

Getting to Know Our Devotional Writers...



A native of Tennessee, Chris and wife Sheila have two children, Noah and Anna, and a beloved *bichon frise*, Pepe. Chris is a husband, a father, a pastor, a musician, and a hoot.

A ministry veteran of nearly 30 years and lead pastor of Epiclesis, he is also the Founder and Chair of the Ancient-Future Faith Network. He is known for a warm-hearted, personal, and pastoral approach to ministry, and engaging preaching.

Rick and wife Deanne have been married for 20 years. He has two amazing teenage daughters, Aubry, and Jessalyn and a weird little dog named Rico. He has served for 20 years in pastoral ministry and is passionate about intergenerational discipleship. Originally from Sacramento, Rick has served up and down the west coast and Hawaii.



Rick has degrees in theology, family ministry, and a DWS which focused on developing a culture of the transmission of God's story in an ancient-future context.



Teresa Gardner has long held a vision for seeing the arts restored for the glory of God and is the Director of *Zion Center for Worship and the Arts (ZCWA)*— a center for worship training through biblical study and technical artistic development based in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Israel plays an important role in Teresa's life and ZCWA's ministry. For a decade she served with the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem as Dance Company Manager for the annual Christian Celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles. Ongoing trips to Israel provide worship and educational opportunities for others to learn with ZCWA of our Ancient-Future connection with this land.

Carl Peters is married to Reneé and has three sons: Daulton, Kendall, and Hayden. Having served churches in Michigan, Kentucky, Florida, and California, Carl is pastor at the Anchor Baptist Church in Lexington, Kentucky. As a proponent of the Ancient-Future principles so brilliantly articulated by Dr. Robert Webber, Carl has given special attention to the central place of covenant renewal as a defining factor in scripturally-informed worship.



Carl has worked to implement a catechetical structure within a traditional Baptist setting. Utilizing Webber's "Journey to Jesus" as a model, progress is being made using this four stage discipleship strategy, derived from the early church, as a regular part of church membership at Anchor.



Devotionals for Holy Land Pilgrims

Daily prayers, Scripture, and meditations for Israel, 2018

Contents



Image, left: Pilgrim on the Via Dolorosa (detail). Photo credit: Gali Tabbon/AFP).

Overview: How to Use this Devotional Booklet: Page 2

Morning Prayer Liturgy: Pages 3 and 4

Evening Prayer Liturgy, Pages 5 and 6

Scripture and Meditations for Each Day: Beginning on Page 7

Getting to Know Our Devotional Writers: Page 23

About the cover art:

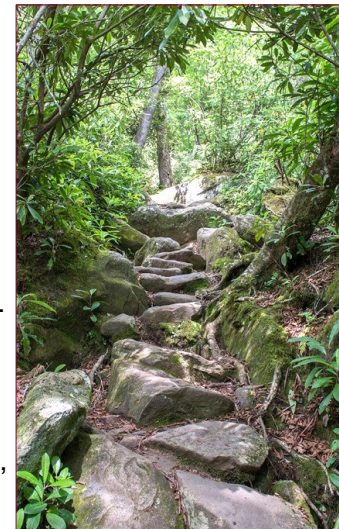
Standing with hands and eyes upraised was a common posture of prayer in the early church. The 3rd century fresco on the front cover (from a catacomb in Rome) gives us a window into what it would have been like in Jerusalem during the early years of the Christian church. Can you imagine hundreds of worshippers gathered with hands upraised around the tomb of Christ?

Wednesday, October 24

Going Downhill is Sometimes Harder. Luke 9:28-51.

When I was growing up, we visited the Great Smoky Mountains all the time—camping, picnics, and swimming. I remember the hikes most of all.

When you climb mountains, especially when the trails are gnarled with roots and rocks, going up is hard. But one of the ironies of hiking is that going downhill is sometimes harder. Why? You have to choose your steps more carefully. If you don't watch it, short steps can become longer, the pace quickens, and forward momentum can cause a spill. Falling downhill hurts more!



After Jesus and the disciples had that breath-taking experience on the Mount of Transfiguration, the Bible tells us what happened when they came down: Life and reality came rushing back in. Teaching, healing, (and opposition) resumed, they were confronted by a demon, and the disciples argued. And this: Jesus predicted his death and yet still set his face toward Jerusalem.

