

# Lesson 13 | November 27, 2022

## Author and Finisher of Our Faith

**Study Text:** Hebrews 10:32 through 13:25

**Central Truth:** Christians must remain focused on the Champion of our faith, Jesus Christ.

### **Key Verse: Hebrews 12:2**

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God (KJV).

We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne (NLT).

### **Learning Objectives**

- Students should recognize potential challenges to their belief in Christ and commit to steadfast faith in Him.
- Students should trust in Christ amid the distractions of the world.
- Students should commit to living for Christ every day.

## **Introducing the Study**

**Say:** Most Christians are familiar with Philippians 3:14, which begins: "I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize . . ." (NLT). **This verse is important because it reminds us that we do not live in a world that is compatible with serving Christ. Ken Davis made this comment when speaking to a group of preachers. "I have been married for 40 years. Pause ... To seven different women. Applause stopped. The speaker was not compatible with the group. Of course he told them he was joking and he has been married to the same woman for 40 years. The world is not compatible with us so we can expect to be treated as being incompatible.**

**To live for Christ, we must continue to look toward Him, trusting the Holy Spirit to give us strength to walk in Christ.**

### **Opening Activity—What's Right?**

*Ask. Based on media and Internet content, how would you define the standards of right and wrong in today's world? Note that there often seem to be no set standards. Clearly, the definition of right and wrong in the world is far different from that in Scripture. In*

the world there are gray areas. There is right, then wrong, and finally gray. There are no gray areas in God's standards.

**Say: Our world is at odds with the Christian faith. As a result, Christians must actively press on, pursuing Christ daily. In this concluding lesson of the unit on Hebrews, we find encouragement to continue in the faith, to keep on looking to Jesus and living for Him every day.** (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Previously, we have seen how the Book of Hebrews addresses some very serious and sobering topics, including strong warnings about the consequences of not persevering in the faith. **In this final study, we see that the epistle concludes with an exhortation to live out the faith, just as great men and women of God have done in the past. In preparation for this lesson, it might be helpful to read the familiar words of chapter 11, as it is not among the texts covered. This is intentional, in that while we recognize past heroes of faith, we also recognize God's desire that we maintain our faith by looking to Christ and continuing in Christlike living. Abraham lived by faith. So did Jacob, Joseph, David, and a host of others.**

Born into poverty, this man was faced with defeat throughout his life. He lost eight elections, twice failed in business and suffered a nervous breakdown and was in bed for six months.

He could have quit many times - but he didn't and because he didn't quit, he became one of the greatest presidents in the history of our country, Abraham Lincoln.

This man invented a vote recorder for Congress in the 1800s. He thought his fortune was made. But it was rejected because those in Congress felt it took the ability to sway votes away.

**[2Pe 1:1 KJV] 1 Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:**

**[2Pe 1:1 NLT] 1 This letter is from Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ. I am writing to you who share the same precious faith we have. This faith was given to you because of the justice and fairness of Jesus Christ, our God and Savior.**

## **Part 1—Keep On Believing**

## Patient Endurance Is Needed

Hebrews 10:35–39

**[Heb 10:35-39 KJV] 35 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. 36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. 37 For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. 38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if [any man] draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. 39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.**

**[Heb 10:35-39 NLT] 35 So do not throw away this confident trust in the Lord. Remember the great reward it brings you! 36 Patient endurance is what you need now, so that you will continue to do God's will. Then you will receive all that he has promised. 37 "For in just a little while, the Coming One will come and not delay. 38 And my righteous ones will live by faith. But I will take no pleasure in anyone who turns away." 39 But we are not like those who turn away from God to their own destruction. We are the faithful ones, whose souls will be saved.**

**Say:** Hebrews 10:32–34, the verses preceding this passage, are a great example of the wisdom of Scripture. The writer of Hebrews called his readers to look back at the beginnings of their faith. These were not good times; in fact, they were times of great persecution. Rather, the people could look back to this time as days filled with concern and compassion for fellow Christians and, above all, hope: “You knew there were better things waiting for you that will last forever” (verse 34, NLT). In the future, as in the past, Jesus would be faithful as they endured to the end.  
(Share your highlights from the following text.)

