

thoughts

(x365)

'The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.'

(1 Corinthians 2:10)

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*To James Walker, a young man of humility, faith
in Jesus, and a love of the Word.*

Introduction:

Each of these 'thoughts' is only a starting point. I trust that you, the reader, can go beyond them, deeper into Spirit.

'All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are found in Christ.' (Colossians 2:3)

1. (Jan 1)

When I see a vulnerable child, I sometimes whisper to myself, *'What if she was my child?'* Then I hear the Lord say, *'She is your child.'*

'Pointing at his disciples, Jesus said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers and my sisters.' (Matthew 12:49-50)

2. (Jan 2)

Long, lonely night.
The first light of dawn touches the window,
touches my soul.
Hope.

***'There will be no more gloom for those who
are in distress... The people walking in
darkness have seen a great light.'***
(Isaiah 9:1-2)

3. (Jan 3)

We need to know both the 'warming' and the 'warning' of Jesus. To disregard either, is to disregard both.

'Come to me, all who are weary...'

(Matthew 11:28)

'If you do not believe that I am he, you will indeed die in your sins.'

(John 8:24)

4. (Jan 4)

We live in a temporal kingdom, with the purpose of building the eternal Kingdom – both here on earth, and in heaven above.

‘Jesus taught us to pray... ‘Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.’ (Matthew 6:9-13)

‘Here we do not have a lasting city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.’ (Hebrews 13:14)

5. (Jan 5)

Your only lasting legacy is what God records and remembers about you.

'On that day your work will be shown for what it is.' (1 Corinthians 3:13)

'It is the Lord Christ you are serving.'
(Colossians 3:24)

6. (Jan 6)

Jesus is tender towards you.

'A bruised reed he will not break, and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out.'
(Matthew 12:19-20)

7. (Jan 7)

The world was once perfect, and it will be again.
Our heart's longing for eternal beauty is of God.

'Jesus said, 'I am making all things new!''

(Revelation 21:5)

8. (Jan 8)

The circle of blessing:
You bless in Jesus' name, and Jesus blesses
you as a reward.

***'Whatever you do, do in the name of the Lord
Jesus Christ.'*** (Colossians 3:17)

***'If anyone gives even a cold cup of water to
one of these little ones who is my disciple,
truly I tell you, that person will certainly not
lose their reward.'*** (Matthew 10:42)

9. (Jan 9)

Light: If we don't use it, we lose it.

'Jesus said, 'Walk while you have the light...''
(John 12:35)

10. (Jan 10)

Insightful or 'inciteful'? It's about the spirit, not the words.

'Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, 'You hypocrites! Why are you trying to trap me?''
(Matthew 22:18)

11. (Jan 11)

Running from sin.
I've been there.
Exhausting.

'Jesus asked her, 'Does no one condemn you?'

'No one, sir,' She said.

'Then neither do I condemn you,' Jesus said.

'Go now and leave your life of sin.'

(John 8:10-11)

12. (Jan 12)

What name do you go by?

‘Jesus said, ‘To the one who is victorious... I will give a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it.’ (Revelation 2:17)

13. (Jan 13)

All of life is pursuit of safety. We've been running and reaching for safety since the day we fell.

'The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run into it and they are safe.'

(Proverbs 18:10)

'His name will be called Jesus, because he will save people from their sin.'

(Matthew 1:21)

14. (Jan 14)

Doorkeeper. One person, one door. And there is a unique door for every person, because everyone is made in the image of God.

'I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.' (Psalm 84:10)

15. (Jan 15)

To know who you are. To enjoy who you are.
God named you.

‘Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn’t she light a lamp and search carefully... And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me...’

(Luke 15:8-10)

16. (Jan 16)

#listenmore

(I need to grow in this)

'My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.'

(James 1:19)

17. (Jan 17)

True (not false) prophetic words are not the same as rationale or reasonable words. They speak to the spirit at work. For example: *'Greed is behind this.'* Or, *'Envy is at the root of this.'*

'Jesus said, 'Many will come to me on that day and say, 'Lord, did we not do miracles in your name?' And I will say to them, 'Depart from me, I never knew you.'

(Matthew 7:21-23)

18. (Jan 18)

Victory is our promise, our guarantee. Every scar, insecurity, regret, and sense of insignificance, is destined to disappear by the blood of Jesus. So use your weakness now, to reassure others you find in that place.

‘God said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you. My power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.’

(2 Corinthians 12:9)

19. (Jan 19)

God gave you your own eyes to look out of. Only your eyes. You can only see what you see. Who lights your eyes? What do you see?

‘The Lord came to me and said, ‘What do you see, Jeremiah?’ (Jeremiah 1:11)

‘Jesus said, ‘The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light...’ (Matthew 6:22-23)

20. (Jan 20)

We need hearts that discern hearts, even in the temple courts.

'He then brought me into the inner court of the house of the Lord, and there... between the portico and the altar, were about twenty-five men. With their backs toward the temple of the Lord and their faces toward the east, they were bowing down to the sun in the east.

He said to me, "Have you seen this? Is it a trivial matter for the people to do the detestable things they are doing here?... Therefore I will deal with them in anger.'

(Ezekiel 9:16-18)

21. (Jan 21)

I thought back about 20 years. Then I thought about this moment, here and now. Then I thought about the future, 20 years hence. Life will cross over the finish line very soon.

'I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me - the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace.' (Acts 20:24)

'However, when Jesus comes, will he find faith on the earth?' (Luke 18:8)

22. (Jan 22)

'Then you will know that I am the Lord.'
(Ezekiel 7:4)

Through the prophets God would tell of his coming discipline and punishment. What grabs my attention is that the Lord often finishes his warnings with, *'Then you will know that I am the Lord.'*

God cares to be known, truly known.

23. (Jan 23)

When God whispers a word of truth to you, let it sink in. Emotions will not change immediately, but as you stay on that word, repeat it and stand on it, feelings will change soon.

'We live by faith and not by sight.'
(2 Corinthians 5:7)

24. (Jan 24)

In it together. That pretty much defines our relationship with God. He calls on us, and we call on him. It is the most pure and childlike relationship that exists.

'The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.'

(1 Corinthians 2:14)

25. (Jan 25)

God has spoken a name, a report over your life. Some people sing along, affirm and confirm that report. Others undermine it in spirit, if not in words.

'But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it.' (2 Timothy 3:14)

'Jesus came to his home town... They took offense at him... he said, 'A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household.' ... He marveled because of their unbelief.' (Mark 6:1-6)

26. (Jan 26)

'I will bring down on their own heads what they have done.' (Ezekiel 9:10)

'Call on the Lord while he may be found.'
(Isaiah 55:6)

27. (Jan 27)

Listen. Listen deeply. The report of the Lord over you, here and now.

'I will give that person a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it.'

(Revelation 2:17)

28. (Jan 28)

The gospel of Jesus Christ – ‘*God with us*’, reaching to the lost – is the ultimate filter of all reason and soundness of mind and theology.

‘... the gospel, the power of God for salvation.’ (Romans 1:16)

‘... they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel...’ (Galatians 2:14)

‘See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.’ (Colossians 2:8)

29. (Jan 29)

We call on the Lord's name, and then we bear the Lord's name. As a member of his family we will bring the Lord honor or disgrace.

'We are Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.'
(2 Corinthians 5:20)

'You, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself?... God's name is blasphemed among the unbelievers because of you.'
(Romans 2:21-24)

30. (Jan 30)

Gold is referred to in Scripture as **'God's beautiful ornament.'** (Ezekiel 7:20)

Now consider:

'Your faith more precious than gold.'
(1 Peter 1:7)

31. (Jan 31)

God has invited all people. People need to hear they are invited and accept his invitation.

'Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.' (Romans 10:17)

32. (Feb 1)

All good gifts come from the one good God. Some will know him and acknowledge him, some will not know him, and not know to acknowledge him. But all true goodness is from Jesus.

‘Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights...’ (James 1:17)

33. (Feb 2)

'When tempted, no one should say, 'God is tempting me.'... a person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full grown, gives birth to death.'

(James 1:13-15)

'*Tempted*' here, means actually giving into temptation. It is not wrong in itself to experience desire for something that we should not have, but it is wrong to give into that desire, to nurture that desire, to reach out and take, touch, look at that which we should not, and have opportunity to turn away from.

(Look up **Hebrews 4:15**, and **1 Corinthians 10:13**)

34. (Feb 3)

A city in ruins can be very fertile soil for faith, for beautiful spiritual architecture and landscape.

‘Jesus said, ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.’

(Matthew 5:3)

‘Has not God chosen the poor to be rich in faith?’ (James 2:5)

35. (Feb 4)

‘David was greatly distressed... But David found strength in the Lord his God.’

(1 Samuel 30:6)

David was not yet king, and his prospects of becoming king were impossible to even fathom at this point. His own men had turned against him, his family had been kidnapped.

‘But David found strength in the Lord his God.’

This moment of turning to God, trusting God, was the turning point of everything in David’s life.

(Read the amazing story of David in 1 & 2 Samuel)

36. (Feb 5)

‘Jesus said, ‘You are the salt of the earth.’
(Matthew 5:13)

Salt preserves. Salt kills infection. We live in a dark world, a sinful world. The salt of the gospel message and the Spirit of Jesus pushes back darkness, does not allow evil to take root.

37. (Feb 6)

Believe for another. Stand, pray and believe *with* another.

If there is something practical that we can do to help, we will. But if not, we call on God in Jesus' name to act, to provide, to protect, to open and close doors, to heal. And we believe!

'Without faith it is impossible to please God. Anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.' (Hebrews 11:6)

38. (Feb 7)

Jesus will guide you. You can't fix everything, you can't save everyone. But in the midst of it all, Jesus will guide *you*.

What is Jesus saying to you today? How is he leading you?

'Whether you turn to the right or to the left, you will hear a voice behind you, saying, 'This is the way; walk in it.'

(Isaiah 30:21)

39. (Feb 8)

Discernment. What is God's word for *this* moment? What's in this moment, behind this moment? What do the Scriptures teach us, what is the Spirit saying?

'They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm.'

(1 Timothy 1:7)

'But solid food is for the mature who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

(Hebrews 5:14)

40. (Feb 9)

Lights can dim without any perceptible change. You just realize – or don't realize – over time, that lights have gone down.

'Above all else guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.' (Proverbs 4:23)

41. (Feb 10)

Lights can brighten without any perceptible change. You just realize – or don't realize – over time, that you can see more clearly.

'The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, ever-brighter until the full light of day.' (Proverbs 4:18)

42. (Feb 11)

Dare to tell what you see.
Don't tell it to another just yet,
Just tell it to yourself.
Whisper what you see.

***'Jesus said to Peter, 'But what about you?
Who do you say that I am?''***
(Matthew 16:15)

43. (Feb 12)

Spirit is in the mix. Everyone knows that spirit is in blood. The spiritual in the very fabric of life's source, life's flow. Everyone knows this.

'In Christ we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins...'

(Ephesians 1:7)

44. (Feb 13)

Exhortation can sound and feel like judgmentalism.

Jesus himself was accused of being offensive when he was being prophetic, directive, admonishing.

‘An expert in the law said to Jesus, ‘Teacher, when you say these things you insult us.’

(Luke 11:45)

45. (Feb 14)

Where *is* there an open door?

Seasons change. A door once open might now be closed. A door once closed might be opening. Look for the leading of the Spirit today.

‘Jesus said, ‘All those the Father give to me come to me, and all those who come to me I do not turn away.’ (John 6:37)

46. (Feb 15)

'Does he who made the eye not see? Does he who formed the ear not hear?'

(Psalm 94:9)

47. (Feb 16)

You stand in a jail cell, but the door is open. You are looking at the open door, the freedom on the other side. But there is a voice that whispers in your ear that you cannot, should not, don't deserve to and won't last on the outside.

So what do you do?

'Jesus said, 'The Spirit of the Lord... has sent me to proclaim freedom to prisoners.'

(Luke 4:18)

48. (Feb 17)

I'm not looking for heaven on earth. Heaven itself will be just fine!

'I want to know Christ, and the power of his resurrection... and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.'

(Philippians 3:10-11)

49. (Feb 18)

Two kingdoms. Simple as that.

Kingdom of earth: *Survive, stay safe, warm, fed and feeling good.*

Kingdom of heaven: *Where Jesus is Lord of the heart.*

‘Jesus taught them to pray, ‘Father in heaven... your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.’

(Matthew 6:9-13)

50. (Feb 19)

Are your spiritual giftings – *faith, mercy, service, prophecy, encouragement* – serving others?

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.'

(1 Peter 4:10)

51. (Feb 20)

In Jesus what is your 'invitation' to people?

Not, what are you against or don't believe in;
but rather, what are you *for*, and *do* believe in?

***'A bruised reed he will not break, and a
smoldering wick he will not snuff out.'***

(Isaiah 42:3)

52. (Feb 21)

Have you ever had those moments when the truth of Jesus – his Word and his reality – seems *completely* true in all aspects of life? This is faith. This is seeing God's glory.

'The disciples said to Jesus, 'Increase our faith.' (Luke 17:5)

'Moses said to God, 'Show me your glory.'
(Exodus 33:18)

53. (Feb 22)

'The kingdom of God is not one of mere words but of power.' (1 Corinthians 4:20)

Is there power behind the words? What kind of power is it? Is it just strong conviction and strong words, or is it the Spirit of Jesus?

54. (Feb 23)

True words are not always timely words, and therefore are not true words.

'If anyone loudly blesses their neighbor early in the morning, it will be taken as a curse.'

(Proverbs 27:14)

55. (Feb 24)

True words are not always loving words, and therefore are not true words.

'If I speak in the tongues of men and angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging symbol.'

(1 Corinthians 13:1)

56. (Feb 25)

Bible verses are not always Spirit-filled, and therefore are not true.

The devil quoted Psalm 91:11-12 to Jesus, with the motive of Jesus destroying himself:

'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written:

'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'

(Matthew 4:6)

57. (Feb 26)

To talk about wisdom is to talk about something that has Spirit in it. Living wisdom – truth for this moment - comes from a living God in that moment. Wisdom takes faith.

‘Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.’

(Hebrews 11:6)

58. (Feb 27)

The treasure you buy when you give money away never needs maintenance, will never lose its value, will never clutter your home or cause buyer's regret.

'He who gives to the poor lends to God.'
(Proverbs 19:17)

59. (Feb 28)

'Use money to buy friends, so that when your money is gone they will welcome you into eternal dwellings.' (Luke 16:9)

Here's another way of phrasing and interpreting this verse:

Use whatever advantage you have to help the disadvantaged, so that when the tables turn, and you are disadvantaged, they will help you.

60. (Feb 29)

‘Jesus said to them, ‘I have food to eat that you know nothing about... My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.’ (John 4:32-34)

My friend, in Jesus we are given a spiritual mission – to bring his kingdom to earth, and to bring souls on earth to his kingdom.

Have you found your ‘food’, your nourishment, in this ‘work’?

61. (Mar 1)

Vindication comes later. It comes after –
sometimes long after - the stand of truth.

***'On that day your work will be shown for
what it is...'*** (1 Corinthians 3:13)

62. (Mar 2)

‘Jesus said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations...’

(Matthew 28:18-20)

What other vision do you need? What other permission do you need?

63. (Mar 3)

Discernment is a beautiful gift from God.

