

INTRODUCTION

Thank you so much for your willingness to sacrifice your time, energy, money and a host of other things in order to come to Calgary and help us reach these precious people with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Because of people like you doing this over quite a few summers, people have come to know Christ and His great love. You may be here for only one week and what you do this week may seem insignificant to you, but if you could be here week after week and see the children and their parents get a grasp of the love and kindness shown to them over and over again and hear them say things like, "These people are different; they're so loving and kind," you would realize the impact that people like you make on the lives of so many people. God truly takes your effort that is bathed in His love and draws people to Himself through His amazing, indescribable power.

We have spent a great deal of time praying for you and we look forward to seeing what God is going to do in and through you this week. You are being given this Bible study so that you will give God the opportunity to pour into you every day so that, out of the overflow, you can pour into the lives of the many people with whom you will interact. It is our prayer that you will begin each day doing that day's study individually and then that your group will, at some designated point during the day, discuss the day's study together. This will help you get to know your team members better and encourage unity of heart and spirit as you serve together. This should provide a greater focus for the purpose of your being here.

Again, thank you, thank you, thank you for your help in bringing the gospel to the people of Calgary!

**CANADA SUMMER MISSION TEAM BIBLE STUDY
2017**

DAY ONE - Celebrate God

The theme for this year's Bible study is Celebrate. We will be focusing on celebrating God and who He is, what He is doing and has done in your life and for what He is doing and has done in Calgary. From looking behind us and seeing the lives that have been changed, there is no doubt that God is at work in the lives of many people in Calgary and that He is going to take the remnant already there and do great and mighty things that only He can do. It is a very exciting time to be involved in this ministry of serving God by sharing His message of hope, freedom and everlasting life to many people who have never heard it. We are excited that you are joining us in this adventure and we pray that you will be blessed as much as you will bless us and the people of Calgary who will be involved in the summer activities that are designed to point people to Jesus Christ.

Our focus verses for the week are Psalm 100:1&4b: "***Shout triumphantly to the Lord, all the earth...Give thanks to Him and praise His name.***"

Read Psalm 100. The entirety of this psalm provides a wonderful backdrop of who God is, who we are, and how deserving He is of our worship, praise and thanksgiving. Other Bible translations begin this Psalm with "Make a joyful shout to the Lord, all you lands!" (NKJV) and "Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth!" (ESV) and "Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth." (NIV). Any way you say it, the Lord is to be praised with passion and joy. Focusing on the word in the HCSB translation which we used above, consider what the word "triumphantly" means as it refers to God and write your thoughts.

Imagine that you're an avid fan of a sports team and your team is playing the season championship game. After an intense, challenging game, your team is victorious! You, along with thousands of other fans, stand shouting and clapping for the victory which you feel you own a part of by association and support of the team. Feel the exhilaration and satisfaction that overcomes you. Now consider that that feeling is only minuscule to what we will feel when we, after a time of loving and serving God, see Jesus in all His glory after having defeated Satan and his angels. Revelation 19:1 records this event by saying, "*After this I heard something like the loud voice of a vast multitude in heaven, saying: 'Hallelujah! Salvation, glory and power belong to our God.'*" Do you get a sense of the triumph you will feel when you clearly see that it was worth all the sacrifice, all the pain, all the challenges you faced? We can know without a doubt that it is going to be worth every bit of sacrifice we make and that we will celebrate throughout all eternity who God really is as we see Him face to face and experience the sheer glory of His presence.

Even though we aren't in His presence now as we will be one day, we who have a personal relationship with Christ do experience His presence in our hearts. That presence assures us of who He is. Verse 3 says, "*Acknowledge that Yahweh is God. He made us, and we are His, His people, the sheep of His pasture.*" So He is God and He created us and all the universe. We are His people, the sheep of His pasture who have every reason to "shout triumphantly" to Him

and give Him thanks, praising His name. In the middle of the battle of life, we can know the ending because it's already been recorded for us in God's Word, so we can celebrate every victory along the way, even daily.

