

## Sunday, August 8

Mark 4:35-41 *That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." (v.35 NIV)*

I laughingly recall the last time I got that kind of invitation. It came from Jim Morrison, of The Doors, and he wanted me to "break on through to other side, yeah!" That didn't really work out for me, although I did spend some time in the effort. Today, I read of this new invitation from Christ to go to the other side with him.

OK, I'm on board—you and me Jesus, just as we are. But then a furious squall came up. There may not be enough room in this paragraph to enumerate the number of "waves" that come over the bow to swamp my little boat. Sometimes it feels like the deep ocean has invited itself aboard. Am I frightened, just like the apostles? Yes! Will I actually make it to the other side?

So they wake Jesus up, and he rebukes the wind and quiets the waves. Then he says to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" This part bothers me. I'm not fearless yet. What does that say about my faith? Lord, forgive me for being timid. Dear Holy Spirit, come and be my life preserver. Let me roar in my confidence that, with Christ, I shall safely make it to the other side. Amen.

Judges 11:1-11, 29-40; Psalms 66, 67; 2 Corinthians 11:21b-31

## Monday, August 9

John 3:1-21 *Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God. (vv.20-21)*

Fortunately for me, Jesus came to save and not condemn. In John's lesson, this passage is all so perfectly direct and concise—the way to salvation, the method, the reason, and the verdict. Living by the truth brings me into the light and this light is an inexhaustible source. However, I admit there are still shadows cast in my path. Sometimes the shadow cast is by my own figure.

In my relationship with Christ, I welcome the light. It allows me to see Jesus lifted up for my salvation. That certain truth is pivotal in my

understanding of my relationship with God. What a sincere invitation I am presented with: live by the truth, come into the light.

Precious Lord, keep my eyes open to the truth and strengthen my will to always seek the light of Your love for me. Thank you.

Judges 12:1-7; Psalm 89:1-18; Acts 5:12-26

## Tuesday, August 10

Acts 5:27-42 *They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. (vv.40b-41)*

When I read a passage like this, emotionally my response is to admit to some complacency in my faith. OK, maybe more than some—maybe a lot compared to the apostles in this portion of Acts.

This story is a challenge. What is my faith motivating me to do? Where is God calling me to do his work? To be honest, I might be short-changing myself. Do I have more in me than I think? I bet God has some really big plans for us all. I didn't see the movie called *The Yes Man*, a comedy starring Jim Carrey. The plot was about a man who always said no to everything. Then one day he is convinced to say yes to everything. And his life was changed. I sometimes feel that I don't have time to change my life. Life is busy, difficult, and hard.

Lord, give me wisdom to know when to say yes. Give me confidence to approach life with all the freshness and newness each day brings. Holy Spirit, prepare my heart to be fertile ground, that your plans for me take root, blossom, and bear fruit. Amen.

Judges 13:1-15; Psalms 97, 99, 100; John 3:22-36

## Wednesday, August 11

John 4:1-26 *Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. (v.23)*

To worship in spirit and truth is the essence of what I want my relationship to be with my savior. I want to unconsciously live that

relationship rather than intellectualize it. Merely thinking about things can lead me to an emotional disconnection. You see, I often forget what I think about. But I don't forget how I feel. When my relationship is right, when I'm in the truth and not practicing self-deceit, those are the wonderful times. That is when I feel the Spirit present with his gifts. During my time in this church sanctuary, I offer worship that I pray rises with acceptance to the Father, in an exercise that I can only hope someday will continue for an eternity.

Judges 13:15-24; Psalms 101, 109; Acts 6:1-15

### **Thursday, August 12**

John 4:27-42 *"My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work."* (v.34)

I refer to this the passage as the "breakfast of champions" or the "holy Gospel harvest diet." It is most likely a regimen that I should embrace. I hear Christ exhorting me to open my eyes to the possibilities that are all around me. The work is there. A foundation has been laid. OK, so where are my tools. I don't think I can do much bare handed. I need the tools. Well, first and foremost is the Word of the Lord. \*Note to self: continue with your Bible study. Next, the truth. \*Another note to self: practice that part about walking the walk if you're talking the talk. What's next? The Holy Spirit. OK, Lord I want to humbly receive your living sacrament in the form of your body and blood to fortify my spirit. Let's put it all together with the plans we've drawn up as a community of believers. Ahhhh. Can you smell it cooking? Yeah! Heavenly stew! Now dig in.

