

appnotes

DAY 1

READ ECCLESIASTES 3:1-11

Today, July 4, 2016, is the 240th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. It's also the 240th anniversary of the day when 56 men chose to commit an act of treason, a crime punishable by death. When they signed that document, they knew things were going to change one way or the other. Had they not acted you might speak with a British accent! Over the decades our young country has seen its share of changes. And I'm sure your life—maybe even your week—has had its ups and downs. No matter what changes in your life you can count on this: God never changes. His love never diminishes, and His forgiveness doesn't run out! Let Him be your anchor today.

DAY 2

READ JOHN 15:18-25

One of my all-time favorite movie scenes—from *The Untouchables*—features a character by the name of Malone (Sean Connery) talking to federal agent Ness (Kevin Costner) who wants to bring the gangster Al Capone to justice. Ness was asking Malone for help. Malone replies, "What are you prepared to do?" For Ness to achieve his goal, he was going to have to rebel against the corrupt culture of his day. When we make the choice to become one of Jesus' disciples, we are choosing to follow a path that doesn't always match up with today's culture. Jesus wants us to be prepared for opposition, ridicule, and possibly even persecution by our culture as a result of choosing to follow Him. So I have to ask you, "What are you prepared to do?"

DAY 3

READ JOHN 19:1-16

Carl Jung said, "The world will ask you who you are, and if you do not know, the world will tell you." We all know someone who seems to struggle with peer pressure and is prone to compromise to "fit in." Peer pressure can be good, but it can also be dangerous. In today's reading, the peer pressure is dangerous. Jesus' life hangs in the balance because He doesn't fit in the religious confines of His day. How was Jesus calm in the face of such pressure? Jesus knew that governors only rule because God allows it. In the end, Pilate capitulated to the whims of the people. Ironically, Pilate did so while telling Jesus how powerful he was. As a Jesus follower, we should honor His example of attitude just as much as we should honor His example of action.

DAY READ PSALM 33:1-22

4

Our best worship flows from this attitude, “You are God, and I am not.” The Bible is full of testimonies of people who have lived the statement “He’s God, and I’m not.” You can also find examples of people who ignored this truth and ran headlong into pain. We tend to trust in our strength, even though we know it is so limited. No matter the trial, obstacle, or even goodness that we face, there are just some things we cannot do. Verse 16 is a great reminder of the limits of human power: “No king is saved by the size of his army; no warrior escapes by his great strength.” As you reflect on today’s passage, challenge yourself to consider how you are worshipping God. After all, He’s God, and we’re not.

DAY READ ROMANS 13:1-7

5

Does worshipping God permit us to ignore the law of the land? In today’s reading, Paul is building on one of Jesus’ teachings where He made it clear that our faith is not a free pass to disobey the law (Matthew 22:15-22). Paul reminds believers that our primary responsibility is to submit to the governing authorities that God has placed in our lives. It is only in rare instances (such as Daniel being prohibited from praying in Babylon) that we have the freedom to ignore the authorities that God has placed over us. Even then, we don’t get to choose the outcome. In those circumstances, it is always best to obey God rather than man (Acts 5:29).

AppNotes are available on our Facebook page, Monday-Friday.

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