

September 13 – September 19

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION

“Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!”

Romans 11:33

BOOK READING

Roberts, pp. 9-15

QUOTATION FOR MEDITATION

“It is to be feared that a future generation, when it looks back on our age of Christianity, will have to make the dreadful assessment of us that we were an age of shallowness in the things of God” (p. 11).

M'CHEYNE BIBLE READING SCHEDULE

Sep 12	2 Sam 7	2 Cor 1	Eze 15	Ps 56, 57
Sep 13	2 Sam 8, 9	2 Cor 2	Eze 16	Ps 58, 59
Sep 14	2 Sam 10	2 Cor 3	Eze 17	Ps 60, 61
Sep 15	2 Sam 11	2 Cor 4	Eze 18	Ps 62, 63
Sep 16	2 Sam 12	2 Cor 5	Eze 19	Ps 64, 65
Sep 17	2 Sam 13	2 Cor 6	Eze 20	Ps 66, 67
Sep 18	2 Sam 14	2 Cor 7	Eze 21	Ps 68

PERSONAL REFLECTION

TIGHT PLACES – CUSTOM BUILT BY GOD

JOSH PERKINS

“My tight places”, I like that wording because God custom builds our life experiences. Tight places for one man may or not be tight for another. God uses events in each of our lives to mold, test, and use us; often for reasons we do not understand and may never know in this life. Over the last few years, I have had some harrowing experiences, both in Papua New Guinea and here in the States. I think most people would qualify those events as “tight places”. But for me personally, the traumatic events themselves have not proven to be the tight place. I found that climbing out of a burning house at midnight with your family is actually more instinct and reaction than anything. The hardship came days later when I was tired, exhausted physically and mentally, in the midst of trying to find permanent housing for my family, meeting with insurance people, scrounging up “life’s necessities” for my family, trying to relieve my children’s fears, caring for a pregnant wife due in a matter of weeks.. you know... etc.... etc.... etc.... I found that the test was how I was going to lead my family when I felt like taking a break. Were my children going to see me resting in the Lord when in the grind? Or were they going to see me explode in frustration at the smallest little thing and retreat into my own little world of self-pity? After all, with everything going on, the last thing I need right now is to have to deal with my crying children about some small little insignificant spat, I don’t have time or energy for this. In those kinds of moments, I didn’t have the energy or emotional depth or patience or longsuffering or wisdom required.

It is easy for any of us to teach our children cold mental theology, but the application of it in the midst of stress is the real measure of faith. Does your faith in the written word of God override your feelings and reactions when the nuts and bolts of life around you seem to contradict that mental assent to God’s Word? And as a man and father trying to lead a family, can your family see the theology working its way into the “rubber meets the road” side of life as you respond? I realized that my reactions are shaping my children’s understanding of God and His Word. They see whether my faith is genuine or not, and that impacts their faith. I wish I could say that I always quitted myself like a man, but I cannot. And it was in those moments I had nothing with which to lead

my family but my faith. When I could not meet their needs, or even my own needs, I had no option but to turn to God, and then turn them to God. And that is the point of a tight place. The night before our house burned down, I had made some pretty pointed applications of a Bible lesson that was going to be tested out later that evening. After the fire, it was pretty easy to think, ok, maybe I should be less pointed in my family devotion applications. NO! My kids need to see me say that God was not just working good in the Bible story, He was doing that in our life that very week, and that I believed it. They need to hear me pray to God and seek His face. They need to see me submitting myself to the next hard life lesson in our family devotions and not shying from it.

For that to happen though, I could not retreat or take a break spiritually. A few weeks later I found myself wandering through my rental home at 1am carrying a crying newborn infant with myself on the verge of tears asking God for sleep. Then, God brought to mind, "Be on the alert, stand fast in the faith, act like men, be strong...Let all that you do be done in love". As I paced around the house that night confused, frustrated, and ready to give up, I started quoting that verse. I found God to be strong even though I was not. I believed that God was good, and He would help me do what needed to be done by His grace. My family was fed, clothed, housed, safe, not because I was some courageous man, but because God is good. I could lay my selfish "needs" aside this night, God was going to be my joy. God is with us in the tight spaces. My children need to see that faith in the grind of things, not just the big events. For some of you, like me, the tight space is in the endurance test. As the book Revelation repeatedly says, "He who overcomes...." Or as the book of Hebrews exhorts again and again, "For this reason we must pay closer attention...Take care that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart...let us be diligent to enter that rest...let us press on...let us draw near...let us hold fast...do not throw away your confidence...let us run with endurance...See to it that no one comes short...Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and forever. Amen."

And by God's grace, tomorrow all of us can get up and do it again with a faith that endures.