Let's look at the instructions found in this precious psalm. We are told to...

- Shout triumphantly to the Lord.
- Serve the Lord with gladness.
- Come before Him with joyful songs.
- Acknowledge that Yahweh is God.
- Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise.
- Give thanks to Him and praise His name.

And we do all of this because...

- God made us and we are His.
- God is good and His love is eternal.
- His faithfulness endures through all generations.

It's interesting to note that in the middle of telling us what we are to do, the psalmist reminds us that God made us. Some translations include the fact that we did not make ourselves. The NKJV says, "*It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves.*" So we are to do all these things because we owe our very being to this great and mighty God who is good, who loves us eternally and who is forever faithful to us.

Read the lists above several times and think about the joy that should fill us as we walk through this life.

How does the psalmist say we should serve God? _____

How should we approach God? (2 commands) _____

Who do we know that He is? _____

What else do we see about Him that should be constantly on our minds? _____

How would your life be different if you read this psalm every morning and allowed it to be the backdrop of every day? _____

Spend some time in prayer asking God to fill you with the fullness of His joy, to put a song in your heart of praise to Him, to enable you to serve Him with gladness, and to constantly thank Him for all He's done for you. Ask Him to fill you with a spirit of celebration especially this week as you celebrate not only what God has done for you, but also what He has done for the people you are serving in Calgary.

Meditate today on the focus passage from Psalm 100:1,4b, "*Shout triumphantly to the Lord, all the earth...Give thanks to Him and praise His name.*"

DAY TWO - Celebrate God's Call

Let's look at an Old Testament passage that can lead us to celebrate God and His greatness and His mighty works. The following passage contains the words from the leaders of the Israelites after the people had rebuilt the temple and the wall around Jerusalem but had drifted away from God and had failed to keep the commandments given them through Moses and other prophets. Ezra had read the law as given to Moses, and the people were reminded of all the ways God had provided for their ancestors and themselves and yet all the ways they had been unfaithful to Him. They confessed their sins before God and worshiped Him. Then their leaders said to them,

"Stand up and bless the Lord our God from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed be Your glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise. You are the Lord, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you." Nehemiah 9:5b-6

When we stop and take time to consider the glory and power of God, the creator and sustainer of the universe and the living God from everlasting to everlasting, we should all be amazed and be drawn to worship Him. When our soul, heart and mind say, "*You are the Lord*," it is a worshipful acknowledgement that He truly is Lord over all things, both in and around us.

Another part of worshiping God is allowing Him to work in and through us. It is through this worship that God calls us to do various acts of love and service to represent Him in the world. Then as we feel His power working through us, we are drawn to continual worship of Him because we realize that it is the power of the God of the universe using us. What an incredibly satisfying and humbling realization that is!

You may have been to Calgary many times on mission trips and have seen God at work here or this may be your first trip. We pray that either way, you will see His mighty hand at work in lives here and will experience His presence as He works in and through you. This is a good time to stop and consider a few of the wonderful things that God has accomplished in His work in Calgary since 2014.

1. A total of nine baptisms, plus a few more awaiting warmer water for baptism
2. Two more decisions made recently
3. Addition of Elaine Shaneyfelt, who moved from Louisiana to work with ladies and children
4. Addition of Denise Shirley, who moved from South Carolina to work with summer camps, marketing and youth
5. New families plugging in to serve in various capacities
6. The great number of children involved in church
7. Three life groups added this year and another one starting soon
8. Spiritual and numerical growth of members and attendees
9. New volunteer groups starting, such as set-up and tear-down of the church equipment and furniture each Sunday
10. The Flora family moving to Calgary to plant a sister church in the Silverado community

Before Brett and his family moved to Calgary, there was a point that Brett reached where he was able to say, "You know, when we began this journey of raising support for ministering in Calgary, I thought to myself how much better and easier it would have been if the Southern