At a certain point you don't need a verse, you don't need a history, you just hear from the Lord. God's Spirit speaks to your heart and you speak against a situation and say, *'This is off!'*

'Solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.' (Hebrews 5:14)

64. (Mar 4)

What kindness has God shown you? Go show that kindness to others.

'... and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us...'
(Matthew 6:9-13)

65. (Mar 5)

There's a kind of tiredness that feels good, like after a workout or after a big accomplishment or good day of work.

'Strive to enter God's rest.' (Hebrews 4:15)

66. (Mar 6)

Treat the unbeautiful like she is stunningly beautiful. With Jesus one day, she will be stunningly beautiful, and you will wish she remembered you as an admirer.

'He had no beauty to attract us to him.'
(Isaiah 53:2)

'There Jesus was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light.' (Matthew 17:2)

67. (Mar 7)

Horses wear blinders to limit their vision – when racing or pulling a cart. With blinders they look only forward and they can't be 'spooked'.

'The devil said, 'God knows that when you eat from the tree of knowledge your eyes will be opened, and you will know...'

(Genesis 3:5)

'With the increase of knowledge is the increase of sorrow.' (Ecclesiastes 1:18)

68. (Mar 8)

‘Paul said, ‘After my departure fierce wolves will come in among you... Therefore, be alert.’ (Acts 20:29-31)

It is OK to consider carefully at the lives, teaching and integrity of church leaders.

‘... people will surround themselves with many teachers telling them what their itching ears want to hear... As for you, keep your head...’ (2 Timothy 4:3-5)

69. (Mar 9)

'... Satan blocked our way.'

(1 Thessalonians 2:18)

'The Holy Spirit kept us from preaching the word...' (Acts 16:6)

'... I found that the Lord had opened a door for me, I still had no peace of mind... so I said goodbye...' (2 Corinthians 2:12-13)

70. (Mar 10)

God would speak words, and people would obsess about the words, and miss God himself. Happened then, happens now.

‘Jesus said, ‘You search the Scriptures because in them you think you possess eternal life, but you refuse to come to me to have life.’ (John 5:39-40)

‘The Word became flesh...’ (John 1:14)

71. (Mar 11)

Sharing Christ is giving him away to another, just like sharing anything.

We testify so that Christ goes with people, not so that people come with us.

‘... the man who had been demon-possessed begged Jesus to go with him. Jesus did not let him, but said, ‘Go home to your own people and tell them how the Lord has had mercy on you.’ (Mark 5:18-19)

72. (Mar 12)

‘The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, ‘Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome.’ (Acts 23:11)

Paul had been misunderstood, misjudged by believers, beaten and tried for two days before receiving this reassurance from the Lord – that his words and stand were pleasing to God.

73. (Mar 13)

Loneliness. Everyone's plight because of sin and death. When you feel it, know that others are feeling it too. And consider how you might bring comfort, bring company, to another in Jesus' name.

'Jesus comforts us... so that we can comfort others.' (2 Corinthians 2:3-4)

74. (Mar 14)

When I was younger some people disdained my testimony about Jesus, my faith. But those people don't disdain it now. Life has gone on, and they see differently now, need differently now.

'God made all people everywhere to seek him, to perhaps reach out for him and find him.' (Acts 17:25-27)

75. (Mar 15)

Now that I'm older, some people reject my testimony about Christ. Their hearts were open when they were younger but have hardened over time.

'Some have rejected the faith and a good conscience and so have suffered shipwreck with regard to the faith.'

(1 Timothy 1:19-20)

76. (Mar 16)

A prayer for someone you know, who does not yet know Jesus:

Dear Jesus, please say something to their heart today that I could not say, and that they cannot resist.

'The Holy Spirit will convict the world of sin...' (John 16:8)

'When I, Jesus, open a door, no man can shut it.' (Revelation 3:8)

77. (Mar 17)

'Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.'

(Romans 12:11)

Real zeal is not about intensity. Let this sink in. Most real zeal is very quiet, even unnoticed. Zeal is about truly believing Jesus, following Jesus, in the deep and secret places of your heart, and then taking steps or speaking words that his Spirit directs. Quiet. Strong. Faithful.

'Your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.' (Matthew 6:18)

78. (Mar 18)

Gloom. What a word. It captures so much of this life. It's the essence of loneliness, discouragement, depression and despair. Look at this verse, 600 years before Jesus was born, prophesying what Christ would bring to the human heart, to the land, to our souls for eternity.

'There will be no gloom for those who are in distress... The people walking in darkness have seen a great light. On those living in the land of the shadow of death, a light has dawned... For to us a child is born, to us a son is given... And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.'
(Isaiah 9:1-7)

79. (Mar 19)

The general rule is to make efforts to love, to listen, to forgive, to give. But at times God also calls us to stand strong, draw a line, step back, step away.

'As far as it depends on you, live at peace with all people.' (Romans 12:18)

'I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people - not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or swindler. Do not even eat with such people.'

(1 Corinthians 5:9-11)

80. (Mar 20)

Counterfeits of truth can run neck and neck with it for a stretch, or lay hidden for a season, but it will be exposed and defeated every time.

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “When Pharaoh says to you, ‘Perform a miracle,’ then say to Aaron, ‘Take your staff and throw it down before Pharaoh,’ and it will become a snake.”

So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did just as the Lord commanded. Aaron threw his staff down in front of Pharaoh and his officials, and it became a snake. Pharaoh then summoned wise men and sorcerers, and the Egyptian magicians also did the same things by their secret arts. Each one threw down his staff and it became a snake. But Aaron’s staff swallowed up their staffs.’ (Exodus 7:8-12)

81. (Mar 21)

Jesus' family didn't get behind him. It might have hurt his heart, but it was their loss. He moved on, continued on before God.

'Jesus said, 'The Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.' (John 5:19)

'All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.' (John 6:37)

82. (Mar 22)

#unstoppable

When our weakness is a source of power, when God's grace is the floor we stand on.

'God said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you. My power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.'

(2 Corinthians 12:9)

83. (Mar 23)

'I will guide you continually...' (Isaiah 58:11)

'Jesus said, 'My sheep know my voice.'
(John 10:27)

84. (Mar 24)

Sometimes a person will come at you – or ignore you, undermine you, question you... This person is searching for their own identity. They are struggling with some insecurity, or possibly envy. The envy is not about you, but about them and God. If you weren't around, it would be expressing itself against someone else.

So when you feel the discomfort of someone's unprovoked pressure, commend them to the Lord, set your eyes back on your own path in the Lord, and walk on.

**'Walk', as in, be active in what God has called you to be active in – serve other, share the gospel, read the Bible, worship, pray.*

'No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer... Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.' (2 Timothy 2:4,7)

85. (Mar 25)

You are made in the image of God.

God just is.

'God said, 'I am who I am.''

(Exodus 3:14)

'You are of Christ and Christ is of God.'

(1 Corinthians 3:23)

86. (Mar 26)

Judgmentalism happens when we refuse to make the climb to the place of real wisdom, to enter into that sphere where truth is more than words.

‘Jesus said, ‘Do not judge, or you too will be judged.’ (Matthew 7:1)

‘Jesus said, ‘Stop judging by mere appearances, but instead judge correctly.’ (John 7:24)

87. (Mar 27)

Part of the ocean spray. God's global mission is happening by his Spirit. He calls us to be part of it.

'The Spirit will testify about me. And you also must testify...' (John 15:26-27)

'The knowledge of the glory of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.'
(Habakkuk 2:14)

88. (Mar 28)

When you have seen truth, whether other people have seen it or not, well, you've seen what you've seen and you know what you know.

'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought the field.'

(Matthew 13:44)

89. (Mar 29)

Do I leave gleanings – emotionally, spiritually, financially?

‘When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and for the foreigner residing among you. I am the Lord your God.’
(Leviticus 23:22)

90. (Mar 30)

‘The Lord says, ‘They will remember me – how I have been grieved by their adulterous hearts... and by their eyes, which have lusted after idols.’ (Ezekiel 6:9)

The Lord feels our unfaithfulness. He grieves it. Our relationship with God is the safest, strongest, most free, but also the most tender.

91. (Mar 31)

Discernment is a spiritual gift. But it is also something that must be 'practiced', and with practice becomes refined.

'Solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.'

(Hebrews 5:14)

'Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good.'

(1 Thessalonians 5:20-21)

92. (Apr 1)

Paul confronted Peter (Galatians 2:11), John confronted Herod (Mark 6:18), and Jesus confronted the 'church' leaders. (Luke 11:45-46)

We don't set out to confront people. But in Jesus, we must be prepared to speak honestly and admonishingly, if led by the Spirit.

'Let the word of Christ dwell in your richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another...' (Ephesians 5:19)

'Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently.'
(Galatians 6:1)

93. (Apr 2)

Sometimes we are called to know who we are, and stand on it. Sometimes we are called to act and speak in truth, whether we are feeling our identity or not. God gives us both a name, and a path.

‘To James and his brother John, Jesus gave the name Boanerges, which means, ‘sons of thunder.’ (Mark 3:17)

‘I claimed to know nothing while I was with you, except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling.’ (1 Corinthians 2:2-3)

94. (Apr 3)

Honor God by believing his report over your life,
and walking free...

'You are not your own; you were bought at a price.' (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

95. (Apr 4)

Sharing Christ with people, is more about unearthing a revelation deep within them. It's not so much about bringing them a truth, but revealing to them something they have always known, always looked for.

'The God who made the world... did this so that people would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from anyone of us. For in him we live and move and have our being...'

(Acts 17:24-28)

96. (Apr 5)

True prophetic words are sometimes not easy to hear. They will ring true but cut a little. And not everyone who calls themselves a prophet, is prophesying truth.

Read **2 Chronicles 18**, about the true prophet, Micaiah, amongst 400 other prophets that were not speaking truth.

God has also put his Spirit in you, and you also know the voice of Jesus. Discern.

‘The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.’

(Romans 8:16)

‘Jesus said, ‘My sheep know my voice...’

(John 10:27)

97. (Apr 6)

Jesus came to set captives free. Who is captive?
Who is in prison?

To see the world and people as Jesus sees it,
we need to believe his truths and build on them
bit by bit, day by day.

***'His name will be called Jesus, because he
will save people from their sin.'***

(Matthew 1:21)

98. (Apr 7)

Just because you have sin in your past, doesn't mean that you do not see and judge sin now.

Paul writes, '***Are you not to judge those inside the church? Expel the wicked man from among you.***' (1 Corinthians 5:12)

Paul writes, '***I once was a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man...***'
(1 Timothy 1:13)

99. (Apr 8)

Humans use any advantage to their own advantage. A strong man physically – born this way, no virtue in it – uses his strength to bully and intimidate. A strong man intellectually – born this way, no virtue in it – uses his mind to deceive and steal from others.

‘Jesus said, ‘The greatest among you will be your servant. Those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.’

(Matthew 23:11-12)

‘Jesus said, ‘The last will be first and the first will be last.’ (Matthew 20:16)

100. (Apr 9)

Money does not exist in heaven. It has no value, no trading worth. And yet here on earth, money can buy us heavenly treasure.

'Use money to buy friends, so that when your money is gone they will welcome you into eternal dwellings.' (Luke 16:9)

'Come, all you who are thirsty... buy wine and milk without money and without cost.' (Isaiah 55:1)

101. (Apr 10)

I find simple-minded people to be pure-souled.

‘God commanded them, ‘You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.’ (Genesis 2:16-17)

102. (Apr 11)

The world fits into God. God doesn't fit into the world. God's truths, therefore, are bigger, deeper, wider than life's truths.

'... we take captive thoughts and make them subject to Christ.' (2 Corinthians 10:5)

'They overcame the accuser by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony.'
(Revelation 12:11)

103. (Apr 12)

Some people may not yet be able to believe, but they can affirm your belief. This has deep spiritual significance.

‘Jesus said, ‘... whoever is not against us is for us. Anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to the Messiah will certainly not lose their reward.’
(Mark 9:40-41)

104. (Apr 13)

Grace is Spirit. There are measures of faith. And there are measures of Grace – maybe not what is given, but what is experienced. If a person grows in Christ they grow in the invisible.

‘The disciples said to Jesus, ‘Increase our faith.’ (Luke 17:5)

105. (Apr 14)

To the degree of light you've been given, the measure of faith gifted to you, you will be accountable. What do you see, therefore? What do you really know? Ask Jesus to help you be true to this!

'The servant who knows the master's will and does not get ready or does not do what the master wants will be beaten with many blows. But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.' (Luke 12:47-48)

106. (Apr 15)

Life only makes sense in the reality and Spirit of the Creator God. Enter in.

'See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.'

(Colossians 2:8)

107. (Apr 16)

‘Jesus taught us to pray, ‘Deliver us from evil.’ (Matthew 6:9-13)

Do you pray this? We need protection.

‘He will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.’ (Psalm 91:11)

108. (Apr 17)

You may be battered and torn, but you have not lost, *are* not lost! Lift your eyes to Christ today. Allow him to hold you, restore you, turn your darkness into light.

‘Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.’

(Romans 8:38-39)

‘Jesus said, ‘I will wipe away every tear from your eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. I am making all things new.’ (Revelation 21:4)

109. (Apr 18)

Jesus has won the war. He has defeated death and sin. It's over.

'Jesus said, 'The prince of this world stands defeated.' (John 16:11)

'Jesus said, 'It is finished.' (John 19:30)

110. (Apr 19)

'The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.'
(Galatians 5:19-21)

111. (Apr 20)

Fruit of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, is spiritual fruit in and through you. It is not show, not appearance, it is spirit fruit.

‘The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.’

(Galatians 5:22-23)

112. (Apr 21)

We live in world of deception. Not to be feared – not at all! But we are called to be shrewd, to be discerning.

‘... preaching a different Jesus... a different spirit... a different gospel.’

(2 Corinthians 11:4)

‘Demons dress up as angels of light.’

(2 Corinthians 11:14)

‘I have been in danger from false Christians.’

(2 Corinthians 11:26)

113. (Apr 22)

Counterfeit. Looks like the real thing, is not the real thing.

By the fruit – not the show, not the appearance – you will know the real from the false.

‘Jesus said, ‘Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them.’ (Matthew 7:15-16)

114. (Apr 23)

'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.' (1 John 1:9)

115. (Apr 24)

'They claim to know God, but deny him by their actions.' (Titus 1:16)

116. (Apr 25)

'Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.' (2 Timothy 2:22)

We don't pursue the things of God with just those who call on the Lord, but rather with those who call on the Lord *'out of a pure heart.'*

'Jesus said, 'Many will come to me and say, 'Lord, Lord, did we not cast out demons in your name?' And I will say, 'Depart from me, I never knew you.''' (Matthew 7:21-23)

117. (Apr 26)

Sometimes we truly look at a situation, a feeling, and don't know what to say, what to share, what to give.

What you have in your heart, your thoughts, your hand. God has provided that for this moment. Share that.

'Let the message of Christ dwell in your richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns and songs from the Spirit.'

(Colossians 3:16)

118. (Apr 27)

As we share Jesus, live Jesus, we will one day find no more people who don't know him. We will come to the end of the mission, and all people everywhere will know, love, and worship Jesus.

'The knowledge of the glory of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.'
(Habakkuk 2:14)

119. (Apr 28)

Disrupter. Pervasive. Like dye in water. Like yeast in dough. When Jesus touches the heart of a person, over time he will fill them completely, and come forth from them completely.

