

MONDAY

Bible verses through the Gospel of John

JOHN 9:30-33 *The man replied, "This is amazing! You claim to know nothing about Jesus, but the fact is, he opened my eyes! It's well known that God isn't at the beck and call of sinners, but listens carefully to anyone who lives in reverence and does his will. That someone opened the eyes of a man born blind has never been heard of—ever. If this man didn't come from God, he wouldn't be able to do anything."*

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**Message on Sermon Preparation from Pastors:**

Nothing impressive or particularly unusual here...

1. Annual study / prayer retreat (usually in December): I go somewhere that is away from the office (cabin at the lake, lodge in the mountains, motel, retreat center, campground, etc.) a. I layout the next year, holidays, church events, etc. b. I spend time praying about books, themes & passages to teach; what's going on in the life of the church, what our needs are and concerns, etc. c. I plan out major sections of Scripture to teach from or major themes for the year.

2. I meet with staff & a creative team to plan ideas for series & ways to communicate. a. I usually preach books of the Bible or long sections, but also tie into a theme. b. Team thinks about ways to creatively present the theme (video, drama, music, visual graphics, etc.)

3. Each week I'm studying the passages & preparing from.. a. Bible - I try to read the passage over several times, often use more than one translation to read the passage, to get a fresh perspective on the words, ideas.

b. Commentaries - I'll often grab a book or copy a page or short section & put in a file folder, study it verse by verse. c. I will listen to relevant pod casts of other preachers / teachers for ideas. d. Read what others have written (eg. Spurgeon, MacArthur, Piper, Driscoll, etc.) on the passage; e. Look at my back files for previous messages (25 years of sermons, bible studies) f. Look at my files for illustrations, and think of ways to update or personalize events & occurrences in my life.

4. I prayerfully "homogenize" all of the above under the guidance of the Holy Spirit as it pertains to the situation in my church & in current events, etc.

5. By Thursday I type out: a. Full manuscript; b. I prepare notes / handout for worship bulletin; I hand this off to a staff member on Thursday afternoon or Friday morning at the latest. Sometimes this is alliterated points, but often it's just the main points to help keep the listeners involved & help them think of ways to apply the message. c. I put together Keynotes for presenting my main points & illustrations. d. By Friday I have an outline for myself w/ bullet points that corresponds to my manuscript; I keep this outline in my Bible. This is either one side of a half-sheet (= 5 1/2 x 8 1/2) or 2 sides of that half sheet inserted in my Bible in the section where I'm preaching to help keep me on task. I used to preach more from memory, but I find I'm more forgetful. I study this to the point of memorizing between Thursday & Saturday so by Sunday I can just glance at each point & know what I plan to say, or what the joke is or the story, etc. My vision is not as sharp as it used to be, so I usually highlight this text in yellow (in Word) I get up early Sunday morning (5ish) & review it several times alternating with early morning prayer time. f. I usually meet with & pray with deacon(s) / prayer partners on Sunday morning before everything begins.

Blessings, *Dave Evans, Springfield, TN, Website: [www.highlandmoore.com](http://www.highlandmoore.com)*

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A Washington Post columnist runs a column each summer listing interesting t-shirts observed at the -  
Ocean City, Maryland beach: T-Shirt Slogans -

"I childproofed my house, but they still get in." "On the front - 60 is not old. On the back - If you're a tree."

"My reality check just bounced." "I'm not 50. I'm \$49.95 plus tax." "I'm not a snob. I'm just better than you are."

"Buckle up. It makes it harder for the aliens to snatch you from your car." "It's my cat's world. I'm just here to open cans."

"Keep staring....I may do a trick." "We got rid of the kids. The cat was allergic."

"My mind works like lightning. One brilliant flash, and it's gone." "In God we trust. All others we Lie-Detect."

"Live your life so that when you die, the preacher will not have to tell lies at your funeral."  
"

"Every time I hear the word "exercise", I wash my mouth out with chocolate."

"Cats regard people as warm-blooded furniture." *Laugh & Lift*



## TUESDAY

John 9:34 *They said, "You're nothing but dirt! How dare you take that tone with us!" Then they threw the blind man whom Jesus had healed out in the street.*

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Remember, it takes a college degree to fly a plane for a major airline, but only a high school diploma to fix one.

After every flight, Qantas pilots fill out a form, called a "Gripe Sheet," which tells mechanics about problems with the aircraft.

The mechanics correct the problems and document their repairs on the form, and then pilots review the Gripe Sheets before the next flight. Never let it be said that ground crews lack a sense of humor.

Here are some actual maintenance complaints submitted by Qantas' pilots (marked with a P) and the solutions recorded (marked with an S) by maintenance engineers.

P: Suspected crack in windshield. S: Suspect you're right.

P: Aircraft handles funny. S: Aircraft warned to straighten up, fly right, and be serious.

P: Target radar hums. S: Reprogrammed target radar with lyrics.

P: Mouse in cockpit. S: Cat installed.