Baptist Convention had just said, 'We're going to pay you this amount per month for this many years;' however, if they had done that, I would have missed out on seeing God work in such wonderful, miraculous ways. As it turned out, I wouldn't take anything for seeing His hand at work in providing what only He can do!" God is the one with the plan. No matter how insurmountable a task looks to us, if God is in it, He can move mountains to bring about His will. With Calgary being one of the most expensive places to live, it had seemed like such a huge mountain to raise enough support to be able to live in the community that God was calling Brett and Kristin to serve. Yet, God provided all they needed and they knew without a doubt that He had done it. When we follow His plan, we reap the reward of seeing Him accomplish what we cannot accomplish alone. There is nothing more rewarding than to know that the God of the universe worked in and through us to accomplish His plan.

What are a few things God has done in your life that you absolutely know came only from God working out His will in you?

Read and meditate on the following words of King David as recorded in Psalm 9:1-2:
"I will praise You, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your marvelous works. I will be glad and rejoice in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High." What do you praise God for today?

Reflecting on all that God has done for us in spite of our sins should make us also praise Him with our whole heart. We should have hearts full of joy because He loves us, He gave his only Son for us, and He has given us His Holy Spirit to live in us and enable us to accomplish His will His way. This should also cause us to do as David and tell others of God's marvelous works.

As mentioned earlier, a heart full of praise and worship to God also experiences God's call to action. What are some things God has called you to do? Is there anything He has called you to do that you have not done?

Spend a few minutes in prayer thanking God for working in your life to accomplish things that you could not have done on your own. Praise God for all He has done and allow Him to fill your heart with gladness and rejoicing, along with a desire to tell others of His glorious works. Consider how you can celebrate God's goodness in your life. Thank God also for working miracles in Calgary so that unbelievers can know and experience His grace and love. Prepare your heart for a day of celebration of God's mighty works.

Meditate today on the verse, *"I will praise You, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your marvelous works. I will be glad and rejoice in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High."*
Psalm 9:1-2

DAY THREE - Celebrate God's Love

John 3:16 says, "*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*"

God performs His mighty acts because of His great love for humanity. He doesn't choose to reach people with His message because we deserve what He has to offer. He chooses to love humanity in spite of ourselves because He simply is a God of love. It was God's will from the beginning of creation to offer His Son as the sacrifice for our sins and He willingly gave His Son for us. However, Jesus had to be willing to leave the comfort of heaven to come to the earth and teach a group of disciples, then be persecuted and nailed to a cross, dying an unimaginable and humiliating death, all for the purpose of reconciling humanity with God. In one of his teaching times with His disciples, Jesus said, "*These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.*" (John 15:11-13). The disciples did not know at the time that Jesus was going to literally lay down His life for them. He was teaching them the vastness of the love of God that we should also have for others, a love that compels us to put our selfish desires aside in order to serve others regardless of the cost.

Jesus' love compelled Him to leave the comfort of heaven. If we are to follow His example, we will sometimes be asked to leave the comfort of home to share Jesus' love with those who need to know it. What sacrifices have you made to leave your home for this mission adventure and what do you hope to accomplish as a result?

Romans 10:14-15a says, "*How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent?*"

As surprising as it is, there are vast numbers of people in Calgary who really do not know who Jesus is; they simply have not heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ. There is somewhat of a correlation between the people of Alberta and the Israelites. The Israelites were God's chosen people and He worked mightily in them, but as He did, there were times when the people walked with Him and other times when they forgot what He had done for them and set aside His commandments, walking in their own unrighteous ways. There were generations who grew up during times of rebellion against God and who did not know the history of God's love for them. Then prophets would come along and remind them of all that God had done for His people and they would repent and turn back to Him. The similarity with this and the people of Alberta is that two generations ago, Christianity was so common in the province of Alberta that it has been told that when a plane flew over Alberta, alcohol could not be served on it. However, obviously that generation turned away from God and did not teach God's Word to their children. Consequently, if you ask a person from Calgary or Alberta if they go to church, a common answer is, "No, but my grandparents did." The important note here is that God did not forget the people of Alberta. He, like He did so many times for the Israelites, wants to bring the descendants of these people to Himself.

