

11/01/2017
The Whole Ball Of Wax

"Faith, goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, love... But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins" (2 Pet.1:5-7, 9).

If you look up the idiom, "the whole ball of wax," you will find its definition in one word... EVERYTHING! When Peter presents us with this list of eight virtues, he is unrelenting. He powerfully implies that the lack of these graces in a Christian believer renders a person not only fruitless, (Vs 9) but blind... "But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind..." Because a person cannot be nearsighted and blind at the same time, Peter might possibly have an alternative meaning for nearsightedness, namely to "shut one's eyes." Such folks are blind because they shut their eyes to the truth.... To be candid about this, the subject is not literal blindness; it is a figure of speech. "But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes" (1 Jn.2:11). For Peter, the blindness of those who lacked these qualities consisted of their shortsightedness. As I look at the eight graces that Peter presents us with, I see something else. They are only complete when we start with faith, and continue to add the other seven graces to it. Peter insists on "the whole ball of wax..." As we really look through the list and its progression, how can we possibly think that possessing these traits will not make us better people? I don't believe that any of us want to be either unfruitful or blind, do we? Christians who absorb these virtues will certainly make themselves better members of the Lord's church. As we examine them, how can we even think that they will not make us better? There's one more caveat to all of this. Not only do they make us better members of the Lord's kingdom here on earth, but it they prepare us for the eternal kingdom that awaits all of us. Now that's the whole ball of wax....

Have a wonderful day.... Make your little part of the world better... Love mark Phil.4:11

11/02/2017
Remembering Is Important

"So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made it clear to me. And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things" (2 Pet.1:12-15).

Baseball's World Series ended last night, and as a fan, it was fantastic to see the two best teams in major league baseball duke it out. Even if you are just a casual fan, did you ever

wonder how these guys can throw, catch and hit the way they do? As a person who played the game for a long time, let me tell you how they are able to compete with such skill at this high level... It is all about two things... They are; lots of practice, and a very good memory. OK... We all get the practice thing, but what's the memory thing all about? One's memory allows a player to ply his skills as if he has been doing them since birth. Peter wants his readers to be highly skilled Christians. To do so, look at today's three verses.... "So I will always remind you of these things..." "I think it is right to refresh your memory..." "you will always be able to remember these things..." By the time Peter wrote these words, he was an old man and knew that he would probably not live much longer. As long as he was alive, Peter said that he would remind them of the truths they had already heard. He had withheld nothing from his readers. They knew truth! The false teachers that were around them had no revelation to add. Peter's objective was not to reveal or impart some spectacular new stuff to them. Rather, it was to remind them of the message they had already received. And here is the crux of today's devotional... Christians often need no new teachings. They need the encouragement and courage to live by the message they already know. How are we doing with this? Have we practiced these truths with diligence and regularity? Are faith, goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love a part of our daily skill set? Are we performing at a high level? To do so, remembering is important....

Have a great day... Let His light shine through you... Love mark Phil.4:11

11/03/2017
Granted Gifts

"I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints..." (Eph.1:17-18).

These two verses are a prayer on the apostle Paul's part for the Ephesian people, and us. The message is for those who "were marked in Him with a seal, the holy Spirit." (1:13). From the beginning of this letter to the Ephesian church, Father, Son and Holy Spirit interweave their very Being in the creation of this new, redeemed people... As it did then, the Three continue their "oneness" in the sustaining power that molds Christians into what they should be. The blessings, or gifts, for which Paul prayed are nothing new to them. Back in verse eight, he declared that his readers had redemption and forgiveness of sins, and that they abounded "in all wisdom and understanding." In actuality, Paul's readers awaited no future realizations of God's favor. It was not for anything that these Christians yet needed to experience that the apostle prayed for. So... What's the big deal here, and just what is Paul praying for? I think that he prayed for them to realize the magnitude of the gifts God had already granted... Maybe he is saying that Christians do not need a constant diet of excitement. Spiritual growth would come by

"the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him..." Peter (2 Pet.3:1) told Christians that his purpose was for "stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, that you should remember the words that were spoken beforehand..." Paul prayed that God might grant his readers renewed reflection on blessings that God had lavished upon them... Not only are these gifts here with us in our present Christian life, but recognition of a coming judgement and the hope of a future life with God in the heavens is a vital part of the gospel message. We should never overlook the richness of the blessings (gifts) already enjoyed by Christians as we bask in the inheritance God has given.

Have a great day... T G I F Thank God I'm Free.... Love mark Phil.4:11

11/04/2017
Creation

This morning's quiz will be about the seven (7) days of creation You are to fill in the blanks under each day with with the creation of God that day.

