

Watching Daily At My Gates

November 3 Read II Corinthians 13:1-6

As Paul comes to the close of this epistle he comes back to two thoughts that he has addressed before. First of all, he shows them that sin cannot go uncorrected. In today's day and age no less than in the day of this epistle, people are allowed to stay in their sin. Paul was not going to allow this to happen in Corinth, and neither may we do this in our homes or churches. Sin is repugnant to God and should be to us as well. Secondly, he speaks of the power of Christ. This truth is the heart of the gospel. Do we seek that heart? Do we promote that heart? Let us fight sin by the power of Christ. Sing Psalter 83.

November 4 Read II Corinthians 13:7-14

As Paul closes this epistle to the Corinthians, he reminds them of several things. First of all, he writes about the truth. God's people must walk in the truth and must try all things against the truth. This is the only way that we must live. Secondly, he reminds them of the purpose of this writing. It was not to hurt them but rather to edify them and show them the right way of sanctification. Even when he was sharp, it was for their good and God's glory. Finally, notice in his farewell remarks that he reminds them to live in peace and unity. This was the most evident fault of the Corinthians. We, too, must learn from this. If we do not live in unity with all of our brothers and sisters in the Lord, we will not walk in the truth. Let us think on these things each day, and let us walk in peace and the truth. In this way we will find blessing in the eyes of almighty God. Sing Psalter 369.

November 5 Read James 1:1-8

This small book has many practical and informative discussions in it. James writes to Christians who were persecuted in the Roman Empire, but he writes to Christians of all ages. It appears that these Christians were Jewish by lineage and not the Gentiles of Paul's ministry. You notice in this first small section that James addresses several items. First of all there are temptations. The word temptation here probably means trials. Through these trials we are led into a more perfect faith. But in that faith we must have the wisdom described in the book of Proverbs. James also exhorts us to pray. We find that here, and we will come across that same subject later in the letter. These prayers must be by faith and not in our own strength. Those prayers asked in our strength will not be heard by our heavenly Father. Let us pray for wisdom and let us do it by faith. Sing Psalter 202.

November 6 Read James 1:9-16

We have two main thoughts in this section of Scripture. First of all, we have the thought concerning humility. Both the Old and New Testaments speak of this sin. It is man's nature to think more of himself than his neighbor or even God. This was the first sin of Satan, and from it proceeds all the other sins. This is the sin that leads church members into so many difficulties. James shows to us that pride gets us nowhere as we all will die like the flower of the field. Secondly, we see the theme of temptations and trials. Temptations and trials are different in that temptations come from Satan and trials from God. A temptation may lead to a trial, but that does not erase the sins committed in the temptation. James wants his brethren and us to not err in this matter. We must not ascribe to God the evil works that are from Satan. Rather, we must fight temptation through the grace given to us by God. Sing Psalter 366.

November 7 Read James 1:17-21

James is laying the groundwork for the various admonitions that he is bringing to the church scattered throughout the world. These admonitions have their basis in the fact that good gifts come from God who not only created the whole world and all that is in it, but also formed for himself a people to show forth his glory. Because we have been ordained by God for this purpose, we should live that kind of a life. We must listen to our brother, and we must control all of our actions toward that brother. Our anger does not cause God to be glorified. This section is finished with an admonition to walk the sanctified life of the child of God listening and doing God's Word that is given to us. As Christ said, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Sing Psalter 133.

November 8 Read James 1:22-27

After admonishing us to keep ourselves unspotted from the world, James commands us to be doers of God's Word. He first of all explains what that statement means. We are to pay attention to what we both read and hear in that Word. He uses the figure of a person looking in the mirror, seeing a dirty face, and then walking away without washing it. We must look into God's law, see who we are by nature, and then walk in the way of sanctification. The last two verses give to us practical applications of this truth. We are, first of all, to watch our tongues. James will have more to say on this later so we will wait until then. Secondly, we are to visit and have fellowship with those who are needy in this world. He identifies the orphans and widows. They are only representatives of all who need our fellowship. Let us be diligent to walk with those who truly need us in this world. Sing Psalter 24.

November 9 Read James 2:1-13

The problem that James describes here is one that is ongoing even today. We break the second great commandment which is “to love thy neighbor as thyself.” by showing partiality to certain groups of people. We are discriminatory to other groups because of some characteristic that they exhibit. Here James points out that discrimination has appeared because of economic differences. But it could be race or nationality or any other trait. When we have respect of persons, we break God’s law. Not only do we break the moral law, but we break the law of Christian liberty which allows us to worship and glorify God completely. We need to pray for the grace to show mercy to all kinds of people so that God may be glorified in our walk. Sing Psalter 69.