I want you to think about all these things as we, too, come back down the mountain. Pray for your fellow travelers. Take care not to let your steps become too wide or fast. Remember that the world is going to rush back in. Don't be surprised if confronted by the demonic. And set your face—beloved, this is the most important thing—set your face toward the will of the Father and be prepared to do whatever he asks, no matter the cost.

Going downhill is sometimes harder— and it requires more concentration and energy.

For evening prayer: What are some potential pitfalls you're looking out for on the trail back down the mountain? See also Psalm 18:30-36. C.A.

Image above: Ramsey Cascades trail. Great Smoky Mountains.

Tuesday, October 23

Pilgrimage after the Pilgrimage. Luke 8:26-39.

It hardly seems possible that our long-awaited and anticipated journey is at an end.

Do you remember Egeria? We started our trip by looking at her story. You'll recall that she was the Spanish nun who traveled to 4th century Jerusalem on a spiritual pilgrimage.

I suggested there were at least three lessons we could learn from Egeria: That we should appreciate the *cost and effort* to make the trip; marvel at her *discipline* to write everything down; and consider how her journey was a *blessing to the world*.

Especially today I'm wondering how it was for her to go back home. How did it go? Were her sister nuns glad to see her? Did they put her right back to work? Were some jealous of the journey, or maybe resentful of her miraculous stories from the road?

How in the world do you go back home after seeing miraculous things and tell people what God has done for you?

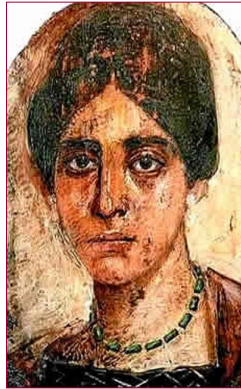
I think there's always a pilgrimage after a pilgrimage. And the second one is probably the hardest, and it's certainly the longest.

Truth is, we've got to return home. We might have to go right back to work, some folks may not be glad to see us, friends, family, or colleagues could be jealous, and a few might even be resentful of our miraculous stories from the road.

So, as we consider the pilgrimage after the pilgrimage—the one that takes us back home—let's determine to use what we've shared together to be a blessing to the world. Let's speak a word in season, and in love, and use our trip to enhance the Kingdom.

For evening prayer: Will you ask the Lord to give you the time, words, and gentle spirit to share what you've experienced in the Holy Land with others? See also John 14:23-27. C.A.

Image above: Image thought to be Egeria. Date unknown.



Overview: How to Use this Devotional Booklet

Christians have been making pilgrimages to the Holy Land since the early 4th century. In fact, much of what we know about early Christian worship in Jerusalem comes from the travel diary of a 4th century pilgrim, a woman named Egeria.



Now you and I are joining our brothers and sisters across the ages in a spiritual trek to the Land of the Bible.

One of the most important things we can do as fellow travelers is to pray and worship together. That's what this booklet is for: To focus our hearts and minds so, at least for a few days, we can be as close spiritually as we are physically.

There are two main parts to this devotional: 1) Standard prayer liturgies for mornings and evenings; and 2) specific Scripture and meditations for daily use.

Here's how it all works:

First, notice that the daily readings begin a day before we depart and continue until a day after our return (begin on Oct. 9 and continue through Oct. 24).

Each day, once in the morning and again at night, turn to the Liturgy for Morning (or Evening) Prayer (p. 3 or 5). Note that the basic morning and evening liturgies are the same each day. Go slowly. Clear your mind and be quiet for a bit before jumping in. Use your body in worship. Remember the ancient posture of prayer (see cover art and note). Also, in this booklet the symbol “+++” indicates another ancient custom: making the sign of the cross. Try both actions and see if they deepen your devotional experience.

Next, you will be directed to skip ahead to the specific Scripture and meditations unique for each day (p. 7-ff). Read any Scripture(s) referenced and the meditation for the day. After that, come right back to the Liturgy for Morning Prayer to finish. A brief evening meditation and Scripture references are found at the bottom of each page.

Pictured at the top of this page is a Jerusalem, or Pilgrim's, Cross, long worn by travelers to the Holy Land. Each of its crosses stands for the traditional five wounds of Christ (scourging, plucking of the beard, thorns, nails, and spear). I've attached one to this booklet as my pilgrimage gift to you!

Liturgies for Morning and Evening Prayer were taken from *Celtic Daily Prayer: Book Two: Farther Up and Farther In* (London: William Collins, 2015). Daily devotionals were written by the authors featured on p. 23.

A blessed and life-changing pilgrimage to you, fellow traveler!