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------|---------------------|-----|
| 1. First day (Gen.1:3) | _____ | (a) beast | (q) |
| | whales | | |
| | _____ | (b) cattle | (p) |
| | stars | | |
| 2. Second day (Gen.1:7) | _____ | (c) creeping things | (o) |
| | sun | | |
| | _____ | (d) earth | |
| 3. Third day (Gen.1:10-13) | _____ | (e) firmament | |
| | _____ | (f) fish | |
| 4. Fourth day (Gen.1:14-29) | _____ | (g) fowl | |
| | _____ | (h) fruit tree | |
| 5. Fifth day (Gen.1:20-23) | _____ | (i) grass | |
| | _____ | (j) light | |
| 6. Sixth day (Gen.1:25-27) | | (k) male and female | |

7. Seventh day (Gen.2:3)

(l) moon

(m) God rested

(n) seas

Have a wonderful weekend and an uplifting and glorifying day of worship on His day.... Love mark Phil.4:11

11/06/2017

Peter And The Transfiguration

"Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking to Him" (Matt.17:1-3).

By the time Peter wrote his second letter, he was a relatively old man. In his first letter, he had little to say about himself personally. He called himself a fellow elder and referred to having been a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and that's about it. The second letter is different though, as in it he recalls two incidents recorded in the gospels. The first is about the circumstances of Peter's death (2 Pet.1:14). It took place after Jesus' resurrection. Seven of the disciples, among them Peter and John, had returned to Galilee to take up their old fishing trade (Jn.21:1-2). Jesus spoke to them and had a remarkable conversation where he spoke of Peter's coming death (Vs 18-19). The second incident Peter recalled was about the most memorable thing that happened in Jesus' life, the transfiguration... In this event, just to refresh your memory, Jesus took Peter, James and John up on a mountain and was transfigured before them, as is described in today's verses from the gospel of Matthew. Not only that, but these nondescript men also witnessed Moses and Elijah speaking to the Lord. Every time I read this account, I get goosebumps, and imagine myself as one of these men witnessing this extraordinary happening. To cap off this miraculous scene, while Peter was talking about building three (3) tabernacles for Moses, Elijah and Jesus, God's voice booms out of the heavens.... "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" As you read the account, do you feel like a witness yourself? With this in mind, let's consider the miraculous event that has transpired and take God's words to heart. He was well pleased with His Son for all the right reasons, and we should be too... God's final words are not just spoken to Peter, James and John but to us also.... Hear Him!

Have a great start to your week.... Begin it with a RAK or two.... Love mark Phil.4:11

11/07/2017
A Select Ocasion

"Six days later Jesus took with Him Peter, James and John his brother, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves. And He was transformed before them; and His face shone like the sun. and His garments became as white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him" (Matt.17:1-3).

Leading up to Jesus' Transfiguration, the Lord asked His disciples what people were saying about Him. Who did they say He was? Confusion abounded. Some said He was John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah or the prophet Moses had said would come in Deut.18:18... Characteristically, Peter in his boldness said this; "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt.16:16). Jesus' task was enormous. He wanted His disciples to know that He was the Son of God, but His future would not be what they expected it to be... As their king, He would not lead any army or He would not sit on a throne. After Peter's confession, for the first time Jesus would reveal to His disciples that He had to go to Jerusalem. There He would be humiliated. There He would suffer and die. The Transfiguration was important to them and us because it was the conclusion of a series of events that all had to do with His true identity. There, before them, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening. While their minds were still reeling, they saw two men with Jesus. Somehow they knew that the two were Moses and Elijah, transported from the world of the dead to speak with Jesus about his coming ordeal. Perhaps, with this event, Peter, James and John were beginning to understand the significance of the angel's announcement to Joseph in Matthew 1:21. "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." Decades later, when Peter wrote his second epistle, these events were fresh in his mind. They should be significant to us also as we realize that Jesus was indeed the Son of God. He proved this to us by performing miracles, and through His death, burial and resurrection, he substantiated all that He claimed He was... We serve the Son of the Living God who gives us the chance to live eternally with Him...

Have a great day.... Do good and give God the credit.... Love mark Phil.4:11

11/08/2017
The Transfiguration, A Contemporary Response

"Peter said to Jesus, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three tabernacles (shelters NIV) here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah' " (Matt.17:4).

With Jesus glowing, and Moses and Elijah in their presence, Peter breaks the silence of this spectacular moment with the words in today's verse. I guess he felt that with guests like Moses and Elijah there, they (he) needed to do something... Without any resources at hand, the least they could do was to make themselves hospitable. Peter proposed that they build three shelters.