November 10 Read James 2:14-26

Those who claim that this passage teaches justification by works are wrong. This passage teaches sanctification. Faith is made manifest by the works of the Spirit in the hearts of the elect child of God. The persons spoken of in this text are already justified. Both Abraham and Rahab, though their faith became visible in a different way, were already elect children of God when the events pointed to in this text took place. The point here is that we cannot just say we are elect and then not live a life permeated by Spirit generated works. Paul called this “quenching the Spirit.” It must be our duty and goal in life to glorify God in all that we do, and seek to bring our faith to life. Otherwise, we will live the life described in verse 26. Sing Psalter 326.

November 11 Read James 3:1-7

James, like Solomon in the book of Proverbs, addresses many situations in life and in the church. In this passage of Scripture, he addresses the issue of our speech. He is not looking at profanity in these first verses of the chapter, though that would be an issue that affects the child of God; he is looking at how we use the tongue in relation to our neighbor. One of the ways in which we transgress the commandments is to use our tongue. When words leave our mouth they are impossible to call back. We must be careful about what we say to and about our neighbor. Like a small flame a single word or phrase can incite great damage. We need to ask for grace to control our tongues at all times. Sing Psalter 330.

November 12 Read James 3:8-12

After the opening remarks on the power and nature of the tongue, James turns to how we use our tongues with respect to the neighbor. He uses several figures to show to us what must not be in our lives. Just as a well does not issue forth good and bad water, so must our tongues not issue forth good and bad words about our neighbor. Just as plants only have one kind of fruit, by nature, so must our tongues have only one type

of speech. In these verses he also addresses profanity. We must not speak profane words about others or to others. With our tongues we have the ability to praise God and to speak good about the neighbor. What comes forth from our tongues? Do we obey the third and ninth commandments? It takes grace to speak well of both God and the neighbor. Let us ask for that grace daily. Sing Psalter 25.

November 13 Read James 3:13-18

As you read this section of Scripture, did you notice a similarity to James' words and the words of Paul to the church at Corinth? There was strife and conflict within both groups of people. Look at verse 14 again. See where the trouble starts? It does not start with the other person; it starts within our hearts. When we bear a grudge against someone, it blossoms into confusion and evil works. James again draws his audience back to the words of wise Solomon. He draws them back to true wisdom. This is where we must go as well. We must open our Bibles and examine the wisdom that is from above. We must embrace it, and when we do, we will have the peace within and with our brothers that characterizes the true child of God. We will have a small bit of that peace that will be ours in heaven. Sing Psalter 113:1-6.

November 14 Read James 4:1-10

Among God's church at times comes a spirit of contention. James begins this chapter by examining the source of such contention. That source is from within. Our old man is covetous of what others have and desires those things. Or those in the church desire friendship with the world and that leads to controversy. The solution to such things is humility given by grace. This is not a solution found within our natures. We must go to God and ask for the grace to be humble in all situations. The commands given in verse 7-10 are not popular in this world of "me first". Notice the reward in verse 10. True humility in the sight of God results in being lifted up to his throne of grace. Let us seek that humility and walk in peace with our neighbor and especially those who are in the family of God. Sing Psalter 113:7-12.

November 15 Read James 4:11-17

Many of us are planning people. Some will plan for a part of a day; some a whole day; some a week; and some much longer than that. Some plans will be very general, and some will be very detailed. For some, if their plans do not work out, they become very discouraged or even angry. This passage of James speaks to that situation. When we make plans, we should always remember the Latin phrase *Deo Volentie*, or as we see it often D.V. It has the same meaning as verse 25- in short God willing. We must remember that God has made all of our plans for us. It is he who directs our way. Would we want it any other way? If we, who are tainted with sin in all of our being,

make plans, they will be and are flawed from the start. But God, who directs all things for our good and his glory, will cause all to turn out for good. Let us remember this as we plan. Sing Psalter 95.

