is never possible for us to cross our overflowing sinful 'rivers' and reach there. But then Joshua reminds us here that by making some changes in life, God would bring his miraculous days of peace, love and goodness into our life. What are those changes? The scripture gives us some clues; unity, obedience, consecrating ourselves, completely united with the plans of leaders etc. are those changes.

God expects us to be completely united in mind and purpose. God never expects anything that is not possible from us. God expects obedience in us, which, God knows is possible. He never comes up with some superhuman expectations. Just like we need water, air and food, we need purification also. We cannot move on with impurity for a long time. Submission to His leaders is a command from the Lord.

When the Israelites made changes according to God's expectation, God brought amazing victories among them. They could cross the Jordan when it is overflowing, which is impossible to do in ordinary circumstances. While we turn our hearts towards God and his expectations, we will also see the violent Jordans in our life are giving way. May God bless us all.

Prayer idea: Acknowledge before God the areas in life you still find difficult to surrender.

13. The fall of the mighty

Joshua 6:1-21

Joshua made sure that he observed everything God told him. We see him getting up early in the morning to walk around the city of Jericho.

God did not tell him to walk around the city of Jericho, but he did not tell him when. But here we see Joshua did that early in the morning. When God told Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac, Abraham set himself out in the early morning. David prepares himself to be with the Lord in the morning (Psalm 5:3). Jesus found himself praying to his father in a solitary place early in the morning. When do we find our time with God? In the wee hours of the day or would we postpone praying later? Postpone something tells that we are not interested in that, it is as equal as not doing it.

They marched around the city for six days continuously, with no results as such. Yet they continued faithfully to the seventh time on the seventh day. Sometimes when we tried to help someone to become a disciple, even after trying many ways with no apparent result or change in him, if we continue giving our best, believing that God would do great things, we will see great miracles taking place.

With regard to the things which are devoted to the Lord (often destroyed completely), Joshua warns them not to take anything from it (v18). Things which are to be destroyed, like sin, we should also take a hardline decision in our life. We should not take anything in our heart, in which God is not pleased.

Colossians 3:5-10; God tells us to put to death whatever belongs to the earthly nature. Let's take a decision to put death whatever belongs to the sinful nature within us.

Prayer idea: Have a time of detailed confession of sins.

14. The sun stands still

Joshua 10:6-14

The faith displayed here by Joshua in proclaiming it publicly in front people is notable indeed. I believe Joshua was a keen observer of God and his powerful deeds. This is a war which is impossible for Israelites to win with their might, is made possible by God. Joshua was there proclaiming his faith in God, that God would win the war for them, in front of all the Israelites - so that they can put their trust in God.

On the day when Joshua said, to the Lord in the presence of Israel: "O sun, stand still over Gibeon, O moon, over the valley of Aijalon", God answered his prayer, like never before. The sun stood still and the moon stopped.

Today, when we believe in the Lord wholeheartedly and when we are intense in proclaiming our faith in front of others, we will see many miracles taking place. We will see many people put their faith in Jesus and we will see God's name be glorified.

Let's make a decision today to share our faith to people around us and also to thank God in prayer for all the great things he had done in our life.

Prayer idea: Decide in prayer to do something radical, out of pure faith for Jesus.

15. Gideon's encounter with the Lord

Judges 6:11-23

The angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon and said the Lord is with you mighty warrior. Gideon was in hiding at that time. And Gideon questioned God about the problem that he & his nation faced and God's apparent lack of help. What he didn't acknowledge was the fact that the people had brought upon themselves when they decided to disobey and neglect God. It is very easy to overlook personal accountability & blame our problems on God & others.

Unfortunately this does not solve all the problems.

It brings us no closer to God. And it leads us to very edge of rebellion & back-sliding. When problems come the first place to look is within. Our first action should be confession to God of sins that may have created our problems. In V 14-16 "I will be with you God told Gideon" and God promised to give him strength he needed to overcome the opposition. In spite of this clear promise for strength Gideon made excuses seeing only his limitations & weaknesses. He failed to see how God could work through him.

Like Gideon we are called to serve God in specific ways. Although God promises us the tools & strength we need, we often make excuses. Don't spend time making excuses instead spend it doing what God wants. God had to assure Gideon "Peace! Do not be afraid you are not going to die."

God has to assure us on & off to keep us going.

Prayer idea: Ask other brothers/sisters in the family group how you behave when you are disturbed. Get them to help you.

16. Destroy the old and Build the new

Judges 6:25-32

The Lord said to Gideon "Tear down the altar to Baal. Then build a proper kind of altar to the Lord your God." And what God told Gideon, God tells each of us.

Colossians 3:5, 12

Destroy: Whatever belongs to the earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed

Build: As God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Ephesians 4:22-24

Destroy: Your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires;

Build: to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Romans 6:11-13

Destroy: Count yourselves dead to sin, do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness.

