



DEVOTIONALS

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**To Weep Where God Weeps
Nehemiah 1:1-4**

On most mission experiences I have found myself weeping for the people that I have encountered. In fact I have found myself praying, "Lord, help me to weep where you weep." Missions are more than going on an adventure to strange places. It is more than doing the work of a missionary. It is more than doing the right things. It is about allowing God to let you see what He sees, to hurt where He hurts, to be burdened as He is burdened, and to weep where He is weeping.

Will you become so distracted by your "mission" that you miss seeing the people and allowing them to touch your heart? Will you take time to look at them with your "culturally sensitive glasses" off? Will you see beyond their situation and their sins in order to see them as Jesus sees them?

Will you weep where God weeps? Nehemiah did. What about you?

MY THOUGHTS FROM GOD'S WORD AND THE DEVOTION TODAY

PEOPLE AND NEEDS FOR WHICH I HAVE PRAYED TODAY

THINGS TO DO TODAY FOR PREPARATION

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

**With You?
Colossians 4:12-13**

Every time I look at this passage I carry away something new. Epaphras got more than he bargained for when he left Colosse and everyone that got to know him got more as well. It is obvious that Paul got a lot from being in prison with Epaphras. He heard the passion and the deep burden in Epaphras' prayers. He could not help but see that Epaphras carried the mark of Colosse.

On many a mission trip I have asked the volunteers, "What are you taking back?" I have discovered that the most precious things that they are taking back are not what they have packed into their suitcases but what they have filled their hearts with. I wonder what will you be taking back with you? Will others, like Paul, be able to see it? Think about it.

MY THOUGHTS FROM GOD'S WORD AND THE DEVOTION TODAY

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Calling People To The House Of Prayer
Isaiah 56:1-8

Are you a respecter of persons? Are all people welcomed at your church? God is inviting people of all nations to His house and He is going to use you to deliver the invitation. God is no respecter of persons and you can't be either if you are going to deliver His invitation. He says that He will accept them and their sacrifices. Ask the Lord to search your heart and to see if there is a root of prejudice.

Take some time to think about the statement, "a house of prayer for all people." Is your house of prayer a place where all are welcomed to come and pray, but is it also a place where all people are prayed for?

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

It Is A Matter of Perspective
Jonah 4:4-11

Our first reaction to our passage for today is one of wonderment. How can someone on a mission like Jonah's be so concern about his personal comfort and have so little concern about the eternal destiny of so many? Yet on almost every mission trip I have ever been on I have had to deal with someone that became an unbearable pain because they were unhappy with the lodging arrangements, food, the climate, or the culture differences. They became a constant thorn in the side for everyone. Others in the group just shake their heads and wonder why in the world is this person even on a mission trip. Yet the truth is most of us end up acting like Jonah. Some how we forget what our assignment is and that it is not about us but about God and those we have come to serve. Yet God uses the Jonahs, but He really desires to see a transformation in Jonah as well as the lost of the Nineveh's of the world. What is it going to be the gourd or the lost?

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

**Rescuing A Sheep From The Pit
Matthew 12:9-13**

From time to time we all need to be reminded that the lost are pearls of great worth to God. He came and paid the full price to purchase them for Himself. The Pharisees thought that their history, their theology, their tradition was more important than rescuing the lost from the pit. The truth was that the Pharisees were in a pit just as deep as the man with the withered hand. One wanted out and the others did not. Don't forget what is more important. Don't forget that rescuing the perishing is of utmost importance. Don't stand in the way or you may discover that you have dug a pit for yourself. Isn't it good that the Lord doesn't need our permission to lift people out of the pit?

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

**Mission:
To Bear The Infirmities Of The Weak
Romans 15:1-7**

Nearly every mission trip that I have been on I have encountered those who remember a day when they were weak, poor, lonely, or lost. The mission field has a way of bringing back those memories. These individuals remember those who God sent to minister to them in their days of need. They are driven by a deep desire to be used by God to do the same for someone else. They often have compassion and a passion about them that is lacking in many who have no memories of being weak.

What is your mission? Will you be driven by compassion for those you have come to serve?

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Cracks In The Pavement
Matthew 13:1-9; 18-23

On a recent mission trip to Montreal, Canada we had an interview with a long-term Canadian missionary. His task was to help us to know how to pray more effectively for the people of Quebec.

