

Greetings friends,

I ask that as we begin our spiritual journey together we begin to take some time daily (if you are not already) to read the Scripture and pray. I thought it would be beneficial for us to focus on the same passage of Scripture for the week. This week, we will focus on Sunday's texts (See below). If you were not present in worship on Sunday and have not yet watched it, I encourage you to do so. The Scripture used on Sunday was **Matthew 13:16-19**. The setting is with Jesus and the disciples in the region of Caesarea Philippi. This scene takes place after the Pharisees and Sadducees tested Jesus, demanding a sign, and Jesus refused. This scene segues toward the cross. After this scene, in v.21, it says, "From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life." Matthew, the writer of this Gospel, was also named Levi. When Jesus called him to be a disciple, Matthew/Levi had been a tax collector (which were hated by the Jews, considering them to be "sell outs" to the Roman government). The audience for Matthew's Gospel was Jewish, which is why he utilizes many Old Testament prophecies to support the message of Christ. His sensitivity to his audience also has him using the term "kingdom of heaven" instead of "kingdom of God" like the other Gospel writers, but the terms are interchangeable.

Format-this is a repeat from every week, and will be consistently present for anyone new and as a reminder for all. It is listed at the bottom for review and for anyone who is new to this exercise. Please remember that it is a suggestion. There is no pressure to do it in the format suggested, to do everything on the days that are listed, or to even to answer all the questions. Allow the Holy Spirit to lead you. If one question takes up the time because you are moved in your spirit, then stay with it. The idea of this is to spend some intentional time with the Scriptures, in the presence of God, and in prayer and reflection- in whatever way that works for you!

Scripture: Matthew 16:13-19 (NIV)

¹³ When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" ¹⁴ They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ¹⁵ "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" ¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. ¹⁸ And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

Other Scriptures referenced:

Matt. 16:21- From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

Daniel 7:13-14- ¹³ “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. ¹⁴ He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

DAILY QUIET TIME WITH GOD:

Monday: v.13a “When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi” – Caesarea Philippi is a Gentile city at the northern boundary of Ancient Israel- north of the Sea of Galilee. Philip the Tetrarch (or Herod Philip, son of Herod the Great) had rebuilt the city, making it beautiful and majestic. He gave it the name “Caesarea” in honor of Caesar Tiberius, the emperor. Since there was another Caesarea that was located on the Mediterranean coast, he added his own name, “Philip” to distinguish it- Caesarea Philippi, or Caesarea of Philip. It was known for its pagan worship, especially to the pagan Greek god “Pan” (from which we get the word “panic”). A “sanctuary” was built out of a caves, and many niches were carved out that would hold statues, etc.- the remnants are still there today. It was at these caves that people would make sacrifices, as well as practice many detestable acts, as worship to the pagan gods. They believed that the cave itself was a gate to the underworld (Hades). Imagine what Jesus, the Son of God, felt in this area, with people blatantly and shamelessly worshiping false gods! Although it can be difficult to imagine worshiping idols in that way, in many ways people still do. There is a sacrifice of time, money, focus, love, etc. There is a desire to act out in ways that are contrary to what God would want. Consider what some idols are in our world today, and if there are any in your own life. Take a moment to pray about it, asking God if there is anything you are treating as an idol, anything that you are worshiping and placing above God. If God brings something to mind, spend time with God about it. Ask God for clarity and for revelation of his will. Ask for empowerment to no longer have any false gods, or idols, in your life.

Caesarea Philippi, because of its pagan practices, would’ve been a troubling atmosphere for people who love and follow God. Jews absolutely avoided it. Have you ever been in a place where you were surrounded by an atmosphere that was outright against God? If so, describe the experience, and the feelings that accompanied it. Did you experience any desire to leave? Places without God, especially places focused on idol worship in defiance of God, can be very dark places. In situations when we are in such places, we need to be extra-aware of the Holy Spirit- either leading us to go away from the darkness, or stay and be a light within it. If God ever asks you to stay, be vigilant, put on the armor of God, and stay protected and strong. Spiritual warfare is very real, and you don’t want to open any doors to darkness in your life! Take a moment and pray a prayer of protection from the enemy in Jesus’ name, and give thanks for God’s power and holy presence within you!