Build: Count yourselves alive to God in Christ Jesus. Offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness

Romans 8: 13

Destroy: the misdeeds of the body.

Build: Be led by the Spirit.

This is what repentance is all about, tearing down our worldly altars, and building a proper altar to our God. And Gideon did as the Lord told him.

Look at the world's response in vs 30. *"He must die, because he has broken down Baal's altar"*

The world may not respond to our repentance any better. Jesus says; *"If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you."* (John 15:19). *"In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."* (2 Timothy 3: 12)

Prayer idea: Take an inventory, see if there are any idols of your old self still remaining to be destroyed.

17. The birth of Samson

Judges 13:1-25

Let's thank God for giving us this morning to prepare us more equipped as we get more deeper with his holy scriptures.

A woman blessed by God (Judges 13:1-5)

God was moved by her prayers enough to send an angel towards her help. Through his angel God told them how to live and be prepared (Just like what he did with Sarai earlier and Mary later). God made her to understand that the one who is yet to come from her would lead his people. Isn't it amazing that God has already chosen our children to be his children, even as he gave them for us!

Unity brings forth God's blessings (Judges 13:6-10)

The wife of Manoah shared everything with her husband in communication. So she talked to him about the angel and what he said. We should imitate this, we should be able to have open communications. He went with his wife to God again and asked God how they should rear the boy child. To whom do we ask, how we may bring up our children?

God protects his blessed (Judges 13:15-25)

Manoah and his wife were grateful to God for everything he had done. They followed his instructions whole heartedly. Let's follow God whole heartedly as well, so that God's blessings would flow into our life.

Prayer idea: Think how you want your family to be like in the future. Find out how you can reach there.

18. Victory in surrender

Judges 16:23-30

Samson led Israel for twenty years. He was very strong, he could kill a young lion with his bare hands. We see him facing his enemies all by himself most of the time and being victorious in the battle. But here we see a weak Samson, sadly.

Samson's unshaved braids of hair was the secret of his power. But when he submitted himself to the wickedness of the woman whom he was living with, he lost it. Though he was sure about his loss, he prayed to God with all his faith. With that faith he did act also. So he could destroy more enemies of Israel on his death, than the ones he defeated while he was living. We can relate to him also in this matter of faith. Truly, the power we have is our faith. We have done many great things in our life, just because we had faith. Yet at times, we lose our faith, by getting attracted to the world and its lures. May be you are in a situation where you have lost your faith, now. We can learn from the life and faith of Samson.

When he was on the verge of losing everything, even his life, he found his trust in God and he could muster his faith as well as his strength. We do have the opportunity to muster our faith, and courage, so that we will be able to do great things for God - the things we always wanted to do. Let there be a beginning.

Prayer idea: Take an inventory of your faith? What are the killers of your faith? Take a decision to overcome those killers of faith.

19. The Right Choice

Ruth 4:13-17

Ruth, though she was a gentile, she decided to throw away her ancestral family and relationships so that she would be faithful to the God of Israel and her late husband's family. God blessed her and made her to be a part of the genealogy of Jesus. There are many characters we come across in this chapter, from whom we can learn many things.

Elimelech, Mahlon, Kilion (Ruth1:1-5): When there was a famine in God's land, Elimelech ran away to a greener pasture with his wife and children - couldn't wait for God to act. They settled there, sons got married, yet unfortunately all the men died. Do we run away too, when we see greener pastures other than discipleship?

Naomi: She lost her basic needs as a woman - love and security. When their life turned out to be bitter, she told her daughter-in-laws to return to their fathers' house, he herself was intending to do that. Her faith in God was stable.

Orpah: Both the girls had the same choice to make. Yet when it comes to the matter of a safe future, Orpah turned away. When future chances look grim, what kind choices would we make?

Ruth: She got familiar with the God of her husband's family, whom she knew nothing about. She decided to be faithful to Him. Throughout the book we see her as a sincere person, who would discuss everything with her mother-in-law and faithfully obey all her instructions. Do you think are these the qualities a disciple of Jesus should acquire?

When she chose to be what is right and do what is right, God did what is right with her too. God chose her to be a great great grand mother of our Savior.

First kinsman redeemer: What did he lose when he said no to redeem Ruth and her husband's name, because he thought it would not be profitable for him? He was taken away from the genealogy of Jesus. Bible does not even mention his name.

Do we escape or turn down our spiritual responsibilities when there is no one to acknowledge and appreciate?

Boaz: From where he got such a sense of responsibility? (See Matthew 1:5) Surely from his parents. It was not an honorable thing in the society for Salmon to marry Rahab. But when he chose to do what is right, his son also decided to choose what is right.

When it came to the matter of choosing for the sake of God's kingdom, Salmon & Rahab and Boaz & Ruth chose to do what is honorable before God and God in turn made their lives beautiful. Let us remember that we are also chosen to be part of the genealogy of a generation which belong to God and his Kingdom.

