

BIBLE READING NOTES FOR OCTOBER 2022
Compiled by Rev Dr J Jack for the Congregation of Duddingston Kirk

You will find reading the Bible rewarding and encouraging,
but reading the Bible is not always easy!

These guidelines may help you.

Before you read each passage, ask God to speak to you through His Word.

Set aside a special time each day to read the Bible, and stick to it!

Make use of your Bible index to find readings – every Bible has a contents page.

Pray that what you have read will help you live according to God's wishes.

October 1st 2Corinthians 1:1-7

Paul refers to 'his troubles'. He did not have an easy life, yet he thanks God for those troubles because through them he is able to help others also in trouble. Christians grumble when life deals them a hard blow. That blow may be another 'lesson' from God, helping them to a more effective witness. If someone's faith is broken by some pain of body, heart or mind, then they can be sure that it was a flimsy faith to begin with!

October 2nd 2Cor.1:8-11

Paul and his companions endured troubles so serious that they thought death was near. They did not complain against God, nor are they afraid of death, nor does their faith falter. Their trust in God was complete. Notice also their reference to prayers made on their behalf. If we really understood the power of prayer we would give far more time to it, and much less to the non-essentials of life.

October 3rd 2Cor.1:12-14

Paul knew that his readers could 'understand us only in part'. In other words, they could not fully grasp his meaning, but one day they would see the entire truth. So many want to stay in the well-known areas of their faith. A maturing faith is not afraid to venture into the unknown. We have a duty to extend our knowledge of the faith. Also notice that Paul's relations with the Corinthians were in 'God given frankness'. The best friend anyone may have is one to whom they can speak with perfect frankness and truthfulness. Where offence is given, or received then a true Christian relationship does not exist.

October 4th 2Cor.1:15-22

The Corinthians thought Paul fickle. When a man is confident of his own motives he need not fear what others think. Paul was so committed to God that it was as though he had been branded like a slave or a cattle beast – God's 'mark of ownership' was on him. When Paul referred to himself as a servant of Christ he was not indulging in mock modesty. Paul's faith was unshakable.

October 5th 2Cor.1:23-2:4

Paul had written another letter to Corinth, between the two we know. So far as we know that 'middle' letter does not exist now. In it he spoke bluntly, and this had hurt them. Paul's intention had not been to hurt, but to help. There are times when Christians must speak plainly to one another. Truth must ever be spoken in love.

October 6th 2Cor.2:5-11

Paul's blunt letter had arisen out of some trouble in Corinth caused by one member. But now the trouble is over, and the person is to be forgiven and restored to the fellowship. I'll forgive,

but I will never forget' we often say. It is hard to forget someone who caused hurt, but real forgiveness includes total forgetfulness' so that the 'slate' is wiped clean.

October 7th 2Cor.2:12-13

Paul was in a dilemma in Troas. There was a great work for him there, but he was anxious over the absence of Titus. Should he grasp this opportunity and forget Titus, or leave the work and seek his brother in Christ? He chose the second option, but was he right?

October 8th 2Cor.2:14-17

In the ancient world victorious generals came home leading all who had been made slaves. Paul sees himself and all Christians as having 'submitted' to the conquest of Christ. Christians are like a perfume which pervades society. This 'fragrance' is different from the stench of those doomed to eternal destruction.

October 9th 2Cor.3:1-6

Paul's letters of recommendation are for those whose lives have been changed and influenced by his ministry. How many of us could claim to have such letters of recommendation? Yet he is conscious that this work was not done by his own ability, but through the power and love of Christ working through him.

October 10th 2Cor.3:7-11

Paul never criticized the beliefs of the Jews. But he never tired of saying that the Christian faith was far better! There is a certain glory in all that is revealed through the pages of the Old Testament; but there is a far better glory revealed in the life, death and resurrection of the Son of God.

October 11th 2Cor.3:12-18

Each of us should ask, 'How much of God's glory is reflected through me?' We should also ask, 'To what extent have I been transformed into the likeness of Christ?' Many think there is a spiritual arrogance about such questions, but if the Christian faith has any relevance at all in my life, it must show.

October 12th 2Cor.4:1-6

Chapter 3 ends with the influence of Christ on the *individual*. Chapter 4 begins with the work that God has called the *Church* to do! We have been called into faith for a purpose. God has a 'job' for each of us to do. It is clear that the Christian must never present themselves, but ever seek to present the Lord whom we serve.

October 13th 2Cor.4:7-15

Paul reminds us that we are mere earthenware vessels. The real value is not us but the treasure that is Christ. But Christians do not necessarily have an easy time in this life. They are subjected to many pressures and tensions. Yet no pressure, however great, can ever destroy the faith that is truly founded on Christ.

October 14th 2Cor.4:16-18

'*Change and decay in all around I see*' is a line in a well-known hymn. It is also true of our physical life. Yet the spiritual life does not decay. The Christian has his eyes fixed on a far greater prize than anything this world can ever offer – a prize far, far greater than all the troubles of this earthly life.

October 15th 2Cor.5:1-5

This earthly life is likened to a tent, which is a temporary affair, whereas the spiritual life has the permanence of a house. Besides, it is a house prepared by God Himself. The fellowship of the Spirit in this earthly life is the guarantee of that richer life yet to come.

October 16th 2Cor.5:6-10

This confidence in the eternal life in God's presence fills us with courage to face the trials of this present life, but it also gives an urgent desire to serve God. For the Christian, God becomes the sole aim of this life.

October 17th 2Cor.5:11-15

Paul's great mission in life was to 'try to persuade others'. He did this because Christ died for all. Paul wanted all men and women to have the chance to hear the Good News of Christ. If they rejected that Good News, then the decision was theirs, but they must at least have that chance. Here is the main reason for all missionary work by the Church; not to gain new members, but to enable all men and women everywhere to know the offer of salvation.