'Jesus said, '... the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.' (John 4:14)

120. (Apr 29)

Impart purpose. Give other people the power to give. What you give them, can they give another? Or what do you see in them that they can give to others?

‘Jesus said, ‘Whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these...’

(John 14:12)

121. (Apr 30)

We live here in the physical world, but as Christians we have access, all the time, to a spiritual construction site – the building site of the kingdom of God.

If we ask Jesus to open our eyes to moments, words and actions that can lay bricks in this kingdom, he will. Sometimes we may catch a glimpse of one small – but important – brick (for they are all equally important), and by God's grace we set that brick in this or that wall, this or that gateway or tower or street. It will be there for all time. On another occasion or season, God may bring you into a big, almost never-ending pile of bricks that need laying. It might seem overwhelming, but it is an incredible opportunity. Why? Because in laying those bricks, by the grace, strength and power of the Holy Spirit, you are speeding the completion of the project for all saints everywhere.

'By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light.' (1 Corinthians 3:10-13)

122. (May 1)

Read the Bible. It is easy to read, and easy to understand. Here's a great way to read it:

Read 1 chapter today from **Matthew**. Then read one chapter every day till you finish that book.

Then read 1 chapter a day from **Genesis** until you finish that book.

Then go back to **Mark**... Then back to **Exodus**...

You see? This way you are reading both the New Testament (*written about Jesus, and after he came and lived*), and the Old Testament (*written before Jesus, and about the history of his people, and the prophecies of his coming*)

Don't worry about names, dates, places, etc. Just keep reading, and letting what you do understand, to land. And keep going...

'You must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things... Prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.' (2 Peter 1:20-21)

123. (May 2)

‘Jesus said to the church, ‘I know your poverty... and yet you are rich!’

(Revelation 2:9)

124. (May 3)

'Your faith... more precious than gold.'
(1 Peter 1:7)

125. (May 4)

'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.'

(Matthew 13:44)

126. (May 5)

'The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. Then he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.'

(Matthew 13:45-46)

127. (May 6)

'Your love, O Lord, is better than life.'
(Psalm 63:3)

128. (May 7)

To the faithful son, not the prodigal, God said:

'My son, you are always with me, and everything I have is yours.' (Luke 15:31)

129. (May 8)

'Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.' (1 Timothy 6:6-10)

130. (May 9)

We listen. We believe.

Then we live that belief.

'... I will show you my faith by my deeds.'
(James 2:18)

131. (May 10)

'None of the disciples dared asked him, 'Who are you?' They knew it was the Lord.'

(John 21:12)

132. (May 11)

In this life you get titles, roles and responsibilities.

The same is true of your spiritual life – titles, roles, responsibilities.

Paul said to Timothy, ***'Fan into the flame the gift of God that is within you...'***
(2 Timothy 1:6)

133. (May 12)

When you know who you are in Jesus, you just have to get on *being* that, not *proving* that to anybody.

‘Whether they listen or fail to listen, speak my word.’ (Ezekiel 2:5)

134. (May 13)

'You are of Christ, and Christ is of God.'

(1 Corinthians 3:23)

Your identity comes from Jesus, and is *'unto'* Jesus. You don't get your identity or 'calling' from people, nor do you answer to people for it.

135. (May 14)

Jesus never answered (to) people who were trying to get him to state or prove his identity. He was who he was, and he knew who he was, unto God the Father and not to people.

***‘The religious leaders asked Jesus, ‘On what authority are you doing these things?’ [some shrewd wisdom of Jesus in here, and then...]
Jesus said, ‘Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.’***

(Luke 20:1-8)

Also read carefully Matthew 4:1-11 and consider carefully:

1. How the devil was trying to get Jesus to focus on his identity, and answer to him – or prove to him – his identity;
2. How Jesus responded – i.e. not by actually answering the devil on his terms, but rather stating truth on Christ’s terms.

Note: If the devil tried to distract and get Jesus to speak to the issue of identity, he will also target our hearts and minds in the same way.

136. (May 15)

Confidence in who you are should be a very quiet thing.

Jesus was the most assured of who he was, what his power and authority was, and his role and responsibilities. ALL. THE. TIME. And yet...

'Jesus did not consider equality with God something to be grasped; but rather, he made himself nothing, taking on the form of a servant.' (Philippians 2:6-7)

The more assured we become in our true identity in Christ, the less we should need to talk about it, and the more ready we should be to put it to the side in order to serve others.

137. (May 16)

'The greatest among you will be your servant.' (Matthew 23:11)

The surest way to be full of authority in your calling and spiritual gifting, is to posture yourself as a servant of others.

'Consider others better than yourself.'
(Philippians 2:3)

138. (May 17)

Enough light.

God has given you enough light about who you are in him, in truth. Just be who he has made you today.

‘Whether you turn to the left or to the right, you will hear a voice behind you say, ‘This is the way; walk in it.’

(Isaiah 30:21)

139. (May 18)

The devil does not want you to be assured in who God has made you. He will lie to you, accuse you, and distract you about your own identity.

Just be mindful of this. There is a time to think this or that through. But there is also a time to recognize that the 'father of lies' is whispering to you, and simply – by faith – needs to be rejected. And you turn your mind and heart away from his words and spirit.

The devil is the 'father of lies'. (John 8:44)

The devil is an 'accuser'. (Revelation 12:10)

But he can be rejected and overcome!

'Resist the devil and he will flee from you.'

(James 4:7)

'They overcame the devil by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony.'

(Revelation 12:11)

A prayer in faith when you are hearing the devil's lies:

Dear Jesus, I rebuke these lies of the devil. I'm not going to think them through, just reject them as untrue. I resist the devil today. I testify to the power of Jesus over the devil today. Amen and amen!

(Then put on some good worship music!)

140. (May 19)

There was a time in my life I kept running myself into problems because of my sinful lifestyle. I would pray for help and relief. But when I was helped, relieved, I would go back to my sinful ways.

‘When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.’

(James 4:3)

After Jesus once healed a man, he said to him, ***‘See, you are well again. Now stop sinning or something worse may happen to you.’***

(John 5:14)

Jesus once said he would heal a person, ***‘so that you know that I have power to forgive sins.’*** (Luke 5:20-24)

141. (May 20)

We can pray for God's love to be poured out on someone. The same way we can pray for God's protection, his provision, his guidance, we can pray simply for God's love to be poured out on someone.

'Pray in the Spirit with all kinds of prayers and requests...' (Ephesians 6:18)

142. (May 21)

Jesus taught us to pray, ***'May God's Kingdom come... here on earth.'*** (Matthew 6:9-13)

What does God's Kingdom on earth look like? It is established in the hearts of people, not in bricks and mortar.

'Jesus said, 'The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be seen with the eyes... because the kingdom of God is within you.' (Luke 17:20-21)

143. (May 22)

Don't try to *'be'* somebody, or something.

Ask God who and how he has made you. Pursue that. Be true to that. That is a huge and powerful aspiration.

'Jesus said, 'I will give that person a new name that only they know...''

(Revelation 2:17)

144. (May 23)

‘Jesus said, ‘My words are Spirit and they are life.’ (John 6:63)

The words of Jesus can only truly be understood and spoken in truth, where his Spirit is also moving through them.

145. (May 24)

‘Jesus said, ‘Anyone who drinks this water will thirst again.’ (John 4:13)

An incredible statement by Jesus. Calmly pointing to the fact – the fact we all know – that even where every physical need is met, it is only for a very short while, and for the body, not the soul.

146. (May 25)

So Obvious!

I think of two people attracted to people. The chemistry. The beauty and the excitement. And from the intimacy and union of these two people, another person is born. A miraculous coming together, a miraculous creation coming forth from love. People live life, beautiful life, and life perpetuates. The power of God, the Spirit of God, laced into the fabric of the physical, in the bodies, hearts and minds of all people, of all creation. The Spirit of God everywhere, in everything, breathing it forth, holding it up, moving it in life and love and beauty.

'Christ is all, and is in all.' (Colossians 3:11)

'The heavens declare the glory of God, the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech, night after night they display knowledge.'

(Psalm 19:1-2)

147. (May 26)

Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts

Discovering your spiritual gifts is like a man who came upon a Kingdom being built. There was much work underway, such as digging the moat, building walls, feeding the workers, chopping and stacking wood, guarding the grounds, cooking and cleaning and people making music and flags. The man asked the King, 'What can I do to help build this Kingdom?' And the King asked him, 'What job would you like to do? What job do you feel you do well?'

'There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.'

(1 Corinthians 12:4-7)

148. (May 27)

Taking the *'lowest place'* is about trusting God to put you where you need to be, so that honor you do receive is from Jesus, not people.

'But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all the other guests. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.' (Luke 14:10)

149. (May 28)

Ever showed up at an event and said, ‘*What can I do to help?*’ And the job you’re given, although part of the whole, is a particular thing to focus on, to do well.

When we follow Jesus, he gives us an **identity**, and he gives us **work to do** in building his kingdom.

A prayer:

Dear Jesus, help me to be true to my identity in you all day, every day. And show me my particular giftings and opportunities in building the kingdom of God.

Taking the ‘*lowest place*’ is about a true heart disposition towards other people. It is not false humility.

‘But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, ‘Friend, move up to a better place.’ (Luke 14:10)

‘Consider others better than yourself.’ (Philippians 2:3)

150. (May 29)

Kids think really little things are important. Like, if they find a nice rock and put it under a tree, that becomes a treasure.

‘Jesus said, ‘Look at the flowers of the field. Not even king Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, will he not much more clothe you?’ (Matthew 6:28-30)

151. (May 30)

Kids don't question whether they have deep purpose or meaning in life. They don't have a mid-childhood crisis.

'Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.'

(Matthew 19:14)

152. (May 31)

'The wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving...'

(James 3:17)

Be pure. Be peace-loving. Be confident in the gifts God has given you, who he has made, to serve, to speak, to act.

153. (June 1)

The Peanut Shell

I sat looking at a peanut shell in my hand, and thought: I could sit and analyze this peanut shell for the rest of my life, with all scientific equipment at work, layers on layers, and micro formations and twists and turns. Then I could analyze the actual tools we'd be using to analyze, and what myriads of mind and moments and science went into making those tools... and then the process of eating food to fuel the brain to analyze... and to analyze analysis itself... and the amazing power of words to weave around this thought. And then there's Thought to consider. All this in a 2 second reflection on this peanut shell in my hand.

'... what may be know about God is plain to all mankind, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.'

(Romans 1:19-20)

154. (June 2)

Prayer is a gift from God to be present with someone in spirit when you can't be present in person. And prayer is a gift from God to *do* something for a person when you can't do it for them in person.

'I will continue to rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.'

(Philippians 1:18-19)

'God has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.'

(2 Corinthians 1:10-11)

155. (June 3)

‘On the very day they sacrificed their children to their idols, they entered my sanctuary and desecrated it. That is what they did in my house. They even sent messengers for men who came from far away, and when they arrived you bathed yourself for them, applied eye makeup and put on your jewelry. You sat on an elegant couch, with a table spread before it on which you had placed the incense and olive oil that belonged to me.’
(Ezekiel 23:39-41)

A modern day interpretation:

‘On the same day that the church leaders had committed adultery and sexual immorality, they entered confidently into the church building, and this is what they did. They sent for a guest speaker to come visit. Everyone was excited and got dressed up, and a big shindig was laid on for the guest speaker and the church members, spending lots of money that was tithe and should not have been spent on this.’

156. (June 4)

Sometimes I just want to curl up and disappear, float off to heaven. It's OK to get weary, but not to give up on the inside. Jesus gave us a mission here, one with guaranteed victory. So while I have strength, I pursue this mission.

'If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me.'

(Philippians 1:22)

157. (June 5)

Being a sincere follower of Jesus is a huge blessing to other Christians when they cross your path on the journey of life, on the battlefield for Jesus. You are a **'person of peace'** (Luke 10:2) in this situation, a light, a pillar, a comfort and protection.

'Jesus said, 'You are the salt of the earth... the light of the world...''

(Matthew 5:13-14)

158. (June 6)

There have been seasons in my life when I've been aimless as a Christian. What I mean is that I didn't have the '*great commission*' of Jesus as a '*living mission*' in my own heart, mind and life.

It is critical that this mission of Jesus is always stirring in the depths of our soul, day to day. It gives us direction and purpose in life.

'Jesus said to his disciples, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.'
(Mark 16:15)

159. (June 7)

There is a finish line. We will lay down our arms.
We will rest.

‘Jesus said to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.’

(Matthew 25:34)

160. (June 8)

I am fully known and loved by God. I am complete. No other recognition needed, no other love required.

'You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession.'

(1 Peter 2:9)

161. (June 9)

‘Because the Philistines acted with malice of soul to destroy, God says, ‘I will execute great vengeance on them.’

(Ezekiel 25:15-17)

Destruction is not the same as evil. God sometimes used a people to destroy another people, but never willed evil or malice, and will judge it.

162. (June 10)

‘Jesus was hungry. The tempter came to him... But Jesus said, ‘Man cannot live on bread alone...’ (Matthew 4:1-4)

Jesus had a natural and intense craving for food, but it was not right to eat *that* food from *that* source.

Sometimes the spirit has a natural and intense craving for relationship, but it's not right to engage *that* relationship from *that* source.

163. (June 11)

When the people opposed Moses' identity, authority, anointing and favor with God, Moses only worried for the people.

'When Moses heard this he fell facedown.'
(Numbers 16:4)

What name has God given you?

164. (June 12)

There is a grace and truth that brings people to a place of self-awareness.

‘They caught a large number of fish... When Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus’ knees and said, ‘I am a sinner.’ (Luke 5:8)

165. (June 13)

Jesus was so secure in his true identity in God, that he could make himself 'nothing' to reach people.

'Jesus did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing...' (Philippians 2:6-7)

Am I this secure in my true identity in Jesus, that I can make myself nothing to reach others?

166. (June 14)

People can be doing the right thing in the wrong spirit. It does matter to God.

This does not mean we will always be able to put our finger on the issue - cause it's hard to put a finger on spirit! But we can discern. We don't have to judge, but we can step back and not endorse.

'... who by constant practice have trained themselves to discern good from evil.' (Hebrews 5:14)

'Jesus said, 'Be on your guard against the yeast of the religious leaders, which is hypocrisy.' (Luke 12:1)

'Jesus said, 'My words are Spirit and they are life.' (John 6:63)

'If I have faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.'
(1 Corinthians 13:2)

167. (June 15)

Discovering your call, your gift, your anointing
and authority:

What need of Jesus do you see, do you feel?

What stirs in your heart?

'What do you see, Jeremiah?'

(Jeremiah 1:11)

168. (June 16)

'I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.' (Psalm 84:10)

A modern interpretation here: *I would rather be helping out in church on a Saturday evening, than at an immoral party with friends.*

169. (June 17)

Walking with Jesus is not a one-and-done reality. For example, as a Christian, I can be doing 'Christian projects' that really are not in step with the Spirit, are not in his leading, his presence.

Jesus said to the church in Ephesus, '***I have this against you, you have lost your first love.***' (Revelation 2:4)

170. (June 18)

'Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit...' (Philippians 2:3)

I have done things out of selfish ambition and vain conceit. When I covered up sin in my life, and tried to build on top of it, it was wearisome, and God did not allow it to grow. I could feel the futility of it in my soul. It was a cold feeling. Lonely.

'Anyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice, is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.'
(Matthew 7:26)

'Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it...' (Psalm 127:1)

Get right with God. No cover up. Repent of sin. Bring your heart to Jesus. Rest. Then go where he leads, build only what he blesses.

171. (June 19)

As Christians we '**carry each other's burdens**'.
Christ carried us, and we carry others.

But there is a time to step back from a person.
Paul says, '**each one should carry their own load.**' (Galatians 6:1-5)

It is important to discern these times, and step
back when the Spirit releases you. Step back,
and be at peace.

172. (June 20)

When you operate out of your spiritual gift and calling, you are the purest you. Let me explain...

So there I am looking at this guy, just watching him from a distance. I find myself silently judging him, not even with words, just flitting impressions, split-seconds. Then he crosses my path, and the Lord leads me to share a verse card with him, ***'Hey, can I share this little card with you, has a couple verses I like to share with people?'***

The man accepts, there is smiling and some quick, kind words exchanged.

By doing what God has called me to do, I cut across my own judgmentalism towards this man, and ministered truth.

Truly God's gifts to us are for us! They keep us busy in his Spirit.

'There are different kind of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them... To each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given... we were all baptized by one Spirit.'

(1 Corinthians 12:4,7,13)

173. (June 21)

Wisdom is a walk, not a status. It is a daily identity (or not), and not a badge or title.

Wisdom is a person, Jesus Christ; a Spirit, the Holy Spirit.

'Jesus said, 'I am the way, the truth and the life...' (John 14:6)

174. (June 22)

'Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.'

(Proverbs 4:23)

Jesus said, ***'From the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks.'*** (Matthew 12:34)

175. (June 23)

***‘Clothe yourselves with compassion,
kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.’***
(Colossians 3:12)

‘Clothe yourselves’ is intentional.

176. (June 24)

Biological and spiritual family have priority in our lives.

'Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, especially their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.' (1 Timothy 5:8)

'Who is my mother, and who are my brothers and sisters?' Pointing to his disciples Jesus said, 'Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.'
(Matthew 12:48-50)

177. (June 25)

Jesus got down on our level, so he could relate to us, be with us.

'His name will be called Emanuel, which means, God with us.' (Matthew 1:23)

Jesus was so secure in his own identity, that he could put his identity on the shelf in order to speak and relate to people.

It's as if a famous man was going to help with a youth event with some poor children. And he knew that if people talked about him being famous, the children would be distracted and maybe even a little shy and withdraw. And this would mean he could not talk to them freely, and they to him. He could not laugh with them and listen to their true hearts. So this man asked those who knew about his fame and power, to please not tell the children for now, so that he could get close to them and really talk to them and listen to them.

'Being in nature God... Jesus made himself nothing...'
(Philippians 2:6-7)

'Then he ordered his disciples to not tell anyone that he was the Savior.' (Matthew 16:19)

Sometimes we have to put our own identity aside, our self-importance, let Jesus hold it. And then like Jesus, make ourselves 'nothing', so that others can really connect with us, get near and share openly, feel loved by us. It is being free of self, so that we can be free to love others.

To set yourself aside – or rather entrust yourself to the Lord – also frees you from other people's judgment and hold on you. I've heard it said like this: I'm free of you, because I'm free of me.

178. (June 26)

When Jesus – King of kings – came to a village to simply pass through it, the people would not let him. They did not like his ethnic group, his ‘people’.

Have you ever felt unrecognized, or patronized, disrespected, belittled?

Jesus’ disciples were mad about this disrespect, lack of honor and recognition, and asked Jesus if they should/could call down fire from heaven and smoke these people. Literally.

Jesus rebuked his disciples – this response, this anger, this offense. And they simply took another route. (*Read this account in Luke 9:51-56*)

When someone fails to give me honor or recognition that I believe is rightfully mine, I get rattled, insecure, unsure. And honestly it can be from a pauper or a prince. Both seem to hold power over me in this regard. Why? I need to lift my eyes higher, for the approval and peace of only One.

‘Fear of man [or love of man – same thing] will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe.’ (Proverbs 29:25)

179. (June 27)

As we soak in the Word of God, we change. So what comes to us and through us over time is not just Scriptures we've learnt, but the very Spirit that wrote the Scriptures.

'Jesus said, 'The Holy Spirit will teach you all things, and call to your mind things I have spoken.' (John 14:26)

'... no tree in the garden of God was its equal in beauty.' (Ezekiel 31:8b)

180. (June 28)

The Miraculous:

Life is miraculous. Every single atom, cell, tree, breeze, eye, color and river.

Now, what has been given to mankind as 'dependable' – i.e. nature and life – well, we don't consider that miraculous. We call it amazing, we see it as beautiful, but we don't call it miraculous; we call it life.

Now if God the Creator of life were to step into his own creation, we might expect something 'other' than what we know. We might expect a king to not separate himself in lofty distance as our kings do, but to defy the expected. We might expect God as King to retain his glory and yet walk with the meek, the weak, the children in our midst.

If this God the Creator were to step into his own creation, we might expect to see his hand to something other than what he has already done, to evidence to us that he has done it all, owns it all. For example, we would not want to see him create water, but to walk on water.

It would only all make sense if this miracle-worker could rescue creation itself – not just the body but the soul. If he did create mankind with 'eternity in their hearts', could he rescue mankind from mortality and give him the gift of eternity? Could he erase hurt done to a person, and hurt done by a person, with perfect justice and 'blood for blood', and so release us into glory with a 'new heart and a new spirit.'?

The person, history, Spirit and path of Christ connects every dot of creation's story and destiny. And he reaches to you, now, and invites you to come in.

'I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and dine with you.'

(Revelation 3:20)

181. (June 29)

A better feeling than feeling good, is feeling true.

Sometimes God will give the truth of a situation – or of your own identity, authority – but not the ‘feeling’ of it. He wants you to hold the report, move in the report, but not float away in the feeling. Why? Well, sometimes because of the risk of pride or conceit.

‘To keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh... Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ (2 Corinthians 12:7-9)

182. (June 30)

Jesus said he was a door to another world, another spiritual reality, now and forevermore. He said when we passed through this door, we would 'come in and go out and find pasture.'

Jesus, in this sense, is only the starting point of an eternal space in God's creation, his revelation, his voice, his power, his paradise.

'Jesus said, 'I am the door, and anyone who comes through me will go in and come out and find pasture.' (John 10:9)

183. (July 1)

You can sit around philosophizing about what can't be known. Or you can take hold of what (who) can be known, and grow, go, produce fruit in childlike faith.

'I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like a child, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.' (Matthew 18:3)

184. (July 2)

'Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in so doing have departed from the faith.' (1 Timothy 6:20-21)

Note:

1. What you have learned and acquired in your faith, guard. What can you do to 'guard' what you have already grown to truly know?

2. Opposing ideas (supposedly 'deep' type of reasoning, deceptive philosophy about Jesus), avoid. It is actually 'false knowledge', and leads people away from faith in Jesus.

185. (July 3)

'Your life is hidden with Christ in God.'
(Colossians 3:3)

Never come out of this hiding.

186. (July 4)

True wisdom will take you to places of clear skies, or clouds, of insight and no sight. True wisdom leads you to the Spirit of God, and whatever light or winds he pours out in a space or a thought or a feeling. Now it is to speak. Now it is to be silent. This is freedom. To be blown with the wind of the Spirit. Where the Spirit is, there is full wisdom.

'The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.' (John 3:8)

187. (July 5)

'Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good.' (1

Thessalonians 5:19-22)

Prophecies – words of God to you, from you – still come through broken mankind. So they need testing. Hold them before God for a time, and let him confirm the words, or blow them gently away.

188. (July 6)

'The wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure, then peace-loving...' (James 3:17)

- 1. What is the first criterion for true wisdom from God?*
- 2. What is the second criterion?*

Check out this as a parallel:

'Jesus answered, 'The most important commandment is this, to love the Lord your God with all your heart... The second is this, to love your neighbor...' (Matthew 22:36-40)

189. (July 7)

'Admonish one another with all wisdom.'
(Colossians 3:16)

You may or may not quote a verse when you are led by the Spirit to admonish someone. Maybe you just see and feel truth that you need to tell someone. The Holy Spirit is in you, too. (see *John 16:13*)

190. (July 8)

When it comes to knowing God and his character, there is so much 'paradox' in the Bible.

For example, 'God does not tempt anyone.' (James 1:13), and yet God led Jesus into the desert to be tempted. (Matthew 4:1)

This is not a contradiction of God's truth or Spirit. God hates evil, and never 'wills' it. But at times there is a sense that God navigates it, as a man might navigate a war-torn city, and make good out of rubble, make purpose out of pain.

So where we perceive paradox in the Scriptures, this is our step-off point to know God deeper in Spirit – not in words. We allow ourselves to grow. We may have less, clean-cut explanations about God, but we will know God himself deeper. Less answers, more relationship.

'Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.'

(2 Timothy 2:7)

**Note: 'Insight' is what you see between the words, between the lines. True truth is not just words, but Spirit. (see John 6:63)*

191. (July 9)

One of the most important things about knowing the Bible – its stories and its teachings – is to have a reference for what God considers worthwhile to talk about, and to do.

Many times I've asked questions that honestly just aren't questions worth asking. Or I've sought understanding on things that God has offered no (intellectual) understanding on. As I read and believe God's Word, I come to see what type of questions are even worth considering, worth talking about.

I recently heard a man wisely say during a 'theological discussion' (or argument):

'That type of question is never really asked anywhere in the Bible. It just seems to be distracted from the real point of this passage, or from God's focus in the Word.'

192. (July 10)

'Jesus wept.' (John 11:25)

Sometimes an emotional response is God's deepest truth in a situation.

193. (July 11)

'In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I tell you this so that no one may deceive you with fine-sounding arguments... See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.'

(Colossians 2:3-8)

'We take captive thoughts and make them subject to Christ.' (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

'... and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the gospel...' (1 Timothy 1:8-11)

194. (July 12)

A Nightmare:

After all those years, that man who had control of your emotions, your self-esteem, pulled off a mask and said: *Why did you listen to me, when you had God's truth to hold on to?*

'...for they loved human approval more than approval from God.' (John 12:43)

My friend, we can all chase the approval of people, and let people's 'disapproval' – which is very uncomfortable – distract our hearts and minds deeply. We only need God's approval – whether people see it or don't see it. The true light and spirit and terms of life flow down from God. He calls it. He says who is who, and what report is true, and who can say and who can't say.

195. (July 13)

Prophetic gifting – or prophetic moments and moving in your life – is to hear the right things for the right time. It is to see the right way, in the right situation. It is to hear the whisper of the Spirit over the noise of the intellect. It is move in the wind of God rather than the wisdom of man. It is to align your words with the word Jesus is saying in that moment, to speak in harmony. It is simply to be in step with the Spirit.

‘Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy... The one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort... the one who prophesies edifies the church.’
(1 Corinthians 14:1-4)

196. (July 14)

'I have much to say to you... But when the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own... The Spirit will receive from me what he makes known to you.' (John 16:12-15)

Jesus continues to teach and guide each one of us by his Spirit.

197. (July 15)

I share verse cards with people. I simply introduce this statement, as it were, into the moment, into the interaction. ***'Hey, here are a couple verses I love to share around!'*** People are free to decline my offering, and sometimes do.

Other people – often the same person I am offering a card to – is making a statement of belief of their own. For example, they might speaking in a tone and with mannerisms that proclaims not only their chosen gender but their belief in gender choice. They might be wearing colors or badges or clothes that make known to me what they believe and what they believe others *should* believe.

Bumper stickers, flags/banners in yards, social media posts, comments of support in a group conversation or classroom, comments of opposition... Many people are making their beliefs known all the time!

'Jesus said, 'If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels.' (Mark 8:38)

198. (July 16)

Jesus taught that there would be people that use his name to do wrong things – even kill true followers of Jesus. (John 16:1-3)

So if God himself tells of people deceived, counterfeits and false prophets – both inside and outside the walls of the church – we must live and look with the heart, with Spirit, looking for fruit and integrity not at words and performance.

‘Jesus said, ‘A time is coming when you will not worship God on this mountain [this church] nor in Jerusalem [in this denomination] ... God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in Spirit and in truth.’ (John 4:21-24)

199. (July 17)

'I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers [natural things], in danger from bandits [bad people], in danger from my fellow Jews [fellow citizens], in danger from Gentiles [people from other religions]; in danger in the city [urban spaces], in danger in the country [rural places], in danger at sea [traveling]; and in danger from false believers [false Christians].'

(2 Corinthians 11:26)

200. (July 18)

'Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.' (2 Timothy 2:22)

1. What should we turn away from?
2. What should we pursue actively?
3. What kind of people should we team up with?

201. (July 19)

'But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.' (Hebrews 5:14)

'constant use' = time and effort

'trained themselves' = discipline and tools

Spiritual growth takes time and is a grind.

202. (July 20)

Are you heeding
And holding
Truth
As it is revealed to you
Along life's way?

If so, you will
Become who you need to be,
See what you need to see,
And have the power and words you will need.

'Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.' (Romans 12:1-2)

'Make up your mind to not worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict.' (Luke 21:14-15)

203. (July 21)

It's a horrible feeling when you think people don't like you, that certain people are 'hard' towards you.

But listen, take a minute now. Consider: God made you, and God loves you. Are you right with God today? Yes? Have you wronged those people in any particular way? No?

OK, then just smile quietly to yourself, take eyes and thoughts off those people, and walk on. It really does not matter what people think about you, or how they feel about you.

'Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord will be kept safe.'
(Proverbs 29:25)

'How can you believe since you seek glory from one another but do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?' (John 5:44)

204. (July 22)

'... and after you have done everything, to stand.' (Ephesians 6:13)

I get tired, sometimes, of sharing Jesus with people. I get a little weary of the constant mission I have as a Christian – to bring Jesus to people, and people to Jesus.

Getting weary is understandable, but you don't want to give into it. Because when Jesus comes, or calls you home, you want to be looking for him, eyes lifted, standing steady in faith.

Jesus asked, **'When the Son of Man returns, will he find faith?'** (Luke 18:8)

205. (July 23)

'... eagerly desire the gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy.' (1 Corinthians 14:1)

Paul is referring to speaking words that are true, of God, *'edify the church'* and are *'encouraging, strengthening and comforting.'* (vs 1-5)

Paul is not here referring to prophecy in the sense of telling the future. He is referring to prophecy in the sense of speaking the truth of God in the moment by his Spirit to his people.

Prophetic truth grows in us and through us as we grow in Jesus.

Jesus said, **'Abide in me... Abide in my love.'** (John 15:4,9)

206. (July 24)

'Whoever aspires to be an overseer [leader in a church] desires a noble task... He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited... He must also have a good reputation with outsiders...' (1 Timothy 3:1-7)

Recent converts can sometimes be eager to 'lead', because they feel inspired. However, the most important *'leading'* we will ever do is the honest leading of our own selves. Leading our own spiritual lives, step by step, day by day, being faithful to Jesus in secret and in public (Matthew 6:6) - this is how a *'good reputation with outsiders'* is built over time.