Because of His great love for them, God worked out a number of details to get people here to share Christ with these precious people. The leadership of the churches here have been obedient to the call, leaving family and friends to move to Calgary and work diligently to share God's love with the people and teach them His Word. Many volunteers over quite a few summers have also come to serve the children, as well as adults, and model the love and kindness of Christ before them. These acts of service have had a tremendous impact on the people of Calgary because they say to them that they are cared for and then when they hear that it is God who has sent them, it takes on a special meaning to them. This is cause for celebration just like the Israelites celebrated God's deliverance and love for them.

Turning the thought to you who are not in Calgary full time, there are people you come in contact with every day who may know about Jesus but have not experienced Him, do not have a personal relationship with Him. However, they can get a taste of Him through contact with you. Consider some ways you can share Christ and His great love in your everyday contact with others. List ways you could be more intentional with sharing Christ.

As recorded in John 15:11-13 shown in a previous paragraph, Jesus said, "*These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.*" If Christ's joy is in us and it is full, why do you think we may not always manifest that joy to others?

If we are going to celebrate all that God has done both in the lives of people in Calgary and in each one of our lives, that spirit of celebration and thanksgiving will fill us with the joy of Christ and the richness of all that He offers. List a couple of things that you believe are causes to celebrate God's work in your life and allow Him to fill you with His joy and thanksgiving.

Look back over the list of things from Day One that God has done in the ministry of Calgary and pick out two or three.

Spend a few minutes thanking God for each item listed in the two lists above and praise Him for His power, His love, and His grace. Ask God to give you a spirit of celebration today that will fill you with the fullness of Christ's great love. Our prayer for all of us is that we will radiate God's love and let His light shine through us so that others know it is God who is serving them.

Meditate today on the words recorded in John 15:12: "*This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.*"

DAY FOUR - Celebrate God's Will and God's Way

John 13:14-15 says, "*If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.*"

When Jesus said these words, He had just washed the feet of His disciples. Imagine being in the presence of Jesus right now, with Him kneeling in front of you and washing your feet. Look at the smile in His eyes as they radiate His love for you and the touch of His hands as they softly cleanse your feet from the filth of this world. Oh, the comfort and joy He brings! Jesus tells you, as He told His disciples, that He is going away but that you cannot follow Him there now and then He says, "*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.*" Then you realize that Jesus went on soon after this to give His life so that all humanity can be fully cleansed from the filth of sin forever. He can, therefore, cleanse not only your feet from the filth of this world, but He can also cleanse your heart from the sin that overtakes you.

The act of washing the disciples' feet demonstrated Jesus' love for them, emphasizing that His serving them was motivated by His love for them. Jesus' love is unconditional and sacrificial...that is His way of loving us. Likewise, our service to God should be motivated by our love for Him and those we serve and our love, too, should be unconditional and sacrificial. Consider what unconditional and sacrificial love really is. It's easy to love those who love us back, but if we demonstrate the love of Christ, we will love those who don't love us back and who can't return our favor and we will willingly sacrifice our desires to help them.

Have you ever performed an act of service simply because you knew it was the right thing to do, but your heart was not motivated by unconditional love for those whom you served? Maybe your heart was motivated by a sense of duty or by wanting someone to notice you for the recognition you might receive or maybe it was good for your business. Have you ever sat down to have your Bible study just because you knew it was your duty, but your motivation was not a pure love for God? Or maybe you skipped your Bible study because you were not willing to sacrifice some sleep time in order to spend time with him?