**The writer of Hebrews recognized that the people had come a long way in their faith. The process of spiritual maturity had brought about confident trust in the Lord, undergirded by a hope for the great reward to come (Hebrews 10:35).**

**The phrase “do not throw away” (NLT; “cast not away,” KJV) is especially important. Through their earlier faithful conduct, the people had made it clear that they trusted in the Lord (see verses 32–34). But now some were struggling. The expression “cast away” conveys a sense of reckless action against something valuable. So, these early believers knew that what Christ had done for them was precious. To turn their backs on Him now would be to ignore all the wondrous things He had done for them, as well as their faithful and hopeful response despite difficulty.**

At this point in their spiritual walk with Christ, the people needed patient endurance. Beginning in verse 36, the writer of Hebrews set out to urge those early believers to continue to follow the will of the Lord, rather than lose their confidence in their salvation, and trust in His gift of everlasting life. They needed to continue persevering in their commitment to Christ.

Perseverance was especially important in light of the coming of the Lord (verse 37). Indeed, the promise of Christ's return can always help believers retain a proper perspective. Still today, we are wise to follow the advice of the apostle Paul, keeping our eyes on the prize set before us and longing for Christ rather than becoming distracted by the things of this world (see 2 Timothy 4:8).

The exhortation to persevere is supported by a quotation from Habakkuk 2:3–4 in Hebrews 10:38. There the prophet cried out to God as wickedness seemed to be overtaking His people. God responded that He would act in His own timing. Yet in the meantime, the righteous must continue to live by faith.

[Hab 2:3-4 NLT] 3 This vision is for a future time. It describes the end, and it will be fulfilled. If it seems slow in coming, wait patiently, for it will surely take place. It will not be delayed. 4 "Look at the proud! They trust in themselves, and their lives are crooked. But the righteous will live by their faithfulness to God.

Verse 38 also includes a warning to any who would “draw back” (KJV; “turn away,” NLT). God will “take no pleasure” (NLT) in those who shrink back in fear and abandon their confidence in Him. What a contrast to the preceding words in verses 37–38. The tone changes from hopeful promise to sober contemplation of God's wrath.

Yet the writer closed the section, in verse 39, with a wonderful reminder: “We are not like those who turn away from God to their own destruction” (NLT). Sometimes believers need to be reminded of their changed status and state of being in Christ. We are not like the world. We have been transformed into people of faith, the faithful ones of Christ. We know that in the end, we “will be saved.”

### **Resource Packet Item 1: The Value of Endurance**

Distribute the work sheet and instruct students to complete it in groups. Then discuss their responses in class.

#### ***Discuss***

? Why is it important that believers live in the constant hope of Christ's return?

? Describe what it “looks like” when a Christian lives in hope of Christ's return.

## **Have Faith in God**

Hebrews 11:6

**[Heb 11:6 KJV] 6 But without faith [it is] impossible to please [him]: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and [that] he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.**

**[Heb 11:6 NLT] 6 And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.**

**Say:** Most Christians recognize Hebrews 11 as the great “heroes of faith” chapter, celebrating men and women who had exhibited strong and consistent faith. However, tucked away amid these inspirational biographies is a statement about the nature of and need for faith. Verse 6 states that faith is the essential ingredient to a life that pleases God, and the means by which we recognize who He is. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

**Although Hebrews 11:6 is only a single verse, it is rich in meaning and instruction, reminding us of some basic truths in the Christian faith. At its heart, it explains why the heroes of faith were, in fact, heroes. Faith is the essential ingredient to entering into a proper relationship with God and then, to please God and be found pleasing in His sight. We cannot earn God’s pleasure by good works or self-denial. It is not a matter of seeking spiritual manifestations or reaching many with news of His kingdom, though these are good things. God calls us to be, first and foremost, people of faith. In essence, then, faith is the great equalizer in God’s kingdom, for every person, whether seemingly great or small, can believe God.**

**Such faith—a faith that pleases God—is twofold in its definition. First, faith recognizes the existence of God. This is perhaps more profound than one might imagine at first glance. Belief in God’s existence means affirming His sovereign identity as Creator, the Maker of heaven and earth (see Psalms 102:25; 115:15; 121:2). Psalm 121:2 is especially noteworthy because recognizing God as Creator is intertwined with recognizing Him as Helper, and making Him the object of our trust. Such faith, then, involves humble surrender and submission to Him.**

**Second, true faith believes that God “rewards those who sincerely seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6, NLT). This speaks to a recognition of God’s nature and character. The Christ-follower believes that God cares about those He has created. In other words, he or she believes in the goodness of God—which includes His love, His justice, and His compassion for those made in His image. Without this deep conviction about God’s character, true faith is impossible.**

### ***Discuss***

? In what sense does our like faith make us equal in the eyes of God?

? Do you think it is possible for a person to believe that God exists, yet not believe in His good character? If so, what would be some examples of this false faith” that we might observe in the world around us?