Tuesday: v.1b “he [Jesus] asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”” – “Son of Man” is the title Jesus usually uses to describe himself. The title comes from the book of Daniel,

as Daniel described one of his visions (Dan. 7:13-14). Daniel said, "... before me was one like a Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed." This is regarded as a Messianic prophecy- a prophecy foretelling some of what the coming Messiah would be. Tradition of the people held that the Messiah would be political and militaristic, leading an army that would overthrow the Roman government and set the Israelites free from their rule. The Israelites were oppressed in their own land, and so they longed for, and assumed, that the Christ would give victory and they could have their own land, the "Promised Land" back, and re-establishing the Davidic kingdom. "Son of Man" was a Messianic term that focused on humanity and humility along with divinity. We understand Jesus to be fully human AND fully divine (hypostatic union). The term Son of Man, and all ideas of the coming Christ, described victory, but Jesus' victory would be victory in the spiritual realm. Victory over sin and death through the cross and resurrection. This was not the way the people had envisioned it. Although it was exactly what was needed, for many it was not what was assumed or even wanted. Have you ever assumed something about God, deciding ahead about what God would/should do, only to find that God did something completely different? In those times we can find ourselves wrestling with God, coming from a sense of our own pride or entitlement. We can find ourselves predetermining God's will for ourselves instead of actually seeking God's will. In our prayer life we petition God for many things, but prayer is a conversation and we need to listen as much as, or more than, we speak. Pray to know God's will, and listen. Consider that even the disciples assumed that Jesus would be a victorious military leader, and how they all scattered in confusion and fear when Jesus was arrested. The cross was something they would've never imagined or wanted- it wasn't in their ideas or agendas. It wasn't until the resurrection that they began to understand, and even then it took some time to fully grasp it all. Have you ever looked back upon times when you experienced something that you didn't understand, or want, or appreciate, and realized that God had been moving through it? That although the choices that God had made weren't anything you would've wanted or imagined, God did something beautiful through it? Perhaps you recognized the blessing through it? This is NOT to say that everything that happens that is not what we want is God's will! The world is still very broken and dark, and tragedies happen. In those times, God is with us, holding us in comfort, and weeping too. But so often we can also try to take the role of God, predetermine with our own will and control about who God is and what God does and what God will do. Take a moment and ask God if there are any areas of your life where you are doing that. If God brings something to mind, confess and repent. Listen for the truth- who God is, what God's will is. Trust God, and ask to be given the strength to live into God's will- even if it's nothing you would've ever wanted or imagined. Watch for and embrace the blessings that come from living in God's will!

Wednesday: v.13b-14 "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets"- even King Herod was wondering if Jesus was John the Baptist risen from the dead (Matt. 14:1-2, Mark 6:14-16), though that thought might've come from his own guilt of beheading John. People were noticing Jesus and great crowds were following. People called him "Rabbi," a term of respect, and listened to his teaching, though his teachings were often much stronger than what people had