Maybe, in a contemporary way, he could offer them some shade from the sun. From what I understand, the word tabernacle often meant a tent, but the word was broad enough in its usage to mean a shelter or "lean to." Peter offers to build three of them. Humble as it was, it would honor Jesus in company with Moses and Elijah. What happened next was fixed indelibly in Peter's mind, as he wrote about it some 35 years later... The apostle imagined that it must have been a great honor for Jesus to be in the company of such revered men as Moses and Elijah. If Peter had really understood who Jesus was, he would have known that it was Moses and Elijah who were honored to be in the presence of Jesus... God took care of all this when a bright cloud enveloped all of them, and they heard the testimony from the cloud... "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him." The disciples were so overpowered by the events, that they fell down on their faces in fear, and as quickly as it had all begun, it was over. Jesus put out His hand, touched them and said this; "Get up, do not be afraid..." When they opened their eyes, everything was back to normal... Moses and Elijah were gone, and Jesus looked as He always had. Our contemporary response to all of this, with the exception of building the tabernacles, ought to be the same. Each day of our lives, we ought to look toward Jesus who is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. We should look toward Him and not be afraid... We should follow God's advice and listen to Him....

Have a great day.... Make your little part of the world better.... Love mark Phil.4:11

11/09/2017

The Transfiguration Upon Reflection

"For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For when he received glory and honor from God the Father such an utterance as this was made to him by the Majestic Glory, 'This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased'----- and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain" (2 Pet.1:16-18).

Probably more than 35 years had passed between the time that Peter had seen Jesus transfigured and the writing of his second letter. During this time, Peter had been a leader in the church at Jerusalem, and had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. He had seen the church become a worldwide fellowship of believers. Would you like to venture a guess as to how many times he had shared the experience of the Transfiguration of Jesus with others? I believe that this singular event probably transformed his life, and this Galilean fisherman became an instrument for God... Through him and others, the church had been set into motion, and the

apostle wanted folks to know that he was an eyewitness to some spectacular events. He had been with the Lord when God uttered the words found both in Matt.17:5 and here in his second letter, this is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased. Peter shared with his readers that the prophetic word had been fulfilled in what Jesus had said and done... In a special way, the events Peter, James and John saw on the mountain had both confirmed and solidified what they understood the prophets to say. His readers would do well to listen to God's Word... "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psa.119:105). Peter wants his readers to understand the significance of the prophets. More than that, he wanted to impress them with God's revelation. The prophets had not spoken according to their own unguided wisdom, because God had been at work in them... Scripture has come into being this way; "But know this first of all, that no scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (2 Pet.1:20-21). It is so wonderful to know that the prophets were inspired by God. We should all be in awe, knowing that the Scripture they wrote is God speaking across the centuries to His people... I need an amen for that....

Have a great day... Let His light shine through you... Love mark Phil.4:11

11/10/2017
Remembrance

"I consider it right, as long as I am in this earthly dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder.." (2 Pet.1:13). "This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles" (2 Pet.3:1-2).

Many songwriters have waxed poetic over memories. Barbra Streisand sang a song "The Way We Were," in which the opening lines went like this; "Memories light the corners of my mind, misty water-colored memories of the way we were." Elvis Presley sang a song entitled "Memories" that opened this way; "Memories, pressed between the pages of my mind, sweetened through the ages just like wine." In today's two verses from 2 Peter, he says that he actually wrote his second letter to stir up the remembrance of his readers. As Christians, we do well to remember what happened in Galilee and Judea when the Son of God lived among the people. On the Mount of Transfiguration, God, by sight and sound, impressed some important things on the minds of Peter, James and John, and vicariously through us. Jesus was no "peer" of Moses and Elijah. As great as these men were, Jesus was in a whole different league... He was the Lord of Moses and Elijah, just as He was the Lord of Peter, James and John. As he was their Lord, He is ours too. His authority far exceeds theirs and ours. His life, and subsequent death on the cross ushered in a new beginning for humankind that in no way was comparable to the prophets. When we decide to make Jesus a part of our life and wear His

name, lets all remember these words from Peter's second letter; "So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts..." (1:19).

Have a great day... T G I F Today God Is First.... Love mark Phil.4:11

11/11/2017

Location, Location, Location

Many of us can pinpoint events in our lives by recalling the place in which they happened. In today's quiz, you are to match each place with an important thing that happened there.... Where were you when..... As always, have fun

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| ___ 1. Jerusalem | (a) altar to an unknown God |
| ___ 2 Lydda | (b) Philip preached and many turned to Jesus |
| ___ 3. Joppa | (c) first Christian church |
| ___ 4. Caesarea | (d) Ethiopian saved |
| ___ 5. Samaria | (e) place where Jesus prayed |
| ___ 6. Gaza desert | (f) Saul visited by Ananias |
| ___ 7. Damascus | (g) Aeneas healed |
| ___ 8. Antioch | (h) Stephen stoned |
| ___ 9. Gethsemane | (i) Tabitha raised |
| ___ 10 Jerusalem | (j) Cornelius lived here |
| ___ 11. Athens | (k) followers called Christians 1st |

Have a great weekend and an uplifting and glorifying day of worship on His day.... Love mark Phil.4:11

11/13/2017

The Wickedness Around Us

"For speaking out arrogant words of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who are living in error, promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption" (2 Pet.2:18-19).