Ask God to examine your heart and show you areas that you need Him to cleanse and replace with His unconditional and sacrificial love for Him and for others and note any changes He leads you to make.

Consider the words of the psalmist recorded in Psalm 34:3: "*Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together.*" Allow God to fill your heart with praise to Him because of His greatness, His glory and power and also for revealing His will to you and His way which He enables you to carry it out through His demonstration of unconditional and sacrificial love.

As a follower of Christ, we can know His will as He reveals it to us, and it is important to note that when He does this, He commands complete obedience. Incomplete obedience is actually disobedience. Complete obedience is not simply the act of carrying out the specific tasks God has asked us to perform, but carrying out the tasks in the way He would do them if He were here physically--acts wrapped in love, grace and humility. We know a lady who served most of

her adult life as a missionary in Africa. We were able to serve alongside her when she came back to the states. However, we noticed that as she served people, she had a tendency to be abrupt and disrespectful to them. Of course, it's much easier to see the flaws in another person than to see our own, but this stood out as odd because you would think that a person who is serving others would love the people being served. The people received the physical items they needed, but they were not granted the joy and respect that a smile and a kind word would have given them. This reminds us that it is not enough to do God's will; we must also do it His way. John 13:15 of today's passage relates Jesus' words, "*For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.*" Oh, that we could just remember that every moment of every day! Unconditionally and sacrificially do the will of God.

Examine your heart and see if you find any acts of service you have done that lacked the "way" of doing them--unconditionally and sacrificially in love, grace and humility. Record your thoughts below.

Let's apply God's will and His way (unconditional, sacrificial love) to what He has done in the hearts and lives of many people in Calgary in the past few years. Look back over the list from Day One and record two things (or two things you've seen that aren't on the list) that reveal God's unconditional, sacrificial love for these precious people.

We realize that your willingness to come to Calgary was a sacrifice of time, energy, family duties and money, among other things. We praise God for you and your love for Him that compelled you to make such a sacrifice. Ask God now to fill you with His unconditional love for Him and these people in a powerful way that demonstrates His love, grace and humility and compels you to manifest His character in every single act you perform this week for the people, as well as your interactions with your team members. It is our prayer that everyone we are around feels the love of God flowing through us. Second, it is also our prayer that we are sensitive to God's leadership and that we each follow to the letter everything that He tells us to do in complete obedience.

Spend a few minutes praising God for the things you listed above that He has done in hearts and lives of the people of Calgary and also things that He has done in your own heart to make you more like Him. Then ask God to enable you to consistently do His will His way.

Meditate today on Psalm 34:3: "*Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together.*"

DAY FIVE - Celebrate God's Power

Look once again at our focus verses for the week, Psalm 100:1&4b: "**Shout triumphantly to the Lord, all the earth...Give thanks to Him and praise His name.**" Today we will look at another reason to celebrate God--His almighty, incomprehensible power. Psalm 21:13 says, "**Be exalted, O Lord, in your strength! We will sing and praise your power.**" (ESV)

There's no way that we can comprehend God's power that enables Him to create the universe from nothing, create man from dust of the earth, create woman from man's rib, and the list goes on. Just look at the sky on a clear night and see the stars, the moon, realizing that you're only seeing a speck of the universe, and think about the power it took to create the universe.

However, as mystifying as all of that is, one thing that constantly amazes me is God's power to speak to millions of people all over the earth at the same time, having a plan for every person's life before we were even created, knowing every little detail of each of our lives, working out problems for people across the earth. Stop for a minute and think about the fact that God is right now tuned in to what you're doing and is listening to the prayer of your heart, while at the same time doing the same thing for countless individuals all over the earth. That is amazing!