This trip is sponsored jointly by Epiclesis: An Ancient-Future Faith Community and The Ancient-Future Faith Network. Credit and extra special thanks for the overall organization and coordination of the trip goes to John Brown of The Obed Project.



Liturgy for Morning Prayer

+++ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Opening sentences

*One thing I have asked of the Lord,
this is what I seek:
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life;
to behold the beauty of the Lord
and to seek Him in His temple.*

Who is it that you seek?

We seek the Lord our God.

Do you seek Him with all your heart?

Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Do you seek Him with all your soul?

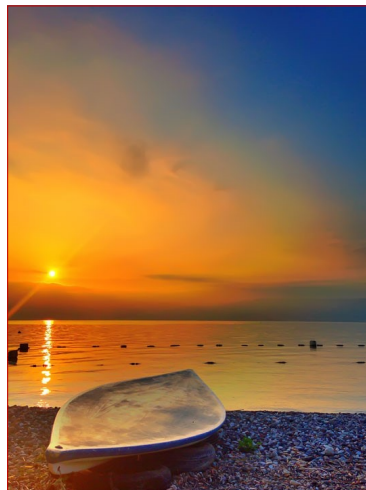
Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Do you seek Him with all your mind?

Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Do you seek Him with all your strength?

Amen. Christ, have mercy.



Declaration of faith

To whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life,
and we have believed and have come to know
that You are the Holy One of God.

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ,
King of endless glory!

Scripture and daily meditation (See pages 7 and following. Return back here when you get down to the “Evening Prayer” section of the daily reading and save that part for tonight).

Praying for others

Use this time to pray daily for a specific trip participant, including our guide, and driver. (Tip: Use our travel brochure’s list of participants).

Canticle

Christ, as a light
illumine and guide me.
Christ, as a shield

Monday, October 22

Our last day? Say it isn’t so!

Is there a more fitting way to seal our time with the Lord and with each other than by sharing Holy Communion at The Garden Tomb— the other historical site considered by many to be the place of Jesus’ resurrection? Situated next to what looks like Golgotha (Skull Hill), this garden holds an ancient burial tomb traced back to before the 1st century. And, as the guide will remind us, it is not the location that is most important, but that you believe He is risen.

After visiting two amazing museums, we will share another meal in Abu Gosh. That name doesn’t sound familiar? How about Kiryat Ye’arim, the town where the Ark of the Covenant remained in Obed Edom’s house for three months? Or, how about Emmaus, where Jesus was revealed in the breaking of bread after His resurrection? Both are associated with this area.

Fitting again is that we are sharing together in such a place of worship history. As we dine together on this last evening, I trust we will share both a spiritual and natural feast as we remember the Lord’s revelations to us during our pilgrimage and the great things He has done.

What did you expect before you came? And, what do you expect now that you are preparing to return home? We have received so much and it seems almost impossible to put into words, right? I encourage you to ask for grace and wisdom on how to share your experience. Two things I am pretty sure of: You will never be the same, and you will read God’s Word with new vision.

The Lord brought us to Israel as His personal guests, and now He will take us home— but the One who reveals Himself in the breaking of bread will continue to reveal. The God of Israel is with you always.

We will not say “goodbye”, but *le’itraot*, which means “see you again.”

For evening prayer: Read 2 Sam 6:11; Luke 24:27-32. *Lord, as we treasure this pilgrimage in our hearts, may we be Your blessing and witness to those around us. May all that You have shared with us continue to transform our lives to know and love You more and be living witnesses of Your Good News. T.G.*

Sunday, October 21

LifeWar. Ephesians 6:10-20.

Did you know that the City of David was also called the Fortress of Zion? Or that the very area we will be in today was where David danced like a crazy man as the Ark was paraded through the city? Did you know David was buried here? Today, we will experience some amazing archeological locations. You might even unearth a piece of history with your own hands! As amazing as all of this will be, lets not over romanticize the ancient. David's city was a fortress for war, offering defense and protection, as well as a launching point for offensive incursions against his enemies.

Most of David's adult life was lived out in a combat zone. Some, of his own making, some political and national strife, some external threats. Ephesians 6:11-13 makes clear the combat zone we now live in. Our fortress is Christ, our armor is God's, and our enemy is real.

- What does standing firm (v.13) look like in your life?
- Consider how the armor Paul describes often mark where the attacks are most likely to hit us. What part of your "armor" needs to be built up?
- Are you even in the fight? Consider where you might reposition yourself to be more effective for the gospel.