Prayer idea: Thank God for the great qualities of the disciples we know. Share to them also.

20. I come in the name of the Lord

1 Samuel 17:41-50

Scripture here says how David, a shepherd defeated the mighty Goliath.

Goliath, a Philistine is a great warrior well trained in battle right from his childhood. Verse 4 to 7 talks about his gigantic figure and the armor he was wearing! Believe it or not, as per the scriptures the weight of his armor was around 110 kilograms! Even a mere look at him can terrify people.

Now David was a young man taking care of the sheep in his father's household, gentle but yet had enormous zeal, zeal to protect his sheep and the zeal not to defy anything that belongs to the Lord.

When the Philistine challenged Israel, David was vehement to protect his God's own people. He was never terrified by Goliath's armor or his huge appearance but he was innocent enough to have his full trust in the Lord and brought the mighty philistine down with just a sling shot! David knew he need not require a big sword or shield to protect him but instead went forward in the 'Name of the Lord' with whatever he had and defeated the philistine!

Verse 37 & 47 teaches us how far "faith in Lord" can change a man's life; giving him confidence from nowhere and enables him to do great things for God! No matter if you have BIG problems in front of you today like the Goliath here, all you have to do is trust and

believe that you have a BIGGER God who looks down on your problems which are very small to Him. God has the authority to bring your problems DOWN and Lift you UP. Think about your faith in God today. Do you really trust Him like David did?

Prayer idea: David was diligent in taking care of his responsibilities. What responsibilities you can take up to make the church glorious? What ways you can be more diligent in taking care of the responsibilities you have now?

21. Obedience and Faith

1 Kings 17:1-8

Ahab, the Judean king was a wicked king, more wicked than any other king who reigned before him. God opposed him through Elijah. Elijah calls out .."Jehovah is the king of Israel.. (17:1, 18:37)" We see John, Joshua and Paul calling out the same thing (1 John 4:15, Joshua 24:15, Acts 27:23).

When we believe that Jehovah is the only God and Jesus is the only Savior and when we obey faithfully our Lord, God works miracles, even when the situations are similar to a drought. When Elijah did that, there was a severe famine throughout the land. God had intended this to save Elijah from the hands of the wicked king Ahab.

We don't see crows handle food neatly, yet when it come to Elijah, they brought for him bread and meat - may be from the palace of Ahab!

Again we see that the ravine of Kerith was dried out also. It happened to him so that his trust would be in the living Lord not on raven or ravine. Sometimes God bring those times of drought in our lives, only to get us focussed on God. When God called Elijah to go to Zeraphet and Carmel, Elijah obeyed and his obedience brought him to witness God's amazing glory.

When Paul stood strong for the Lord and his call, though he was caught up in a shipwreck, he was saved - also those who were with him. His call was to go to Rome so that he could appear before Caesar and testify his faith in Jesus to the king. When he decided to heed the call, not only he was saved from a life threatening shipwreck, but also he could testify his faith to Caesar. A double blessing, indeed.

Prayer idea: What make you grumble against God in the past? What can shatter your faith? How would you overcome it, if it occurs again.

22. The Widow at Zarephath

1 Kings 17:7-16

Let us meditate (M) on some points of the portion of scripture here and talk to 'Our Father...'

v7-Should the Brook had to dry up? (M)-Did God want to disturb nature? Does he wanted to respect Elijah's word? Why God did not move the prophet to a better place? (Is it to protect him from enemies, or to share his faith with the widow?) God is not vindictive or hostile to the suffering of Elijah or the widow & her Son. He want them to have more faith/obedience. He was training them for big miracles.

v8-Why then the word of the Lord came to him? (M)-God talks to his prophet, even though he can speak to anyone, He chose his anointed prophets.

v9-Why 'go at once' to this pagan place Zarephath of Sidon to stay; why this pagan widow to supply him food? (M)-Immediate Obedience ('go at once')? Israel was under severe curse for 3½years. God command the widow to give Elijah food. Jesus quote this incident to explain God's mercy (Luke 4:25-26). She said her son will die soon? Will any parent allow their child to die? God, our Father did this difficult thing by giving Jesus on the cross. How does God's promise to Elijah comfort us in our worries?

v12-Why is She saying, 'the Lord YOUR God'? (M)Being a pagan for these many years, she has not taken Elijah's God to be her personal saviour yet. If she accepts the true living God as her own God, the blessings would be immeasurable. What worries you? Why?

v13-How come Elijah is giving her the assurance to her life? (M) His faith in God; Elijah didn't go along with her but told her to go home first. Allowing her own faith to be put into action.

v14-Now why is Elijah telling her about the God of Israel? (M) Sharing his faith to her. How did the widow show faith in God's promise? What promises does God make for you?

v 15-How come there was food for Elijah & her family every single day? (M) she went away confidently & did what Elijah told her. (Obedience). God gave her "manna" from heaven even while he was withholding food for his people.

v16-Where is the ultimate Victory/Joy/Peace? (M) In God's Word; *Faith* in His PROMISES. The widow cried, "...the word of the Lord from your mouth is the truth." She made a confession that the Israelites had failed to make (v24).