He said, "The soil of Quebec is like a concrete sidewalk, hard and well worn." Then he said, "I am seeing cracks in the pavement with little green sprouts growing up." The image was powerful and clear. As we prayerwalked the cities of Quebec we kept asking God to plant giant oaks in the cracks of the pavement. We could see their powerful roots breaking up the pavement.

As you pass among the people of your assigned mission field you will encounter all types of soils. The needs of the soils will shape the way you will pray for them. Open your eyes today and see the fields as God sees them and be an oak in the pavement. How will you pray today for these people?

MY THOUGHTS FROM GOD'S WORD AND THE DEVOTION TODAY

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

**Asking For What You Know Not
Jeremiah 33:3**

Jeremiah 33:3 is often called the phone number of God. God has taught me so much from this verse but I especially love the phrase, “*which thou knowest not.*” I suppose that you are just like me that many times you don’t know how to pray. At times like those I love to rest in the fact that if I will just call on Him, He will answer and show me great and mighty things. But what I love about this is that these things that He promises to show me are things that I know not. In other words, before He shows them to me they were not even a part of my thinking. I never would have been able to dream them, plan them, or even ask for them. They are bigger, greater, and mightier than I could ever even think about. Wow! Now isn’t that awesome? Since I discovered this truth I have started asking God for things that are so great and mighty that I can’t even comprehend them, and then I ask Him to open my eyes and show them to me so I may glorify Him.

What are you asking God to do in your life and in this country? Is it bigger, greater, and mightier than you can imagine?

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

**Work Gloves Required
Ephesians 6:5-8**

I have been on many mission trips and led many teams. I can tell you not all mission trips are created equal and not all team members are the same. I have worked with some team members that work extremely hard and of course not all them for the right reasons. I have also worked with some that I wondered why in the world they bothered to even come. For some it is a vacation and a sightseeing tour and for others it is their "Mission". Some take it very seriously and for others it is nothing but a joke. I hope that you are in the group that came to give your all that you feel a calling and are on a mission for the Master. I hope you are the type that will be giving all that is in you to the task before you as to the Lord. Why? Because it is "to the Lord!" I hope you brought your working gloves, in fact I hope you would never leave home without them.

Examine your motives during this time. Take a look at yourself and try not to lose it with those who are on vacation. Offer them an extra pair of gloves maybe they didn't get the memo to bring their own.

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

**A Fisher Of Men or Just Gone Fishing?
Matthew 4:18-22; John 21:1-3**

I was in Portugal when I met “John” (not his real name). John was a fisherman by trade. We had come to his home to pray with his wife and family. John stuck his head in the doorway and said welcome and was gone. His family prayed earnestly for John. Before we left the home I asked if I could just speak with John. His wife led me to the back of their home where John and a few other men were working on a fishing boat. John proudly showed me his boat and I shared with him that I too was a fisherman. He asked me what did I catch. I said that on a good day I would catch someone like himself. He looked puzzled and I shared with him the call of Jesus in my life to be a fisher-of-men. He smiled and understood. In the next few minutes I was able to share the gospel with him. He said that many years ago that he felt God calling him but he never knew what to do with it. I shared with him that today I felt God calling me to share with him. To make a long story short, John did not accept Christ but he is very aware that God is calling him to be a new kind of fisherman. I wonder during your mission experience will you be found to be a Fisher of Men or just one who has gone fishing?

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Open Our Eyes To See Your Glory
Psalm 22:3; Ezekiel 22:30

The Lord is Holy and enthroned in the praises of His people. As we praise Him He opens our hearts to see His glory fresh and new. After prayerwalking in Canada I saw Jesus break up the fallow ground, plant His seeds, and I watched as they gave forth to green sprouts. He set my heart to praising Him. As you go forth may you see His glory fresh and alive all around you. May the result be further praise. So open your eyes and be prepared to see His glory.

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

**Pray For Me
I Samuel 12:23**

Recently I read where a young child asked his mother, "Mom, did you pray for me this morning?" The mother assured her son that she had. Then the child said, "Are you going to keep praying for me all day?" The mother was surprised and said, "Today I will." God is going to speak to you in these days and He is going to give you some of His burden for these people. Some will ask you to pray for them and you will respond, "Yes." The question is, "Will you?" Prayer is not just telling someone we will pray or even sharing that need with a church. Prayer is when you and I sit down for a little talk with Jesus. Why not have a little talk with Jesus right now.