Judges 14:1-19; Psalm 105:1-22; Acts 6:15—7:16

### **Friday, August 13**

Acts 7:17-29 *"Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?" When Moses heard this, he fled to Midian, where he settled as a foreigner and had two sons."* (vv.28-29)

I read this story of Moses as an important cautionary tale for me or anyone else wishing to act on what they think the Lord is calling them

to do. As one of the most succinct descriptions of the life of Moses, this short passage illuminates for me the conviction that Moses must have had when he strikes down the Egyptian.

I want to do what is pleasing to the Lord and not do what is displeasing. There should not be a lot of confusion about what that is. When I do "good works," I have mixed feelings about it. Am I secure in my salvation or am I still trying to "work" my way into heaven. If my actions are really the work of the Holy Spirit, how could I ever have doubts? I guess I would like to have the kind of conviction that Moses had, but I wouldn't want to be detoured in the fashion that Moses had to endure. I know God works through every blessing and adversity. I'm going to trust in God's plan for me. I will content myself with the progress I daily make in my relationship with my Creator. Brothers and Sisters, pray for me on my path to wisdom as I pray for you also. Amen.

Judges 14:20—15:20; Psalm 102; John 4:43-54

### **Saturday, August 14**

John 5:1-18 *When Jesus saw him lying here and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?"* (v.6)

What a curious question Jesus asks. The guy has been an invalid for 38 years; of course he wants to get well! Maybe not. How long have I been a spiritual invalid? Jesus asks me the same question. Have I come up with a "lame" excuse for not getting into the pool while the waters were stirring?

For me, this passage has to do with the will. I am somewhat aware of the serious doctrinal differences that exist over the role of man's will in his salvation. (I am not joining the discussion.) I am also aware that in today's world, neuroscientists are agreeing that free will is an illusion. Philosophers have debated the concept and its meaning ad infinitum.

I hold to my will. I hold to accountability. If I wasn't required to be accountable, it wouldn't make sense when Christ, upon seeing the same invalid later in the temple court, says "See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you."

I believe that God's plan for me requires my will to be exercised through the guidance of the Spirit and the Word. I know we pray for

God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven, but I perceive a burden of accountability on me to make that will concrete. Pray for the Spirit to guide us all.

Judges 16:1-14; Psalms 107:33-43, 108; Acts 7:30-43

*by Larry Standish*

### **Sunday, August 15**

Psalm 118 *You are my God, I give you thanks: my God, I offer you praise. Give thanks to the LORD, who is good, whose love endures forever.* (vv.28-29 NAB)

God doesn't really ask that much of us. We are to do our human best to obey his laws and we are to praise Him. The Bible is filled with examples of human failure tempered by God's faithfulness. As with other good parents, God recognizes when we, His children, do our best for Him. I am sure that God's refrigerator is filled with lots of glue and pasta portraits that are a bit lopsided. God recognizes that our imitations are sincere flattery. When we proclaim His glory and praise Him in our daily lives, we remind ourselves not only of God's blessings and goodness but also of His faith in us and faithfulness to us.

Judges 16:15-31; 2 Corinthians 13:1-11; Mark 5:25-34

### **Monday, August 16**

John 5:19-25 *Amen, amen, I say to you, the hour is coming and is now here when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.* (v.25)

God has patience and we don't. When the people of Israel followed Moses to the desert and salvation from slavery in Egypt, they lost patience with God. They tried to rush God's promises. God separated the just from the wicked and destroyed the wicked. God disciplined Israel by designing a punishment to teach patience—a forty year time-out in the desert! I thank God that He keeps his promises and constantly pray for patience to wait for God's plan. I also pray that I will be counted amongst the just and not the wicked on the last day. For on

judgment day, God will keep His promises.

Judges 17:1-13; Psalm 106:1-18; Acts 7:44—8:1

### **Tuesday, August 17**

Psalm 121 *The LORD will guard your coming and going both now and forever.* (v.8)

I find it very comforting to know that God looks after me. When our family goes anywhere, we have a ritual of roll call. As I or my husband call each of our five children by name, they answer. Then one (or more) will call our names. Until we answer, the roll call continues. It makes me feel secure that we are together and safe. This roll call ritual is our modern version of the shepherd counting his sheep. A good shepherd knows each and every one of his flock. God is our shepherd. God knows me and each of His family by name. He protects our coming and going, now and forever.