For evening prayer: W.C.T.O. Lord, you are... (**W**orship). Lord, I need to confess... (**C**onfession). Lord, today I thank you for... (giving **T**hanks). Lord, I pray for these people... (**O**thers). R.A.

Image above: David Dances. Shoshannah Bromcher, 2005.



overshadow me.
Christ under me;
Christ over me;
Christ beside me
on my left and my right.
This day be within and without me,
lowly and meek, yet all-powerful.
Be in the heart of each to whom I speak;
in the mouth of each who speaks unto me.
This day be within and without me,
lowly and meek, yet all-powerful.
Christ as a light;
Christ as a shield;
Christ beside me
on my left and my right.

Blessing

*May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you,
wherever He may send you.
May He guide you through the wilderness,
protect you through the storm.
May He bring you home rejoicing
at the wonders He has shown you.
May He bring you home rejoicing
once again into our doors.*

+++ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen



Image, above. Sunrise, Jerusalem. Previous page, Sunrise, Sea of Galilee. Unknown photo credit.

Liturgy for Evening Prayer

+++ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Opening sentences

*My soul waits for the Lord
more than those
who watch for the morning,
more than those
who watch for the morning.*

Out of the depths I have cried to You.

O Lord, hear my voice.

With my whole heart I praise You.

O Lord, hear my voice.

If you, Lord, should mark iniquities:

Who could stand? Who could stand?



I will wait for the Lord, my soul waits,
and in His word do I hope.

Expressions of faith

Lord, You have always given
bread for the coming day;
and though I am poor,
today I believe.

Lord, You have always given
peace for the coming day;
and though of anxious heart,
today I believe.

Lord, You have always marked
the road for the coming day;
and though it may be hidden,
today I believe.

Lord, You have always spoken
when time was ripe;
and though you be silent now,
today I believe.

Lord, You have always given
strength for the coming day;
and though I am weak,
today I believe.

Lord, You have always kept
me safe in trials;
and now, tried as I am,
today I believe.

Lord, You have always lightened
this darkness of mine;
and though the night is here,
today I believe.

Saturday, October 20

In AD 70, Titus and his Roman soldiers decimated Jerusalem. Rome's Tenth Legion left the city in ruins, including the Temple. When Hadrian arrived to quash the second Jewish revolt in AD 130, Jerusalem was still in a state of utter destruction, with one notable exception: Saint Epiphanius wrote that the city was completely ruined, "except for a few houses and the little church of God on the spot where the disciples went to the upper room."

What made the "upper room" so special that it would be preserved? Consider that this was where Jesus shared the Passover with His disciples. This is the place where the *Todah* offering and the Passover Feast converged to become the Eucharist—the sign of the New Covenant. Here Jesus transformed the memorial of the first Exodus into the remembrance meal of the new and greater "Exodus...." He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. In this holy hall, Jesus offered His followers "the true bread come down from heaven...." Jesus held out a cup to His potential "bride" and bid them drink, which would ratify the covenant with them! Later that night he would speak in terms of betrothal: "I am going to prepare a place for you...and I will come again...that where I am, there you may be also." Jesus told His disciples to go and "do this." That is exactly what they did as they went into the world preaching the word and keeping the Feast.

It was also in the "upper room," though perhaps not the same one, where 120 followers of Jesus, the disciples, and Mary waited for the coming of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the Church. Traditionally, the Apostle Peter preached here and thousands were saved. As we enter the "upper room," consider the significance of this place in God's story. Though the architecture has changed through the centuries, the profound meaning remains!

For evening prayer: Read Luke 22:7-23 and Acts 1:12-14, 2:1-4. Meditate on the Father's good gifts given through His Son and Holy Spirit. Give thanks that Jesus offers Himself to us through the Eucharist. Finally, consider how we might obey as Mary and Jesus' followers did in waiting for the Spirit and then going forth to preach the Gospel. C.P.

Friday, October 19

Remember. Psalm 103:1-5.

“Remember” is a key word in Scripture. We are told repeatedly to remember what God has done, and to give thanks.

The Jewish people know how important it is to remember; therefore there is *Yad Vashem*, a memorial to remember those who perished in the Holocaust. And, as we walk through ancient Jerusalem to the Western (Wailing) Wall, we will be in the midst of hundreds of Jewish men, women, and children who are following the command “to remember” as they faithfully pray and give thanks to the Holy One of Israel.

But for us, as Christians, today we will visit the most significant site of our faith where we will remember the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord, *The Church of the Holy Sepulchre*.

