

Devotional Calendar

April
2020

Unit II.
God Promises a
Just Kingdom

5



Meditate: Psalm 98

Listen: “Lord, We Rejoice” by Darwin Hobbs

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGzrygt-DUc>

Pray: Express to the Mighty God that You Rejoice in Him

12



Meditate: Isaiah 53:4-12

Listen: “Celebrate (He Lives)” by Fred Hammond

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XcplHtZzQe8>

Pray: Thank the Living God for All that He Has Done for You

19



Meditate: Luke 19:11-26

Listen: “Celebrate the King” by Ricky Dillard

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4BFt7M7KUwE>

Pray: Express to God that He Is the King of Your Life

26



Meditate: Isaiah 42:1-9

Listen: “Your Spirit” by Tasha Cobbs Leonard (featuring Kierra Sheard)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BZT8jqsc8lQ>

Pray: Ask the Lord to Bring Justice across Our Nation by His Spirit

How to Do a Devotional

Daily devotionals are important to help you grow in your relationship with God. Pray, meditate, and read the Word of God, and you will grow spiritually. Devote ten minutes at the beginning of your day to clear your mind and heart and prepare to receive God. Daily devotions will prepare you for any obstacles that may come your way. Take time each morning to hear from God. Even Jesus used time in the morning to be with God. “Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed” (Mark 1:35, NIV).

He's Given Me a New Name!

LESSON

9

Background Scripture:

Isaiah 61:8–62:12

Print Passage:

Isaiah 61:8–11; 62:2–4a

The nations will see your vindication, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will bestow. (Isaiah 62:2)



A block away from the church, Nathan noticed a man with a sign asking for money. Nathan thought about the man all the while he was in worship. After worship, Nathan asked his mother to stop so Nathan could talk to the man. Nathan found out the man's name was Darius and recently he was released from prison.

After spending years in prison, Darius had nothing—no bank account; no family support; and no money for food, clothing, or shelter. Until his application for government assistance is approved, Darius has no other option but to depend on other people's kindness. He served the time for his crime, but now, he was having an almost impossible time trying to get back on his feet.

Nathan told Darius, "Hold on. I know two people who are able to help you—one is Jesus and the other is my pastor!" Nathan talked to Jesus and then talked to Pastor Keith, who is also a city councilman. On Wednesday evening, the church van picked up Darius and brought him to Wednesday night service. The pastor preached the message, "Twisted Justice, Divine Love, and Second Chances." Darius was so deeply moved by the message of salvation, forgiveness, and hope that he began weeping in his seat. With tears in his eyes, Darius came forward to rededicate his life to God.

Pastor Keith hugged Darius and said, "None of us are so good that we don't need God's grace and mercy. We are sinners and God gave us all another chance. Welcome back home, my brother; we need you." Pastor reached into his own pocket and gave Darius a one hundred-dollar bill, along with a folder from the church that included restaurant gift cards, a city bus pass, barbershop gift cards, and a voucher for the Second Chance Clothes Closet. In the midst of despair and hopelessness, Darius had experienced the hope of restoration! He jumped out of his seat and shouted, "HALLELUJAH! THANK YOU, JESUS!" and gave Nathan a high-five!

Other than sports victories, what moves you to rejoice and shout for joy?





Isaiah 61:8-11; 62:2-4a

8 “For I, the LORD, love justice; I hate robbery and wrongdoing. In my faithfulness I will reward my people and make an everlasting covenant with them. **9** Their descendants will be known among the nations and their offspring among the peoples. All who see them will acknowledge that they are a people the LORD has blessed.” **10** I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. **11** For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign LORD will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.

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2 The nations will see your vindication, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will bestow. **3** You will be a crown of splendor in the LORD’s hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God. **4** No longer will they call you Deserted, or name your land Desolate.



Intersect

Today’s Bible lesson comes from the book of Isaiah, one of the major prophets. Isaiah 61 begins with a prophecy that outlines an agenda of justice and social ministry to the poor, the brokenhearted, the captives, the prisoners, and all those who mourn. This commitment to oppressed and hurting people was the specific focus of Jesus’ ministry on earth; it was from this section of Isaiah that Jesus read when He stood in the synagogue at the beginning of His ministry in Luke 4:16-21 to announce, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me . . .” and reveal that He was the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy.

Isaiah continues to describe God’s commitment to justice. It is one thing when people suffer the consequences of their own poor choices and bad behavior—they get what they deserve. But God is personally committed to defend and bless innocent people who suffer because of others’ robbery and wrongdoing (verse 8).

God loves justice and hates evil and oppression in any form. Isaiah 61 is a glimpse into the coming day when God will conquer injustice with the reign of His righteousness. Isaiah prophesies that God will cause the righteous to rejoice in their salvation (expressed as being clothed with the “garments of salvation” and the “robe of righteousness”). Instead of oppression, righteousness will triumph as a seed sprouting up in a garden, springing forth before the nations.

• Inside Out

Sometimes when negative situations linger for a long time, it is easy to lose hope and believe that things will never get better. Today’s lesson reminds us that no matter how bad a situation may appear, God can fully restore His people to their rightful position as His blessed children. The gift of salvation and righteousness can only come from God. Invite God into your difficult situations and trust that He will bless you. How can you stay encouraged when you face trials or difficult situations in life?



There's an App for That!

The message of hope in Isaiah's prophecy is simple. No matter how dark and difficult your struggle has been: no matter how people have despised and mistreated you—know that God's eye is focused on you, and He takes delight in turning your situation around. Seeing His people overcome their struggles and giving them a fresh start is what makes God happy! Sooner or later, everyone will face a hardship or struggle in life. Isn't it great to know that you have a God who is cheering for you to win?

Connect

In today's "Reflect" story, Darius felt defeated because he wanted to make a new start but could not overcome the obstacles from what he had done in the past. Through the compassion of a young stranger, Darius was inspired to renew his relationship with God. The decision to start with God became the stepping stone he needed to overcome the challenges of reentering society after prison. Are you discouraged in the face of tough challenges? Start with God.

Stepping Out!

Like the nation of Israel, everyone has sinned against God. This week, your challenge is to think about reasons why you fall short of doing what God expects you to do. For each reason, write a positive action that you can take to resist giving in to disobedience. Pray and ask God to help you grow in obedience, trusting that He will empower you to live righteously.



Media Mission

Visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A14THPoc4-4> and watch the video entitled "Justice," published by The Bible Project. The video emphasizes God's commitment to justice for oppressed people. Take notes and be ready to give a biblical definition of the word *justice*.