## **Part 2—Keep Looking to Jesus Run With Endurance**

Hebrews 12:1–6

**[Heb 12:1-6 KJV] 1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset [us], and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of [our] faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. 4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. 5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.**

**Say:** Christianity can often lead to a number of struggles, both without and within. Hebrews 12:1–6 compares the Christian life to a race, reminding us that life’s challenges and God’s correction serve to build our endurance and strengthen us in the Christian walk. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

### **Resource Packet Item 2: Learning from the Past**

Distribute the work sheet and complete it as a class. Discuss the questions as an introduction to this subpoint.

**Hebrews 12:1 refers to the heroes of faith in chapter 11. They bore witness to the reality of what it means to live by faith, demonstrating that the life of faith demands endurance (see Habakkuk 2:3–4; Hebrews 10:36–38). Note that the focus of 12:1 is not so much that the witnesses are looking at us, but that we can look to them as examples.**

**Many of the original readers of Hebrews were having trouble living by faith in Christ. Many were struggling against returning to Judaism, trusting in the Law for salvation rather than Christ. Amid their struggles, they could look back to those who had persevered before them and find strength to put aside all that impeded**

their progress. For them, the struggle focused on failing to recognize Jesus for who He really is. But many different struggles can impede the faith of the believer. **When we get uncomfortable, we seek to get back to comfort. Often there is an easy way and there is a better way.**

Verses 1–2 record the proper response to the sins that impede Christians: lay aside our sin, run, endure, and stay focused on Jesus. Like an athlete in competition, it takes great determination to persevere until the race is done and the reward is presented. When one is tempted to change course, the example of others is inspiring.

Verse 2 further notes that Jesus is much more than a worthy example to us. He prepared and secured the way of faith so His people could follow after Him. And Jesus is not just the example for faithfulness; He is also the example for suffering agony and hostility beyond what we could ever imagine (verse 3).

Verse 4 states: “You have not resisted unto blood, striving against sin” (KJV). Interpreting this verse poses some problems. **Some believe as the NLT translates this verse— “You have not yet given your lives in your struggle against sin”—that martyrdom is in view because of what happened to some heroes of the faith in chapter 11. Others believe that this refers to the struggle believers in Christ have in resisting sin, because verse 1 states to “strip off . . . the sin that slows us down,” as well as verses 5–11, which tell us to “submit even more to the discipline of the Father of our spirits, and live forever. . . . so we might share in his holiness” (verses 9–10, NLT).** The writer cited Proverbs 3:11 in Hebrews 12:5–6 to instruct believers to keep a proper perspective of discipline. This may indicate that it is a combination of resistance to sin ending in possible martyrdom as well as accepting the Lord’s discipline graciously.

### ***Discuss***

? What can the life of Jesus teach us about suffering?

? How can God’s correction help us become stronger in the faith?

## **Accept Godly Discipline**

Hebrews 12:11–15

**[Heb 12:11-15 KJV] 11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. 12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; 13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. 14 Follow peace with all [men], and holiness, without which no man shall see**

**the Lord: 15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble [you], and thereby many be defiled;**

**Say:** Parental discipline, even when done properly and in love, is often unpleasant. Yet those of us blessed by good, godly parents likely recall that such discipline made us better people and corrected problems in our lives before they became worse. This is also true of discipline from God, the greatest Father of all. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

**Beginning in Hebrews 12:11, the writer reminded the reader of an important fact: Not only is suffering inevitable in the Christian life, but it must be met with the proper attitude. Verse 6 taught that sometimes suffering comes as a result of sin— and that in those cases, the discipline of the Lord is restorative. In other words, it is meant to draw one nearer to a loving God who loves, cherishes, and accepts His children. What is that proper attitude? It is the willingness to accept God’s correction as spiritually beneficial, and thereby humble ourselves to Him.**

Verses 12–13 expand on this. There is a sense of putting forth one’s best effort, not as a means to earn God’s blessings, but in response to a conviction that God is good and does good things for His children. Scholars see a reference to Isaiah 35:1–3 in these verses. There, Isaiah gave a word of hope to people experiencing God’s discipline. The picture in Hebrews, then, is that of God’s people seemingly made weak or even paralyzed by their troubles. **They needed to “strengthen [their] weak knees” (verse 12, NLT) by responding to God, making things right, and going about the business of moving forward in the faith. Indeed, verse 13 cites Proverbs 4:26. As one reads that verse in context of verses 25–27 (nlt), the message is clear: The believer is to set his or her eyes on God, map out a path toward spiritual safety, and keep one’s feet from the path of evil going forward into the future.**