Surrounded by the hustle and bustle of the Old City without, and even within, in the midst of several church traditions, other pilgrims and tourists, we focus to remember the salvific acts of our Savior. It was no less busy 2,000 years ago, and Jesus is no less present in the hustle and bustle of our own busyness. But we must remember and recognize that the Lord who overcame death is now with us always, even to the end of the age. As millions of pilgrims throughout the ages have walked through and worshiped in this very spot, let us join in the victorious proclamation of the ages: He is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

This evening is Shabbat: *Remember the Sabbath, to keep it holy* (Exodus 20:8-11). Two candles are lit, one to remember and the other to observe (do, act, accomplish). May we each live out what our Savior has done for us, as those who remember and observe.

For evening prayer: As we remember and observe the Sabbath, may we recall all that the One who is our Sabbath Rest, has done for us in this very place and be thankful. John 19:16-42; 20:1-18. T.G.

Image above: Prayer at the Western Wall.



Evening prayer, Scripture, and meditation (See pages 7 and following. Look for “Evening Prayer” at the bottom of the page).

Praying for others

Use this time to pray daily for a specific trip participant, including our guide, and driver. (Tip: Use our travel brochure’s list of participants).

Canticle

*In the shadow of Your wings
I will sing Your praises, O Lord.*

The Lord is my light, my salvation;
whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the refuge of my life;
of whom shall I be afraid?

*In the shadow of Your wings
I will sing Your praises, O Lord.*

One thing I ask of the Lord,
one thing I seek;
to dwell in the presence of my God,
to gaze on Your holy place.

*In the shadow of Your wings
I will sing Your praises, O Lord.*

I believe I shall see the goodness
of the Lord in the land of the living.
O wait for the Lord!
Have courage and wait,
wait for the Lord.

*In the shadow of Your wings
I will sing Your praises, O Lord.*

Blessing

*See that ye be at peace among yourselves, my children,
and love one another.
Follow the example of the wise and good
and God will comfort you and help you,
both in this world
and in the world which is to come.*

+++ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Image, previous page, Shofar at sunset. Photo credit: Huffington Post.

Tuesday, October 9

Content in the Journey. Philippians 2:1-4; 4:8-9, 11-13.

Ready for a confession? I used to hate to travel. Or at least the process: Packing, making arrangements for the house and Pepe, getting to the airport, the mass of humanity, the crowded airplane seats— all of it combined to make travel a drudgery.



And then I changed my mind; or, actually, mind and heart. That's what the Greek word *metanoia* (meta-NOY-uh) means: A transformative change of heart and mind.

Paul says that we should imitate Christ's humility, look to the interest of others, rejoice, and be content whatever the circumstances. Goodness, gracious, I can't do that on my own.

But with a God-given *metanoia*, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me:

When traffic to the airport is clogged, I will rejoice.

When folks in line are unkind, I will look for Christ at work.

When the flight is delayed, I will scour the landscape to see something pure and lovely.

And when I finally reach my destination, I will be content, for I will have remembered that so much about the Christian life has to do with the journey.

Today as you prepare for our Holy Land pilgrimage, and as you think about the process of traveling, ask the Lord to give you eyes to see where He is at work— no matter what the circumstances.

For evening prayer: Part of Paul's secret for being content, and one of the ways God causes a true *metanoia* in us, has to do with the practice of changing our focus. Check out this biblical list of things to focus on when circumstances seem less than ideal... and be at peace: See Philippians 4:4-7. C.A.

Thursday, October 18

Eyes Up. Psalm 21.

Circle every place you see the word “watch/watches.”

Underline actions attributed to the Lord on your behalf.

Psalm 121

I lift up my eyes to the mountains—

where does my help come from?

My help comes from the Lord,

the Maker of heaven and earth.

He will not let your foot slip—

he who watches over you will not slumber;

indeed, he who watches over Israel

will neither slumber nor sleep.

The Lord watches over you—

the Lord is your shade at your right hand;

the sun will not harm you by day,

nor the moon by night.

The Lord will keep you from all harm—

he will watch over your life;

the Lord will watch over your coming and going

both now and forevermore.

If you were ascending to Jerusalem, you would sing this psalm. Why?

What does it mean that God “watches over” you?

Take a moment to reflect on the help the Lord has provided you over your life. Offer up thanks and praise for His generosity.