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Where Two Or More Are Gathered
Matthew 18:15-20

“My prayers don’t count much. I’m only one person.” Was the statement heard across the room? Though most of us rarely dare to express that thought publicly most of us have thought it. I recently read a testimony of a volunteer who had returned from a Prayerwalk trip to Portugal. The volunteer said, “As I prayerwalked through Portugal, I was struck by two powerful realities. First, the immenseness of the challenge to reach the world with the gospel was ever present. I literally wept over these cities of 1 million people, the vast majority without Christ. Second, I discovered a whole new power in prayer. Power to encourage other believers, the power of intercession, the power of overcoming strongholds, and the power to transform lives.” Often I need to remind myself that I am not alone, that the Son and the Spirit are interceding, working, and speaking all around me and when I am on mission it is their mission that I am on and not mine. So get on the mission train with them and let them show you around.

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**It Is Not For Your Sake
Ezekiel 36:22-38**

“For the sake of His holy name,” says the Lord. As I read this I was overwhelmed by the awesome grace of God. They have profaned His name but He is going to use them to make it holy again among the people. He is going to do this through them! Wow! What incredible grace! They are offered a grace that I cannot understand. He is going to cleanse them, give them a new heart by removing their heart of stone. Can I just share with you that I believe that these two things are needed for the church today? We need to be cleansed again and our hearts of stone, indifference, and lukewarmness need to be cut out and replaced with a heart that is new and tender. I pray that during these days that God will accomplish these things through and in you, not for your sake but for His.

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

**Does The Devil Know Your Name?
Acts 19:11-20**

I don't know how many times I have read this story and every time I end up laughing, except this time. It was the phrase, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are you?" That caught my attention. The demons recognized that these seven men did not have the presence of Jesus in their lives. As a result the lost demons ended up attacking the seven lost men. By whose name do you go forth in today? What power will be demonstrated in the heavenly realm through you today? Will the demons flee or laugh at you today. "Paul I know but who are you?" Wow, what a thought. Does the devil know your name and tremble?

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Acts 20:13-38

I hate goodbyes. As a missionary it felt like we were always saying goodbye. Some teams we were glad to see leave and others it was like family was leaving. My children, loved it when the teams came but toward the end of the week they would start the breaking away. Goodbyes are painful for team members, missionaries, and nationals. Paul really loved the Ephesians. He was deeply concerned about their future. His instructions to the leaders of this church as he left leaves very little doubt that Paul had invested himself into these people. How will you say goodbye? How will they say goodbye to you? What is it that you will leave with them? What of this text can you hear the Lord speaking to you about? Be sure to read and hear the last verse.

MY THOUGHTS FROM GOD'S WORD AND THE DEVOTION TODAY

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

I Have Not Arrived!
Philippians 3:12-16

One of the things that often disturbed me as a missionary was to see other missionaries or volunteer team members that would treat the nationals with an attitude that the nationals just were not at the level as them. This arrogant attitude would hinder the work of that missionary or team member. Some how the truth that none of us have arrived and that we are brothers on the same journey had been lost to them. I have seen this expressed in so many ways; sometimes it is by that one who is constantly talking about “well in America this is the way we do it.” As though America had the only correct way to do it. I have also seen it in the looks or whispers that are exchanged. Some come with the thinking that they have been sent to teach them the way it is. But you know the team members that have the greatest impact were always those who came as learners and not as teachers. Those who realized that they were there to not just deliver something but also to receive something, left more behind, and took more back. What kind are you: A Master Teacher or A Student sent by the Master?

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Stay With The Profitable
Titus 3:9

It is so easy to lose track of the main thing, this is also true on the mission field. There will be so many things that are new and different for you, that if you aren't careful they could become a very deep slime pit that will bog you down. Constantly you will encounter politics and philosophies that are different than yours. You have not been sent to fix these. You must remember to stay with that which is profitable. Stay with that which is useful and avoid that which is useless. Just a word from the Word to keep you on track during your time of missions, this time will be short make the most of the time you have, make it profitable.