**This proper perspective, in turn, should bear fruit in the form of peaceful relationships with others and a holy lifestyle. Indeed, holy living is essential, since without holiness, a person will not see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14).** There is a clear connection between human relationships and the pursuit of holy living. **The word holy means to be “set apart” and be made fit for service to the Lord by the Holy Spirit. When people treat others in ungodly ways, such as in anger, selfishness, greed, and hatred, holiness is lacking and repentance is needed. In fact, relationships are often areas where one’s need for God’s restoration and forgiveness are most clearly seen.**

Verse 15 brings out this reality, addressing two key issues. **First, believers must take care not to turn their backs on God’s grace that they have already received (see Hebrews 6:4–6). And second, they must not allow bitterness to plant a seed within them, for such a seed will bear bitter fruit, threatening to corrupt others.**



**Once again, then, Christianity is best described in corporate, relational terms, so believers must be concerned about others as well as themselves.**

***Discuss***

? What spiritual lessons have you learned from suffering?

? What are some reasons Christians might become bitter amid correction or other suffering, and how can this bitterness impact other Christians?

## **Part 3—Continue in Christlike Living Worship the Unchanging Savior**

Hebrews 13:8,15

**[Heb 13:8, 15 KJV] 8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. ... 15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of [our] lips giving thanks to his name.**

**Say:** While Hebrews can seem like a deeply theological Book, it closes with practical instruction as we walk with Jesus day-by-day, even as such instruction is rooted in the deep truths that have been taught throughout this letter. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Hebrews 13:8, a familiar statement of faith beloved by Christians, sets the foundation for this entire section proceeding through to the end of Hebrews: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (NLT). **The terms “yesterday” and “forever” should not be scrutinized for their theological meanings, as if they are there simply to affirm Christ’s eternal nature—though He is indeed eternal. Instead, they speak to believers personally, as to their own past and future: Jesus has never been different than He is right now, and He will never be different than He is right now. One need not focus on past trials, for Jesus has overcome for us and will forever be there for us in the future. Likewise, one need not fear the future, for Jesus will always be our perfect Mediator, Savior, and loving Lord.**

Upon this foundation, Christians are exhorted to offer “a continual sacrifice of praise to God” (verse 15, NLT). Note that this verse follows another passage contrasting Christ with the levitical high priest (verses 11–14). **Because of Christ, our offerings are not blood sacrifices. These are not needed. Instead, we offer praise “through Jesus.” And these sacrifices do not occur only at set times, like the levitical offerings. They instead rise continually to God through the One who is ever interceding for us (see John 17:9; Romans 8:34).**

***Discuss***

? Why is it significant that we, as Christians, offer sacrifices of praise to the Father through Christ, rather than animal sacrifices?

? What might be included in our “sacrifices of praise to God”?

## **Reflect Christ in Your Relationships With Others**

Hebrews 13:16–21

**[Heb 13:16-21 KJV] 16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. 17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that [is] unprofitable for you. 18 Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. 19 But I beseech [you] the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner. 20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, 21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom [be] glory for ever and ever. Amen.**

**Say:** Beginning in Hebrews 13:16, the writer explored a different way that believers offer sacrifices to God: through our relationships with others. ( Share your highlights from the following text.)

**Along with sacrifices of praise to God, the writer instructed believers on how their actions in relationship to others would serve as a sacrifice to God. This included acts of compassion for the needy (Hebrews 13:16), which the Old Testament often highlights (see Leviticus 19:9–10; Isaiah 58:6–7). It is especially notable that God presents himself as the defender of the poor, so to exploit them is an act against Him (Proverbs 14:13). Yet the writer’s instruction on relationships also extended to attitudes toward those in spiritual authority. While obedience to their godly commands can be difficult sometimes, their role in leadership is part of God’s design.**

The writer closed with a request for prayer and a doxology—a word of praise to God and prayer for the people. The writer’s prayer request included a recognition that he himself needed the help of the Lord to live honorably with a clean conscience (verses 18–19). The doxology of verses 20–21 recognizes the Risen Christ, the Shepherd caring for the sheep, and the One who ratified the covenant. Having reflected the concerns of his letter, the writer’s prayer focused on the

**people being equipped by God to do His will (amid struggles), and giving Him glory forever. Such is a fitting prayer for believers of all times, including today.**

### **Resource Packet Item 3: My Doxology**

Distribute the work sheet and have students complete their doxologies. Invite them to share their results with the class.

### ***Discuss***

? How are our relationships with others related to living holy before the Lord?