Obviously, God's mighty power is capable of doing anything He wants to do. Therefore, He is capable of accomplishing whatever He wants to do in and through us if we will only allow Him. However, we, in comparison to God, are frail individuals with limited knowledge, limited skills, limited sight, full of selfish ambition. Throughout scripture, God refers to people as sheep. Isaiah 53:6a says, "**All we like sheep have gone astray...**" and Ezekiel 34:31 says, "**And you are my sheep, human sheep of my pasture, and I am your God, declares the Lord God.**" Brett recently preached a sermon in which he gave a few characteristics of sheep. Here they are:

Prone to wander	Defenseless	Do not see or hear well
No weapon of defense	No sense of direction	Easily disturbed
Weak	Foolishly stubborn	Tend to follow other sheep

When we think about our fleshly nature, we can probably each identify with all or most of these characteristics. Let's just take one of these as an example--"Do not see or hear well." In comparison to God who knows the future, who sees dangers that we cannot possibly see, who speaks to us many times and we refuse to listen to His guidance, maybe you, like each of us, can understand how we can be like sheep even in this characteristic. Without God at work in our lives, we are prone to wander and we tend to follow others who may or may not be going in God's direction. However, in spite of all of these characteristics, God has the power to use us to accomplish His eternal purpose! He can pour into us His almighty, indescribable power and enable us to do things that we could never do on our own. This is worth celebrating!

Think about something that God has done for or through you that you knew you could have never done on your own and describe it.

There is absolutely nothing more gratifying than to know that the God of the universe is working through you to accomplish something that is of eternal value. So why do we try to do things on our own, why do we worry about things that may or may not happen when all we have to do is trust God and His power to work out whatever it is we are facing? Try to imagine God's

frustration when He sees us trying to work out our own problems, manipulate situations that we think will get us what we want, worry through sleepless nights--all because we lack the ability to simply trust Him. He wants to say to us, "Just trust Me. I've got this." We've heard the term "simple faith," but why, if it is so simple, do we struggle so much with it? Could it be that we really think we know more than God knows? Or do we think that our problems aren't important enough for God, so we have to tackle them ourselves? When we think about it, these questions are odd, considering God's love and power, so why do we think that way? It probably comes down to the basic lack of that simple faith--faith that trusts God instinctively because of seeing Him work over and over again, the realization that He is God and He really does "have this." Oh, what we would accomplish if we truly realized that God will enable us to do whatever it is that He calls us to do! It is not up to us. The obedience is up to us, but the outcome is not.

Is there an area where you have a lack of faith in God's power to work in your own life? If so, why do you think you struggle to simply trust God and His power to work in your life?

Mark 12:41-44 describes the story of the widow who put into the treasury two mites, which was all she had. Jesus, having seen this, said to His disciples, "**Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood.**" Although this instance concerned the giving of monetary means, the same truth translates to anything we give God. This week what may seem to you like a very simple act of teaching a child things such as how to hit a t-ball, or telling children a Bible story, helping children draw pictures, teaching them the motions to a song about God, or other things you do to serve these children and their parents. However, God can take your simple willingness and love and He can show a child His love and give him or her a glimpse of Him that will eventually lead to that child and his or her family coming to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. That's the power of God! Only the true and living God of the universe can do that.

Here are a few ways God's power has been revealed in the people of the church in Mahogany that are cause for celebration:

- A representative of the developer of Mahogany asked the Southwinds Church in Cranston to plant a church in Mahogany and the leadership of that church began to pray for a pastor.
- Three weeks later, God revealed to Brett and Kristin His desire for them to lead this church.
- God led Elaine Shaneyfelt and Denise Shirley to move to Calgary and fulfill the roles that God clearly defined for them within the church and has empowered them to make a difference.
- God has moved in hearts of people in Mahogany and surrounding communities and led them to accept the gift of Jesus as their Savior.
- God has granted this church favor in the community through hundreds of people who have been willing to spend a week in Calgary serving the people here.

Read Psalm 106:8. Spend a few minutes thinking about the fact that God wants to use you to make His power known to others. Then praise Him for His power and thank Him for His willingness to use you to be a display of His power, His love and grace. Commit to Him your desire to be used by Him.