"For no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ. And so through him the 'Amen' is spoken by us to the glory of God" (2 Corinthians 1:20). Our heavenly Father's promises defeats our worries. Claim them with faith, Amen.

Prayer idea: Meditate on the above questions.

23. The second chance

1 Kings 17: 17-24

Is there any other miracle better than this one - the dead come back to life again? The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being (Genesis 2:7). When the Lord takes this breath back, man dies and becomes dust.

Few in the Bible got back from the chilling hands of death - the boy we see here, son of the Shunammite woman, Lazar, daughter of Jairus, son of the widow from Nain, Tabitha, Euticus and Jesus. Let's look at today's scripture.

When the child died, the first thing that came to her mind was her sins (v18). But now she was trying to blame Elijah for the loss of her child, we can't see her turning to repentance. When we turn against the one ordained by God, we condemn God himself. What do we do when hardships struck us, blame God or our fellow travellers? Or do we look into our own hearts and the things we need to change?

The man of God here, turned towards God while he was faced with criticisms, and he prayed. God answered his prayer, the boy got his life back. Seeing this, the woman turned sober. She was turning towards God and his words (v24).

When we are faced with accusations and criticisms, let us also turn towards God with a prayerful heart. Let us follow the example of Jesus, he prayed with loud cries and tears. let us make his words come true in our lives. "I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these (John 14:12).

Prayer idea: Praise Jesus for the "I am..." claims in the gospel of John. (Eg. I am the bread of life)

24. Fire from the Lord

1Kings 18:30-39

Elijah rebuilt the altar on Mount Carmel, and then He had called the people who watch him keenly to make a decision. He poured enough water to drench the offering, the altar of 12 stones and the trench around - no foul tricks here. Then he called the Lord, "Answer me, O Lord, answer me..." (Vs. 37).

What a contrast here between Elijah and the priests of Baal. The priests of Baal ranted, raved, danced, sliced themselves with knives, and went half out of their minds trying to make Baal answer. In contrast, all Elijah did was a sensible, sincere, believing prayer. He is convinced that the Lord would answer. God keep his ears tuned to our prayers.

Why should Elijah pray - some people wonder! Because, God know what is at stake here on Mount Carmel! - they think. Prayer is the inseperable link in the chain by which God realises his promises.

God did answer the prayers by sending fire earlier also. Fire came from the Lord after the tabernacle was first built and consecrated to the service of the Lord (Lev 9:24). When the temple was consecrated, after Solomon's prayer, fire once again came down from heaven (2Chron 7:1). When King David repented of counting the fighting men of Israel the Lord sent down fire from heaven (1Chron 21:26). God answer prayers.

Elijah asked for four things in his prayer.

First, **"let it be known today that you are God in Israel"** (vs. 36). Second, **"let it be known ... that I am your servant"** (vs. 36). Elijah had been defamed and hunted by everybody because he speak about God. Third, **"let it be known ... that I ... have done all these things at your command"** (vs. 36). He wanted the people to acknowledge that he was faithful to God's commands. And fourth, **"Answer me, O Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again"** (vs. 37). Elijah hope that if the Lord answered by fire the children of Israel would answer back in faith and belief - that was the whole reason for the confrontation on Mount Carmel.

The Lord spoke and He **spoke loudly**. He **spoke clearly**. He spoke **convincingly**. The people of Israel witnessed the fire. They knew what it meant. **So they fell to the ground before the altar of the Lord and cried out, "The Lord—he is God! The Lord—he is God!"** (vs. 39).

Prayer idea: Enlist and pray at least 5 specific requests which you want God to fulfill in 2013.

25. What are you doing, Elijah?

1 Kings 19:9-18

Elijah has turned out to be a grumbler here, ever after God doing great things through him just recently. But God was not finished with Elijah, God never thought Elijah is over.

God told him to go to the mountain, yet Elijah confined himself in the cave. Both the powerful wind and the earth quake were incapable of expressing what God wanted to tell Elijah. Neither it could console Elijah. But when he heard the gentle whisper, Elijah came ou of his cave where he confined himself. God had the same question which he asked before. "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

Do our soul ask ourseves this question, when we lie down to sleep everyday? What I was doing today? Do you try and avoid this question, like someone who lost his capacity to respond? Can we find enough excuses which is valid before God?

When Elijah complained about his loneliness, God gave him Elisha as a companion. When he complained that Israel had rejected God and there is no point in preaching to them, God provided him 7000 prophets who never bow their knees before Baal. When Elijah complained that the king wants to take Elijah's life, God told him to appoint Jehu, who later eradicated Baal worship in Israel. When he complained that his life is in danger, God did not allow him to see death, he was taken up to heaven alive. God was not finished with Elijah, for sure. Do you think God has finished with you?

