10.8.2016 Personal Bible Study "Choose This Day: Remember, Hope, and Be Ready"

This study is designed for individual use in about 45–60 minutes. Set aside a quiet place, open your Bible, and keep a journal nearby. Pray before you begin and ask the Holy Spirit to make these texts personal.

Theme

Covenant faithfulness lived through memory, resurrection hope, and watchful readiness.

Scripture Focus

- Joshua 24:1–3a, 14–25, - Psalm 78:1–7, - 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18, - Matthew 25:1–13

Key Verse: "Choose this day whom you will serve… But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." — Joshua 24:15

Opening Prayer

Lord God, you are faithful from generation to generation. As we study your Word, help us remember your mighty deeds, renew our allegiance to you, grieve with resurrection hope, and live ready for the return of Christ. In Jesus' name, amen.

Summary

These readings together call God's people to a faithful, watchful life rooted in who God is and what God has done. In Joshua, Israel is called to remember God's saving history and renew covenant allegiance. Psalm 78 commands each generation to tell God's mighty acts so that hope stays in God. 1Thessalonians, give believers resurrection hope in the face of grief. Matthew 25 calls disciples to wise readiness for the bridegroom's return. Together they ask: Will we remember, choose, hope, and stay ready?

Key Points

1. Joshua 24:1–3a, 14–25 — Remember God's grace and choose whom you will serve

Joshua gathers Israel at Shechem and recounts God's initiative in their story, beginning with Abraham. Grace comes before demand: God acts, then calls His people to respond. Joshua calls them to fear the Lord, serve in sincerity and faithfulness, and put away foreign gods. The people publicly affirm, "We will serve the LORD." Joshua warns them that covenant commitment is serious, and the people again declare their loyalty. A stone becomes a witness to their choice.

Point: Faithfulness is a daily, deliberate allegiance to the God who has already been faithful to us.

2. **Psalm 78:1–7 — Pass on the memory of God's deeds**

The psalmist calls God's people to listen to teaching and testimony. The purpose is not mere nostalgia but transmission: tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds, might, and wonders of God. The goal is that they set their hope in God, do not forget His works, and keep His commandments.

Point: Remembering God's works fuels hope and obedience—and memory is meant to be shared.

3. **1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 — Grieve with resurrection hope**

Paul does not tell Christians not to grieve; he tells them not to grieve "as others do who have no hope." The basis of hope is that Jesus died and rose again. Those who are asleep in Christ will not be left out; the Lord Himself will come down, and believers will be with the Lord forever. These words are given so that we "encourage one another."

Point: Christian hope does not erase grief, but it transforms grief and gives comfort to share.

4. **Matthew 25:1–13 — Be wise and ready**

Ten bridesmaids await the bridegroom. Five are wise and take oil; five are foolish and run out. When the bridegroom is delayed, all grow drowsy. At midnight the cry comes, and only those prepared enter with him. The point is not date-setting but readiness: "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour."

Point: Readiness is personal and sustained; it cannot be borrowed at the last minute. Faithful discipleship is lived now in light of Christ's certain return.

Questions for Reflection

Joshua 24

1. Where do you see God's grace and initiative in your own story?

2. What "foreign gods" might you need to put away—approval, control, comfort, money, success, or something else?

3. What would it look like for you to "choose this day" to serve the Lord in a specific area of your life?

Psalm 78

4. Who has passed on the memory of God's faithfulness to you?

5. What testimony of God's work do you need to remember—and perhaps share with someone else?

6. How does remembering God's deeds strengthen your hope and obedience?

1 Thessalonians 4

7. Where are you carrying grief or loss right now? How does resurrection hope speak into it?

8. How does this passage change the way you think about those who have died in Christ?

9. Who needs encouragement from these words this week?

Matthew 25

10. What does wise, watchful readiness look like in ordinary life?

11. Where are you tempted to borrow readiness from others rather than cultivate your own faith?

12. What distraction or delay is making you spiritually drowsy?

Personal Application

Choose one or more of these practices for this week:

1. Write a covenant-renewal statement. In your journal, write: "This day I choose to serve the Lord by…" Name one "foreign god" you will put away and one faithful habit you will begin.

2. Practice holy memory. Write down three specific ways God has been faithful to you. If appropriate, share one with a family member or friend so that the next generation or a fellow believer can hear it.

3. Bring grief into the light of hope. Take a loss or sorrow to God in prayer. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 slowly. Then send an encouraging note or message to someone who is grieving.

4. Cultivate readiness. Identify one distraction that makes you spiritually drowsy and one habit that keeps you watchful—prayer, Scripture, confession, worship, or service. Commit to it this week.

Closing Prayer

Faithful God, thank you for your mighty deeds and for Jesus, who died and rose again. Help us put away every false god, remember your works, grieve with hope, and live watchfully for the return of Christ. Keep us faithful this day and every day. Amen.