Chapter two of 2 Peter deals primarily with a warning about false teachers who had infiltrated their way into the church. Since I have dealt with this just recently, I thought I would stay on its periphery. When folks try to drag Christians back into the world, the most vulnerable to their ways are young believers. Why? The primary reason is that they have just escaped from the world, and its lures may be fresh on their minds... We have all seen enough nature shows to understand how the lion "circles around the flock..." The easiest meal is not the biggest and strongest of the flock, but rather they will pluck off the weakest of its members. Those who would raid the flock of believers have two resources at their disposal. First is that they speak boldly. The young are apt to confuse eloquence with truth and self-confidence with sincerity. The second thing is that they are willing to throw off restraint... While godly teachers always warn of sins and its consequences, the false teachers will more than likely make allowance for the flesh. Something like this; "alcohol and drugs are for fun," or "sexual desire is natural," or "there's nothing harmful with a bit of indulgence." Let's be sure to notice that Peter was writing this stuff to Christians who lived 2,000 years ago, but does the message sound eerily modern? If you think so, you are right on target because people and their temptations have changed very little over the years... It is no wonder that Peter is outright indignant. He sees the youngest and most vulnerable of the community of believers to be at risk and wants to send out a clear message to inexperienced Christians. Let's end this devotional with one final thought. If you are one of those younger Christians, don't go away thinking that you're the only ones being tempted. Just because you get older, it doesn't mean that the temptations magically go away or that with age comes immunity. We must remember the message of the Lord and His Word each and every day...." (1:19).

With that, have a great start to your week.... Begin it with a RAK or two... Love mark Phil.4:11

11/14/2017

A Dog And A Pig

"It happened to them according to the true proverb, 'A dog returns to its own vomit,' and, 'A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire' " (2 Pet.2:22).

My stomach always get a bit queasy when I read about the dog and its vomit, but that's for a little later... Teachers who taught untruths were slaves to their corruption, and they threatened to enslave others. When slavery was a common practice, a slave just didn't walk up to his owner and announce that his servitude was over. It just isn't that easy to walk away from enslavement... This slavery that we are speaking about is being shackled in sin. There's a popular notion out there in the world that sin is not so serious after all. One attitude that a person might have is that God waits like an old grandfather, ready to forgive. It is true that God waits patiently for all sinners to come to Him, for though Christ, God will forgive the penitent sinner. The danger here is that sin can corrupt and defile the mind to the extent that a godly life is buried beneath the rubble of bitterness, hatred and sensuality. Peter goes so far as to say that when a Christian is drawn back into that former life, the grip of sin becomes even stronger than it was in the first place... Sin secures and tightens the shackles. To make this point, Peter draws from Proverbs 26:11, which he repeats in today's verse about the dog and the pig....

Since we view pigs living in slop anyway, that illustration doesn't seem so bad, but that dog/vomit thing always clinches it for me. He says that for a Christian to turn back to the world and its corruption was like a dog, lapping up its own vomit... Ugggh..... The scene is so repugnant, that just the thought of going back into the sinful world after tasting the riches of the Lord, should seal the deal for all of us. We have all heard that in today's world, the "news cycle" is on an every minute of every day spin. The Christian life is like that too. We are God's children every minute of every day, so we must act like it...

Have a wonderful day... Do good, and give God the credit.... Love mark Phil.4:11

11/15/2017
Accursed Children

"But these men blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They are like brute beasts, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like beasts they too will perish" (2 Pet.2:12).

This issue about those who are teaching falsehoods is really important to the apostle Peter. His passionate attack on them intensified as he considered their methods. The utter harshness in his words cause us to go back to the Psalms for more... The psalmist prays this: "Break the teeth in their mouths, O God, tear out, O Lord, the fangs of the lions!" (Psa.58:6) Another reads, "May his children be fatherless and his wife a widow. May his children be wandering beggars." (Psa. 109:9-10).The psalmist and Peter testify to the indignation felt by people of God when the guilty exploit the vulnerable and innocent...Such language offers no model for Christian behavior, but rather, it affirms that God holds the guilty responsible for what they do. In concert, neither the psalmist nor Peter elect to take vengeance into their own hands. God will judge in due time. Peter's passion 2,000 years ago is a subtle reminder that the problem still exists today. There is a never-ending struggle in the living of a Christian life. Though we probably don't

face beatings and imprisonment, many suffer from the heartache of seeing loved ones or family and friends caught up in the abandonment of sensuality and greed... The way of the world exploits the weak, curses the holy, and lives by fear and hatred. Peter is angry at those who would lead the young in faith back into a sinful life. His righteous indignation should wear well on each of us who want to honor God and find true life.