Let's go to God today, praying earnestly for giving us the faith that we believe every good things has started all over again in our life, not ended.

Prayer idea: What are your dreams for God and his kingdom? Rekindle those lost dreams. If you don't have one, repent and start having dreams.

26. Noble Relationship

2 Kings 2:1-12

Elijah was going to be taken up to heaven. He told Elisha, 'stay here, the Lord send me to Bethel'. 'As surely as the Lord lives and you live, I will not leave you,' said Elisha. Elisha did not want to leave his master Elijah.

When the prophets of Bethel and Jerricho came to and told Elisha about the departure of Elijah, he told them not to talk about that. He knew what was going to happen.

Dear brothers and sisters, what we see here is an amazing relationship of discipleship. Elisha wanted to be where his master Elijah was. Especially on this day, the most important day in his master's life, he definitely wanted to be together with him. He even warned those prophets who talked about Elijah to keep quiet.

In this era of everyone makes an opinion about everything, mostly irresponsible comments, how do we respond to those statements. Sometimes it is about the leaders of the church or other disciples or about church or even about Jesus himself. When people/others make irresponsible comments, do we join with them and add our own flavour to it? When you see other disciples go through different situations in their life, would you approach those situations with faith? Would you tell the irresponsible 'company of prophets' to keep quiet?

Let us give our best make our relationship with the ones who lead us in the Lord, like the one between Elijah and Elisha. Let us make discipling relationships a blessing, using every opportunity to become mature and complete, so that we will be able to join with Him when Jesus appear again to take us with him to heaven.

Prayer idea: Have you ever hurt anybody's faith with a negative talk? Please pray with that person and make the relationship straight.

27. Imperishable portion

2 Kings 2:7-8 and 13-14

Elisha (means God is salvation) was following the prophetic mission of Elijah. As God commanded on the mount of Horeb, Elijah went to see him in his field. Elisha was ploughing his field with 11 other men driving their pair of oxen, and he himself was on the twelfth pair. Elijah cast his outer garment on Elijah, as a symbol of transferring authority. Elisha went back home, sacrificed his oxen using the wood from the plough and gave a feast to all the men. Then he came back and became a disciple of Elijah.

When Elijah said it was time for him to be taken up, Elijah replied with a strong 'I will not leave you', all the three times Elijah said it. He asked a double portion of Elijah's spirit. Who would have so much courage to take over the mission such a person like Elijah was holding? When Elijah was taken up to heaven, Elisha was receiving the double portion of his spirit. He came back from Jordan as the successor of Elijah.

Now, it is true that the Lord chose Elisha to be the successor of Elijah. On the other hand, Elisha had a heart to serve the Lord and his people, he had zeal for the Lord and determination to serve him. So God blessed Elisha with the double portion of Elijah's spirit. What is our 'portion' in the church and in God's kingdom today? What are the 'portions' we ask from the Lord? Elisha could have asked and received many material blessings from Elijah. Instead he chose what would please God. The 'portions' of this world will fade away, but the 'portions from God will stay forever.

Prayer idea: Do something with the people you are reaching out to. (Like give a gift or share a meal etc)

28. The widow's oil

2 Kings 1:7-8

When we go through the up's and down's of life, lets look into this scripture and evaluate our life. The servants gave the king a description of the prophet, he could understand that it is Elijah. How are we been described lately?

2 Kings 4:1-7

This widow was open about her life and her struggles to the man of God and she followed what he told her to do. That made a great change in her life, a great victory. Do you do the same? Let us make a decision to be righteously open about what we go through, and be sincere in following the advices and instructions we receive. A humble and contrite heart brings forth God's wonderful miracles in our life.

Let us look in to the great miracles God had done in our past and thank God for all that miracles. Let us keep our hearts humble and obedient so that we will be able to have a blessed life.

Prayer idea: Pray with your discipler. Have a good talk about your life.

29. Life to the full

2 Kings 4:8-17

The life of Elisha gives a glimpse to what it takes to be a man of God. A man of God is someone who speak on behalf of God. He takes a stand as someone represents God. He had enough faith to do the very things God commanded through him. This well-to-do Shunammite woman recognised Elisha as a man of God. She called him for a meal once

and gladly have him for meals whenever he was passing there by from that time on. She spoke to her husband on behalf of this holy man and she made an upper room ready for him to stay.

One day, when Elisha was taking rest in that upper room, he thought about giving something for his hosts as a reward. When he came to know that they were childless, he promised them that they would have a child by next year. Though her husband was well advanced in age, she did give birth to a child, as Elijah the man of God spoke. When they came close to Elisha, they came close to God also. They could get to know the Lord, later, and now even be blessed by the Lord.

