

Bold Confidence

In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted (2 Timothy 3:12).

Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:10-17

Song: “Through It All”

Zeba, a 12-year-old Pakistani girl and professing Christian, was being persecuted by the head of the household where she worked as a servant. Three times when she refused to read from the Quran, she was beaten and later falsely accused of theft. When Zeba’s mother confronted the family, she too was beaten, doused with gasoline, and lit on fire.

Jesus said in John 15:20, “If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also.” And again, from the Mount of Olives, Jesus encouraged his disciples to rejoice in persecutions “because great is your reward in heaven” (Matthew 5:12). Throughout Paul’s letters to Timothy, he urged the young pastor to be strong and to endure afflictions and hardships for the sake of Christ. Paul reminded Timothy that God had not given him a spirit of fear but of power (2 Timothy 1:7).

Despite her mother’s terrifying death, Zeba remains faith-filled. She asked to be baptized to publicly identify as a disciple of Jesus Christ. She hopes to become a Bible teacher and share the gospel message widely—evidence that her persecutors have not robbed her of her joy. May Zeba’s example encourage us to follow Christ with bold confidence!

Father, I marvel at Your grace. In times of harsh opposition, strengthen me to confess Your name with confidence. In Jesus’ name, amen.

God's Word, My Counselor

Your statutes are my delight; they are my counselors
(Psalm 119:24).

Scripture: Psalm 119:17-24

Song: “Thy Word”

Attorneys have long held to the adage that the person who represents himself at trial has a fool for a client. In other words, advocating for ourselves in court is a bad idea. Besides a lack of legal expertise, we may be too emotionally involved to maintain objectivity, or our own prejudice and opinion could narrow or distort our perspective on the matter. A wise person will seek counsel to serve as advisor, protector, and defender.

The Scriptures are our counselors. When we delight in the Word of God—reading, studying, memorizing it—the Holy Spirit reveals to our hearts and minds the way we should go and the steps we should take, whatever our circumstances. In Proverbs 3:5 Solomon advises against leaning on our own understanding, which we all have the tendency to do. Waiting on God can be difficult, yet yielding to the temptation to act without His counsel often results in a situation becoming worse.

Before we rush ahead, let's take time to seek guidance from our Wonderful Counselor. His understanding of our situation is complete, without prejudice or bias. Then in His wisdom, we can go forward with confidence, knowing that He will enable us to walk in His counsel. Let's trust Him and commit the outcome of our obedience to Him.

Father, You are my counselor, and I delight in Your Word. In every situation, in every hard place, guide my steps as I seek Your wisdom. In Jesus' name, amen.

Perhaps Today

[Jesus said,] Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh (Matthew 25:11-13, *KJV*).

Scripture: Matthew 25:1-13

Song: “What If It Were Today?”

While dating my husband-to-be, I spent a great deal of time primping in the mirror and choosing just the right outfit in preparation for our outings. Then I’d watch at the window, eagerly awaiting his arrival. One day, on an impulse, he dropped in and found me unprepared and feeling somewhat embarrassed.

In Jesus’ day, the wedding week began with the bridegroom’s journey to the home of the bride’s parents. He’d receive his bride and return to his home for the marriage feast. In today’s passage, all 10 virgins had been invited to the celebration, and all 10 believed the groom would come for his bride. Only five, however, acted on that belief and prepared. The wise virgins, with sufficient lamp oil to make the journey, joined the procession and entered the groom’s house. The unprepared virgins arrived too late and found the door shut.

In today’s passage, the bridegroom said to the virgins lacking oil, “I never knew you.” The hour is late. Christ’s return is imminent. Let’s act on our beliefs (2 Peter 1:3-11) and be prepared for His arrival!

Father, shine Your light of truth in my heart to reveal any foolish presumptions there. I want to be prepared and ready when Your Son arrives. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Profitable Servants

[Jesus said,] “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’” (Matthew 25:23).

Scripture: Matthew 25:14-15, 19-30

Song: “Give of Your Best to the Master”

When children are small, we fill their cup in proportion with their ability to manage it. A toddler receives an inch of milk in his cup, while a teen’s glass can be filled. Imagine the look on a teen’s face if handed a glass with barely any milk in it, and the disaster a full cup could become in the hands of a toddler.