Judges 18:1-15; Psalms 120, 122, 123; Acts 8:1-13; John 5:30-47

### **Wednesday, August 18**

John 6:1-15 *Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed them to those who were reclining, and also as much of the fish as they wanted.* (v.11)

God's blessings come to us by God's grace, not human actions. As we live our lives in and by God's grace, we need to be open to His blessings. When Jesus blessed the loaves and fishes, he used a little boy's lunch. That little boy had come prepared to learn from Jesus and was willing to do as Jesus asked. God's grace and love go beyond human understanding. Jesus worked miracles to give us a glimpse of God's power and to remind us God is not bound by human standards and expectations.

Judges 18:16-31; Psalm 119:145-176; Acts 8:14-25

## Thursday, August 19

Psalms 131 *Instead, I am content and at peace. As a child lies quietly in its mother's arms, so my heart is quiet within me.* (v.2)

God's world is not limited to ours. His world is infinite and beyond our comprehension. Every bad thing that happens on earth is not punishment by God. Remember Job and all the bad things that happened to him, including losing his children. People come into and go out of our lives on earth but God is constant. His plan reaches before our memories and extends into the future forever. Earthly things may satisfy our bodies and our human needs but our soul yearns for eternal nourishment. That eternal nourishment is provided only by God.

Job 1:1-22; Psalms 132, 133; Acts 8:26-40; John 6:16-27

## Friday, August 20

John 6:27-40 *Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in the one he sent."* (v.29)

Our faith should not be predicated on what happens in our lives here on earth. Whether we are afflicted with sores and unrecognizable as Job was to his friends or are persecutors like Saul, God wants us to believe in Jesus. God promises eternal life in him. We all have times in which we have been victimized. We all have times in which we persecute others. No matter which we are, and in this imperfect world we are often both, it is in giving ourselves to the Lord and following Jesus that makes us new.

Job 2:1-13; Psalms 140, 142; Acts 9:1-9

## Saturday, August 21

Job 3:1-26 *For what I fear overtakes me, and what I shrink from comes upon me. I have no peace nor ease; I have no rest, for trouble comes!* (vv.25-26)

God will use our lives to His purpose. Living our lives by faith is a challenge when we really want it all to go away. To remember God is

our protector and loves us regardless of our earthly life is difficult. Think of poor Ananias whom God sent to minister to Saul—the very same Saul who had come to persecute Ananias and other Christians! God sent Ananias to Saul to declare his own faith to Saul so that God could work in the world. When we rely on God to give us strength to meet our earthly challenges, we allow God to work His plan through us.

Psalms 137, 144; Acts 9:10-19a; John 6:41-51

*by Anna Notation-Rhoades*

## Sunday, August 22

Mark 6:1-6a *"What's this wisdom that has been given him, that he even does miracles! Isn't this the carpenter?"* (vv.2b-3a NIV)

Okay, I have a confession. I actually like to sweep. Sweeping the floor provides me with thinking time. Big things are accomplished in this one menial task. I make mental lists, I work through stresses and snags, make plans for my life, and I pray for others. Recently I had an interesting thought, I bet Jesus spent quite a lot of time sweeping and cleaning up after a long day of making tools, bowls, and plows. I find it fascinating to think about it in certain terms—God swept!

What a thought. The fact that Jesus was a carpenter is quite significant. Actually Jesus served as a carpenter much longer than He ever served as a teacher. His life and public ministry were groomed through his years of manual labor and his thinking time. In the Scriptures he makes numerous references to things that a carpenter would relate to such as yoke, keystone, building a house on the solid ground. The fact that God came to us as a mere carpenter raised the dignity of our daily work. He considers what we do to be honorable in His eyes.

The next time you are tempted to feel like your ordinary tasks are not so important, think about how our Savior's life and ministry was shaped around what some would consider ordinary tasks. Don't be surprised if God touches your work and it becomes thinking time for bigger things to happen in your life.