Have a great day... Make your little part of the world better... Love mark Phil.4:11

11/16/2017

220...221... Whatever It Takes!

"And his incomparable power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength which he exerted in Christ..." (Eph.1:19-20).

I couldn't resist using a line from the movie Mr. Mom in the title today. I'll get to it in a minute... Considered in one way, nothing at all is required of the one who wants to share in the Christian inheritance. God extends His grace, and folks either choose to accept it or not. Here's the catch... God's grace is not cheap. To lay hold of His grace is to embrace a whole new way of life. When an obedient believer has repented, confessed and been baptized into Christ, the Lord adds him or her to His church. After that, the saved one is to live faithfully in Christ. Baptism, as a mere act, devoid of faith and faithfulness, saves no one. Rather, it is an initial step, not a finishing act on the road to salvation... The good news is that Christ does not leave those washed clean of sin without resources. Lets look at today's verses. And his incomparable power for us who believe it says... Other Bible versions use the modifiers, exceeding greatness or surpassing. Just where does this incomparable power come from you ask? "That power is like the working of his mighty strength which he exerted in Christ." The companion of Christians in their struggle against sin is the man that God raised from the dead and seated at His right hand. God has placed all rule and authority at His disposal. He's the 220, 221... Whatever it takes! He, Jesus Christ, exercises His authority and power in the lives of Christians, those who constitute His church. The power is matchless... He is with His people, protecting, sustaining, empowering, forgiving, nurturing and teaching.... With such a powerful friend, a Christian is able to persevere in the face of temptation and sin. Great power, wouldn't you say?

Have a great day.... Let His light shine through you.... Love mark Phil.4:11

11/17/2017

Grace's Power

"But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive in Christ even when we were dead in transgressions ----- it is by grace you have been saved" (Eph.2:4).

By contrast and comparison, folks can come to an awareness of their blessings when otherwise they would have drifted along in ignorant bliss... The apostle Paul began his letter to the Ephesians by rehearsing the redemptive work of God through Christ, and after that he described how his prayers for them were offered. In order to express upon his readers the magnitude of their blessings, he turned to the use of contrasts... It went something like this; "Here is where you were and what you were before God reached out to you..." By contrast, "Here is what you have become because God has taken the initiative to save you..." Jesus Christ is, among other things, the fullness of God's revelation. This revelation found in the New Testament, allows Christians to know God's grace in ways that those who lived under the law of Moses in the Old Testament never knew. Before a person can come to understand grace, he or she must be aware that sin is no small matter. It cannot be patched up or repaired by a simple slap on the wrist. When one lives in sin, it entails a separation from God, and those that are tainted with it are cut off. There is simply no way one can shed the guilt or pay the price to make amends for it. The biblical word for making amends is expiation, and that is way above our pay grade. Here's the great part! The story of Jesus is one of God reaching out to to save us when no other path to salvation is in any way conceivable... There is a song in our hymnals that was written back in 1865 entitled, "Jesus Paid It All.." I will end this morning's devotional with its refrain; *"Jesus paid it all, All to Him I owe; Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow..."*

Have a great day... T G I F Today God Is First.... Love mark Phil.4:1

11/18/2017

This Morning's Questions

This morning's questions are a conglomeration of information from around the Bible. As always, enjoy and have fun....

TRUE OR FALSE

- _____ 1. The invalid had been lying by the pool of Bethesda for 38 years.
- _____ 2. Mary washed Jesus' feet with a perfume called nard.
- _____ 3. Jacob named the place where he wrestled with a man Peniel.
- _____ 4. Leah's special physical feature was her long red hair.

- _____ 5. Dinah was raped by her half-brother Amnon.
- _____ 6. When Job became ill, his skin turned black.
- _____ 7. Gideon was the father of 71 sons.
- _____ 8. The special physical feature of the Anakims and Emites was that they were very short.
- _____ 9. Isaiah's father was named Amoz.
- _____ 10. Deborah, the Old Testament judge, sat under a sycamore tree.
- _____ 11. David was betrothed to Saul's daughter for 500 Philistine foreskins.
- _____ 12. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, the 2nd person to ignore the injured man was a Levite.