known before- for example, the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). The three named in this passage are prophets that spoke God's words of conviction against corruption and sin. Jesus also gave words of conviction, especially to the Pharisees, for example the "Seven Woes" (Matthew 23:13-39). People seemed to understand that Jesus was attuned to God, and witnessed God working through him as he miraculously healed people. They witnessed that he had great power over demons, who shrieked when they saw him and left upon Jesus' command. Demons recognized Jesus and shouted out that he was the "Son of God" or "Holy One of God" (Matt. 8:28-30, Mark 1:23-24). Yet in spite of all of that, people were unable or unwilling to acknowledge the divinity of Jesus, that Jesus was the Christ. People still do this today! They will say that Jesus was an important historical figure, a great teacher with wisdom, he had a heart for caring for people, etc. But they will not say that Jesus is divine, and that he died on the cross for our sins and rose again so we may have eternal life. As C.S. Lewis wrote, Jesus was either a lunatic, liar, or Lord. Everyone must make a choice and determine who they believe Jesus to be. Just like the people with Jesus, we have seen and experienced Jesus Christ working in and through us and others. We know Jesus to be Lord! Yet for others, in spite of evidence of Jesus healing and transforming lives (including yours and mine), people still choose to not believe. Consider the reasons why people do not see, or know, or acknowledge, who Jesus really is. There are likely many reasons, but one that I believe happens often is that acknowledging Jesus' divinity would mean they have to change their mind, and have a new understanding of God and life. If Jesus truly is the Christ, the Son of the living God, then eternity is real and there will be a day of judgement. Accepting that Jesus actually is the Christ- God incarnate- then it means that people would need to change their life. Frankly, many just don't want to do that. Have you encountered this? What does that choice for that reason say about the person? What is really blocking them from accepting Christ? Consider other reasons why people do not accept Jesus as the Christ. Reflect upon times when you were not accepting or acknowledging that Jesus was the Christ- whether it was before you knew, or perhaps a season when you had turned away. What was going on within you? What led to the change and acceptance? There are so many in need of a Savior! Take some time to pray for those who have not yet accepted Jesus Christ. Pray for open hearts and minds. Pray that people will see and know Jesus through you. Pray for opportunities to witness and share. Pray thanks for God's amazing grace that is offered to all!

Thursday: v.15 (Jesus asked the disciples) "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" This was a question to all of the disciples, not just Peter, as indicated by "you" being both emphatic and plural in the Greek. It's a question asked of all of us- who do we believe Jesus to be? It's an important question and differentiation- are you following in the thoughts of the crowd, or are you a follower who truly sees and knows who Jesus really is? Do you have a head knowledge of Jesus from the Bible, church, and perhaps tradition only, or do you also have a personal relationship? Consider for a moment- who do you say that Jesus is? Not just the title, but make it personal- not what you know about him, but who you know Jesus to be because of your relationship with him. What we say and believe about Jesus doesn't change who he is- but it does change who we are! Reflect upon ways that your life has changed by knowing Jesus Christ, and give thanks.

v.16- Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God"- "Messiah" is from the NIV translation. The original Greek is *Xristós*, transliterated *Christos*, which is where

were get the English term, “Christ.” Christ is the Greek, and Messiah is the Hebrew (*Mašiah*), and the terms are used interchangeably. The definition for Messiah/Christ is “the Anointed One.” The Jewish people believed that God would send the Messiah/Christ, the Anointed One, who would deliver the people. Throughout the Old Testament, anointing was for setting people apart as chosen by God, consecrating them for a certain office and function. This was done for prophets, priests, and kings. Anointing with oil was how kings were chosen by God, as in when Samuel anointed David (1 Samuel 16:13). Anointing was also for priests, for example, when God asked Moses to anoint Aaron to be consecrated as the first priest (Exodus 28:41, Leviticus 8:12). Prophets were anointed as a sign of being empowered and protected by the Spirit to perform their calling, as in when Elijah anointed Elisha. For all, it was a sign that they were selected by God, that God’s presence was with them and had favor upon them. The anointed person was no longer independent, but instead would speak, serve, and rule in the name of the Lord, and as God’s representative. The three groups anointed in the Old Testament- prophets, priests, and kings, foreshadowed the fullness of Jesus’ role and function. Jesus was anointed at his baptism into the three-fold office of prophet, priest, and king. He received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, God’s proclamation of who he was, and the mandate for his ministry. Jesus the Christ was prophet, priest, and king! Consider what ways Jesus fulfilled the role of prophet, priest, and king: prophet- to speak forth God’s message, priest- to offer the sacrifice, and king- to rule over all!

In Luke 4:14-21, Jesus read from the prophet Isaiah, proclaiming that “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” Consider that as a Christian, you too are anointed! You are chosen by God, consecrated by the Holy Spirit, and empowered to live out the ministry of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Making the choice to believe in Jesus Christ means that you are no longer independent, but are now consecrated for God’s service, his representative in speech and conduct, and to have authority to rule over darkness in the spiritual realm. What does the idea that you are anointed through Christ say to you? How does that make you feel? Pray about it, and ask God to reveal the fullness of your anointing. Ask God how he would want you to live out the mission and ministry of Jesus. If led, ask God for greater anointing, an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, that you may live even more boldly into your consecrated life with God. Take a moment to consider all that you could thank God for- and then do so!