Job 4:1-6; 12-21; Psalms 146, 147; Revelation 4:1-11

## Monday, August 23

Acts 9:19b-31 *Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Christ. (v.22)*

This passage makes me ask a question. “Does my life prove to others that Jesus is indeed my Lord?” You have heard the old phrase from the 1600’s “The proof is in the pudding.” The entire phrase actually is “the proof of the pudding is in the eating.” What that means is to fully value or prove something it needs to be tried and tested. Saul’s life was one that was tried and tested by everyone in the Roman’s world. He was a puzzle to everyone. This man who fervently ridiculed, even had Christians killed, was now preaching about Jesus everywhere. Saul, who later changed his name to Paul, explained his conversion experience over and over and gave evidence that he was genuinely changed and that he desired to now live for his Jesus. But for all his words, it was by observing his new life that the Jews and Gentiles had their proof that his life was changed.

This really hits home. “Am I really making the case for Christ in my life? Am I proving my faith to others by my words and actions that Jesus is not only important but is the Lord of my life? As I carry this analogy a bit further the real proof of faith is in a Christian’s daily faith, a faith that is tried and tested through life’s circumstances. People watch our lives, especially people who are not yet Christians. Is there proof in our life?

Job 4:1-4, 5:1-11, 17-21, 26-27; Psalms 1, 2, 3; John 6:52-59

## Tuesday, August 24

John 6:60-71 *On hearing it, many of his disciples said, “This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?” Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, “Does this offend you?” (vv.60-61)*

If Jesus lived here today He would surely have made the front page of the newspapers often. I can see the headlines now: “Jewish Preacher Causes Havoc on the East Side.” This simple teacher roused the crowds and created controversy everywhere he went. To the world he was presumptuous, offensive, and narrow-minded. However, to those being saved he was precious and the source of heavenly wisdom.

I find it comforting that Jesus is straightforward with sheer truth even if it leaves me uncomfortable and doubting at times. He has no problem addressing me right where I am in my doubt. When I stumble upon a Scripture that does not fit into a nice, orderly package for my limited human mind I have to stop and have a moment with my Lord. This is the place I call faith-point. Faith-point is the place where I must let go of my ways and cling to his even when they are not easy to hear. By experience I have found that every time I let go and trust the Lord, I find his words to always be true and life-giving.

Jesus does not always keep us comfortable but he keeps us walking in the truth. “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” In my faith-point moments I realize that I serve a mysterious God who overwhelms me with his love and grace, overshadowing all the questions and doubts that I may have.

Job 6:1-4, 8-15 ,21; Psalms 5, 6; Acts 9:32-43

## Wednesday, August 25

Acts 10:1-16 *One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, “Cornelius!” Cornelius stared at him in fear. “What is it, Lord?” he asked. The angel answered, “Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter.” (vv.3-5)*

Isn’t it remarkable that God sees all that we do and hears all that we say? “How precious also are your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!” (Psalm 139:17). My first reaction is to think about all the times that I could have done better in loving God more and remembering my neighbor before thinking of myself. Yet, I know God must look much deeper. He looks at intentions of my heart. He looks at the consistency of my offerings. This scripture in Acts is an important one. Am I trying to be consistent in keeping daily habits that honor God? Am I praying for others and giving generously to those around me?

There is no way around it. Pleasing God does have a connection with our daily habits for we must remember that He sees all that we say and do. Our Heavenly Father is a good God. If we recognize the great love that He has for us then it will only be natural that we live to please Him. In those times when I know I should Love him more, I ask him for

help knowing that He can and will increase my love and open my eyes to the wonderful riches that he has in store for me. Take the time to ask this question with me today. Are you consistently honoring God? If we consistently make it a priority in our life, we will catch God's attention!

Job 6:1, 7:1-21, Psalm 119:1-24; John 7:1-13

#### **Thursday, August 26**

Psalm 18:1-20 *He reached down from on high and took hold of me; he drew me out of deep waters.* (v.16)

My adorable new granddaughter has just learned to crawl. As she explores the new world around her we must constantly keep an eye on her. We are always plucking her up as she is nearing danger, from steep drops off the bed, sharp corners, and precarious situations where she gets in over her head. Just when she is finding trouble the mighty hand of mom scoops her up by the britches. Once again, she is safe from harm.

I love the imagery here in Psalm 18. It is honestly one of my favorites. I can think of several times in my life when God initiated a rescue effort on my behalf. Sometimes I knew I was getting myself into a dangerous situation or walking too close to a temptation that would entice me in a direction other than where God desires me to go. Often, I am aware of the rescue as it is happening and other times I am not. It is breathtaking, though, as I look back and see his handprints on my britches.