Have a great weekend and an uplifting and glorifying day of worship on His day.... Love mark
Phil.4:11

11/20/2017
Wholesome Thinking

"Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the prophets and the command given by your Lord and Savior through your apostles" (2 Pet.3:1-2).

I really like the words of the apostle Peter here in which he tells his readers that he has written in order to stimulate you to wholesome thinking... I looked up the word wholesome, and it refers to promoting good health or well-being of mind and spirit. Its about being sound in mind, body or morals, and a synonym for it might be the term prudent. Have you given much thought to this, and would you consider your life and the way you think as wholesome? The apostle Paul had his own take on the wholesome aspect of life, and he articulated it this way; "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable ----- if anything is excellent or praiseworthy ----- put it into practice. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me ---- put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you" (Phil.4:8-9). Do you look at that a wholesome stuff, or what.... Early Christians had borne up well when their enemies attacked them forthrightly. From the second century to the 21st, believers have never been shy about giving "a reason for the hope" that sustains them. Christians have usually done well when the arena has been about facts and reason and in part, their wholesome thinking might be their pillar of support... The

deceivers, when their knowledge failed them, turned to seduce the unwary with mocking words, sophisticated grins and clever remarks. Peter and the other apostles response to this was to remind their readers to remember the apostolic teachings and that a judgement day was at hand. The sophisticated ways of the world were destined to end, and the wholesome people would prevail. We will take a closer look at this during the week.

Have a great start to your week.... Begin it with a RAK or two.... Love mark Phil.4:11

11/21/2017

Just By Way Of Reminder

"Know this first of all that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation' " (2 Pet.3:3-4).

Just a little side note before we start... In the 1st verse of chapter three (3), Peter says "beloved, I now write to you this 2nd epistle." Naturally we assume of that epistle as 1st Peter, but since they they were addressed to different parts of the world, and the subject matter is considerably different, that was probably not the other letter. The recognition that Peter and Paul wrote other letters that were not included in the New Testament, attests that this is more than likely true...

This presents no obstacle to faith, in that the Holy Spirit not only inspired the authors of the Bible, but He also saw to it that the books He inspired were included in the New Testament. Peter wanted his readers to understand that the teaching they had received had been the truth. Earlier, he had reassured them that they had been firmly established in the truth (2 Pet.1:12).

Peter's purpose stayed firm, and was the same as it had always been. They were saved because the message he had taught them had taken root in their hearts, and naturally in our hearts too. The false teachers needed some new ammo... Having failed to shake their faith, they were now using a new tactic that we see in today's verses. If we are in the last days, and this Jesus guy promised to come back, were is He? Lets make this perfectly clear... The "last days" refers to the time between Christ's 1st and 2nd coming... Although 2,000 years has transpired, we are still in those last days. In the 1st century they said this; "Where is the promise of His coming? Ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation..." It is hardly surprising that mockers 2,000 years later bring up the same charge. In His own due time, the Lord will appear. For those mockers, we can use Jesus' own words. He said He will come on a day he does not expect him and an hour he does not know...

(Matt.24:50). This is just by way of reminder...

Have a great day.... Do good and give God the credit.... Love
Phil.4:11

mark

11/22/2017
Willfully Forgetting

"For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, through which the world at that time was destroyed being flooded with water. But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgement and destruction of ungodly men" (2 Pet.3:5-7).

For those who mocked Christians because they believed a judgement day was coming needed to take into account three factors... First was that God had judged the world previously, and what he had done in the past He could do again. Secondly, scripture tells us that God holds the world accountable, and accountability implies a judgement. Thirdly, the present world is reserved for judgement by fire. This continues only because it is being upheld by the word of Christ and until judgement comes, the ungodly are reserved for that judgement. During the antediluvian world of Noah, this judgement would be mentioned three times in Peter's letters. (1 Pet.3:20, 2 Pet.2:5; 3:5-6)... Though 2 Peter parallels the epistle of Jude in several ways, for some reason Jude does not mention Noah. Perhaps this is due to the fact that Peter's readers were Jewish, and having known Noah, they would have accepted the premise that God judged the ancient world with water. When the false teachers and mockers claimed that the world had remained unchanged from the days of the fathers, they were willfully unmindful of the flood... For them and us, Peter concludes that his and our present heavens and earth are moving toward a fiery conclusion. Why? Partly because God reassured Noah after the flood that he would not destroy the world in this manner again. The message is clear about the coming judgement. Jesus called the world to believe in Him so that their fate would be that of living with Him and the Father forever. Just as with the false teachers and mockers, no one should ever willfully forget...

Have a great day.... Make your little part of the world better.... Love mark
Phil.4:11

11/23/2017
Happy Thanksgiving

"I will praise you, O Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of your wonders. I will be glad and rejoice in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High" (Psa.9:1-2).