MY THOUGHTS FROM GOD'S WORD AND THE DEVOTION TODAY

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

**Do You Know Why You Are Here?
Acts 10:23-29**

Recently while on a mission trip in Gaza, I entered a home of an old blind Muslim widow. The situation was one of the worst I had ever seen. She was so pleased that we had come. I asked her, "Do you know why we have come?" Quickly she responded, "Allah, sent you." For a moment I was surprised. I replied, "Jesus sent us because He loves you." She said, "Yes, I know." She began to share her story with us. The pain that this woman had endured was more than a dozen women could endure. I deeply struggled with how we could help her understand that Jesus really did send us. I never did come to an answer for that question. When we got ready to leave I asked if we could pray with her. She agreed and I asked our young believer guide to pray for us. He prayed in the name of Jesus with such intensity and such fervor. He wept for her as he prayed. When we left though I could not communicate to her I felt that she heard, saw, and felt the love Jesus through us. From time to time I have to ask myself, "Why am I here?" Do you know why you are here?

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Thank You!
Luke 17:11-19

It seems that it was a very rare thing for people to express their thanks to Jesus for the great things he did in their lives. Yet every now and then there is this person that stands out. Thanks ought to be a natural response from someone who has received so much from someone else for so little. Thanks are generally few on the mission field but when they come they usually are more than enough. Recently I was involved in an effort of delivering food to starving families overseas. The situation was great in one home. The father had not worked for two years do to the war, their infant child was dying, their seven-year-old daughter was severely traumatized by the bombings, and the parents wore the pain in their faces. We gave food, listened to their story, and prayed. When I rose to leave the father jumped up and embraced me weeping on my shoulder crying "Thank you" over and over again. Even now as I tell this to you I still see his face and weep. In a moment two men shared pains and shared burdens. I don't know if he still carries mine, but I sure do carry his. I am not sure which one of us should have said, "Thanks", him or me. I do know that now more then ever it is I that still say, "Thanks Lord for bringing me to him."

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**Warning Live Mines!
II Kings 6:1-7**

How would you like to be this man? You are a holy man, with a whole bunch of holy men, working with the holy man, doing a holy job for a holy God and something unholy happens. It almost makes you want to run and hide. If you haven't discovered it yet, this is often the norm. I love what this man did, I guess because it is so unlike what I would naturally do. I admitted he needed help and went directly to the Master for help. There are so many things that he could of done but he knew that there was no need to do anything else but what he did. And look at the miracle that is worked. I remember seeing a sign in Belize in one of their national parks when we first arrived there that read, "Warning Live Mines!" I remember what a place for a park in the middle of a live land mine field. Then I realized that the world is just like that, we think that we are out for a simple stroll through the park when "BANG!" we step on a live mine. But if we will remember that we are holy people doing a holy job alongside of the Holy God then all we need do is cry for the Master to come near.

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

**Pray For Laborers
Matthew 9:37-38**

You will be overwhelmed with the size of the task to reach the world with the gospel. You will hurt where God and others hurt. You will weep where God and others weep. You will sow where God and others are sowing. But hopefully you will begin to pray where Jesus and others have prayed, "Lord, Send forth Laborers into Your Harvest!" I hope that you understand that this call to prayer is not just to feel some vacancies but for those laborers that are the chosen to respond and to go. It is also a cry for prayers for the laborers that are presently in the His fields and not just for those to come. It is a cry that says, "O' Lord I see the need for more workers, send them, send me!" I have very little doubt that this prayer will be on your lips many times in the days ahead. May the Lord of the harvest answer your prayer and mine.

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

**I Lift Up My Eyes
Psalm 123**

As you look at this psalm today what will your eyes see? Where will they be turned inward, outward, backwards, or upward? Do you have the eyes of a slave? What about the eyes of a maid? Where will you look for mercy for you and for these new people that God has now brought into your life?

I hope that you will mediate on this word throughout the day and may the Master help us all to focus our eyes toward Him.

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

**If You Are Pleased With Me
Exodus 33:12-23**

Moses said, "If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you." I would like for you to begin to think that perhaps God hasn't brought you here so much for what you can do for these people but because of what He wants to do for you and for them.