Meditate today on Psalm 21:13: "**Be exalted, O Lord, in your strength! We will sing and praise your power.**" Throughout the day, celebrate God's almighty power.

DAY SIX - Celebrate God's Faithfulness

Look once again at our focus verses for the week, Psalm 100:1&4b: "***Shout triumphantly to the Lord, all the earth...Give thanks to Him and praise His name.***" Today we will thank God for and celebrate His faithfulness. We find these words in Lamentations 3:22-24: "***The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."***" (ESV)

Break down the above passage by phrases and read each one again, really thinking about what they each mean. To really get a grasp of these truths is to have the abundant life that is available to us through Jesus Christ.

Describe what you think is meant by "The Lord is my portion."

Merriam-Webster defines portion as the amount of food that is served to a person at one time. This is a fitting description of God being all we need, entrusting to us all we can handle at any given time. No matter what our circumstances are, He can counterbalance them because He is faithful to meet our needs. Just as you have said, "No, thank you" to the offering of food you did not want, can you imagine saying, "No, thank you" to the God of the universe who created you and wants to help you? Yet, I'm sure most of us could admit that we've probably done that more than once. So what is the antidote for refusing the help of God in every aspect of our lives? The answer is given in the two verses that precede the declaration of "The Lord is my portion."

The realization that "*The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness*" is the antidote for failure to trust Him and to be able to take possession of His portion that He generously offers us. However, we must spend time with Him to fully realize who He is and all that He offers, then to partake of His gift of love, mercy and faithfulness. This is the key to a future full of hope, peace and joy. What hope we have when Jesus truly is our portion and what peace and joy will result!

Today we praise God in anticipation of all the mighty things He will do in the future in and for us personally, as well as for the people of Calgary. God has begun a good work and we know that He is faithful to continue it, so we are excited about the future!

Describe what a blessed, peaceful and joyful future looks like to you.

Hopefully, we realize that hope, peace and joy in the future does not mean that we know we will have a life free of difficulties; however, we know that in spite of any difficulties we may face, we can have hope, peace and joy because, as the song says, "We know who holds tomorrow."

Read Psalm 16 and write verse 11.

The words "you" and "your" are found three times in this short verse. Look back at the verse, emphasizing these words. What do you find significant about these words?

The key to having hope, peace and joy in the future lies in an intimate, abiding relationship with God our Father through Jesus Christ. What excites you about the future that is available to you personally through this relationship, as well as what is available to the people of Calgary?

What is one thing that you have seen so far in the work in Calgary that shows God's hand at work and an indication that there is great hope for the future?

Psalm 119:108 says, "**Lord, please accept my willing offerings of praise, and teach me Your judgments.**" (HCSB) A heart full of praise to God and open to His teachings--what a blessed life awaits!

Spend a few minutes praising and thanking God for all He has done for you and for people in Calgary through The Junction Church and asking Him to give you a spirit of celebration throughout today for the future work He has planned.

Meditate today on Lamentations 3:22-24: "**The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."**"

DAY SEVEN - Celebrate God's Promises

Remember our focus verses for the week, Psalm 100:1&4b: "**Shout triumphantly to the Lord, all the earth...Give thanks to Him and praise His name.**" We pray that you have enjoyed celebrating God this week and that it has been an encouraging and inspiring week for you personally. We also pray that this spirit of celebration will continue in your heart and cause you to celebrate God every day for all that He is and all that He offers.

Today we will celebrate God's promises that give us hope for the future. Isaiah 43:1b-3a says, "**Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.**" (ESV). God spoke these words to Jacob, but if you have a personal relationship with Him through Jesus, they are just as applicable to you. What confidence in the future this should give us!