Did not God call us to live a life like that of Elisha, dear brothers and sisters? When people get to know us, should they be attracted to the Lord and get to know him? Should they come to know the scriptures through us, and receive salvation for their souls and God's blessings in their life? God did call us to proclaim the good news to the poor, bind up the broken hearted, proclaim freedom to the captives and release the prisoners from darkness. Let us believe that, let us live our life accordingly also. When there is hope, there is always a way.

Prayer idea: Make a list of possible people/friends you can study the Bible with. Pray and initiate with them one by one.

30. Faith that gives life

2 Kings 4:18-35

We see six characters in this part of the scripture. 1. The boy, 2. The Shunammite's husband, 3. The shunammite woman, 4. Elisha, 5. Gehazi, and 6. God

The Shunammite's husband: He send the ailing child to his mother along with some servants. He thought it is the mother's responsibility to take care of the child. He stayed back in his field. This husband assumes spiritual matters like prayer, sacrifices etc are matters pertaining to woman.

The Shunammite woman: She took responsibility for the child who is crying with pain. She went in search of the man of God with a trembling heart, opened up to him what was going on.

Gehazi: A name-sake disciple. He did exactly what his master said, tucked his cloak in to his belt, took his masters staf, ran towards the child and kept the staff on the face of the dead boy. Nothing happened though. He was keen on following the masters commands, but his heart was missing, there was no faith. So there was no miracle.

Elisha: Came into the house, closed the door behind him and he approached the boy. He prayed for the child, with lot of faith and lot of love. Because his heart was completely involved God did a miracle by giving the child its life back from the dead.

When there is faith, love, sincerety and intensity God loves to do miracles.

There are so many children who are dead spiritually, in this world. And God is there, willing to do mighty miracles. Let us have a heart towards the lost and let us pray like Elisha, so that God would save many of those lost souls.

Prayer idea: Pray for great miracles to take place in the church.

31. Faith that gives

2 Kings 4:42-44

Elisha, who became the successor of a powerful prophet Elijah, was powerful too. He got a special blessing from God, the double portion of Elijah's spirit (Traditionally, the first child gets double portion of what other children receive at those times). Elijah used to stay in the wilderness, he came to people when they were faced with threats, once he deals with the situation goes back to the wilderness. While Elisha, as we see, stayed among the crowd, he got involved in the day to day life aspects of people. Elisha had done many things that looks similar to what Christ Jesus did. (Mark 6:34-44)

When God does miracles, he gets men involved in it.

In Jesus time, the five bread and two fish the boy had, was given into the hands of Jesus. After praying Jesus divided those bread and fish to give to people. A large crowd containig 5000 men ate to the full, and twelve basketful of left overs was collected. Here Elijah told the men to serve the 20 barley bread and some ears of corn, those men about 100 in number had a full meal, with some left overs, just like he told it would be.

When we are skeptical about what we have, our faith is weak. But when we give what we have over to God, it is truly a heroic effort of faith.

Today let us pray, that God would make our weak faith into a mighty one.

Prayer idea: Follow the above challenge.

33. The leprosy called pride

2 Kings 5:1-14

When he stepped into the door of Elisha, Naaman had few expectations in his mind - the prophet should behave such and such ways that would fit to honor a person like him, an army commander. In his mind Naaman was imagining a scene where Elisha calls upon the Lord, wave his hand over the leprosy and heal it to the surprise of everyone around. But what happened was literally discouraging and shameful for Naaman. No calling of the Lord with a loud voice, no prayer, no waving of the hand, no fire works and surprised faces and definitely no healing of his shame. Only a ridiculous command - 'go wash yourself seven times in the Jordan.'

Naaman was furious at Elisha. When things did not go as he wished it would, Naaman's true face came out, the mask of humility he was wearing till then came apart torn. The real leprosy which would lead his soul into eternal torment fermented to the surface. Do I have better rivers in Aram, why should I go to this river? He erred in understanding the command, it was not a command intending to the river but a command for his ailing soul.

We find ourself at this point at times. We would have some expectations towards the advices we seek. When the advice differs from what we sought, all our humility and openness becomes a mere act. We find fault with the one who came to help us. The pride, leprosy of the soul will remove its veil and come out.

As for Naaman, praying was such an easy thing, but for Elisha and God, teaching humility was easier. Later, when Naaman listened to the words of his servant, he was healed. As for us also, when we remove the pride-leprosy in us, we will come out blessed.

Prayer idea: Search for the pride-infected areas in life. Decide to change.

33. Winning a war with a feast

2 Kings 6:8-23

V 8-10 Here the king of Aram declares war against Israel. He made many plans for the battle. But our God helped the king of Israel to find success over the enemies through prophet Elisha as he revealing the secret plans of the Aramean king. Our God can help in any situation and he can save us from any evil plots. If we are with godly people, they can give as godly advice.