For evening prayer: W.C.T.O. Lord, you are... (**W**orship). Lord, I need to confess... (**C**onfession). Lord, today I thank you for... (giving **T**hanks). Lord, I pray for these people... (**O**thers). R.A.

Wednesday, October 17

“Who do you say that I am?” Jesus’ question comes into focus today as we visit Caesarea Philippi. Matthew 16 tells us that Jesus came into this district with his disciples. In his exchange with the twelve, particularly with Peter, Jesus’ identity was revealed. First, Jesus asked them, “Who do people say that I am?” They said that some think he is John, Elijah, Jeremiah, or other prophets. Then Jesus turned the question on them.

Caesarea Philippi was known as a main water source for the Jordan River. It was also a place of pagan worship. The Cave of Pan and the Gate of Hermes were here. Statues of idols were placed in niches cut from the rock and still visible today. Jeroboam, Israel’s first king, led the northern kingdom into idol worship near Caesarea Philippi. How interesting that Jesus would establish his identity at a place so identified with idols and evil.

Jesus may have been standing near the mountainous rock that soared above the Cave of Pan when he questioned His disciples.

Peter would be the one to answer Jesus’ question: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus, praises Peter, not for his ingenuity, but for receiving this revelation from the Father. Then, He says, “You are Peter and upon this rock I will build my church.” Standing near a rock upon which pagan worship was associated, Jesus reveals God’s plans for the establishment of true worship. While the Greek rendering of this passage has caused disagreement on Jesus’ meaning, the Aramaic clarifies. Jesus says, “You are Cephas (rock), and upon this *cephas* (rock) I will build my church.” Peter was then given the “keys to the kingdom” and rabbinical authority of “binding and loosing.”

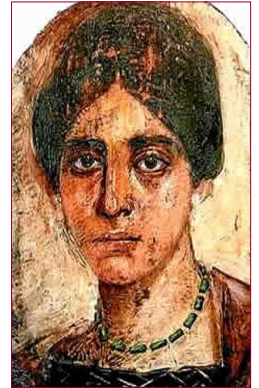
What an amazing setting for Jesus’ identity to be revealed. In Acts 2 we see Jesus’ prophecy being fulfilled as Peter preaches at Pentecost, thousands are saved, and the Church is born.

For evening prayer: Read Matthew 16:13-20 and Isaiah 22:15-22. Meditate on the revelation of Jesus’ identity. How does Jesus’ message at Caesarea Philippi remain poignant in our day? How does it apply to us? C.P.

Wednesday, October 10

Pilgrimage. Psalm 84.

There once was a woman, a Spanish nun named Egeria (ee-JEER-ee-uh), who traveled to Jerusalem on a spiritual pilgrimage. That alone might not sound impressive, but that it happened in about 380 AD makes it a big achievement. Pilgrimages were few and difficult in the very early church, but the Roman legalization of Christianity in 313 AD resulted in growing numbers of travelers headed to the Holy Land.



By the time Egeria came to Jerusalem, the city had come back from years of ruin and neglect to become a significant world center of Christian worship. What did she find there? Lots of worship, prayer, singing, and Scripture reading. How do we know? She made a detailed account of her trip (during Easter, no less) and reported back all that she saw and did to her sisters at home in Spain. I encourage you to read her wonderful travelogue.

There are some lessons we can learn from Egeria, especially on this first day of our pilgrimage to the Holy Land:

First, we should appreciate the *cost and effort* to make the trip. Egeria’s journey was long, hard, and likely expensive, and yet she ultimately made it in order to worship. Why are you going?

Next, pause to think about the *discipline* she must have had to write down everything she saw, heard, and did. Is there a discipline that God might be calling you to observe during our trip?

Finally, consider how Egeria’s journey has been a monumental *blessing to the world*. She didn’t leave her experiences behind: They changed her and she took them back home. What are you planning to take home with you?

For evening prayer: What are some obstacles that might keep you from being an Egeria on this pilgrimage? See also Deut 31:7-8. C.A.

Thursday, October 11

Not So Dead Sea. Ezekiel 47:1-12.

“Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing.”

Yesterday, I was paddling down a river near my home with my family. Our kids wanted to get on the bank and explore a little with our dog. I told them, “Watch out for poison oak... and snakes... and duck poop.”

Ezekiel saw a different kind of river, with different kinds of trees and bushes and critters— healthful, healing kinds that found their source in the Temple of God, flowing down and transforming the Dead Sea into an oasis of life.