207. (July 25)

Sometimes a name is given and must be lived up to. Other times a role is first lived, and the name awarded later. So be true to your 'calling' – your anointing, your authority - whether people see your title or not.

'To the one who is victorious... I will give a white stone with a new name written on it...'
(Revelation 2:17)

208. (July 26)

God's algorithm for his kingdom going viral: You.
Me. Faithful each day.

#spiritmomentum

'The knowledge of the glory of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.'
(Habakkuk 2:14)

'Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end.' (Isaiah 9:7)

'Jesus said, 'On this rock [testimony of Jesus being the Savior of the world] I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.' (Matthew 16:15-20)

209. (July 27)

Sometimes I feel most lonely when I'm at church. When it's not perfect, and I'm not perfect, I just see and feel that heaven is not here on earth – not even with Christians or at church.

Then I reflect. If I can feel lonely at church – because it's not heaven – others might feel this way, too. Maybe *they* need encouragement.

What can I do to bring more of heaven to earth, more of heaven to church?

'As God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.'
(Colossians 3:12)

210. (July 28)

Spirited (Adj) - *Of my spirit, your spirit, the Holy Spirit, an evil spirit?*

'Live by the Holy Spirit... Keep in step with the Holy Spirit...' (Galatians 5:16,25)

211. (July 29)

You only need to prove yourself when you're not secure in God's report over your life.

'Jesus answered, 'Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. You judge by human standards... I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me... You do not know me or my Father... If you knew me, you would know my Father also.'

(John 8:14-19)

212. (July 30)

Jesus loves you. He sees you. He knows that you love him, and that you walk with him.

Don't worry about what others see and affirm in your life, your Christian life. Jesus sees all your work, your heart. You walk with him, and you live unto him. Don't worry what others see and know. God knows.

'Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings.' (Psalm 17:8)

213. (July 31)

God has anointed you.

You might not yet be fully aware of your anointing, or of how God moves around your life. But you are named, anointed.

You can live in this anointing. You can rest in it. Just go where you need to go, and let God move the air around you, move thoughts and people around you, bring meaning and moments to you, define you.

'Determine it in your minds that you will not prepare in advance what you are going to say. For I will give you words and wisdom that the enemy will not be able to resist.'

(Luke 21:14-15)

214. (Aug 1)

'Your life is hidden with Christ in God.'
(Colossians 3:3)

Such escape! I need this. I can do life here, when I know that I am actually 'hidden' somewhere else. Every day *here* I build my inheritance *there*. And one day soon I'll fly away to that paradise island.

215. (Aug 2)

Words are defined by other words. For example, wisdom is 'pure'. But now we need definition for 'purity', right?

And then often it goes around in circles. Like, we might use the word 'pure' to define wisdom, but then we'll use the word 'wisdom' to define purity. (as in James 3:17)

What we see here is that words have their *true* meaning in something beyond words. Words are 'encasements', coverings, for meaning or 'spirit' that no one word can actually capture or encapsulate.

True life and true meaning is spiritual. Ultimate meaning is to encounter not a word, but the Living Word – the word off the page, the Holy Spirit behind all true words and meaning.

'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... The Word became flesh and lived among us.'
(John 1:1,14)

#Jesus

216. (Aug 3)

'Correctly handle the word of truth.'

(2 Timothy 2:15)

It is not enough to just know verses or stories in the Bible. Even with that 'data' we can mishandle the Scripture. We can misuse it, misapply it. Even Satan quoted the Bible to Jesus. (Matthew 4)

Jesus said the Holy Spirit would 'call to our minds things Jesus taught'. (John 14:26) Ask the Lord to give you understanding of Scriptures you read, and to call them to your mind at the right time, by his Holy Spirit.

217. (Aug 4)

‘Jesus said, ‘The Holy Spirit will teach you all things, and call to your mind things I have taught.’ (John 14:26)

Listen for the ‘teaching’ of the Holy Spirit in your life, day by day, year by year. Like with any true teaching, understanding builds and deepens over time, with more paths walked and more time spent with the teacher.

218. (Aug 5)

One day Jesus was indicating to Peter what 'way' or path in life he would follow, he would walk. Peter asked Jesus in that moment about the path of another disciple, John.

'Jesus answered, '... what is that to you? You must follow me.' (John 21:22)

We are called by God to love one another and walk with each other. We are called to 'pull together' as a body of believers. But there is also a space – and a path – between just you and God. This is also very clear throughout Scripture. It is more important that you are true to the steps, the path that Jesus has given you personally, than to keep in step with other people – even Christians – in your life.

219. (Aug 6)

When I stare at the sun for even a moment, the light blocks out the rest of my vision. If a bird flies across my vision at that moment, across the light of the sun, it disappears to my sight. And when I look away, the light of the sun still lingers in my eyes, spots and streaks affect my vision for a while...

When I look intently at the Lord's report in my life, to my spirit personally, it blocks out the rest of my vision. If a church project flies across my vision at that moment, across the light of the Lord's call on my life, it disappears to my sight. And when I look away, the light of the Son still lingers in my eyes, spots and streaks affect my vision for a while...

'The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.' (Matthew 13:44)

220. (Aug 7)

Wisdom – and spiritual maturity – is not to have more answers for ‘deep’ questions. Sometimes as we grow we move past the realm of ‘answers’ to the realm of Spirit. We leave answers about God behind as we come to know God himself more deeply.

Sometimes true wisdom, deeper maturity, is to avoid to the conversation, the argument. To humbly say that there are certain things now you choose not to debate, because their truth is beyond your mind’s grasp. And to move on with the calling and mission of Jesus, praying for people, sharing the gospel with people, and worship.

‘What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit... we have the mind of Christ.’ (1 Corinthians 2:12-16)

221. (Aug 8)

‘That night the Lord stood beside Paul and said, ‘Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, you will testify about me in Rome.’ (Acts 23:11)

Paul had literally caused a riot in court earlier that day, not with powerful words of testimony to Jesus, but with shrewd words that exposed the petty differences between his accusers. It was chaos. It was violent. Confusion was in the air, and trouble was upon him and probably the other believers in the town.

But the Lord stood beside Paul that night. He said he was pleased with him – with his work here, and what he would do there. Peace!

222. (Aug 9)

People trying to be deep, even Christians. Dark stories, heavy thoughts, dramatic testimonies, or over-detailed theology. Nope!

Jesus never glorified gloom or drama or prideful religiosity. His very purpose was to get back to innocence and childlike faith, before we ate of the 'tree of knowledge'. Jesus only ever exalted the humble – and only will exalt the humble.

'Jesus called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. And he said, 'Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.' (Matthew 18:3-4)

223. (Aug 10)

Cold light. No heart, no meaning.

Ever found yourself somewhere, with some people, and just felt that sinking feeling of being miles from true purpose, from the true you? Me too.

‘Jesus said, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.’
(John 8:12)

224. (Aug 11)

After Jesus had risen from the dead and changed the history of the world forever, he did not appear to a crowd, to the full body of believers, or to the political leaders. He appeared to two heartbroken men and walked with them for hours. One we know is named, Cleopas. The other we have no name for.

(Read the account at Luke 24:13-27)

225. (Aug 12)

The Holy Spirit guides us. He speaks to us. He prompts your heart, your mind. He whispers. He is in you and around you. *Every. Moment. Of. Your. Life.*

‘And he will be called Emanuel, which means, ‘God with us.’ (Matthew 1:23)

(Psalm 139:7-12; Romans 5:5; Romans 8:15; Ephesians 1:13; Hebrews 13:5; John 14:16-17,26)

226. (Aug 13)

'Favor and honor come from the Lord.'
(Psalm 84:11)

That's something God does, like a light he shines on his people. If God's favor is on you, it's on you, untouchable by mankind.

227. (Aug 14)

How it is.

#godsway

We work within what is. We live within what is.
How it is. We discover it; we don't determine it.
We open our eyes and see. We look and see.

Life is as it is. God is as He is. We open our
eyes to see. We look and see and know.

***'Moses said to God, 'Suppose they ask me,
'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell
them?'***

***God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM... Say to
them, I AM has sent me to you.'***

(Exodus 3:13-14)

228. (Aug 15)

Sometimes, truly, I just want this world to fold. There are moments that people make me feel like this, and I know at moments I've made people feel like this.

Thanks be to God that day will come!

'All the stars in the sky will be dissolved and the heavens rolled up like a scroll.'

(Isaiah 34:4)

'Jesus said, 'Look! I am making all things new!'' (Revelation 21:5)

229. (Aug 16)

There is living for a purpose, and there is living *out* a purpose.

‘ ... So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.’ (Luke 17:10)

230. (Aug 17)

The gospel of Jesus stops evil in its tracks, and even turns dark forces for good.

'Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison...

As he neared Damascus... a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?'

'Who are you, Lord?' Saul asked.

'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' he replied...

Paul began to preach that Jesus is the Son of God...'

(Acts 8-9)

231. (Aug 18)

God's comfort.

I need his comfort in my soul every day. Like, noise faded away, the world silent around me, and the Spirit of God with me.

'Be still and know that I am God.'

(Psalm 46:10)

'God comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort others with the comfort we have received from God.'

(2 Corinthians 1:4)

232. (Aug 19)

‘Jesus said, ‘Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.’ (Matthew 4:19)

I’m grateful for my job. And having a job, and working a job, is an important thing. (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12)

But rather than just being a ‘fisherman’ to pay my bills and survive, God has offered me an eternal mission of ‘fishing men’.

If we want it – and in my case, ‘need’ it - God has offered us a higher purpose and calling in this life. We can live each day to people to heaven, to bring heaven to people, and to build the ‘kingdom of God’ – a city that we will actually go to and live in one day.

‘... those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.’ (2 Corinthians 5:15)

233. (Aug 20)

I don't need to think about it anymore – about her, about him, about it. God has whispered, **'My grace is sufficient for you.'**

Now if God's grace is sufficient in a situation, then I have to take my eyes off that issue and simply walk on in God's grace. Walk on. No more thinking on that (him, her, it). No more. It still may 'prick' me a tad... but it has no power, makes no difference, doesn't stop the true me, the truth, or fruit as I walk on in God's grace.

'... a thorn in my flesh... Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you...' (2 Corinthians 12:7-9)

234. (Aug 21)

Don't be caught out by people that don't actually want to know.

Is this a conversation where people are seeking truth, or is it a conversation/discussion where they are not?

'Turn away from godless chatter... and false knowledge.' (1 Timothy 6:20)

Prayer: *God, help me to see and know when I'm being trapped, and to have the humility to back on out.*

235. (Aug 22)

'Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you.' (1 Timothy 6:20)

There are truths and experiences of truth that we need to 'stack', we need to remember and build on. Remember. Ponder. Guard.

'I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel - which is really no gospel at all.' (Galatians 1:6-7)

236. (Aug 23)

Jesus did claim to be God (John 8:58; 14:9; 20:28; 10:33, etc. etc.), but used his time here with us to actually show us who that was rather than dispute that He was.

He wanted us to know that **God is light** (John 8:12), **life** (14:6), **the door** (10:9), **living water** (7:37-38), **forgives sins** (Mk 2:10), **heals hearts** (Lk 4:18), **raises the dead** (Jn 11:25-26), and not only gives but **is eternal life** (Jn 17:3), **gives prophecy and fulfills it** (Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; 61:1-2).

Anyone can claim to be God. Only God could simply evidence Himself and let his works make the claims.

'... even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.' (John 10:38)

237. (Aug 24)

Light breaks in.

Light *will* break in.

No matter how you feel – low, even very low – stay with the truth and keep eyes fixed ahead. Keep walking. Light will break in.

‘There will be no more gloom for those who are in distress... The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.’

(Isaiah 9:1-2)

‘They that wait on the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.’ (Isaiah 40:31)

238. (Aug 25)

God reports over your life. Your life personally.
Do you receive it?

It takes faith and humility to hear his report, and to receive his report. Because the world can't see it or validate it. But you know it. Do you walk in it?

'I will give you a name that only you know...'
(Revelation 2:17)

'Guard what has been entrusted to you.'
(1 Timothy 6:20)

239. (Aug 26)

Sometimes we can think through things, and see change happen, feel joy flood in. Like when a true, wise word is spoken – like a Proverb – and truth through the mind and heart breaks a chain, opens the way.

Other times, my friend, you will only see – and ‘feel’ – a chain or insecurity break, when Jesus touches it. When we encounter that type of ‘cloud’ or ‘lie’ over our mind and heart, you will always be able to:

a. Walk on, because **‘God’s grace is sufficient’** to walk on. (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

b. Pray the blood of Jesus over this lie in front of you. (Revelation 12:10-11)

You never need to fear the ‘block’ in the road, because you can always – despite how you ‘feel’ – walk through the block. (God’s grace is sufficient for you in this moment, this feeling of weakness, to still power through in victory). And you can pray, and trust, that the blood of Jesus even now spills over that lie, and will corrode it, disintegrate it, leave it in ashes.

‘God said, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’
(2 Corinthians 12:9)

‘They overcame the devil, the accuser, by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony.’ (Revelation 12:10-11)

240. (Aug 27)

When I was about 15 my mom once said to me, *'Peter, you do like to learn, but you do not like to be taught.'* She was, in a very gentle way, calling me a bit of an eejit! (*Irish slang for 'fool'*)

Sometimes we do want to be free, but we don't want to be rescued. We want the freedom, but we also want the power.

There is a humility in asking God to take the thorn away. It is a recognition that we don't have the power to help ourselves in this or that struggle.

'I asked God three times to take it away...'
(2 Corinthians 12:8)

241. (Aug 28)

We have an enemy in this world. As Christians here in the world, we have a spirit enemy – Satan.

Some struggles in our lives will be from just normal life – personality differences, circumstances, competition, our own sin and suffering. But some other struggles come directly from the enemy of your soul, and often from or through people who resist the Spirit of Jesus in you.

‘If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember what I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.’ (John 15:18-20)

242. (Aug 29)

Wisdom is not the same as intelligence. Wisdom has the Spirit of Jesus in it.

'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.' (Proverbs 1:7)

243. (Aug 30)

When you sing along with someone else – presumably in tune! - the two sounds become one. They merge, sync, and make a more beautiful sound together, reaching further...

‘Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit...’ (Galatians 5:25)

Walk in step with the Spirit. Sing along with the Spirit.

244. (Aug 31)

Heaven on earth.

Heaven is *never* on earth.

Maybe for a moment we taste and feel a breeze of heaven – fresh cut grass, morning skies and peaceful hour - but it cannot be *grasped* here on earth, not even for that same moment it touches us. Cannot be grasped. At best it is a metaphor, a promise, of what will be, what was once...

‘Jesus said, ‘Do not be worried... My Father’s house has many rooms. I am going to prepare a place for you... I will come again and take you to myself, so that you can be where I am...’ (John 14:1-3)

245. (Sept 1)

'I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.'

(Galatians 2:20)

'... indeed, I do not even judge myself...'

(1 Corinthians 4:3-4)

#be

(You can't serve – or seek - God and man in this life. Either you seek to know God, or you seek to know yourself.)

246. (Sept 2)

‘Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling...’ (Philippians 2:12)

God gives you salvation – saves you – through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Forgiven. Set free.

Now we *‘work out’* that salvation, with continued reverence of God and never a sense of entitlement or arrogance.

Paul said, *‘To live is Christ...’* (Philippians 1:21)
In other words, to live now, is to walk with Jesus, and work unto Jesus.