11-13 Here the Aramean king was furious about of his failed plans. His officers informed him that prophet Elisha is revealing their plans to the Israel king. The enraged king sends his strong force to capture prophet Elisha

14-17 When the servant of Elisha saw the army he was so afraid, wondering what shall they do. But the prophet tries to put faith in him. The man of God prayed to God to open his servant's eyes and the servants looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

Some times in our life when we face some tough situations we are also like the servant; so afraid. But the same God's force is around us in order to protect us. Sometimes we failed to see that. In such situations we have to pray to God that he might open our spiritual eyes. Our God will protect us in every situation, and that is a promise.

V 18-19 Elisha prayed that God may strike them with blindness, the Lord answered his prayers.

V 20-23 The Aramean army was trapped. Israel king was about to kill them but prophet Elisha stopped him and told the King to prepare a feast for them instead. The Israel king obeyed the prophet. When we obey godly instructions, miracles take place in our life. After the feast the king send them a back to their master. V 23 says Aram stopped raiding (attacking) Israel territory. Our God can change even wicked people's hearts and plans. Aram was tried to do evil but Israel payed back in doing good. Rom 12:21 says we should not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Prayer idea: Pray through Roman 12

34. The God who answer prayers

2 Kings 20:1-11

Though God miraculously helped Hezekiah to find success with the mighty Assyrian king, he was fallen sick these days. Isaiah warned him that his time is up. When the king heard the news, he turned to the Lord and prayed earnestly. The news was frightening and it is unexpected, yet we see the king did not put his trust in men and their abilities but on God. He turned to the wall, seeing nobody but God and he wept bitterly. God heard his prayers. He was kind enough to give Hezekiah an added fifteen years more.

This is not the first occurrence, as we see in the Bible. God answered tearful prayers many times over before and after (Exodus 2:24, 1 Samuel 1:1-20, John 11:32-44). We see our Lord Jesus as praying with loud cries and tears (Hebrews 5:7). How is our prayer life today? God will never turn his face away from a broken hearted prayer (Psalm 51:17).

Psalm 34:17-19, 1 Chronicles 5:20, Psalm 3:4, Psalm 18:6, Psalm 56:9. let us find some personal time today with God, praying and petitioning with tears and a sincere heart.

Prayer idea: Follow the above challenge.

35. Rise of the Phoenix

Job 42:12-17

According to the ancient Egyptian mythology, Phoenix, an imaginary bird would live up to 1000 years. Towards the end of its life time, it sets up its cage on fire with the bird itself and a new bird arises out of the ashes and embers to live another 1000 years. Though Phoenix is a myth, Job is real. He went into ruts and ashes, with embers of pain not dying in his soul.

God bless Job with a double portion of what he was having before, sheep, camel, ox and donkeys - his possessions along with blessed sons and daughters. Everything he lost was found him, but this time with more convictions and more faith. V 5-6 say that; 'My ears had heard of you but my now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.' He would choose dust and ashes for himself gladly, if given another chance to go through the same cycle of pain, to see the God he had always heard, better. And that is the difference now. Formerly, God was someone he heard of, now He has seen God with his own eyes. God has become personal to him.

The pain and problems we go through in life is either allowed by God or caused by him - with a purpose. A purpose to see him, and taste him and experience him. When we don't see God and his purpose in our afflictions, we are failed utterly. Then God had to go through the pain of discipline us over again. Discipline has only one purpose, to mould our life better. This is a continuous process you and I go through everyday. And there is a clear purpose, which is set by the wisdom and knowledge of God. But when we miss it, life turns out to be meaningless.

When we go through those cycles of pain, let us make sure we are well connected to God with scriptures and godly friends and understand the purposes set by him. Life would turn better.

Prayer idea: What are areas in your life where you see God discipline you.

36. Hezekiah's prayer

Isaiah 37:14-20 & 36-37

What is the tone of our regular prayers? Is it more of petitions and complaints or praises and thanks giving? When we give more time and priority to praise God, it would bring more depth into our prayer life. We see great men in the Bible, like David, Moses and Daniel kept praising God in their prayers.

In order to praise God better, we need to know God better. As we get more deeper with the scriptures, we would be able to see God in his power and mighty acts for his people. As we praise God through those scriptures, we will get more close to God. Let us find time to praise God for all the great things he is doing in our life everyday. Let us put our praises along with the praises of great men and women in the Bible.

In v 14-20, we see how Hezekiah praises our God. Isn't it great to give glory to God along with the great men of faith in the Bible? God made our life so beautiful thus far. He guides us in paths of righteousness. He gives us grace and mercy. He gives honour to our desires and thoughts. He calls us higher with the goodness he alone has. Let us remember all these things and never fail to give glory to God.

Not only in the morning, but noon, evening, night - whenever we get some time, let us utilize it to praise God.

Prayer idea: Let us have a great time praising God.

37. The God who puts life back in us

Ezekiel 37:1-10

When Israel sinned against God, they were all scattered and taken captive by enemies, the nation itself came to extinct. Israel was like the dried, useless bones scattered all over the valley here. Bringing those bones back into life was surely a difficult puzzle for anybody.