As we begin our adventure through the Holy Land, I am curious about the healthful, hopeful, healing things that the Lord is going to do in your life on this trip. Where in your life do you need to be transformed? What healthful, hopeful, healing things are you desiring the Lord to work in your life?

Take a few moments and express these to the Lord, and then be open to how He will work these out in you on this trip. Perhaps it will be in a quiet, alone place, perhaps it will be through a fellow traveler. No matter when, where, or how, He is the source, and from Him flows grace and healing and transformation!

For evening prayer: W.C.T.O. Lord, you are... (**W**orship). Lord, I need to confess... (**C**onfession). Lord, today I thank you for... (giving **T**hanks). Lord, I pray for these people... (**O**thers). R.A.

Image above: “River of Life.” Katerina Machytкова.



Tuesday, October 16

Today we take a boat tour on the Sea of Galilee and we’ll spend time on the Mount of the Beatitudes. Central to Jesus’ work was the fulfilling and updating of the Old Covenant, and the calling of a new priesthood to carry on His ministry. Both goals were advanced at the places we will experience today.

Capernaum was utilized by Jesus as the base of operations for His ministry in the Galilee. It was on this sea that Jesus called four fishermen to be disciples, walked on water, calmed a storm, preached from a boat, and began the advance of the Gospel. It was on these shores that Jesus began his teaching ministry, healed the sick, fed thousands with five loaves and two fish, and where He preached the “Sermon on the Mount.”

As Jesus climbed the mountain to teach, it is hard to miss the connection to Moses climbing Mount Sinai to receive God’s commandments and return to proclaim them to the people. Unlike Moses, Jesus doesn’t leave the people below; rather, He brings the disciples up on the mountain with Him (Matt 5:1). As Jesus sits down to teach, a sign of rabbinical authority, He proceeds to teach eight “laws” for living a blessed life. The chapel at the top of the Mount of Beatitudes has eight sides corresponding to these teachings.

What Jesus taught that day was quite radical and counter-cultural. While the people longed for a new Moses to lead an Exodus back to a renewal of God’s people, Jesus’ message of love and humility would be perfectly enacted at the cross, from which He would lead a new Exodus to a greater Promised Land. Philipians 2 reveals that the way to exaltation is through humility and self-sacrifice. This message echoed across that mountainside, rose like a storm on the Sea of Galilee, and spread throughout the land. Thanks be to God!

For evening prayer: Read Matthew 5:1-11. Reflect on each of the “Beatitudes.” How might these new “laws” have been received by those on the mountainside? How well do we embody them today? What adjustments do we need to make? C.P.

Monday, October 15

Crossing Over - Stones of Remembrance. Joshua 4:1-7; 1 Peter 2:4-10.

Traveling from south to north today, we will make two significant stops: Qumran and the Jordan River Baptismal Site.

Have you ever thought what it would be like without the Bible? Or, not knowing if it is the same as it was thousands of years ago? Qumran and the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls helps us with that. There were faithful scribes who diligently recorded, others who diligently guarded, and others who faithfully passed on the Word of God. May we be like all three of these.

You may have noticed that Israel is filled with rocks and stones. God has a lot to say about these. Did you know that stones are witnesses? (Josh 24:26-27). I have often wondered what they have witnessed of God's Presence in this land. They "speak" of His Story.

But, so do you. Paul says, "You, also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 2:5). Your life, too, is a witness that speaks of His Story.

On our way we'll visit where the twelve tribes *crossed over* into the Promised Land. And, God told Joshua to mark it with stones as a witness for future generations.

Is it not amazing that this is also the area recognized as where Jesus was baptized by John? Through our own baptism into Jesus Christ we, too, *cross over* from death into life and into God's promises. What are the promises that God has waiting for you to walk in?

For Evening Prayer: Joshua 1:9 Psalm 102:14. What are some events in your life that are stones of remembrance for future generations? What promises has God spoken to you? As we move forward, hear God's words to Joshua and to us: "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go" (Josh 1:9). Lord, we will follow. T.G.

Image above: Rocks at Timna



Friday, October 12

God's Purposes. Psalm 57.

Our first full day in Israel! Are we ready? We begin in the desert— a clear and inescapable reminder of our utter dependence upon God and His absolute and everlasting faithfulness, protection, and provision for us no matter what our circumstances.

The desert— where God drew away His beloved so He could speak tenderly to her (Hos 2). A place so quiet you can almost hear silence, so barren and dry you recognize thirst and the miracle of life, so magnificently majestic and strong there are no words.