Friday: v.16 cont.- “the Son of the living God”- deity! The One who is begotten by YHWH, the Almighty Creator! We hear about Jesus being the Son of God first at Jesus’ baptism when God declared, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17). Jesus even spoke of himself as Son to the Father (Matt. 11:27). Before the passage we are examining, in Matt. 14:33, when they experienced Jesus walking on water, the disciples worshiped him and said, “Truly you are the Son of God!” Here, in Peter’s declaration, the word “living” is added. I believe that is in juxtaposition to the false gods and idol worship that they had witnessed in Caesarea Philippi. What then, is the impact of the word “living”? People who have not yet experienced God for themselves can sometimes view God as just something on a page of paper, a construct of someone’s imagination, and definitely not real, not “living.” But, we know that

God IS living- living in heaven and on earth, and living inside of us! What does the reality of God being “living” mean as far as God’s presence and influence in your life? What is the effect upon worship and prayer? The next time you are in worship, hold on to the idea that God is living- that God is present, responding to your worship. Pray, sing, listen for God speaking, worship with abandon, with praise and joy, and expect the living God to touch you and fill you!

Why do you think Jesus chose the backdrop of Caesarea Philippi, a place of Gentiles and worship to pagan gods, to introduce the topic of his own divinity? What would be the greater message? Consider the “Great Commission” (Matt. 28:19-20) which Jesus gave to his disciples right before he ascended. He said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” What would being in the region of Caesarea Philippi say about what Jesus’ mission was to be? Or about the believer’s assignment in the world?

In v.16 Jesus asked, “Who do you say I am?” The response of “the Christ, the Son of the living God” demands commitment, which we have discussed, but Jesus asking about what they say also implies testimony. Beyond who we are believing Jesus to be, who are we saying he is to others? Why is it important that we say it? What impact does saying it have on our own understanding, commitment, and faith? What impact does saying it have in the spiritual realm? What impact does saying it have with others? How can we say it in ways beyond words? Take some time to work through these questions in prayer, and searching your heart and mind. Ask God for revelation and inspiration to say it. And by saying it, live it. And by living it, proclaim it- that by your testimony others may also know and say that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God! May your life be a testimony of the living God within you!

Saturday: v.17 “Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven”- what Peter spoke was “revealed,” a divinely inspired revelation. That truly is a blessing! It wasn’t just a deduction from facts, and everything he had seen and experienced. Many others had also seen and experienced, and yet did not have that same revelation. Revelation from God is a blessing we may all experience as believers, because of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Although God can give revelation any time, in any way, no matter the circumstances, revelation usually comes to minds and hearts that are open to hear, see, and know God spiritually. Faith is not an intellectual exercise, but a working of the Spirit. We can have the revelation of what God is doing, what God’s will is, etc., but we need to set aside our closed-mindedness to the spiritual realm, set aside any preconceived ideas, open up our spiritual ears and eyes, and open our heart and mind to God’s revelation. I encourage you to pay attention- to the nudging in your spirit, to the images that come to mind, to thoughts and words that come forth, as you pray and as you walk in the Spirit. Pay attention.

v.18 (Jesus continued, saying) “And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church”- Throughout Scripture God is described as a rock (Gen. 49:24; Deut. 32; 1 Samuel 2:2; 22, Psalm 18, 28, 31, 42, 62, 71, 78, 89, 92- ETC!!). In this verse Jesus is using a play on words, as Peter means “rock” (*Petros* in Greek) and the word he used for “rock” is (*petra*)- so, “you are *Petros*, and on this *petra* I will build my church.” This was in response to Peter’s testimony, and he was not being renamed. In John 1:42 Jesus nicknamed Simon when he was first brought to him, “Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John (or Jonah). You will be called Cephas” (which, when translated, is Peter).” So this wasn’t a first naming of Peter, but rather an affirmation that his name speaks to his character, understanding, and faith.