The parable of the talents not only teaches us to use the gifts and opportunities we’ve been given, but it also reveals the Father’s knowledge of our capacity to manage those gifts. The number of talents received is not the parable’s focus, but the servants’ attitudes and actions are. The two profitable servants immediately went to work, eager to put their talents to use. The one-talent servant buried his opportunity, earning his master’s rebuke for his attitude toward what was entrusted to him.

As God’s servants, we’re not judged according to our capacity but according to our faithfulness. If the unprofitable servant had put his talent to use, he too would have received his master’s praise and promotion. Whatever our capacity, we can faithfully serve in anticipation of one day hearing our Lord say, “Well done!”

Father, please refresh and encourage my spirit today. I want to honor You by being faithful with the gifts and opportunities You provide. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Speak Up

I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed (Psalm 119:46, *KJV*).

Scripture: Psalm 119:41-48

Song: “I Am Not Ashamed of the Gospel”

When my brother-in-law Gary dines out, he always engages the server when the food arrives, letting them know he’s going to pray over the meal and asking them if there is anything he might pray about on their behalf. I’ve never seen his offer turned down. Then, before leaving the restaurant, Gary seeks out the server to give them a gospel tract.

In today’s passage, we see the psalmist’s determination to know and to speak of God’s statutes. He consistently searched the Scriptures with the full intent to obey what God commanded. His deep understanding of truth enabled him to walk in liberty and to speak boldly about God’s Word and ways, even before kings. The apostle Paul also testified boldly—regardless of anyone’s social standing—to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Whether to the prisoner in the next cell or to the governor with the authority to execute him, Paul faithfully proclaimed the truth of the gospel message.

We may find it easier to speak of Christ to those who are openly hurting and hungry for answers, but the reality of spiritual emptiness, however it may be disguised, does not discriminate. Let’s trust our Lord’s leading. When He places someone in our path, let’s step forward, reach out, and speak up unashamedly.

Father, let Your Word fill my mind and flow from my lips. Embolden my witness to those who are lost. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Finding Your Joy

[God said,] “If you call the Sabbath a delight and the LORD’s holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please . . . then you will find your joy in the LORD” (Isaiah 58:13-14).

Scripture: Isaiah 58

Song: “We Have Come into His House”

“Why do you no longer attend church?” appeared in my Facebook feed as a survey question. Of the more than 1,000 responses, many were focused on what responders preferred to do, not on any issues they had with church itself. Some opted for the convenience of online services. Others said Sunday was their day to sleep in, relax, or be with family.

In today’s Scripture passage, the Lord urges His people to set His day apart to honor Him. When we gather together as a family of believers, our focus on Christ is intentional. To lift our voices as one in praise to our God, to lay our hand on the friend in need of prayer, to invest our time in teaching the children, loving the teens, and encouraging new believers is to prioritize what honors the Lord.

As believers, the personal connectedness we experience in the local assembly contributes to our well-being. While society reflects a downward trend in church attendance and an upward trend in emotional and behavioral health struggles, Scripture reveals how we may replenish our spirits. As we honor the Lord’s Day, pursuing God’s priorities, He promises that His people will find renewed joy in Him.

Father, thank You for my church family and for the joy of worshipping You together. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Agenda Subject to Change

[Jesus said,] “[The King] will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me’” (Matthew 25:45).

Scripture: Matthew 25:31-46

Song: “We Are an Offering”

My husband, an interstate truck driver, brought a hitchhiker to our house, where he received a hot meal, clean clothes, and the gospel—none of which had been on *my* agenda for that day. Later, the young man confessed he’d been contemplating suicide and had asked God to “show up” if He was real.

We take care of our families and minister within our relational circles, and at the end of the day we often feel satisfied with what we’ve been able to do. However, today’s passage serves as a caution that we not overlook the needs of those God puts before us. To serve our family is always a priority, but there are times when God nudges us to reach further, out of our way and maybe even out of our comfort zone.

As we take time to prayerfully seek God’s priorities for our day, He may put on our minds the one person who needs a visit, a phone call, a meal, or a card of encouragement. What we are willing to do in service for those in need, we are actually doing for Christ. As His Holy Spirit directs our steps, may we be willing to put down our agenda to embrace His.

Father, Your plans are what truly count. Please lead me as I seek Your priorities today. In Jesus’ name, amen.