P: Noise coming from under instrument panel. Sounds like a midget pounding on something with a hammer.

S: Took hammer away from midget. *GCFL*

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A tourist was admiring the necklace worn by a local Indian. "What is it made of?" she asked.

"Alligator teeth," the Indian replied.

"I suppose," she said patronizingly, "they mean as much to you as pearls do to us."

"Oh no," he objected. "Anybody can open an oyster." *From "Preaching" Magazine*

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Mama and Papa Bear are accused of child abuse. Baby Bear is put on the stand to testify and is asked by the judge,

"Do you want to live with Papa Bear?"

"No," Baby Bear replies, "he beats me."

Then the judge asks, "Do you want to live with Mama Bear?"

"No," Baby Bear replies, "she beats me too."

So the Judge says, "Well then, who DO you want to live with?"

Baby Bear replies, "I want to live with the Chicago Bears...they don't beat anybody." *Humor Digest*

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My Father was 68 years old, and never used glasses. Drank right out of the bottle. Take-off from *Henny Youngman*

The Vatican is against surrogate mothers. Good thing they didn't have that rule when Jesus was born. -- *Elayne Boosler*



WEDNESDAY

**John 9:35-38** When Jesus heard that they had thrown the healed blind man out, He and went and found him. He asked him, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" 36The man said, "Point him

out to me, sir, so that I can believe in him." 37 Jesus said, "You're looking right at him. Don't you recognize my voice?" 38 "Master, I believe," the man said, and worshiped him.

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Eye-examination charts vary according to the manufacturer, but one thing they have in common is that they don't spell anything.

One day a patient came into my office for an ophthalmological exam. I asked him to read the 20/40 line of the eye chart, but obviously the letters FZBDE were mostly a blur to him. Finally he ventured a guess.

"I can't pronounce his name," the man said, "but I think he played football for Notre Dame." *Cybersalt Digest*

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Life wouldn't be so hard if it wasn't so daily. As I sit here surrounded by laundry and dishes piled high in the sink, I see more than ever how life wears us down one day at a time.

Crumbs litter the floor and dirty smudges cover the windows. And I have yet to discover where that smell is coming from. For this mother of four, a simple trip to the grocery store requires an act of God and Congress - attempted only when we are down to powdered milk and Ramen noodles. Not thirty minutes ago a little one-year-old boy clung to my legs, belting out that scream - you know the one, bats can hear it. And I felt my coping skills slipping away. Not because he was crying but because he cries every day.

The daily-ness.

The job of motherhood feels so vast, and frightening, and unending. I am called to raise these children in the fear and admonition of the Lord and yet there are days that I can't seem to get out of my pajamas much less lead them in a time of prayer. I think anyone could endure the temper tantrums of a small child or the rebellion of a teenager or the constant needs of another if they lasted just one day. But the truth is that these things are the stuff of daily life. And when I am honest with myself, they grind down the rough edges of this woman. Because parenting can not be all about me when diapers must be changed, noses wiped and beds made.

In those moments I force myself to take a deep breath and thank God for this season of life. These children. The privilege of wiping noses and bottoms and countertops. A privilege many women would love to have, but don't. I remind myself that the days are long but the years are short. And one day I will look in the rear-view mirror and see empty seats. The cup that is overflowing right now will slowly drain. The stretch marks will fade. And I will find that a new set of daily struggles has overtaken me. When that day comes I will find the strength to face them as well because God gives the grace, daily.

The daily-ness.

As C.S. Lewis once said, "The thing is to rely on God... Meanwhile, the trouble is that relying on God has to begin all over again every day as if nothing has yet been done."

Your daily-ness is probably different than mine, but it is nonetheless God-ordained. It is exactly what we need to live dependent on His grace instead of our own strength. The One who knows us best, who knit us together in our mother's womb, has allotted these days that are equal parts trial and triumph. And He knows that we will see Him most clearly from a place of dependence.

So today I embrace the normal things. The daily things. Another round of laundry. The ring in my toilet. The dust on my dresser so thick a child could write his name. But even more than that I want to celebrate

the important things. A child slowly learning to read. A husband that finds his comfort in my arms. A baby who learns to walk and talk. Because all these are the things of life: some mundane and some holy. And all of them must be received daily.

Dear Lord, sometimes daily life is just hard. And we're tired. And overwhelmed. But You promised to be our strength and our hope and our comfort. So today we look to You for what we need. Would You meet us in this, our daily-ness, and help us receive Your grace? In Jesus' Name, Amen. *Ariel Allison Lawhon, from "Encouragement for Today"*



## THURSDAY

**John 9:39** *Jesus then said, "I came into the world to bring everything into the clear light of day, making all the distinctions clear, so that those who have never seen will see, and those who have made a great pretense of seeing will be exposed as blind."*

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A husband said to his wife, "No, I don't hate your relatives. In fact, I like your mother-in-law better than I like mine." *Humor Digest*

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While the Bible isn't a book of science, scientific facts that have been in its pages for at least thirty-five hundred years have come to light only in recent times. For example, many of the statutes and regulations in the Old Testament were given for health and hygienic purposes--knowledge that was unknown to the ancient world.

