

## Weekly Word for the week of Feb. 16/25:

Jeremiah 17:5-10

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Psalm 1

1 Corinthians 15:12-20

Luke 6:17-26

These readings challenge each of us to intentionally decide what we believe about Jesus Christ.

The 1 Corinthians 15: 12-20 reading is thought provoking. It says, *“Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead. If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised, and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ--whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. <sup>6</sup>And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.*

We haven't physically seen Him, like the disciples did when He was with them in the flesh. There are reports of scientific and archaeological evidence that Jesus' death and resurrection did take place, as the Bible says it did. Most of us haven't seen that evidence. However, on the other side of that debate, Romans 5:1-2 tells us, *“Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”*

It really is about faith. Hebrews 11:1 defines faith this way, *“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”* Further into Hebrews 11, in verse 6, we read, *“And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.”*

When the Apostle Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians, he expressed his opinion about the resurrection of Jesus in verse 20, by saying, *“But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.”*

If we choose to live by faith, we should follow the example of faith that the multitude of people who came to see Jesus provided for us. Luke 6:18-19 talks about, *“They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases, and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. And everyone in the crowd was trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them.”*

Those people physically made the effort to go to where Jesus was. They wanted to hear Him, and they were filled with expectancy that He would perform miracles of healing and deliverance. They acted on their faith, and it was not in vain, as Luke 6:19 tells us that He healed ALL of them.

Psalm 1:1-3 says *“Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked or take the path that sinners tread or sit in the seat of scoffers, but their delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law they meditate day and night. They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper.”*

On the other side, Psalm 1:4-6 goes on to say, “The wicked are not so but are like chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous, or the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.”

God gave us free will and He will not violate that. He does ask us to intentionally make the choice to serve and trust Him, but we are free to make our own choice.

Deuteronomy 30:19-20 says, *“I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.”*