“On this rock I will build my church” is an area where Roman Catholics and Protestants differ. The Roman Catholic tradition believes this means that Peter would be the head of the church, as the original Pope, and starting an apostolic succession of leaders for the church. Protestants believe this means that the church would be built upon the testimony of who Jesus is. As the song says, “The church’s one foundation, is Jesus Christ, her Lord.” I firmly believe this! The church is built upon Jesus Christ! Jesus is the foundation, the cornerstone, and the capstone. The church is also built with believers in Jesus Christ, who profess their faith, as living stones. As Peter wrote in his epistle, “As you come to him, the living Stone- rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him- you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a royal priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:4-5).

“My church”- “church” in the original Greek is *ekklésia*, which is derived from *ek* (out from and to) and *kaléō* (to call), so it means “called out,” and even more- called out *from* the world and *to* God, with the outcome being the Church, the body of believers. The church must always remember that Jesus Christ is the reason for being, gathering, and mission. There are people, and maybe even yourself at times, that seem to believe that the church is there to serve you, or a just a place to have fun, make friends, and do some things you enjoy. They may even believe that it’s a place to do good things for the community. Although all of those elements are (hopefully) present at church, without Jesus Christ it has no true meaning or purpose, and is truly not the church! Take a moment and pray, asking God if there are any areas in your understanding and practice in his church that you need to put back into alignment with having Jesus Christ as the reason and focus. Go through all that you do with church- where is Jesus Christ?

v.18b “and the gates of Hades will not overcome it”- the KJV has “gates of Hell,” but the Greek is *hadés*, Hades, the “unseen place,” referring to the (invisible) realm of the dead (biblehub.com). Remember that people believed that the caves in Caesarea Philippi were gates to the underworld, Hades, a place of death. It is not only a metaphor for the demonic, but surely the evil practices of worship and idolatry to foreign gods in that place opened doors to the demonic in people’s lives. Jesus, through his death and resurrection, broke down the metaphorical gates, with the spiritual reality- death defeated, sin conquered!

V.19 “I will give you keys to the kingdom of heaven”- you have keys so you can unlock! When Jesus died on the cross, the curtain that separated the holy of holies from the world was torn in two. Through Jesus, God was now available to all. Through Jesus, we can unlock the kingdom of heaven- with a personal God, saving you, dwelling with you- now into eternity. We can experience God, and the kingdom of heaven the moment we believe in Jesus Christ!

v.19b “and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven”- Binding and loosing has layers of meaning. First, in everyday Jewish terms of that day, it was to forbid or allow. It meant that the church would have the authority over interpretation of Scripture, and development of doctrine. Today we speak about Scriptural and doctrinal authority, and we stand on the foundation of the early church that interpreted and developed it. That doesn’t mean that God doesn’t give revelation today, but it does mean that all revelation must be in alignment with Scripture and doctrine. Another layer, is that the church has the authority, through Jesus Christ, to forgive sins. In worship, after the prayer of confession, it is stated, “In the name of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven,” as in, you have been loosed (see John 20:22-23). Still another layer, especially considering the setting, and that it is linked to talking about the gates of Hades and the metaphor of the demonic, is that believers have power and authority in the spiritual realm- to bind up demons and cast them out, and to loose angelic warriors. It means that, if we are moving in God’s will, that God’s power will move through us!

Consider the different layers of Jesus’ words and what they mean to you. How does this understanding relate to expectations of being a believer in Jesus Christ and part of Christ’s church? Pray for revelation, asking God for clarity on where you need to grow in understanding and practice. Pray for wisdom, strength, and grace to minister in the power and authority that God gives us- always through Jesus Christ our Lord! Give thanks, and celebrate God’s gift of his Son Jesus, who is the Christ, the Son of the living God!

Other items:

Responsive Reading- the Apostle’s Creed (doctrinal truth developed by the early church)

Leader: Let us join together in professing the Christian faith as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Do you believe in God the Father?

**All: I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.**

L: Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

**All: I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

L: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

**All: I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body
and the life everlasting. Amen**

Unison Prayer:

Almighty and Merciful God,
We come before You, praising who You are;
the Giver of life, the One who saves,
the One who makes us whole
through Your Son, Jesus Christ.
Fill our worship with Your presence.
Speak Your truth into our hearts and minds,
that we would come to know and love You even more.
In the grace of Christ we pray, Amen.