Are you in deep waters today? Perhaps you are in a financial or an emotional whirlpool? Do you find yourself in some kind of dangerous corner where you cannot see your way out? If you are, be certain that help is on the way, because you are within the ever-vigilant grasp of God's mighty hand. Simply ask for his help and he will soon rescue.

Job 8:1-7, 11-19; Acts 10:17-33; John 7:14-36

#### **Friday, August 27**

Psalm 16 *Lord, you have assigned me my portion and my cup; you have made my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance.* (vv.5-6)

I wonder if we really grasp the inheritance that we as Christians have been given. Did you know you have an inheritance to live into right now?

I recall all the graduations that I have attended in the life of my three children. From kindergarten to college there is nothing more special than to see your child's face light up and their shoulders lift in pride as their entire name is heard over a loudspeakers. There is just something special to hear your full name read aloud. How much more special is it when our names are spoken aloud by our Heavenly Father. When we give our lives to Him everything changes and our names are beautiful to His heart. When He calls out our names the whole universe hears the pride and joy in His heart for His children. When He calls out our names He lifts up our hearts, lifts our countenance, and raises our esteem. Although we do not deserve this amazing gift of love, we long to hear the Lord call out our name.

One day God is going to show us off in a special way. His work will be finished in us and then, at that point, He will read our name aloud will walk across the stage of life and step into eternity. When we hear our names on that day, we will be ultimately be raised up in eternal dignity and joy and come to fully grasp who we are, the glorious children of God.

In my mind I think about the promise of my inheritance with God; knowing that my "lot is secure" makes me live in joy and hope each day.

Job 9:1-15, 32-35; Psalm 17; Acts 10:34-48; John 7:37-52

#### **Saturday, August 28**

Acts 11:1-18 *"So if God gave them the same gift as he gave us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could oppose God?" When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying "So then, God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life." (vv.17-18)*

I remember well; right after my husband and I first met. We were sitting on a hill in Woolwich, Maine and were looking up at the heavens. I lamented that I had never seen a shooting star. At that very moment, to my amazement, a star then streamed across the dark sky in front of me. Actually, it took us both by surprise. "Anything else you

want?" he added with a big grin on his face. Little did we know that this was to be a sign, an "Aha!" moment in our life.

Everyone has shooting star moments in his or her life. I call them shooting star moments because it is a moment in time, a definitive moment when you can say the light bulb goes on, the pieces fit together, and you get what is going on. When the gentiles were filled with the Holy Spirit in Caesarea it was a shooting star moment for Peter and for the church leaders. This was the exact moment the Jewish people recognized that God was going to save not only his Jewish followers but the Gentile world as well! The moment was huge! Each one of us should thank God for this shooting star moment, for because of that day, you and I have the great joy and privilege of being a part of the family of God.

Job 9:1, 10:1-9, 16-22; Psalms 20, 21; John 8:12-20

*by Robin Jagoe*

### **Sunday, August 29**

Matthew 5:1-12 *"You're blessed when you feel you've lost what is most dear to you. Only then can you be embraced by the One most dear to you."* (v.4 The Message)

It's a delicate balance to live the Christian life. We want God to be the One most dear to us, but we frequently and effortlessly give other things or people that position. And before we realize it, God is no longer most important to us.

God says to come to Him honestly, just as we are: desires, disappointments, and drifting included. But it can be difficult to be honest with God when we need to admit that we have something or someone more valuable to us than Him. Yet, this is exactly when we need to be the most honest with God so we can admit it and ask Him to once again be the One we treasure the most. Sometimes we get to that place because we have lost what we once considered more dear. Sometimes though, in His mercy, He uses situations or people in our lives to remind us that He is most beloved because He will always be the One who loves us best and is the only One worthy of our deepest affection.

Job 11:1-9, 13-20; Psalms 148, 149, 150; Revelation 5:1-14

### **Monday, August 30**

Psalm 25 *My eyes are ever on the LORD, for only he will release my feet from the snare.* (v.15 NIV)

I am grateful that I have tangible places in my life where I can see God's immense kindness to me in sparing me from what would have been heartache upon heartache if I had followed my own wisdom instead of His. I remember a time I backed away from an opportunity that seemed like a solid, judicious move at the time. But as I kept asking God about it with an open heart, much to my surprise, I felt like God was directing me to let the opportunity pass.