Paul said he worked and served Christ because he had his hopes set on that miracle up ahead, that mind-blowing moment of being *‘raised from the dead.’* (Philippians 2:11)

‘Forgetting what is behind and straining for what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.’

(Philippians 3:13-14)

247. (Sept 3)

We're told in the Bible to 'strive' to enter God's rest. It seems like a contradiction, striving to rest.

But the point is that the only thing in life worth deep commitment of your soul, is to be right with God, close to him.

We're not supposed to 'stress' about being right with God, we're meant to be moving intentional – striving – in that direction.

'Let us therefore strive to enter that rest...'
(Hebrews 4:11)

248. (Sept 4)

Emulate the faith, not the act or the impact.

'Joseph sold a field and brought the money and gave it to the apostles to use... But Ananias and his wife, Sapphira, also sold a piece of property, but kept back part of the money, and brought the rest to the apostles for them to use... Peter asked her, 'Is that the full amount of money you received for your property?' Sapphira said, 'Yes, that was the price.' ... At that moment she fell down and died...' (Acts 4-5)

249. (Sept 5)

'I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener... every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.' (John 15:1-2)

Sometimes when I feel 'fruitful' in my spiritual life, I experience a type of 'pruning'. Like, I might face an insecurity in myself that I need to deal with – or let God deal with, and heal by his grace.

It feels like a 'weakening', but it is a pruning, a cutting back so even more fruit can be produced.

250. (Sept 6)

'With the increase of words is the increase of sin.' (Proverbs 10:19)

#shhhhhh

251. (Sept 7)

When we talk about *'God's will'*, we are usually thinking in terms of our will. We are seeing and interpreting this word, this characteristic, through our life, our history, our experiences, and what we understand as people by *'our will'*.

To understand what God means – or is - we need to interpret it through God's life, God's histories, his experiences, his teachings.

We have to soak in God's revelation about himself, so that we can understand him through his own lens, not ours.

'Jesus said, 'You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures, together with the power of God.' (Matthew 22:29)

'They want to be teachers, but they do not know what they are talking about.'
(1 Timothy 1:7)

252. (Sept 8)

'... and after you have done everything, to stand.' (Ephesians 6:13)

I love this image. After the storm – of the heart, mind or circumstances – the winds die down, peace settles in, and you are still standing. You did, despite the confusion, stand strong.

253. (Sept 9)

Paul, after lots of talk and teaching on deep theological matters...

'Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!

How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!

"Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?"

"Who has ever given to God, that God should repay them?"

For from him and through him and for him are all things.

To him be the glory forever! Amen.'

(Romans 11:33-36)

#stayhumble

254. (Sept 10)

'So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.' (Luke 17:10)

#stayhumble

255. (Sept 11)

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,’ declares the Lord. ‘As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.’”

(Isaiah 55:8-9)

#stayhumble

256. (Sept 12)

Sometimes you do have to press a little for your rightful identity, your status, not to be served but to serve.

I think of the increasing of speed and therefore sound, not to make more noise, but to break the sound barrier, i.e. to come into a place of quietness, even to fade from notice.

Some people are making noise to be noticed and served; others are making noise not for personal attention but rather to serve others, to make the false noise go away.

'Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.'

(Titus 2:15)

257. (Sept 13)

I listen to the Lord when you're talking to me. Is he speaking through you to me now? Is he speaking a word to me for you?

I will not look to you for affirmation or confirmation of who I am in Jesus, of his report over my life. From God to me. Not through another.

'Paul, sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ.' (Galatians 1:1)

'Get yourself ready! Stand up and say to them whatever I command you. Do not be terrified by them, or I will terrify you before them.' (Jeremiah 1:17)

(and see and ponder 2 Samuel 5:12)

258. (Sept 14)

Be that missing link.

'I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap... but I found no one.'

(Ezekiel 22:30)

With the gifts God has given you, what wall do you see that needs building? What gap do you see that needs filling?

259. (Sept 15)

'Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.'

(1 Timothy 4:12)

'Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.'

(Titus 2:15)

260. (Sept 16)

The peace of Jesus is different to that of the world. The strength of God is different to that of the world.

'My peace I give you... not as the world gives...' (John 14:27)

'When I am weak, then I am strong.'
(2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

261. (Sept 17)

Hold other people's estimation of you very loosely. Hold your own estimation of you very loosely. Jesus holds you!

'I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.' (1 Corinthians 4:3-4)

'To the one who is victorious... I will give that person a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it' (Revelation 2:17)

262. (Sept 18)

Don't linger on falsehood or confusion. Don't ruminate over people and unkindness or insecurity. It has no standing. It will not remain. Fix your eyes, and continue to walk in what you do know is truth, in what you do know is pure spirit.

'The wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure...' (James 3:17)

263. (Sept 19)

'Peace that passes understanding' (Phil 4:7)

'It was for freedom that you have been set free.' (Gal 5:1)

Prayer in faith moves God's heart, and he answers. (James 5:16; John 16:24; Heb 11:6)

Believing and *persevering* in prayer moves God's heart. (Luke 18:1-8)

We are called by God to speak against strongholds of the mind, of the heart. (2 Cor 10:3-5; John 20:23)

We are called by Jesus to *'loose'* and *'bind'* things in spirit.

So in Christ each day we keep stepping forward in his Spirit, we keep pursuing peace, freedom, the breaking of chains (*of arrogance, of deceit, of hurt feelings, etc.*), the binding of discouragement... Don't stop and stare. If you see work in the Spirit that needs doing – faith and prayers to change life – then pray and believe and change life. Keep walking... Everything might not change in an instant, but God has promised it will change when we keep in step with the Spirit, trust him, and keep going.

264. (Sept 20)

You are what you give.

You truly 'have' what you have given away.

In a sense, the true you is what you *don't* have – the kind words you've given (not gotten), the money you've given (not saved).

Really breaking it down, in a deep, spiritual sense: You are what you are not.

'Jesus made himself nothing... So God exalted him to the highest place, and gave him the name that is above every name.'
(Philippians 2:7-9)

265. (Sept 21)

'The greatest among you will be your servant.' (Matthew 23:11)

'Jesus made himself nothing...'
(Philippians 2:7)

266. (Sept 22)

Matthias – mentioned one time in the Bible. He was appointed as an apostle to replace Judas. (Acts 1:21-26)

So Matthias – faithful and present from the beginning of Jesus' ministry to the very end – mentioned one time. Judas, on the other hand, a thief and traitor, spoken of throughout the gospels many times.

So just because you're in the limelight and get lots of attention, doesn't mean you're in God's limelight, so to speak. Let's live to have God's favor and God's recognition, not that of mankind.

'Fear of man [same as 'love of man'] will prove to be a snare.' (Proverbs 29:25)

'Your Father in heaven sees what is done in secret and will reward you.'
(Matthew 6:4,6,18)

267. (Sept 23)

Beauty for ashes: In Christ the deepest of scars disappears over time.

'The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me... to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes...' (Isaiah 61:1-3)

268. (Sept 24)

'In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God... made himself nothing.' (Philippians 2:6-7)

The real challenge in this life is not to 'become' someone, but to become no one in order to better love someone.

269. (Sept 25)

‘See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.’ (Colossians 2:8)

‘human tradition’ and **‘basic principles of this world’** – so there will be some ‘evidence’ in this deceptive philosophy, some rationale, some ‘good’ sense. But Christ is his own ‘set of truths’, so to speak, and if any other philosophy leads one to deny Christ as Lord, well, it is ultimately deceptive philosophy, even it makes good worldly – or mathematical - sense.

270. (Sept 26)

Jesus will you lead to step away from a person, an activity, a conversation, sometimes in a clearcut way, or sometimes by degrees.

Remember that our lives are not our own. Ultimately we live for Christ. If he leads, we follow. We don't need to defend ourselves, or justify ourselves. He says to pull the boat out of the harbor and sail, so we do...

'I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.'

(Galatians 2:20)

'Christ died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.'

(2 Corinthians 5:15)

271. (Sept 27)

I like to be generous to honor God. But I also like to be generous sometimes to open the way for me to share the gospel message with a person. This is why when I do outreach, if I can, I might have a table with some things to give people, like water, coffee, socks or backpacks.

'A gift opens the way and ushers the giver into the presence of the great.'

(Proverbs 18:16)

'Use your wealth to gain friends, so that when it is gone, they will welcome you into eternal dwellings.' (Luke 16:9)

272. (Sept 28)

'Give your servant joy, Lord, for I put my trust in you.' (Psalm 86:4)

Sometimes we simply need to ask the Lord to pour joy in.

273. (Sept 29)

People spend their lives *straining* to make an experience of heaven here on earth.

People build a mansion, and then spend the rest of their days refinancing to repair the mansion.

In Jesus we have a home in heaven to look forward to, even to invest in. We can be at peace. Life will never be even close to perfect. Don't strive for heaven here on earth.

'Jesus said, 'Do not worry about what you will eat or drink or wear... people with no faith in God chase after these things... Instead, make a priority of building God's Kingdom and his righteousness, and all the things you need will be provided for you by the Lord.' (Matthew 6:25-34)

274. (Sept 30)

We can think and worry about things now that we are not even supposed to be aware of.

We can have knowledge (or thought patterns and content) that isn't even real knowledge. Paul refers to it as *'false knowledge'*. (1 Timothy 6:20)

When we ate of the tree of knowledge – and sinned against God – false knowledge flooded our little minds, hearts and world. (Genesis 2:17)

Sometimes our insecurities grow because we are thinking about things – and people – that we're not supposed to. Like, the knowledge of that thing, that broken thing, is not even 'real knowledge', it should not be on the radar of life.

Is there something – or someone – that occupies your heart and mind, and really should not even be on the radar of your thoughts or heart? Their existence, so to speak, is outside the realm of true knowledge, God's knowledge?

'Set your mind on things above, not on earthly things.' (Colossians 3:2)

275. (Oct 1)

Jesus let himself be misunderstood. Jesus let himself be misjudged. He let himself be dishonored, disrespected. He allowed himself to be unknown.

'... instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.' (1 Peter 2:23)

276. (Oct 2)

Don't take offense, just take another road.

'Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them? But Jesus turned and rebuked them. Then he and his disciples went to another village.'

(Luke 9:51-56)

277. (Oct 3)

'Resist the devil and he will flee from you.'

(James 4:8)

Resist. Stand against. Stand your ground.
Believe and stand. Stay. No fear. He will flee. No
other option, and the promise of God.

278. (Oct 4)

When we encounter a challenge, we think.
That's natural, normal, good.

However, if we don't see clarity, we pray, and
ask God for wisdom – with faith, with a listening
ear.

It's OK to think first. It's actually impossible not
to. God gave you a mind – and much wise
counsel (Proverbs, people, experiences) – so
that you would think wisely.

***'If anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask God...
and it will be given to you. But when you ask,
you must believe and not doubt...'***

(James 1:5-6)

279. (Oct 5)

'Avoid godless chatter, and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in doing so have departed from the faith.'

(1 Timothy 6:20-21)

'godless chatter' can include theology or Bible studies. It is about talk and focus that ultimately takes us away from God's true call, lead, Spirit-filled teaching and action. If all the talk is producing only pride and inaction, well, it's godless.

'We know that "We all possess knowledge." But knowledge puffs up while love builds up. Those who think they know something do not yet know as they ought to know. But whoever loves God is known by God.' (1 Corinthians 8:1-3)

280. (Oct 6)

There are seasons of deep struggle in life.

I think of Jesus going into the desert and being tempted for 40 days and nights, no food or water – the intense pressure to ‘keep faith’, to remain hopeful, and to even speak, perhaps whisper, words of truth in the face of the devil’s lies. (Matthew 4)

We will also encounter seasons where we feel very weak. But just like Jesus, even in weakness, we can, by God’s grace, ‘keep faith’, remain hopeful, and even speak, perhaps whisper, words of truth in the face of the devil’s lies. And that’s full victory right there!

‘God said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. When you are weak, you are strong!’ (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

281. (Oct 7)

‘Jesus said, ‘I am making all things new.’

(Revelation 21:5)

Every shred of evil, arrogance, envy and pride, is being reduced to ashes. It will be no more. It will have no place. Peace and harmony will blow in the wind, across the eternal lands.

282. (Oct 8)

Listen, in the moment of the real battle, you will have all the authority you need, all the anointing you need, and the complete victory. God has promised this!

If, in the meantime, you have mixed and matched feelings about yourself, insecurities, etc., well, this is not who you are, or who you are not. Your feelings about yourself, are not yourself. God determines who you are, and on that final day your work will be shown for what it is. Your work in faith, not your feelings along the way.

So don't worry about how you feel – up, down, all around. Just keep eyes on Jesus, and keep walking!

'But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict.' (Luke 21:14-15)

'If anyone builds on this foundation [Christ] using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work.'

(1 Corinthians 3:12-13)

283. (Oct 9)

Posture of the soul. One man appears to stand tall, but his soul is kneeled before God. Another man appears humble in word and deed, but his soul exalts itself in pride.

‘But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.’ (1 Samuel 16:7)

284. (Oct 10)

The high priest asked Jesus what he taught; Jesus said he had spoken openly and to ask those who heard him. Pilate asked Jesus if he was king; Jesus asked Pilate if this question was his own idea or was he asking someone else's question for them. Pilate went on to ask Jesus what he had done, but Jesus doubled back to answer the first question about being a king. Later Pilate asked him where he was from, and Jesus did not answer at all. Then Pilate went on to talk about his own authority, at which point Jesus stated that the only authority – and therefore, accountability – that Pilate had, was from his Father. (John 18)

Fascinating to really look at the questions and answers around Jesus' life, throughout the gospels. He always spoke and responded on his own terms, not usually with a straight answer to the person's question. I believe this is because people's questions usually have such a mix of emotion and motive in them, that to answer what they ask is rarely to speak truth that they need to hear.

'The chief priests and the elders asked Jesus a question... Jesus said, 'First let me ask you a question, and if you answer...''

(Matthew 21:23-27)

285. (Oct 11)

Don't build on man's recognition. That's no foundation. People's favor – and praise – will come and go. It will go as fast as it comes.

Build on God's grace. This sounds mysterious, because it is '*spirit*'. (1 Cor 3:11; 2 Cor 12:9-10) But it is the only rock to build on. It is building not just on what Jesus taught (Matthew 7:24-27), but on what he teaches you still by his Holy Spirit.

People don't see the invisible, the kingdom of God. Jesus said this kingdom that he builds – that we build – you don't observe with your eyes. (Luke 17:20-21) Princes and princesses in this kingdom walk by you unnoticed every day. And some people will miss *your* true name and calling, also – believers as well as unbelievers. They missed Jesus, they'll miss you. Be patient, be steady, continue to grow in the 'true you', the one Jesus defines and leads.

'They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated - the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground. These were all commended for their faith...' (Hebrews 11:37-39)

286. (Oct 12)

'No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer... Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.' (2 Timothy 2:4-7)

Paul gives Timothy a few wise words, like proverbs, and then ends by encouraging him to **'reflect'**. Pause. Ponder. And he says the Lord will whisper to him here...

287. (Oct 13)

The 'thorn', the discomfort, referred to in 2 Corinthians 12, is one of the passages I've written most about, cut most videos about, blogs... It just keeps stirring new angles and meanings in my soul.