In his book, *None of These Diseases*, Dr. S.I. McMillen wrote, "When God led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt, he promised them that if they would obey his statutes, he would put 'none of these diseases' upon them [diseases from which Egypt and other nations were suffering]. God guaranteed a freedom from disease that even modern medicine cannot duplicate."

Dr. McMillen continues, "I am confident that the reader will be intrigued to discover that the Bible's directives can save him from certain infectious diseases, from many lethal cancers, and from a long gauntlet of psychosomatic diseases that are increasing in spite of modern medicine."

*McMillen, S.I., and Daily Encounter*

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It is not until we come close enough to lose it that we really appreciate what we have. *Bob Perks*

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If April showers bring May flowers, do May flowers bring? Pilgrims! *Cybersalt Digest*

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Proper attire is required in the cafeteria at the University of Maine.

To enforce that rule, the management posted this notice: "Shoes are required to eat in this cafeteria."

Next to it, a student added, "Socks can eat wherever they want." *Cybersalt*

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In an old Peanuts comic strip, Peppermint Patty and Violet are reflecting on being a grandmother. After Patty declares that she would like to be a grandmother, Violet agrees and says it would be nice because all they have to do is "sit and rock" (not quite the case, is it?) The girls then decide that the trouble with being a grandmother is that first you have to be a wife and then a mother...and Violet sighs, "I know it...it's all those preliminaries that get me!" *Laugh & Lift*

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When he received a blank journal as a birthday gift, a twelve-year-old boy was mystified. "Mom," he asked, "What am I supposed to do with this? The pages are blank."

"You write down interesting stuff that happens to you," she said.

"So!" he said, a look of enlightenment crossing his face, "It's like a computer blog...on paper."

*Humor Digest*



## FRIDAY

**John 9:40-41** *Some Pharisees overheard Jesus and said, "Does that mean you're calling us blind?" 41Jesus said, "If you were really blind, you would be blameless, but since you claim to see everything so well, you're accountable for every fault and failure."*

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Times are tough, so many companies are contemplating mergers and acquisitions. Here's two to keep an eye on: Fairchild Electronics and Honeywell Computers. (The new company will be called Farewell Honeychild) *GCFL*

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If you cross the North Korean Border illegally, you get 12 years hard labor.

If you cross the Iranian Border illegally, you are detained indefinitely.

If you cross the Afghan Border illegally, you get shot.

If you cross the Saudi Arabian border, you will be jailed.

If you cross the Chinese border illegally, you may never be heard from again.

If you cross the Venezuelan border illegally, you will be branded a spy and your fate will be sealed.

If you cross the Cuban Border illegally, you will be thrown into political prison to rot.

If you cross the U.S.. Border illegally, you get... A job, – a drivers license – a social security card – welfare – food stamps – credit cards – subsidized rent – free education – free health care – a lobbyist in Washington – and the right to carry your birth country's' flag while you protest that you don't get enough respect. *BMHP*

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One hundred years ago.

Facts for THE YEAR 1909 will boggle your mind, I know it did mine! What a difference a century makes!

The average life expectancy was 47 years. Fuel for cars was sold in drug stores only . Only 14 percent of the homes had a bathtub. Only 8 percent of the homes had a telephone. There were only 8,000 cars and only 144 miles of paved roads. The maximum speed limit in most cities was 10 mph. The tallest structure in the world was the Eiffel Tower!

The average wage in 1909 was 22 cents per hour. The average worker made between \$200 and \$400 per year ..

A competent accountant could expect to earn \$2000 per year, a dentist \$2,500 per year, a veterinarian between \$1,500 and \$4,000 per year, and a mechanical engineer about \$5,000 per year.

More than 95 percent of all births took place at HOME. Ninety percent of all doctors had NO COLLEGE EDUCATION!

Instead, they attended so-called medical schools, many of which were condemned in the press AND by the government as 'substandard. '

Sugar cost four cents a pound. Eggs were fourteen cents a dozen. Coffee was fifteen cents a pound.

Most women only washed their hair once a month, and used borax or egg yolks for shampoo.

Canada passed a law that prohibited poor people from entering into their country for any reason.

Five leading causes of death were: 1. Pneumonia and influenza 2. Tuberculosis 3. Diarrhea 4. Heart disease 5. Stroke

The population of Las Vegas, Nevada, was only 30!!!! Crossword puzzles, canned beer, and iced tea hadn't been invented yet. There was no Mother's Day or Father's Day. Two out of every 10 adults couldn't read or write and only 6 percent of all Americans had graduated from high school. Eighteen percent of households had at least one full-time servant or domestic help..

There were about 230 reported murders in the ENTIRE U.S.A.! Plus one more sad thought; 95 percent of the taxes we have now did not exist in 1909. Try to imagine what it may be like in another 100 years.

*Shelvie Stephens*