Song Lyrics:

#163 Ask Ye What Great Thing I Know v.1,3,4

1. Ask ye what great thing I know,
that delights and stirs me so?
What the high reward I win?
Whose the name I glory in?

Jesus Christ, the crucified.

3. Who is life in life to me?
Who the death of death will be?
Who will place me on his right,
with the countless hosts of light?
Jesus Christ, the crucified.

4. This is that great thing I know;
this delights and stirs me so:
faith in him who died to save,
him who triumphed o'er the grave:
Jesus Christ, the crucified.

#362 Nothing But the Blood v.1,2,4

1. What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Refrain:

O precious is the flow
that makes me white as snow;
no other fount I know;
nothing but the blood of Jesus.

2. For my pardon this I see:
nothing but the blood of Jesus.
For my cleansing this my plea:
nothing but the blood of Jesus.
(Refrain)

4. This is all my hope and peace:
nothing but the blood of Jesus.
This is all my righteousness:
nothing but the blood of Jesus.
(Refrain)

Glorious Day by Casting Crowns

One day when Heaven was filled with His praises
One day when sin was as black as could be
Jesus came forth to be born of a virgin
Dwelt among men, my example is He

Word became flesh and the light shined among us
His glory revealed

Refrain:

Living, He loved me
Dying, He saved me
Buried, He carried my sins far away
Rising, He justified freely forever
One day He's coming
Oh glorious day, oh glorious day

One day they led Him up Calvary's mountain
One day they nailed Him to die on a tree
Suffering anguish, despised and rejected
Bearing our sins, my Redeemer is He
Hands that healed nations, stretched out on a tree
And took the nails for me

(Refrain)

One day the grave could conceal Him no longer
One day the stone rolled away from the door
Then He arose, over death He had conquered
Now is ascended, my Lord evermore
Death could not hold Him, the grave could not keep Him
From rising again

(Refrain)

One day the trumpet will sound for His coming
One day the skies with His glories will shine
Wonderful day, my Beloved One bringing
My Savior Jesus is mine

(Refrain)

Glorious day
Oh glorious day

Format (this is a repeat from last week, and will be consistently present for anyone new and as a reminder for all):

Find a quiet place and time to focus on the Word, and to hear from God through it. It doesn't have to be long, for some it will be longer than others. I encourage you, if possible, to do this practice in the morning. You will then find that God brings it to your mind throughout your day.

For greater impact I encourage you to get some paper and a pen and journal daily what thoughts and impressions God brings to mind. Write out also your own thoughts and your own

prayers, making sure to leave space within your time for God's response. Listen intently, and notice what rises up within you- what you are thinking, feeling, memories that arise and ideas that spring up. It may be something God would want you to address within yourself and/or with others. It may be something God is inspiring you to begin or end. God's possibilities are infinite! After time, it is often beneficial to go back and read what you have written, and notice how God has been moving in your life (and praise God for it!).

Begin with prayer, quieting yourself within and opening up to hearing what God would like to reveal to you. Praise God for who he is, for loving you, being with you, and more. Then ask God to speak to you; to open your heart and mind to hear his message. (if you are journaling, you could write out the prayer)

Read the Scripture passage over twice; once as a read through, and the second time slowly, meditatively. Notice what God illuminates for you. Notice what words or ideas are "jumping off the page at you," impacting you from the Scripture. Ask God why that is being highlighted for you. What is God saying to you? What is God asking you to say, do, change, pray about, etc.? What is the application for my life today? **Most importantly- what am I going to do about it? (If you are journaling you could write it all out, which reinforces it in a greater way)

I have put together some daily questions based upon the Scripture. You may use those, but also feel free to deviate away from it if God is leading you there. They are simply offered to prompt contemplation with God. There is much more in this passage, feel free to delve in more!

At the end of your time pray again. I recommend praying throughout, but the ending prayer would include praise, thanking God for revelation, and asking for the Holy Spirit to continue to reveal, bringing to mind God's will. Ask God for the courage, empowerment, and opportunity to do what you have determined God is asking you to do.