It is late autumn, and its that time of the year that we stop and think about the harvest. The farmers always stopped and looked at the bountiful harvest at the end of the long summer and gave thanks to God for helping them. We too need to stop and give thanks to God for all he has

Early Christians expected Jesus to return quickly. To be sure, in his 1st epistle, Peter wrote this; "the end of things is near" (4:7). James added; "You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near" (5:8). We can see how their expectations were that he would be back soon... But as we read today's verses, Peter reminds his us that the Lord does not live under the same times restraints that people do...If the Lord were to delay His coming another thousand years, the time would be brief, Here's the big ticket item, though... Christians are to live in expectation! The critics and mockers point to the passage of time and argue that Christians ought to give up hope, but Peter says something else for the critic to consider. The delay in His return is not because God is slow in keeping His promises. Verse nine explains that quite clearly as is maintains that He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.... The apostle Paul wrote in similar terms to Timothy when he said, "who wants all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of truth" (1 Tim.2:4). The more important thing to know is what will happen when Christ returns, rather than when... Peter, as Jesus did, says that He will come as a thief in the night. ((2 Pet.3:10; cf Matt.24:43; Lk.12:39; 1 Thess.5:2;

Rev.3:3). Since a thief does not announce his coming, like a homeowner, a Christian must be ready. When the Lord returns, there is the judgement, and then the earth as we know it will pass away... Though its been 2,000 years since Peter wrote these things, it does not alter the truth.

We must not forget that Jesus will return, and we must be ready...

Have a great day.... Let His light shine through you.... Love

mark

Phil.4:11

11/25/2017

Writing Materials

Creative people have found things to write on or with over the centuries. In today's quiz, you are to choose the proper writing materials. Make all your marks clear, and no erasures... As always, have fun...

- ___ 1. In defense of an adulterous women, Jesus wrote on what? (a) a stone, (b) the ground, (c) a scroll, (d) her forehead.
- ___ 2. Ezekiel was told by God to write on this. (a) sticks, (b) a tablet, (c) a parchment. (d) I made this up.
- ___ 3. At Belshazzar's party, a hand wrote on this. (a) the ceiling, (b) the floor, (c) the wall, (d) the thin air.
- ___ 4. In Exodus, God wrote on the stone tablets with this. (a) His finger, (b) a chisel, (c) the words just appeared.
- ___ 5. Paul said the Corinthians were a epistle written where? (a) his diary, (b) along with his others writings, (c) his heart, (d) his memory.
- ___ 6. Jesus said the woman arrayed in purple and scarlet colors had a name written on her what? (a) heart, (b) arm, (c) clothes, (d) forehead.
- ___ 7. God commanded the Israelites to write his Commandments on what parts of their houses? (a) doors and floors, (b) doorposts and gates, (c) ceilings and gates, (d) gates and doorknobs.
- ___ 8. God told Isaiah to take a large _____, and write on it with a _____. (a) stone tablet and chisel, (b) scroll and pen, (c) sheet of paper and crayon, (d) This isn't in the Bible.

___ 9. God told Moses to write Aaron's name on the _____ of Levi. (a) phylactery, (b) lapel, (c) rod, (d) hand.

___ 10. Before John was born, a mute Zacharias asked for a writing _____ and wrote, His name is John. (a) utensil, (b) tablet, (c) papyrus, (d) ipod.

Have a great weekend and an uplifting and glorifying day of worship on His day.... Love
mark Phil.4:11

11/27/2017

A Call To Steadfastness

"All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim.3:16-17).

I chose the word steadfast to be a part of my title today. Since the word is not normally a part of our everyday jargon, lets see what Merriam Webster has to say about it... "Absolutely or dutifully firm and unwavering... Synonyms... loyal, faithful, committed, devoted, dedicated, dependable." When folks decide to believe and obey Jesus into salvation, they do not get put into a cocoon or placed under a bubble, sheltered and safe from the world. Things like sensuality, apathy, pride and literally scores of sins cause many who are baptized into Christ to fall away. In the Parable Of The Sower, (Mk.4:4-20) Jesus puts out a warning to those who would become His followers. He said that some seed would fall on shallow soil. Some would hear the Word with joy but when threatened or harassed by non-believers, they would immediately fall away. Other seed would fall on thorny soil, and the cares of the world or the deceitfulness of riches would crowd out the Word... Jesus made it perfectly clear that being a Christian requires more than just a conversion; It would also require steadfastness.... It is against this backdrop that Peter writes his 2nd epistle. Its main thrust is to encourage Christians to continue steadfastly on the great journey they had begun. He offered his readers knowledge and reassurance to help them on their path to glory. He did that by helping us to resist the temptations that would draw us away. Our family of believers are also there to encourage us on our walk. William Golden wrote the words of the song "A Beautiful Life" in 1918. Its words reflect our part in the lives of fellow Christians... "Each day I'll do a golden deed, by helping those who are in need; My life on earth is but a span, and so I'll do the best I can.." "While going down life's weary road. I'll try to lift some traveler's load; I'll try to turn the night to day, make flowers bloom along the way...." I think I'll be singing this song all day long....

