

Day One

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Ephesians tells us of all the benefits that come to us because we are in Christ. We have been joined together with Him by the power of God's Word at work through Baptism. We have been united with Him in His death and life and through that union receive all the benefits of His work.

And because we are in Christ, there is nothing that can separate us from the love of God that is ours in Christ. By faith we cling to God's promises. By faith we trust Him at His word. We have been accepted into the family of God. We have been brought home. He is our God and we are His people.

Day Two

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Again, we look at Ezekiel 37:1-14. It deals with the impossible being made possible. Ezekiel couldn't make these bones live. He knew that. It was beyond him. But God could. And He did.

And He invited Ezekiel to be a part of the impossible by commanding him to speak God's Word to the bones. And even though Ezekiel knew that that it seemed an impossible task, he did what God commanded. He was faithful to the task. And God worked through His Word to make the impossible possible.

Jesus did the same on the cross. As He hung dying on the cross, God's promised victory over sin and death hung in the balance. It seemed impossible. But God was at work through His Word – through the Word made flesh, His Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ – to make the impossible possible.

When Jesus rose from the dead, death was swallowed up by His life. The power of sin was overcome by the forgiveness that Jesus won for us through His blood. And when He came to us by the power of His Word at work through the waters of Baptism, the impossible became possible for us.

We were set free from the power of sin and death to separate us from God. God called us by name and marked us with His name. We became children of God – forgiven and free from the chains of sin and death. We have been restored to God by the work of His Son – an impossible work made possible through Jesus' life, death and resurrection.

Day Three

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In Ezekiel 2:1-5 we see some of the challenges that face us as we seek to be a witness to the love of God that is ours in Christ Jesus. We and the people around us are no different than the Israelites in Ezekiel's day. We and they are stiff necked people. We are stubborn and rebellious. We don't always listen to God speak to us through His Word.

And the devil will use those things to keep us silent. If they're not going to listen anyway, then why speak of God's love. Why should we tell them about God's promises and His salvation?

We have to remember that the listening is our responsibility only when God is speaking to us. When we are speaking to others, the listening is their responsibility. We are only to be faithful to that task that God has given to us. We are to speak His Word. We are to tell others of the love of God that we have received – that has been revealed through Jesus' life, death and resurrection. We are to simply speak of the hope that is ours in Jesus and let the Holy Spirit do His work.

So whether they listen or not, we are to continue to speak of the hope that is ours in Jesus Christ.

Day Four

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Ezekiel 37 talks about dry bones. We've all felt parched and dry – lifeless – at times. In those times, it's easy to feel the need for help – for rescue – for a drink that will quench our thirst and restore our strength.

It's not as easy to see or feel when things are going well – when life is good – and everything seems to be falling our way. But we can be just as dry and parched in those times as we are in the bad times.

If we aren't daily in God's Word, if we aren't spending time thinking about and meditating on God's promises to us made YES in Jesus, then we are in danger of drying up. We are in danger of becoming parched and lifeless because His Word is life and without it, we can't live.

The blessings that we receive each day are wonderful and, I hope, greatly appreciated. God gives them to us to sustain us – to feed our physical life. His Word is food and drink that preserves our soul. And that is the greatest blessing of all.

Day Five

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This text from Daniel 7 is read at the end of the Church Year when the focus is on the second coming of Christ. Here specifically, the focus is on the coming of the Judge. On that day numbers beyond counting will stand before that throne and the books will be opened – the books that tell where you stand in that judgment. Will you receive life or death?

In that book every deed, every word, every thought will be recorded. All of our sin will be recorded in exhausting detail. There will be no word to offer in defense. There will be no plea bargaining. The crime will be detailed and the verdict declared. We will stand guilty as charged.

Then the Son of the Judge will rise and say to His Father, "This one belongs to Me. I have marked him with my Name. I know him and he knows me. I died for his sin. He heard My voice and believed." Then for the sake His Son, the Judge will invite us to enter into His kingdom and live in the peace that comes through the forgiveness of sin.