November 16 Read James 5:1-6

Many of the church members of that day lived in persecution. There is a question about which rich men are being addressed in this part of Scripture. Obviously they are wicked, but are they within the church or without? Really it does not matter. The Word comes to all wicked leaving them without excuse. The riches of this world do not lead to salvation. The wicked use of those riches leads to damnation. Some of God's people then and now are oppressed by wicked rich. In contrast to the picture painted here, James in the next section will bring a word of comfort to the church. Let us not live for the things of this world. Let us live for he who comes on the clouds of heaven. Sing Psalter 156.

November 17 Read James 5:7-11

The first part of this chapter contains a dire warning to the wicked rich who would persecute the church. This section contains words of comfort for the people of God. It returns to a theme found in chapter 1. Go back and see if you can find those verses. James calls the church to be patient and to wait for Christ's coming again. In that day we will be delivered from all the trials and tribulations brought upon us by wicked men. In that patience we must not take out our frustrations upon those in the church around us. This is a very natural happening. We must remember that we, too, will be brought before the almighty judge, God himself. James reminds the church of the examples of the Old Testament. He talks about the prophets and also Job. Let us wait with patience for the coming of him who has pity and mercy upon his people. Sing Psalter 163.

November 18 Read James 5:12-15

As James finishes this epistle, he turns to many practical spiritual matters. He begins by admonishing the church not to swear oaths that cannot be kept. This is part of the meaning of the third commandment. He tells us to say yes or no and to keep our word. Then he goes on to another spiritual matter. This matter is the condition of our hearts. No matter what the condition there is a remedy or solution to that condition. We should be quick to pray knowing that God has given to us this means to bring all our needs to the throne of grace. If we cannot pray on our own, then our duty is to call those who can pray for us. In this way God's name will be glorified and our condition can be alleviated. Sing Psalter 143.

November 19 Read James 5:16-20

James concludes the epistle and this section with instruction on prayer and forgiveness. In chapter 4 he talked about the strife that can be found in the church of Christ. Now he shows the remedy for that strife. Christ's church must be a forgiving church and a praying church. Those two activities will bring peace to God's people. We must confess the sins that we commit against each other, and we must bring those sins to God in prayer for forgiveness from the Most High God. When we do these two things, we will walk in harmony with each other and with God. If we do not, we will not be walking in the truth, and we will be in danger of leaving that truth. Let us forgive one another and let us pray often. Sing Psalter 140.

November 20 Read Psalm 1

Even though the Psalms are familiar and have been written about often, there is something that draws us back to them. That something is that they give to us comfort and help in our daily life, and more importantly, they speak of Christ. As we once again go through the Psalms may they speak to us as they have spoken to the church of all ages. Sing Psalter 2.

November 21 Read Psalm 2

In this Psalm we see the history of the world, and we see the promise of a Savior. The world ever since the fall has looked to do away with God's people. Think of Cain and Abel. Satan would like to eradicate the "mother promise" of Genesis 3. In all their raging God sits on his eternal throne in heaven. His counsel will be carried out; his Son will reign supreme and save his people from all their enemies and sin. As we look at events at history, we can see the heathen raging. Do you almost here God laughing at their futility? Let us take comfort in this Psalm and know that the day of our Lord Jesus Christ will come and he will take us all to heaven. Sing Psalter 4.

November 22 Read Psalm 3

Notice the title to this Psalm. If it is correct, and we have no reason to doubt that it is, David was in a situation that no one would wish on another. He was fleeing from his son. This was a son that he loved, even loved to excess. Now he had to flee his beloved Jerusalem. David does this for the good of his people and God's church. He could have stayed and fought, but he had learned to trust in God during the many months of fleeing from Saul. We see his trust in God in both verses 5 and 8. Do we have this kind of trust? Do we love God and his church so much that we do not worry about any situation and put our trust wholly in Jehovah. This takes grace, people of

God. Let us approach the throne of grace and seek help in the time of our need. Sing Psalter 5.

November 23 Read Psalm 4

Even though the title does not indicate it, this seems to be a companion to Psalm 3. There is a similarity of thought found in it. David realizes, as we must, that salvation, safety, and comfort come only from God. Notice the number of times he uses the word LORD which is actually Jehovah. David has the confidence that he is part of God's covenant, and in that covenant he finds comfort. This should be our comfort as well. Even as God has friendship within himself so we can find friendship like none other in the covenant. When the day is over, David confesses that he can sleep the blessed sleep of the righteous for he knows that he is comprehended in the covenant of God. May God bless us and keep us in our way that is ordained by him. Sing Psalter 8

November 24 Read Psalm 5:1-6

As we read through the Psalms, we will see how many times David calls upon God in prayer. David learned that this was a valuable experience for the child of God. Have we learned this lesson? Do we understand the importance of prayer in our lives? We should learn this at very young age. The practice of children praying at mealtime and before going to bed is important. Do our teenagers continue such a practice? Are we as adults faithful in our prayer lives? As we learn to take our needs to God's throne of grace, we will learn of the value of that practice. We will be confident in a time of need to pray. Let us heed Paul's admonition, "Pray without ceasing." Sing Psalter 11.