Psalm 57 was written by David "when he had fled from Saul into the cave" at Ein Gedi. In a desperate time, David knew His God and His faithfulness and penned, "I cry out to God Most High, to God, who fulfills his purpose for me." In a dry and weary land (Psalm 63:1), where the deer pants for streams of water as our souls long for God (Psalm 42:1), David experienced "deep calling unto deep" (Psalm 42:7). May we do likewise.

At Masada, a huge natural and man-developed fortress intertwined with Israel's history, it will not be hard to remember that "The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer...in whom I take refuge" (Psalm 18:2).

We finish today at the Dead Sea, where because there is no outlet, there is no life. Water flows in, but not out— an amazing analogy of our walk with God. As we allow God to flow through us to minister to others, there is life for us and the recipients. When we don't, well... you get the picture.

So, bring your sunglasses, hat, and water. But most importantly bring your eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts to receive!

For Evening Prayer: Read Psalms 63:1-8, 68:1-7; Proverbs 18:10. Thank You, Lord, for the desert, reminding us of Your daily comfort, protection and provision. May our hearts remain open that we may hear You speak tenderly to us, and may Your purposes for our lives and for this trip be fulfilled. T.G.

Saturday, October 13

Replica of a Replica. Hebrews 8:1-5.

My father loves Southern Gospel Music. In fact, he had a quartet radio program for almost thirty years. One characteristic of that music is a robust preoccupation with heaven. “We’re heading up to glory land...” where we’ll “walk those streets of purest gold,” was a common theme in many of those quartet songs. Despite a steady stream of heavenly lyrics, I usually wondered if this was an accurate portrayal.

Have you ever pondered what heaven is like? Today, we will have the opportunity to peak behind the curtain and catch a glimpse of glory divine. As we visit the tabernacle exhibit, we will be seeing a replica of a replica. This model represents the tabernacle Moses was instructed to build. But Moses’ tabernacle was a replica of yet another tabernacle. Hebrews 8:1-5 tells us that Moses was instructed to build his tent in accordance with the “pattern” of the tent God established in heaven. Moses’ tabernacle was a “copy and shadow of the heavenly things.”

As we visit this “replica of a replica,” be open to what the Spirit will reveal to you about God’s Presence. The earthly tabernacle was God’s chosen place of dwelling amongst His people. Approaching God was highly regulated, and God’s Presence was mediated. Consider the privilege we have as God dwells within us. As you see the veil that curtained off the Most Holy Place, realize the unique role of the high priest who entered once a year and how Jesus’ plays that role ultimately and perfectly. Now, consider how blessed we are to have access to the heavenly Holy of Holies through Jesus’ body, which is the veil, and by His blood. Be receptive to what God reveals to you about heaven as we look into the shadow of a shadow to see God’s glorious light.

For evening prayer: Read Hebrews 10:19-23: What is the Lord revealing to you about His desire to “dwell” with us? How does the tabernacle help us understand God’s heavenly dwelling? Read Hebrews 12:18-25: How do we experience a foretaste of heaven today, especially in worship? C.P.

Sunday, October 14

More Than Meets The Eye. Psalm 18:1-3; 46-50.

From Indiana Jones to the Transformers and many in between, Petra is an iconic site in pop-culture. But, if we were to peel off the plastic veneer of Hollywood, I think... I know, we would find something so much more profound.

Humans have been fascinated with carving stone since, well... forever. I am familiar with an ancient church in Ethiopia that was carved vertically down into a huge slab of rock so it would remain hidden on the horizon. I have a friend on the island of Kauai who is a rock carver Kahu (guardian) and trains younger generations in the ancient techniques of his ancestors.

But, let’s not get lost merely in the artistry and scale of a work like Petra. Let’s ask deeper questions: What is the deeper reality that the artistry and scale are guiding us to? Why is God described as a rock in v. 2 and 46? What attributes are the psalmist wanting us to grab onto? Verses 4 through 45 of Psalm 18 are all about the desperate situation David found himself in, God’s victorious power intervening and the empowerment of David over his enemies. How do these realities not only shape our view of God, but also our own faith? Share your thoughts with someone today, perhaps over a meal or as we travel in the bus.

For evening prayer: W.C.T.O. Lord, you are... (**W**orship). Lord, I need to confess... (**C**onfession). Lord, today I thank you for... (giving **T**hanks). Lord, I pray for these people... (**O**thers). R.A.

Image above: “The Treasury.” Petra.