I usually ponder the power of God's grace to overcome the thorn. However, today, I was thinking about the thorn itself, and how God said it was intended to keep Paul from conceit, from pride, specifically as a counter-balance to deep, spiritual experiences Paul was having.

Sometimes a little discomfort keeps us from fixating on our own accomplishments and status. Keeps our eyes on the road before us, rather than on ourselves on that road.

'In order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh...'
(2 Corinthians 12:7)

288. (Oct 14)

'Where there is envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.' (James 3:16)

When you discern something is 'off', you don't need to have all the details, or full clarity, to justify your sense – to others or to yourself. Sometimes your feeling that something's not right, is a true indicator of something deeper, darker going on.

Break down the verse above. Behind sometimes what you see on the surface as a dynamic of envy or of personal ambition (to be important, rich, in charge...) behind it, under it, there is more 'evil practice'.

You don't need to have all the facts and figures to make a move. You don't account to anyone but the Lord. If by his Spirit you discern something off, move on that. In my experience, sometimes even years later, the thing that was under the surface does come to light.

#discern

289. (Oct 15)

Prayer: *Help me God to believe the way I want other people to believe.*

'Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear... Your heavenly Father knows that you need them.' (Matthew 6:25-34)

290. (Oct 16)

There's a time to just leave an enquiry behind. There is a time when the wise man just steps away from the debate.

It might look to others like he stepped away because he doesn't have the wisdom. But he stepped away because of wisdom.

If you try to enquire into things that can't be known, you're wasting your time.

There are somethings that can only be known in spirit, in truth, not in mind and words.

'We take captive thoughts and make them subject to Christ.' (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

'And when your heart condemns you, God is greater than your heart and knows all things.'
(1 John 3:20)

291. (Oct 17)

On the sovereignty of God, per the revelation of Scripture:

God is involved in life more than we know. And you have freedom of choice, influence on God more than you know.

'Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!

How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!

'Who has known the mind of the Lord?

Or who has been his counselor?'

'Who has ever given to God, that God should repay them?'

For from him and through him and for him are all things.

To him be the glory forever! Amen.'

(Romans 11:33-36)

292. (Oct 18)

401 prophets. All prophets. Only 1 speaking
God's Word.

#michaiah

(1 Kings 22)

293. (Oct 19)

Don't work to build – or leave – a spiritual legacy, heritage, influence. Simply commit your ways – your children, your projects, your heart, your hopes – to Lord.

'Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans.' (Proverbs 16:3)

294. (Oct 20)

God points a way forward. Wisdom. The past tells you there's a better way forward. Let's focus forward.

God doesn't focus on your past and call you a fool. He focuses forward. He gives new mercies each day, and he brings new wisdom for tomorrow.

***'Come now, let us settle the matter,'
says the Lord.***

***'Though your sins are like scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red as crimson,
they shall be like wool.'***

(Isaiah 1:18)

***'The Lord your God is with you,
the Mighty Warrior who saves.
He will take great delight in you;
in his love he will no longer rebuke you,
but will rejoice over you with singing.'***

(Zephaniah 3:17)

295. (Oct 21)

Pour out your heart to God. Don't hold back. God calls us to trust him with our heart, our heart's desires and needs.

When we do this, when I do this, when I get it off my chest and rest for a minute, then I see more clearly what I am grateful for. These things occur to me. I see them. I can then whisper without pressure, without affect, my thanksgivings, also...

'Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.'

(Philippians 4:6-7)

296. (Oct 22)

If you're praying against a thorn, you already know what the thorn is, you already have victory. It's just a feeling you're fighting now, but you know the truth that's why you're standing against it... You know that 'prick' shouldn't be there, doesn't have to be there.

When you're wrestling with insecurities, uncomfortable feelings in your heart and mind, you already have victory. You're already seeing the truth. You're already standing over it. That's why God says, ***'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'*** (2 Corinthians 12:9)

297. (Oct 23)

Sometimes answers don't hold the true answer.

Sometimes the big event is not where it's at.

Sometimes we can be sitting around talking *about* God, when someone else is out partnering *with* God.

'Jesus said, 'My words are spirit and they are life.' (John 6:63)

'Jesus said, 'Where two or three people meet together in my name, I am there with them.'
(Matthew 18:20)

'There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.'

'I will not,' he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.

'Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, 'I will, sir,' but he did not go.

Which of the two did what his father wanted?'

(Matthew 21:28-31)

298. (Oct 24)

You have faith to give. You might not be able to give money, or you might not feel you should give money, but you can truly believe for them, with them. You can pray and believe.

'And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.' (Ephesians 6:18)

299. (Oct 25)

Decide where it's happening!

Be where it's happening!

I know Christ is true. I know it. The party could be jumping down the street, but around the corner, where two or three are gathered in Jesus' name, I just know. I know where the power is, the light, the love, the beauty.

'Jesus said, 'Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there with them.'

(Matthew 12:20)

'I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than dwell in the tents of the wicked.' (Psalm 84:10)

Think about this last verse. Rewrite it in your own words, your own life situation: 'I would rather... than...'

300. (Oct 26)

‘Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to.

(Acts 16:6-7)

‘We wanted to come to you, but Satan blocked our way.’

(1 Thessalonians 2:18)

‘Now when I went to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ and found that the Lord had opened a door for me, I still had no peace of mind, because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I said goodbye to them and went on to Macedonia.

(2 Corinthians 2:12-13)

Jesus stopped Paul from preaching, from going somewhere. The devil also blocked Paul's path on occasion. Another time the Lord opened a door for Paul, but he did not have peace and left there. (and that was OK!)

#discern

#stayhumble

301. (Oct 27)

Sometimes you might feel alone in your faith. Even alone in your faith among other believers. Sometimes. But you're actually not alone. The Lord has his people, even on your wavelength, your level. So stay encouraged. Keep walking.

'All the other prophets were prophesying the same thing... But Micaiah said...'

(1 Kings 22)

'Elijah said, 'I am the only one left, Lord.'... But the Lord said, 'I still have seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal...' (1 Kings 19:14-18)

302. (Oct 28)

The 'thorn' of the conscience. The sting. Dear Lord, prick that man's conscience. We need the thorns of God.

'The Holy Spirit will convict the world of sin...' (John 16:8)

'Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven...' (Matthew 16:19)

303. (Oct 29)

See what you see, think what you think. So what if you see it differently to those around you, believe differently? God calls you to this, and it is your right to do so. You will answer – not to those around you, not to this passing world – but only to the Lord.

'If you were of the world, it would love you as its own. But you are not of the world...'

(John 15:18-19)

304. (Oct 30)

Prayer:

Help me, Lord, to be humble of heart.

*Help me to boast in my weakness, so that I
might be strong, and see fruit.*

*I want to be found knowing you, walking with you
and ministering you.*

I want to be found caught up in the Spirit.

***‘When the Son of Man comes, will he find
faith on the earth?’ (Luke 18:8)***

305. (Oct 31)

Listen, when it comes to the revelation of Jesus Christ, we *present*, we *testify*, and we let that revelation do its own work.

In a sense it's like putting a drop of dye in water, or yeast into dough...

We plant Christ, because we believe as the message and revelation of Christ grows in a heart, a community, it will, one day, be the only truth that remains. All other so-called 'lights' will dim, fade and disappear. All other so-called 'hopes' will fail. All other causes will cease. All other kingdoms will crumble, and blow like chaff in the wind.

So we share Christ. And Christ will vindicate himself.

'When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father - the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father - he will testify about me. And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.' (John 15:26-27)

306. (Nov 1)

Give others the last word. Give the Holy Spirit the last word.

You stop. Let them respond. Then let the Holy Spirit respond.

'Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath...'

(Romans 12:19)

307. (Nov 2)

It counts. Your good works *do* count.

You might think, sometimes, that your good works aren't really the 'true' you, and that if people could see your heart, your thoughts... But you know what? God *does* see your heart, and yet he still credits good deeds with reward.

Now, if people are trying to hide a sinful lifestyle by presenting to the world a type of 'good guy' persona, well, that's hypocrisy, false. But if someone knows they are a sinner, knows that only Jesus saves them, but wants to do good things because it does honor God, well, those good things do count!

'If a wicked person turns away from all the sins they have committed... and does what is right and just, that person will surely live; they will not die.' (Ezekiel 18:21)

'Do not grow weary in doing good, for you know that at the proper time you will reap a reward if you do not give up.' (Galatians 6:9)

#doinggoodthingscounts

308. (Nov 3)

Are you tired of your level of faith?

Sometimes I'm praying, but at the same time I'm thinking, I'm worrying...

I want to grow. I want to get to a new level of faith, a new experience of peace. And however that might change me, I want to become that new person.

'Cast all your anxiety on the Lord, because he cares for you.' (1 Peter 5:7)

309. (Nov 4)

Some knowledge is feeling. You don't process it in your head, but in your heart.

A flitting feeling about where somebody is at. You don't have words for it, you don't need words for it, the true knowledge is in the feeling.

'The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.' (Romans 8:26)

310. (Nov 5)

Not true.

It's just an untruthful focus – that thing you're obsessing about. That person. That accusation. Take your mind off it. Just reel your mind back into the space of God, the realm of true knowledge, not 'false knowledge', false thinking and false light in the eyes. (Matthew 6:22-23; 1 Timothy 6:20)

Look at this woman's joy, her peace, her 'world view' at this moment of truth in her life:

'Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn't she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.' In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.' (Luke 15:8-10)

311. (Nov 6)

I share for safety. A safer world. That's what drives me to continue sharing Jesus with people. I know how much safer people are when surrounded by God-fearing people.

I believe that Christ redeems, makes pure, the heart of a person. And then that person becomes a safe person to other people. They become a protector, a helper, honest and true. They become a lamp.

'Jesus said, 'You are the light of the world.'
(Matthew 5:14)

312. (Nov 7)

'What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.'

(1 Corinthians 2:12-14)

As a Christian you speak a 'spirit language'. People with the Spirit of God 'get' what you mean when you speak through the lens, the filter of Jesus. They get it. They also have the Spirit of God, and they get this language of Christ, they see his Kingdom, they know his mission.

313. (Nov 8)

We all want our loved ones to have the life of a princess. We want to get them away from darkness, from want, from pain and sorrow.

This is why, my friends, the gospel is so powerful, so comforting. It tells of heaven, of salvation, of eternal safety and comfort and beauty – inside of the soul, and in the landscape around us.

‘Jesus said, ‘Do not be worried or upset... My Father’s house has many rooms. I am going to prepare a place for you.’ (John 14:1-2)

‘He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.’ (Revelation 21:4)

‘Jesus said, ‘In this world you will have trouble, but take heart! I have overcome the world.’ (John 16:33)

314. (Nov 9)

'Lord, I can't take it anymore.' (1 Kings 19:4)

Elijah was weary. He wanted to just die. He was done.

Listen, my friend, if you feel like giving up, fall into the Lord's arms. He will help. He will give you rest. In this place of Elijah's weariness, God raised up helper for Elijah, allowed him to pass the torch to other prophets, other leaders. And God was not disappointed.

If you feel you need to fall away from God, there's something wrong. It's not God you need a break from; you need a break from the pressures of life.

Weary? Ask God to change things up for you now.

315. (Nov 10)

Driving along wondering how is it that I hear the voice of God. How do I?

As I was thinking on this, I remembered that same morning I woke up and read a text from a friend. A Scripture came to my mind. I rolled back in bed... But then I thought I really should send the verse to him. I texted him. He wrote back saying it made him cry. Said he was going to ponder the verse all day, that he really needed to hear that. I followed up saying I did believe it was God's word to him.

The truth is, my friend, as a true believer in Jesus you do hear his voice. Maybe not when you're trying to hear it, straining to hear it. And there is no 'technique' to hear it. Love God. Walk with Jesus. You do hear him.

'My sheep know my voice.' (John 10:27)

'I will guide you continually...' (Isaiah 58:11)

316. (Nov 11)

Kari Jobe sings, *'It may look like I'm surrounded, but I'm surrounded by You!'*

'And Elisha prayed, 'Open his eyes, Lord, so that he may see.' Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.' (1 Kings 6:17)

317. (Nov 12)

There is a time to address an issue, to speak. But be careful, be guarded, to not let the issue 'get' you.

Personally I tend to focus on a simple, key message, turning people's attention to Jesus himself, and tabling the question as to where people are at – individually – with Christ. I avoid commenting on many issues that cross my path or social media, because God has called me to focus on the gospel message alone.

However, every now and again something will come up that the Lord does prompt my spirit to speak to. Someone might bring up a legitimate question on a topic, or someone else might be speaking things to others – misleading them – and I feel an anointing to speak to it in that moment.

Where I have gone wrong is when I get emotionally involved, or I allow my pride to get in the mix, and I want to win an argument. Usually if this happens, no matter if I win the argument, I feel I've lost the war. I walk away feeling I won a debate and lost the soul.

Jesus rarely took the bait of even a hot topic or a disingenuous question. What he did was respond by the Spirit on a higher level, and bring the focus to one that honored God, did not simply (or at all!) address the question.

'A woman in the crowd shouted out, 'Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you!' Jesus answered, 'Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.' (Luke 11:27-28)

318. (Nov 13)

Let my faithfulness in God's call on my life, be what defines me. Let me just keep moving in faithfulness day after day... not grasping for identity, but rather pursuing and living out of [both] the call on my life.

'I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus has taken hold of me. Forgetting what is behind, and straining towards what is ahead...'

(Philippians 3:12-13)

319. (Nov 14)

Jesus didn't answer on the terms of the questioner.

Just because someone asks a question, does not obligate you to answer their question – not on the terms they set. We don't owe answers – even about Jesus – to people who ask. We owe it to the Lord to listen to him, to his Spirit, and speak accordingly.

'One day while Jesus was teaching, the chief priests and the teachers of the Law and the elders asked him, 'Tell us, by what authority are you doing these things?'

Jesus answered, 'I will first ask you a question...' (Luke 20:1-8)

320. (Nov 15)

Jesus said, ***'Seek first my kingdom and my righteous...'*** (Matthew 6:33)

This is really challenging! Jesus is calling people here in this challenging world, to not focus on career primarily, not on family, health, safety, retirement, education, opportunities... but to seek first his kingdom. His kingdom, not my kingdom.

We need each other as followers of Jesus to ***'spur one another on to love and good deeds'***, to remind one another of this truth, this other kingdom, other citizenship, that is ours, and is the only inheritance that will stand, will last.

'And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another - and all the more as you see the Day approaching.' (Hebrews 10:24-25)

321. (Nov 16)

'But you, keep your head...' (2 Timothy 4:5)

I tend to lose my head under pressure. Here Paul is telling Timothy to keep his head when surrounded by the pressure of false teaching and false teachers.

What does it look like for a Christian – a Christian concerned about false teaching and false teachers – to *'keep their head'*?

I think it looks like forward motion, forward action, in your call to speak *true* teaching, to be a *true* teacher. Don't get distracted by the false; stay in forward motion in the truth.

'Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.' (2 Timothy 4:2-5)

322. (Nov 17)

That thing, that struggle, that worry, just keep bathing it in the blood of Jesus. It will fade, numb, become nothing over time.

‘They overcame him [the accuser] by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony.’ (Revelation 12:11)

#faith

323. (Nov 18)

Sometimes when I encounter a hostile response to my testimony, my witness, it makes me a little afraid. I can feel the violence under the surface.