October 18th 2Cor.5:16-21

'God was making all mankind His friends through Christ'. We must first recognize that we are at enmity with God. We cannot know eternal life through our own works. It is only through the saving work of Christ whose sole desire is to put all of us in a new relationship with God.

October 19th 2Cor.6:1-2

It is possible for God's grace to be wasted. It is possible for us to make some progress in the spiritual life, and then to waste it in a careless moment. Note also the urgency of the last words in v.2. So many put the decision off for some more suitable moment. There is no moment more suitable than this one.

October 20th 2Cor.6:3-13

What a catalogue of suffering there is in v.4. It seems incredible that anyone could endure all that simply to tell others about Jesus. But for Paul and all true believers there is nothing more important in the whole world than telling others about Jesus. And so personal suffering was a minor detail compared with the urgency and importance of the task.

October 21st 2Cor.6:14-7:1

Many Christians try to combine the advantages of the Christian faith with those of the secular world. To do this is to attempt the impossible. Just as right and wrong are such opposites that they can never be combined, so neither can that which belongs to Christ and that which belongs to the world. Followers of Christ must be committed to Him without reserve.

October 22nd 2Cor.7:2-7

It is sad, but true, that where the Gospel is preached there is often trouble. This trouble may come from those who are directly opposed to all that the Gospel represents. Or it may come from those whose grasp of the Gospel is immature or incorrect. In such a situation the true saint of God is often discouraged. But our God encourages the faint-hearted. Often such encouragement comes through the personal example of one whose own faith is unshakable. Titus was one who could give such encouragement. Each of us may be such a 'Titus' in our own family, neighbourhood or community.

October 23rd

2Cor.7:8-11

Paul had written an earlier letter that had given offence. This he now regrets, but only partially. That letter had brought a change of heart to those who had, at first, been hurt by it. There are times when God can use a period of sadness to bring about a change of heart which, in turn, leads to salvation. Such sadness is a means of grace.

October 24th

2Cor.7:12-16

There had been a quarrel between 'the one who did wrong' and 'the one who was wronged'. What the exact nature of the 'wrong' was we do not know, but its results are only too clear. Often in such a situation so much attention is paid to the wrong that parties lose sight of the overriding love of God. This can happen in the Church when arguments arise over small matters with the result that the whole plan and purpose of God is neglected or forgotten.

October 25th

2Cor.8:1-7

Paul returns to the theme of Christian giving, and in those verses we see what such giving is really like. The Christians in Macedonia had endured terrible trouble and they were also very poor. In such a time they might have been excused for not giving at all. Yet we are told that they were 'extremely generous' and also that they gave 'even more than they could'. They even pleaded for the privilege of helping those in Judea. Why did they act so generously? In their severe testing they had come to rely wholly on the grace of God. Paul says that 'they gave themselves to the Lord'. Christian giving is not a measure of our response to the love of God. That is why we speak of CHRISTIAN liberality.

October 26th

2Cor.8:8-15

There can be no rules governing Christian liberality. If there were any such rules then our giving would be a form of taxation and not liberality. There can be no liberality where there is compulsion as liberality can only be a response to the love of God, especially that love as it was revealed in the life and sacrifice of God's own Son who 'rich as He was (His glory in heaven) He made Himself poor for your sake (He adopted the form of a servant), in order to make you rich by means of His poverty.'

October 27th

2Cor.8:16-24

Paul organized a collection to be sent to the Christians suffering in Judea. He had to ensure that this generous gift was handled with great wisdom. His personal honesty and integrity must not only be discernible by God, but also by all mankind. Christians must never do anything simply to be popular, yet Christians must equally be careful to ensure that nothing is done that might cause offence to others. We must never be merely people-pleasers, yet neither must we act in any high-handed or indiscriminate way.

October 28th

2Cor.9:1-5

Paul continues to plan the practical details of the financial help he is organizing for the Church in Judea. Behind those details we see his world-wide vision of the Church. He is writing to the Church in Corinth; he mentions the Church in Macedonia and they are helping the Church in Judea. Paul sees the Church as the fellowship of all who believe in the Lordship of Christ, no matter where they stay. So often we have a very limited view of the Church thinking only of our own congregation or denomination. The Church of Christ is wherever men and women acknowledge Christ as the Son of God, and as their personal Saviour and Lord.

October 29th

2Cor.9:6-15

‘I got nothing out of that service this morning.’ Sometimes the fault does lie with the person conducting the service – he was so ill prepared that there was nothing to be taken from the service. Often the fault lies with the worshipper. If we put nothing into the service, then certainly we will get nothing out of it. So many want to sit in Church and take no real part in the service. Paul takes his illustration from the harvest field. The farmer who sows but few seeds can hardly expect a bumper crop. That is so obvious it hardly needs to be said. In the same way, if we put little into our worship we can only expect to receive little from it.

October 30th 2Cor.10:1-6

Christians live in the real world and are often tempted to use the world’s methods. Such methods can be contrary to all Christian principles, and must be avoided. Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between those methods we may use and those we must not. The distinction between the Godly and the ungodly can become blurred. Where we can see the difference, then ungodly methods must be completely rejected. Where the difference is uncertain then we must ask the question, ‘Would Jesus do it this way?’ If it is contrary to the life and example of Christ, then, certainly, it is wrong for us.

October 31st 2Cor.10:7-11

There are some who can express themselves best in direct conversation, while others prefer to express their thoughts on paper. Paul was the writer rather than the ‘preacher’. His writing was more persuasive and powerful than his speaking. This led some to think that what he wrote from a distance was different from what he said face to face. In our dealings with others, and in our assessment of ourselves, we must always have regard for such individual strengths and personal weaknesses.