November 25 Read Psalm 5:7-12

Along with prayer David reminds us of faithful church attendance. If we are not faithful in our attendance, we will find no blessing from God. Only in that way may we be assured that God will lead us in his righteousness. To miss church is to miss our spiritual meals. There may be times that God prevents us from attending church, but those should be the only times that we miss. In the way of faithfulness we will find occasion for joy in the name of God. That joy will sustain us throughout the week. Not only will we feel that joy but we will experience the blessing and favor of God as he cares for us at all times. Sing Psalter 10.

November 26 Read Psalm 6

The Psalmist is in the midst of correction from sin. The evil doers are all around him vexing him greatly. He finds no comfort in sleep or his bed. But then he turns to God

in prayer. God hears his prayer and gives to him an answer of peace. He has confidence that that will be so as we see in verse 9. Do we remember to turn unto our God in prayer? As we wallow in doubt and despair, this is what we must do. Even as we lie sleepless on our beds at night, we can go to God in prayer with confidence because Christ sits at his right hand. Let us remember this; let us go to our God in prayer. Sing Psalter 12.

November 27 Read Psalm 7:1-9

This seems to be a song and prayer that David offered as he was fleeing from Saul. Try to put yourself in that situation. The king of the country you love and have helped often now chases after you with one goal. He wishes to kill you. David could do nothing but trust in the Lord his God. He had nowhere else to turn. God did that for a reason. That reason was that David would learn the ability to trust in God alone. God sometimes puts us through situations that should make us learn this ability. Are we learning? Do we put our trust in God alone? Let us ask for the grace to trust and obey the one who saves us from all our foes. Sing Psalter 13:1-4.

November 28 Read Psalm 7:10-17

As David finishes this Psalm, he looks at the plight of the wicked. God judges all men; those who do not turn from their evil way will face the final judgment of hell. It seems that it does not matter what happens to them; they refuse to turn. This shows their true character as it is ordained by God. They have been reprobated by God and cannot turn. We, like David, must see this happening in the world around us. When we see it, we must be instructed to not walk in such a way. And, like David, we must give God the glory as we read in verse 17. God is righteous in all that he does; of that, there is no doubt. Sing Psalter 13:5-7.

November 29 Read Psalm 8

There are Psalms that speak to the child of God in a way that nothing else can. This is one of those. David extols the name of God and realizes that there is no name like it. He also knows that there is no God like Jehovah. He is made aware of this as he looks at the world of nature. David spent his early life out in that natural world as a shepherd. He saw the spacious heavens and the celestial bodies they contained. He heard them speak the name of God to him. He saw the world of animals and knew that man had been placed in dominion over them. The natural world awed him and he realized that it was humbling that God had placed man in that creation. May we look at creation and thank the creator for the grace he has given to us each and every day. Sing Psalter 15.

November 30 Psalm 9:1-10

No matter what may trouble us in this life, we have this confidence. Jehovah God will endure forever. Not only will he endure, but his promises do as well. Because of this we need not fear. During this life he provides for us a refuge in any storm. Whether it be physical, mental, or spiritual, he will be our fortress. We can trust that God will care for us because he does not forget us. At the end of time judgment will come. For God's people this will be a time of rejoicing as they approach the throne of judgment secure in the knowledge that their Savior will plead for them. With these two thoughts let us rest in assurance that all will be well. Sing Psalter 17.

December 1 Read Psalm 9:11-20

Singing provides to us God's Word in a way that lifts up our hearts and strengthens our minds. It does not matter what situation in which we find ourselves, the songs of Jehovah will give to us the comfort that we need. God has given to us the songs found in the book of Psalm for that help and comfort. When we learn them well, they will come flooding over us in our time of need. David in this Psalms obviously was facing some kind of enemy. In his troubles he stops and says, "Sing praises unto God." Do we want this confidence? Then we must learn the Psalms and they will bring to us comfort in our distress. Sing Psalter 16:5-9.