When a man's heart is hardened by sin, the same situation persists. With no hope and expectations, no peace and happiness, no purpose and surety, estranged, wallowing in sin, hard-hearted man. Who can save such a wreck?

Praise be to God, He make the impossibles possible. Through the power of His Word and Holy Spirit, He is able to bring those dead bones back into life, and make an entire army out of such dried lifeless bunch of bones.

A man become alive spiritually by listening to the scriptures and obey it with sincere faith. No matter how hard dried he is, or his situations are, God can make him resurrect. He can bring him back to life.

Prayer idea: What are those spiritual things which you think are 'impossible' or 'extremely difficult' in your life. Pray for such things to become possible.

38. The fiery furnace of faith

Daniel 3:1-29

While it was changing of name and food menu in chapter one, it is changing of God now in this chapter. For Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego it was a walking on fire. Their enemies turned the king's favour against them. When the king asked in trial, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego agreed the charges. Though the king gave them a second chance, their stay was strong. The infuriated king wants to see which God would be able to save them from his hands. The God we serve is able to save us from the fiery furnace, these brothers said. Even if God does not, we will not serve the king's gods, they added.

I wonder, why am not able to talk these words? Because I am not ready to die, I am scared. But these brothers were not. The king was angry at them, he threw them into the fiery furnace, which is heated seven times more than the normal temperature used. The king had a shock when he saw four men dancing in the blazing fire. Fire did not do anything to them, not even they smell fire when they were taken out. The king had only one thing left to do, praising the living God.

Even in front this pagan king, where they were carried away as captives of war, these brave brothers sets us an example of great faith. Let us imitate their faith and their convictions.

Prayer idea: Let us pray for courage to share our faith in Jesus, even in difficult times, like these brave brothers.

39. The lion's den

Daniel 6:13-23

Daniel, the exiled Israelite, has faithfully served the kings of Babylon. Now even after the Babylonians were conquered by the Medes and Persians, Daniel continues his faithful service to the new king Darius. At this time Daniel was over 80 years old and one of Darius' top three administrators. The king was planning to set him over the whole kingdom (6:3). The jealous officials could not find anything about Daniel's life to criticise, so they attacked his religion (6:4-5). The law was made: anyone who prays to any god or man during the next thirty days except the king will be thrown into the Lion's den. Yet Daniel continued to pray three times a day as he always did. Daniel had a disciplined prayer life. He made no attempt to hide his daily prayer routine from his enemies in the government. Even though he knew he would be

disobeying the new law; he was sure only God could give him the guidance and strength during this difficult time.

Our God has power to do anything, even he shuts the lions' mouths. The man or woman who trusts in God and obeys his will is untouchable until God takes him or her. Many unbelievers could witness Daniel's faithful devotion to God. Do you have a disciplined prayer life like Daniel? What kind of pressure you give in to miss your prayer time with God? Proverb 3:5 says "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding" (Can you imagine being in the hungry lion's den and coming out without even a scar?) To trust God, is to have immeasurable peace. God who delivered Daniel will deliver you. Do you trust him with your life?

Prayer idea: Let us decide to get our prayer life organized. Give it justice.

40. God's mercy and forgiveness

Jonah 4:1-11

God gave a goal to Jonah to preach to the city of Nineveh. It was a very difficult job for Jonah; because they were Israel's most dreaded enemy. Nineveh showed their power by numerous acts of cruelty. It is like going and preaching Jesus in Iraq or Saudi Arabia. So when Jonah heard God telling him to go to Nineveh and to call the people to repentance, he ran in the opposite direction. But God has his way to preach his word to Nineveh. Jonah had to submit to God's plan. Jonah took God's discipline and then went to Nineveh and preached.

After preaching, why did Jonah become angry when God spared Nineveh? The Jews did not want to share God's message with gentile nations in Jonah's day. They had forgotten the purpose; through them the rest of the nation should know God's blessing. For that they have to share God's word according to Genesis 22:18. Jonah might have thought that God should not freely give his salvation to a wicked pagan nation. We got to understand that God's salvation is free to all who come to him through faith. Jonah did not understand that the God of Israel was the God of the entire world. We do not deserve to be forgiven by God, but he is so merciful to us.

Jonah was happy when God saved him from inside the fish, but was angry when Nineveh was saved. We are happy when we get God's blessings but do not show the same happiness when other people are blessed. God's forgiveness was not only for Jonah or Israel or me, it extends to all who repent and believe. God spared the sailors when they pleaded for mercy. God saved Jonah when he prayed from inside the fish. God saved the people of Nineveh when Jonah preached the word of God. God answers the prayers of all who call upon him. God has a desire that everyone come to him, trust him, and be saved. If we respond in obedience, God will be gracious and we will receive his mercy not his punishment. Today we need to say with all our heart, "thank you Lord for forgiving me."

Prayer idea: Pray about heaven.