? Why must we depend on God to help us do His will?

## **What Is God Saying to Us?**

**Say:** This lesson placed a heavy focus on self-examination. Each of us needs to take time to consider our relationships with God, one another, and strangers we meet every day, asking God to help us make necessary changes in our lives.

## **Living It Out**

### **Ministry in Action**

- Find a fellow believer this week in need of encouragement, and take the time to talk and pray together.
- Through an email, phone call, or in person, tell one of your spiritual leaders that you appreciate them and are praying for them.
- Research and study some of the doxologies of the New Testament and use them as part of your devotional life. Ask God to help you demonstrate a positive attitude toward others, rooted in your focus on praise.

## **Daily Bible Readings**

### **Monday:**

The Eternal Creator.

Psalm 146:1–10

**[Psa 146:1-10 KJV] 1 Praise ye the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul. 2 While I live will I praise the LORD: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being. 3 Put not your trust in princes, [nor] in the son of man, in whom [there is] no help. 4 His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish. 5 Happy [is he] that [hath] the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope [is] in the LORD his God: 6 Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein [is]: which keepeth truth for ever: 7 Which executeth judgment for the oppressed: which giveth food to the hungry. The LORD looseth the prisoners: 8 The LORD openeth [the eyes of] the blind: the LORD raiseth them that are bowed down: the LORD loveth the righteous: 9 The LORD preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down. 10 The LORD shall reign for ever, [even] thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the LORD.**

## **Tuesday:**

Everlasting Dominion.

Daniel 7:9–14

**[Dan 7:9-14 KJV] 9 I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment [was] white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne [was like] the fiery flame, [and] his wheels [as] burning fire. 10 A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. 11 I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld [even] till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. 12 As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time. 13 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, [one] like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion [is] an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom [that] which shall not be destroyed.**

## **Wednesday:**

Everlasting Ways.

Habakkuk 3:1–6

**[Hab 3:1-6 NLT] 1 This prayer was sung by the prophet Habakkuk: 2 I have heard all about you, LORD. I am filled with awe by your amazing works. In this time of our deep need, help us again as you did in years gone by. And in your anger, remember your mercy. 3 I see God moving across the deserts from Edom, the Holy One coming from Mount Paran. His brilliant splendor fills the heavens, and the earth is filled with his praise. 4 His coming is as brilliant as the sunrise. Rays of light flash from his hands, where his awesome power is hidden. 5 Pestilence marches before him; plague follows close behind. 6 When he stops, the earth shakes. When he looks, the nations tremble. He shatters the everlasting mountains and levels the eternal hills. He is the Eternal One!**

## **Thursday:**

Eternal Weight of Glory.

2 Corinthians 4:16–18

**[2Co 4:16-18 NLT] 16 That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day. 17 For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! 18 So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.**

**Friday:**

Crown of Righteousness.

2 Timothy 4:6–18

**[2Ti 4:6-18 NLT] 6 As for me, my life has already been poured out as an offering to God. The time of my death is near. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful. 8 And now the prize awaits me--the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on the day of his return. And the prize is not just for me but for all who eagerly look forward to his appearing. 9 Timothy, please come as soon as you can. 10 Demas has deserted me because he loves the things of this life and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus has gone to Dalmatia. 11 Only Luke is with me. Bring Mark with you when you come, for he will be helpful to me in my ministry. 12 I sent Tychicus to Ephesus. 13 When you come, be sure to bring the coat I left with Carpus at Troas. Also bring my books, and especially my papers. 14 Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm, but the Lord will judge him for what he has done. 15 Be careful of him, for he fought against everything we said. 16 The first time I was brought before the judge, no one came with me. Everyone abandoned me. May it not be counted against them. 17 But the Lord stood with me and gave me strength so that I might preach the Good News in its entirety for all the Gentiles to hear. And he rescued me from certain death. 18 Yes, and the Lord will deliver me from every evil attack and will bring me safely into his heavenly Kingdom. All glory to God forever and ever! Amen.**

**Saturday:**

Alpha and Omega.

Revelation 21:5–8

**[Rev 21:5-8 NLT] 5 And the one sitting on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new!" And then he said to me, "Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true." 6 And he also said, "It is finished! I am the Alpha and the Omega--the Beginning and the End. To all who are thirsty I will give freely from the springs of the water of life. 7 All who are victorious will inherit all these blessings, and I will be their God, and they will be my children. 8 "But cowards, unbelievers, the corrupt, murderers, the immoral, those who practice witchcraft, idol worshipers, and all liars--their fate is in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."**