Other times, I feel an indignation rise up in me, where I feel the folly before me just teetering on the edge of a cliff. It has zero power. It has zero impact. Not here, not now, not ever.

‘The wicked are like chaff that the wind blows away. The wicked will not stand in the judgement.’ (Psalm 1:4-5)

‘The Lord laughs at the wicked, for he knows his day is coming.’ (Psalm 37:13)

324. (Nov 19)

Sometimes I do my best work when I'm weak.
God's way.

'God said, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'
(2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

Note: 'Perfect', not just good enough.

325. (Nov 20)

'Without a vision the people perish.'

(Proverbs 29:18)

Sometimes we just need a fresh vision. Not more understanding, more insights, but just fresh vision of the landscape of God, to feel his wind, his Spirit, blow through.

'Elijah prayed, 'Open his eyes, Lord, so that he may see.' The Lord opened the servants eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.'

(2 Kings 6:17)

326. (Nov 21)

Reason.

Even reason is only reasonable if it is in the right spirit, and at the right moment. You can apply reason wrongly if the spirit it is standing on, is off.

There was a man who was trying to prove God's strength by letting his children injure themselves. Everything about this is wrong. But why? His reasons would stack, would stand. With words he could connect the dots here.

Even reason relies on spirit of truth.

'We take captive thoughts and make them subject to Christ.' (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

'Jesus said, 'My words are spirit and they are life.' (John 6:63)

'God said, 'What do you see, Jeremiah?''
(Jeremiah 1:11)

327. (Nov 22)

'God is faithful, and he will do it.'

(1 Thessalonians 5:24)

In my walk with the Lord, anytime I *wonder* about my call, my anointing, my gifting, will I be able, I can find myself doubting... But anytime I actually find myself *in* a situation when my true calling and authority in Jesus is needed, God pours through me. Every time.

Thinking about things, I wonder, I'm unsure...
When I'm *in* it, God always pours through.

'Make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict.' (Luke 21:14-15)

328. (Nov 23)

Heaven. So obvious to me sometimes. How can you not believe in it?

We never asked to be here, to be created, to be gazing at life and questioning life. Stars and seas and food and smiles. The wonder. The sheer wonder. And then there is darkness of heart, evil and more evil. So clear to see – a story of good and evil. So clear to see – creation and a Creator.

So for this God to reveal himself, to invade and correct the deepest of trouble, the darkest spirit of sin and death, resonates with everything in my being, my mind. For this God to correct and create yet another world, a chapter 2, a redemption place, an eternal space, just answers every question of the soul.

'The heavens declare the glory of God, the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech, night after night they display knowledge.' (Psalm 19:1-2)

329. (Nov 24)

Knowing who you are:

It is important to have identity. But let God hold it, let God call it. He'll define it in the moment. You just continue to keep your eyes on him, let him define your identity. He'll come through, every time, and far purer.

'I have called you by name. You are mine,' says the Lord.' (Isaiah 43:1)

330. (Nov 25)

Prayer:

'Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings.' (Psalm 17:8)

331. (Nov 26)

I so often try to think my way out of struggles, worries. I need to pray more.

The ultimate humility, really, is to pray for help, pray for God to tackle a thing, bring peace into the mind, still thoughts, steer you.

'Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms... And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests...' (Ephesians 6:10-12,18)

332. (Nov 27)

Everybody is to be pitied. If they are human, they are to be pitied.

Just like you, these people around you today have a tough situation. Maybe money struggles, health, home life, relationships, maybe abuse going on, abuse in the past, bullied, humiliated... Who knows. God knows. But if you can be kind, be kind.

'When Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.' (Matthew 9:36)

'If you have a gift of encouragement, encourage.' (Romans 12:8)

333. (Nov 28)

Jesus focused into the need, strategized. He said, '**We need workers.**' (Matthew 9:36-38) I tend to get overwhelmed. I want to crawl under a rock, get me the... outta here! (*But there is more strength for me.*)

However, there are moments you *are* going to need to step back from all people – friends, family, Christians – and spend some time with the Lord. Rest. Replenish.

'He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters, he restores my soul.' (Psalm 23:1-3)

334. (Nov 29)

Don't take your reference point, your identity, from any man, woman, child, situation, station, status or hater or admirer. God alone speaks your name. Eyes on him only. Be to others who God says you are, not who they say you are.

'... for I know whom I have believed...'
(2 Timothy 1:12)

335. (Nov 30)

I'm praying that you help me pray, that mind won't wander into things it shouldn't. Prayer, of course. No kid questions it anymore than talking to a friend, asking a friend for help. With a friend you knock on his door. Same with God and prayer.

'Jesus said, 'Unless you change and become like a child, you cannot enter the kingdom of God.' (Matthew 18:3)

336. (Dec 1)

God's peace is different. (John 14:27)

God's strength is different. (2 Cor 12:9-10) In our weakness, we are strong. It's a God-type of strength.

“My ways are not your ways,’ says the Lord...” (Isaiah 55:8-9)

337. (Dec 2)

I want my words to be like Christ's words, **'spirit and life.'** (John 6:63) I want my words – and writings – to be full of the Spirit, full of power, not just 'letters'. I want my words and my books to breathe, to come off the page, to release people. I can't make this happen, but God can make this happen. God, fill me, anoint me, set me apart, breathe through me in Jesus' name.

'The kingdom of God is not one of mere words but of power.' (1 Corinthians 4:20)

338. (Dec 3)

When Jesus was asked by Pilate if he was a king, Jesus said, ***'Is this your idea, or did someone else speak to you about me?'*** (John 18:34)

Jesus checked with Pilate whether or not he was asking this question sincerely, from the heart, personally?

Check in, gently and humbly, as to the sincerity of the enquiry. Or if you discern it is not sincere, answer shrewdly. Don't throw pearls before swine. (Matthew 7:6)

'Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect...' (1 Peter 3:15)

339. (Dec 4)

I have a thorn in my side – insecurity.

But God has promised that his grace is sufficient. Now if his grace is 'sufficient', that means that this thorn – my own insecurities – pose no risk to my life and impact for the Lord. My weakness here – if I stand on his grace – does not lessen me. I will not lose a degree of power if I trust in his grace – whether plagued by the thorn or not.

'I asked the Lord three times to take it away, but he said, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'
(2 Corinthians 12:7-10)

#noloss

340. (Dec 5)

Use every advantage you have to honor the disadvantaged so that WHEN (not 'if') you are disadvantaged, they will honor you.

Give money to those who don't have money.

Give honor to those who don't get honored.

Give ear to those who don't get listened to.

Give voice to those who can't speak out.

Give a smile to those who don't get admired.

'I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.'

(Luke 16:9)

341. (Dec 6)

We live in a world of deception. Everything real has a counterfeit – gold, silver, shoes and perfumes.

Paul tells us that even demons ‘counterfeit’ angels. He tells us there are counterfeit gospels and spirits. This isn’t something to fear, but it is something to be aware of. (see 2 Cor 11:4,14)

‘Stop judging by mere appearances, but instead judge correctly.’ (John 7:24)

‘Beware of false prophets... You will know them by their fruit.’ (Matthew 7:15-16)

342. (Dec 7)

You always have something to give, to impart. No one eclipses you. Identity in the kingdom of God is not 'linear', like, someone else is 'better' and therefore you are not needed. Nope. Doesn't work like that.

You just need to 'heed the lead' of Jesus in your own life, your own day. He will turn you left and right in his purposes in your life, his people, his mission. If you find yourself somewhere where what you have to offer is already being offered, well, that means the Lord has another door post for you to man.

'In Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.' (Romans 12:5-8)

343. (Dec 8)

Afraid to die? Don't be. We need to get there, pass through.

Everything in this life that you love is really only a metaphor. The true beauty, '**life that is truly life**', is on the other side. (1 Timothy 6:19)

Everything you love in life that you wish you could stay for, well, you're only going to *really* experience these things – and enjoy those people fully - in heaven, on the other side.

Don't fear death.

'Jesus Christ destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light.' (2 Timothy 1:10)

344. (Dec 9)

I feel like the only things I really have, are the things I've given away.

'Whoever loses their life for me and the gospel will save it.' (Mark 8:35)

345. (Dec 10)

You have so much to give!

Your eyes, they are strong! Your smile, it touches people. Kind words, kind tone, a gentle answer breaks bones. So much to give!

'A word in season is like apples of gold in settings of silver.' (Proverbs 25:11)

346. (Dec 11)

I wondered, *'Should my hear break?'*

God whispered, *'No. Hope in me. I'm on this.'*

***'The eternal God is your refuge,
and underneath are the everlasting arms.
He will drive out your enemies before you,
saying, 'Destroy them!'***

(Deuteronomy 33:27)

347. (Dec 12)

Everyone in the court room can silently judge.
But there is only one judge in the court room
whose judgement call counts.

'I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.' (1 Corinthians 4:3-4)

348. (Dec 13)

***'Therefore I am now going to allure her;
I will lead her into the wilderness
and speak tenderly to her.
There I will give her back her vineyards,
and will make the Valley of Achor Trouble
door of hope.'***

(Hosea 2:14-15)

349. (Dec 14)

Factor Jesus into your day. So much pressure in life. Even in good times we carry burdens. Call on Jesus in and through your day, he can bring peace.

***'Our days may come to seventy years,
or eighty, if our strength endures;
yet the best of them are but trouble and
sorrow,
for they quickly pass, and we fly away.'***

(Psalm 90:10)

350. (Dec 15)

Life is a fight. People's efforts do matter, your efforts matter. Sometimes you might wonder, might ask, if really it can be this hard. Honestly, sadly, yes. Life is a battle.

So in Jesus, don't give up. Fight for love, for truth, for the gospel to advance.

***'He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.
And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God.'***

(Micah 6:8)

351. (Dec 16)

'This is the word of the Lord: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit.'

(Zechariah 4:6)

'Some trust in chariots, some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.'

(Psalm 20:7)

'God takes no pleasure in the strength of animals or humans. The Lord delights in those who fear him, and who trust in his unfailing love.' (Psalm 147:10-11)

352. (Dec 17)

Press in a little. As the Spirit leads. I often stand back, and allow the Lord to fight for me. But other times I am called to know and believe the favor on my life, the authority and anointing in my life, and to press in with the power of the Lord.

'I have given you the keys to the kingdom. Anything you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven, and anything you bind on earth will be bound in heaven.' (Matthew 16:19)

353. (Dec 18)

Faith connects you to the promises of God.

The dots connect. God promises over your life today, and your faith to take hold of that.

'Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who calls on him must believe that he exists, and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.'

(Hebrews 11:6)

354. (Dec 19)

'Faithing' (verb, tr. & intr.)

When you 'faith', you are mapping new ways, believing God for what he said.

'We live by faith and not by sight.'
(2 Corinthians 5:7)

355. (Dec 20)

We can't imagine a world that is 100% safe, prosperous, and where joy is complete. That is heaven.

We rejoice here in blessing. We always celebrate it! But even blessing here is surrounded by darkness. David rejoiced because **'God lays a table before him in the presence of his enemies'** (Psalm 23:5), but in heaven we will have that same table laid before us without even the existence of enemies anywhere on the planet. Peace on another level.

356. (Dec 21)

The only thing I have is Jesus Christ.

He is not the 'best' thing I have, or my most treasured. He is the *only* thing I really have, you really have. Nothing I have traded for knowing him, was really anything at all. He is everything.

'The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.'

(Matthew 13:45-46)

'Christ is all, and is in all.' (Colossians 3:11)

357. (Dec 22)

Dying alone. Or being alive, and feeling alone.

Moses died alone. (Deuteronomy 34)

Jesus often gloried in not being known. (see Matthew 16:20 and Luke 24:13-35)

There is something powerful about the true man, who can fade. (see Phil 2:6-7)

358. (Dec 23)

'For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy.'

(1 Thessalonians 2:19-20)

'He who saves souls is wise.' (Proverbs 11:30)

We work together as a body of Christ, as a family of believers, to win souls to Jesus. We work together.

359. (Dec 24)

‘Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body... and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many. Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.’

(1 Corinthians 12:12-20)

360. (Dec 25)

When we don't have answers for Jesus, it can feel distressing, and some people abandon their faith.

But why?

When we're out of answers, that's when faith is true, pure.

You still see and know Jesus to be true. This is the place, brother, sister. This is the place where we bear the disgrace he bore, where we are truly humble and free.

You see Jesus. You know Jesus. You might not know 'how', but you know. #revelation

'Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.'

(Hebrews 13:13-14)

'For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.' (2 Corinthians 4:6)

'In his light we see light.' (Psalm 36:9)

361. (Dec 26)

Celebrities. Rock Stars. So much audience, and yet nothing to say.

What really matters is what you leave with people. What they take with them when they leave you. People are ultimately alone with God, and they have eternity in their hearts. We need to soak in his Spirit so that we leave people not just with love, but with God's love, not just with kindness, but with God's kindness. In Jesus' name. It's a different Spirit, a different gift.

People like to be nice, but often the return on that investment is back to that same person. The glory doesn't go to Jesus.

Get on mission with Christ, so that you are not living for yourself – in quietness, in word – but for Jesus.

'And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.'
(2 Corinthians 5:15)

'And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.' (Colossians 3:17)

362. (Dec 27)

Is there any hope for that Marianne? Really? I would love for this case to close and for her to go away.

But do I believe in a God that raises the dead? If he can raise the dead there is hope for people that are bound up, far gone, broken in heart and mind. If he can raise the dead he can repair broken thinking, broken souls.

There is room for me to grow in my faith for people.

'Do not be afraid, just believe.' (Mark 5:36)

363. (Dec 28)

People live such lonely lives. I just pulled off on the 291 exit, coming to Cary. Three trucks parked on the other side of the exit. Dark, wet, raining. Probably bedding down for the night in their truck cabs. They go through that loneliness to get a product somewhere, so I can show up in a shop one day and buy that thing, and feel happy.

When you give someone Christ, you give them the presence of God. (see Matthew 1:23) You give people a friend forever, when you give them Christ. They will never be alone again.

And this is true for you, too. You are never alone. Never. God has come to you through Jesus. Jesus is with you now and forevermore.

Jesus said, ***'Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you.'*** (Hebrews 13:5)

364. (Dec 29)

Christ in you, through you, a river up and out.

I need to soak in Christ, not look to other people to fill me up. Christ will fill you up. We need to look to the Lord for our strength – tank up, fill up – with the Holy Spirit. We need to ‘overflow’ so we have to give.

‘... be filled with the Spirit.’ (Ephesians 5:18)

‘Whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.’ (John 4:14)

365. (Dec 30)

'Follow me and I will make you a fisher of men.' (Matthew 4:19)

God gives us mission. God gives us purpose.

The quiet call, ***'Follow me...'***

And then working together, all with different roles, gifts, we have a purpose to fish men, win souls for all eternity.

Do you want to be part of this mission?

Prayer: *God, call me back in.*

366. (Dec 31)

Being 'humble' is a high virtue, a gift of the Spirit.

'Moses was the most humble man on the face of the earth.' (Numbers 12:3)

Jesus said, ***'I am gentle, and humble of heart.'***
(Matthew 11:29)

'Those who exalt themselves will be humbled. Those who humble themselves will be exalted.' (Matthew 23:12)

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