Have a great start to your week.... Begin it with a RAK or two..... Love
Phil.4:11

mark

11/28/2017
Looking Forward

"But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness" (2 Pet.3:13).

We cannot overemphasize that New Testament teachings about the end of the world, the return of the Lord, and the age to come are not so subtle reminders of the kind of life a Christian ought to live. I believe this to be very important; The New Testament does not speculate on the details of when and how the Lord will bring the world to an end, nor does it encourage Christians to do so... In 2 Pet.3:11-12, Peter tells his readers that the heavens would pass away and the elements destroyed, but follows with this important question; "What kind of people ought you to be?" The apostle Paul wrote about the return of the Lord in I Thess.4:3-5; 11.. In it, he didn't speculate about the time the Lord would return; there was no mention of a battle of Armageddon, an antichrist, or an earthly kingdom of God... Those of such a mind will entertain the masses with uncertain matters, but for Paul, it came to this; "But since we are of the day, let us be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation" (I Thess.5:8). The end of the age is not about speculative schemes, but rather a call for godly living in this world. To me, this is of the greatest importance; Christians should know that God will provide His people with a place to live... Life in the world to come will be no disembodied, ghost-like existence... Read I Cor.15:42-43 to get a fuller explanation of life in the world to come. As we see in today's verse, it will be a place where righteousness reigns, and it is not really profitable to say more... Christians ought to anticipate the new age because they have found God to be a friend and Savior in this one. Thus, we ought to be looking forward....

Have a wonderful day.... Do good and give God the credit.... Love
Phil.4:11

mark

11/29/2017
A Call To Be Diligent

"Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found in him in peace, spotless and blameless, and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and

unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction" (2 Pet.3:14-16).

First of all since I have chosen the term diligence as a part of my title, let's get a closer look at what it actually means... The dictionary says this; "characterized by steady, earnest and energetic effort... industrious, hard-working, assiduous, and conscientious..." When the apostle Peter is talking about the 2nd coming, he leads it off with a "therefore." I believe that someone really means business when they preface their remarks with a therefore. It means that he is exhorting us in some special way, and in this case, it is to be diligent. Back in 2 Pet.1:5, the therefore led into a list of special virtues that all Christians are to strive for. He urged them (and us) to diligence in making that list of graces a part of our day-to-day habits... In today's verses, Peter exhorts us again. This time he says be diligent to be found in him in peace, spotless and blameless.... What those who were trying to divert them were doing was to break the link between belief and behavior. Christ will have none of this! Peter never tired of stressing this-worldly consequences of the other-worldly look... Christians are to live godly lives in anticipation. To really get his point across, Peter references the apostle Paul's writings, probably the book of Romans. He lets them know that some things are hard to understand. I think that this "hard to understand" is a part of what makes Christianity great. He lets us know that some will try to distort these Scriptures, just as were doing with his own. He still affirms that "no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (1:20-21). Peter makes a noteworthy claim when he places Paul's letters on a par with Scripture. If we want to found in the Lord, we must be diligent...

Have a great day.... Make your little part of the world better.... Love mark
Phil.4:11

11/30/2017

We Should Know This Stuff

"Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever!" Amen. (2 Pet.3:18-19).

As the letter of 2nd Peter comes to an end, he finishes it with a final warning and an exhortation. I believe that there is a theology that Peter is warning us about here that many churches have accepted or at least flirted with today. In some circles, it is called "the perseverance of the faith." The more common terminology that you all might know it by is, "once saved, always saved..." It is difficult to read Peter's writings, especially this one, and believe that once a sinner has been

saved he or she can never fall from grace. If you look at today's first verse, Peter told Christians to be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position.... It is a sober warning for every believer that no Christian has a ticket punched with a non-stop passage to heaven. We are called to live godly lives, worthy of our faith in the Lord...Today's verse says that we have two clear choices; "to be carried away by the error of lawless men," or to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." There is not a third choice, and there is no "status quo" Christianity... Faith either grows or it deteriorates, and for it to grow, it must be fed. A Christian feeds his or her faith by desiring "the pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation..." (1Pet.1:2). By obeying Christ, one grows in grace and knowledge. Such growth will be to His glory, both now and to the day of eternity...

Have a great day... Let His light shine through you.... Love
Phil.4:11

mark