Moses is so bold in his praying. As I read the words of Moses I think, "I would never speak with God in such a way." Yet I realize Moses' intimacy with God is at a level where he speaks very clearly to God, there are none of the niceties that we so often use. He state what is on his mind and it is clear that Moses and God are in the midst of one of their heart-to-heart talks. I hope that you will not just read this prayer of Moses but that you will mine the gold that it holds. What would be your heart-to-heart prayer with the Master?

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Matthew 13:44-46

Some of the people you will meet will bring an awesome new awareness of what it means to sell all in order to have Jesus, The Pearl of Great Worth. On nearly every mission trip I have been on I have encountered believers who have endured so much more than I and who are so much more faithful than I. They have a way of awakening in me the call to come and follow him. Jesus really is worth it all. In America we talk about this truth but I don't believe that most of us can relate to what most of our brothers and sisters have suffered for the name of Christ. Some time ago I made aware that the reason many of them suffer with such dignity is because they know that though Christ is the pearl of great worth to them they are the pearl of great worth to Him. They understand that God became man in order to purchase them. They realize that to God they are of great value, a value that they cannot understand but are extremely appreciative for. Do you realize that every person that walks the land where you are visiting are pearls of great worth to God and He is not willing that a single pearl be lost? Are they pearls of great worth to you? If not they ought to be.

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Could There Be An Ethiopian Waiting For You?
Acts 8:26-40

Philip was a very submissive servant. He was very open to the Spirit's guidance; it appears that his agenda was to be led by the Spirit. None of it was by chance; God was bringing a seeker to His Savior. God chose to use a surrendered servant to deliver the Savior. I can remember that God has brought into my life. It becomes very obvious in these encounters that God has been the Master Director behind the scene. It is humbling that He would dare trust me with these divine appointments. I believe that wherever God is taking you that He has "Ethiopians" that are just waiting to get in their chariots and ride down your road. Will you recognize these divine appointments when they arrive? Will you be found as ready and willing and able as Philip? Pray for the "Ethiopians" that are waiting for you. Pray that God will find you ready, able and willing.

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**The Just Shall Live By Faith
Romans 1:16-17**

This verse has spoken through the ages to so many. It is literally used by the Master as a sword to bring forth the transformation of not only lives but of His church. God still uses it today to teach the very basic of the Christian faith: faith and only faith in Christ can save. It is not just the faith in Him that saves us but it is that faith that the believer learns to live by. He seeks not to walk by sight but by faith. Undoubtedly you are probably saved, but do you live by faith? Do live by might, hard work, your strength and resources or do you live by faith? What is it that you live by? I hope you have this very basic question settled before you seek to help others live by faith.

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**Chosen By God Often Rejected By Man
I Corinthians 1:26-31**

Every now and then I am reminded that I stuttered when called, was the least likely in my family to ever be used by anyone, and had more garbage in my life than good. But God has a way of taking what the world believes to have no value and doing His God-things through them. Many of the people you will encounter during your trip will appear to have very little of what the world considers as valuable but God loves to prove the world wrong. I pray that you will discover many of those that God is using to prove the world wrong and how powerful He is. You see when God uses that which is weak to accomplish His will He gets more glory, and He loves this. What are the truths that God would like for you to see in this word for today?

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**Are You Dressed For The Occasion?
Colossians 3:12-14**

What will you be wearing during your trip? Have you given it much thought? I bet you have given considerable thought to your packing, have you given the same amount of thought to the dress that will be seen by God and those that you are going to serve with? I have been amazed at how much thought will go into the packing for mission trips and find so many that arrive underdressed for the occasion. Because of the differences in culture and traditions many volunteers leave a lot of their Colossian wardrobe at home. I hope that you will put some thought into packing for the occasion.

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**What A Responsibility
Hebrews 2:1-4**

What a gospel you will be sharing. You will be offering life to some who know nothing about the life that you will speak of. For some this may be the first and the only time that they will hear the gospel, what an incredible responsibility God has given to us. The fact that He would give us such an awesome sacred gift expresses His trust in us. But don't you ever forget that the gospel-rejected means their hope is rejected, more importantly God is rejected. You have been granted an incredible gift; this is not the time to keep it for yourself. Read this text a few times, and let the truths sink in. May you be found faithful in the proclamation and may the hearers have ears to hear and a heart willing to receive it.

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