I did, and God graciously made it clear right away what He knew but what I couldn't have possibly known at the time. In my own wisdom, I would have pursued the opportunity and moved in a direction very different from where I wanted to be. In His wisdom, He graciously redirected me as I stayed connected to Him.

Job 12:1-6, 13-25; Acts 11:19-30; John 8:21-32

### **Tuesday, August 31**

John 8:33-47 *"So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."* (v.36)

All day long, we face countless opportunities to be imprisoned. Whether it comes in the form of guilt, shame, hurtful words against us, frustration, addiction, or selfishness, we have plenty of times in any given day to be enslaved to something or someone. When these moments arise in my daily existence, I have a decision to make. Will I let something or someone else determine how much grace and freedom I will receive in that moment, or will I let Christ determine that? When I stay connected and in tune with Christ, I can be freed up to confess what I need to confess and enjoy His love. When I'm not so connected, it's usually a slippery slope to self-absorption and isolation.

Job 12:1, 13:3-17, 21-27; Psalms 26, 28; Acts 12:1-17

### **Wednesday, September 1**

Acts 12:18-25 *But the word of God continued to increase and spread.* (v.24)

Lately it seems like I hear more about Christianity fizzling out than picking up steam. Someone claiming Christianity does this or that, and I'm saddened that what seems like an act of hypocrisy gets more airtime than all the tremendous good people are doing all around the world to proclaim Christ's love and forgiveness. God's word will go out. But at the end of the day, I want to ask myself whether or not I'm a conduit of the word increasing and spreading. I may never live internationally again, but I want my life to be one that promotes God's word.

Job 12:1, 14:1-22; Psalm 38; John 8:47-59

### **Thursday, September 2**

Psalms 37:1-18 *Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.* (v.3)

God's Word is always life-giving, no matter how well I'm doing or how hard life feels. But sometimes God speaks so directly through His Word to address a particular concern I have, that I can do nothing but sit in awe and gratitude.

Psalms 37:3 will always take me back to when I was a young missionary and had an experience with God like I'm describing. I was sitting at the base of the Swiss Alps and feeling trepidation about returning to the country in which I was living at the time. The country was replete with corruption and still some opposition to the Gospel, and I felt afraid to enter back into it. I opened my Bible to do my daily reading, and my eyes fell on this verse. I sat in awe. I could only pause and thank God for speaking so directly to the fear I had been hiding, and I returned to "the land" with a deeper confidence and trust than I had ever known.

Job 16:16-22, 17:1, 13-16; Acts 13:1-12; John 9:1-17

### **Friday, September 3**

John 9:18-41 *He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!"* (v.25)

I can't identify with being blind and then having my sight restored. I can't identify with being reduced to begging. I can only imagine what it must have been like for a man to go from no hope of anything different than what he's always known, to a life radically changed. I've been a Christian since my mother led Backyard Bible Clubs

when I was 5 years old. I can, however, identify with knowing that without Christ, I would be blind and I would be begging. Instead, I get to daily enjoy the delight of experiencing Christ's presence. I get to know that he has already given me eyes to see his glory in the everyday and in the remarkable. I get to live with the certainty that he is intentionally bringing his glory in my life for my good.

Job 19:1-7, 14-27; Psalm 31; Acts 13:13-25

### **Saturday, September 4**

Job 22:1-4, 21—23:7 *"Do you think it's because he cares about your purity that he's disciplining you, putting you on the spot? Hardly! It's because you're a first-class moral failure."* (vv.4-5 The Message)

I'm thankful for the book of Job for many reasons, one of which is its picture of how *not* to be a friend. It shows us how unhelpful we can be when we presume that we have a better idea of what God is doing in someone else's life than they do. But when we are willing to offer humility and support while also being certain of God's sovereignty and goodness, we just might get to witness that sweet moment when the one who is struggling is ready to accept God's hand in his or her life.

I am always grateful for those who are willing to trust me to hear God's voice and are willing to be patient with me as I get to the place I can hear it, even when I get there at a different pace and by a different route than they would have.

Psalms 30, 32; Acts 13:26-43; John 10:1-18

**by Monica Taffinder**

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