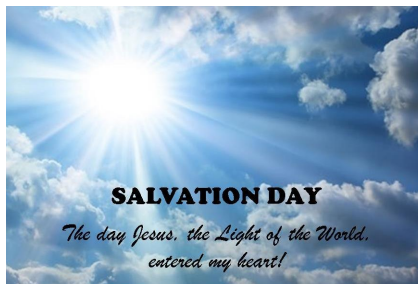
Read these verses once more and summarize how you think they can reshape your view of the future or what impact they can have on it.

One way God fulfills His promises to us is by our spending time with Him and allowing Him to pour His Word into our hearts. Read Psalm 119:105 and write it below.

God's Word is full of instruction for how we are to live life. It is crucial if we want to see where we are going. It provides the lamp to see exactly where we are and the light to see where we're going, exposing any obstacles that would endanger us. Not only does it show us where to go, but it also shows us when we need to tread slowly and softly and when we can run in a clear, wide open path. It leads us exactly where we need to go in the way we need to get there. When we couple God's Word with the Holy Spirit He has given us who believe in Him, we literally have everything we need to live this life as He wills us to live it. In fact, He tells us that in 2 Peter 1:3: "**as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue.**"

Psalm 119:57-59 says, "**The Lord is my portion; I promise to keep your words. I entreat your favor with all my heart; be gracious to me according to your promise. When I think on my ways, I turn my feet to your testimonies.**" (ESV). How rich our future could be if only we could claim these words as the prayer of our heart every day. That can be the case. One of the beatitudes, found in Matthew 5:6, says, "**Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.**" This hunger and thirst for righteousness is key to knowing God's will and keeping His commands. Think about how these passages go hand in hand and summarize your thoughts below.

To conclude this week of celebration (hopefully, not to conclude the celebration, but only this week), let's consider what we can take away from it. Throughout the history of the world, days have been set aside to celebrate various acts of God or groups of people. For example, the children of Israel observed Passover to celebrate God's deliverance of them from the Egyptians, they observed many feasts for various celebrations, we observe Christmas to celebrate Jesus' birth, we observe Easter to celebrate His resurrection, we observe Memorial Day to honor veterans who have lost their lives defending our country, and the list goes on. If you could think of setting aside a day to celebrate the greatest thing God has ever done for you, it would probably be the day He came into your life and saved you to an everlasting life. Could possibly setting aside a day to celebrate that every year lead you to be more aware throughout the year of the cause for celebration that really is? This is just a suggestion, but maybe we could have a celebration called "Salvation Day" where we celebrate the new life we have in Christ and all He has done for us. It could be a day to reflect on the time that we asked Jesus to come into our heart and the journey we've experienced since that time, including all the answered prayers and other things He has done for us. These reminders could also serve to motivate us to enjoy a deeper fellowship with Christ and be more determined to represent Him well.



In conclusion, let's summarize the points of this week's Bible study:

1. Celebrate God - Do you comprehend, as well as humanly possible, who God really is and praise Him as the only true and living God, the God who loves you enough to give His only Son so that you can be reconciled to Him?
2. Celebrate God's call - Do you allow God to work in and through you so that you are a catalyst of His love and grace and do you fulfill the command to share Him with others?
3. Celebrate God's Love - Do your actions reflect the selfless love of Christ that was so strong it made Him willing to give His very life for you?
4. Celebrate God's Will God's Way - As you seek to do God's will, do you make sure you do it His way, being the embodiment of His character?
5. Celebrate God's Power - Do you trust God's ability to work out situations to accomplish His will?
6. Celebrate God's Faithfulness - Have you experienced God's faithfulness to the extent that you trust Him completely and rely on Him to work out His will in you?
7. Celebrate God's Promises - Do you trust God with your future on a level that has removed stress and anxiety because you know that He is in control and you can rest in His peace?

Pray through the list above and ask God to help you in areas where you struggle. Ask Him to show you what He wants you to take away from this experience.

Meditate on the focus verses for the week from Psalm 100:1&4b: "**Shout triumphantly to the Lord, all the earth...Give thanks to Him and praise His name.**"

