

Think on These Things

Gail Allwine

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It seems in my mind and I think in general, that more and more the problems of this world really are closing in on us in greater number and greater magnitude than ever before. There's the Ukraine war which we thought might be over very quickly, that Russia would take over and now it's dragging on for months and seems to be an awful mess. There's inflation now—this morning on SOMETHING Report, that was the top headline. Recently I had to buy some plane tickets, we're going to a graduation for one of our granddaughter's and it surprised me the price was more than twice what we paid for that trip before, so we're really being priced out of air travel. I look out the window and see cars going by that are driving into work every day and having to pay that price for gas. Retired, we don't have to buy that much gas fortunately, but I do feel sorry for those who have to suffer that. Of course, food is going up. Right now, in our yard we have fruit trees that are bloomed out like mad so I think God is telling us that we're going to need the fruit this summer. Hopefully it comes about.

There's this thing with the Supreme court ruling now coming, on abortion and people are protesting that. We have the open southern border that is such a mess—drugs and violence and an epidemic of shootings in schools. It's just increasing and of all things now a shortage of baby food. I recently watched a video, "2000 Mules". Maybe some of you have heard of that and maybe seen it. It's about election fraud. In the last election there were many of these ballot boxes that were placed throughout some of the major cities. In the videos, they showed and were able to trace people going from box to box just stuffing handfuls of ballots into these boxes illegally. Things like that can get you all riled up. You're going to watch a video on what's happening on the southern border and you get all riled up. You can get riled up watching pro-abortion protestors outside the homes of some of the Supreme Court justices, which is illegal—there are laws against that—and nothing is done. I've become riled up and I realize it's a danger and something we have to work on. It can take over our minds. In 1 Peter 3 it says "*a gentle and a quiet spirit is a precious thing in the sight of God*". In the context it's talking about lives, but the quality is appreciated by God in each and every one of us. Jesus Christ had it. I would like to turn to Matthew 10:5.

Matthew 10:5 *These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: 6) But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7) And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. 8) Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give. (KJV)*

Down in verse 16.

16) Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. (KJV)

Christ said we're being sent out as sheep *"in the midst of wolves"* and to be *"wise as serpents and harmless as doves"*. That does apply to us today. We're really in the midst of wolves—actually it's a lion because Peter said *"your adversary the devil is roaming around as a lion seeking who he may be able to devour"*. We are to be *wise as serpents and harmless as doves*.

Once in a while I think we find ourselves doing something that is helpful to others and fulfilling this—once in a while. We find when that happens it does feel good. There is an incident that was mentioned in a sermonette a couple years ago that I think fits that category. Karen and I were on a flight to New York City and as the plane neared New York it circled for a half hour waiting for a thunderstorm to move out of the area. The thunderstorm didn't move, so finally we had to turn around and we landed in Detroit. There were some passengers near us who became very irate and it became a nasty situation. The poor flight attendant was overwhelmed and fit to be tied and didn't really know how to handle the situation. As we left the plane in Detroit, Karen stopped and gave her a hug which really surprised her that someone would care. Later outside the Detroit airport we were waiting for our transportation to our hotel for the night and there were some flight attendants standing not too far away. We heard one of them say, that couple over there are really nice. It made us feel good, so once in a while when we do something good, it does make you feel good.

Back to things in this world that tend to get us riled up, we can let them fill our minds to saturation point if we're not careful. They can put us in a negative mood and even quench God's Holy Spirit. We can get wrapped up in conjecture about things that are happening around us, about different causes that people are standing up for, we can talk about who is to blame and what to do about it. I've been involved in some of these conversations and come to realize, I really don't have much to add because really nothing can be done. These things are beyond human control. There's something fundamental that I think we have to be aware of and continually conscious of. I'd like to go to Luke 4:5.

Luke 4:5 *And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.*

6) And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. (KJV)

So here is something that is very important. Satan has been given authority over this world—for now. He will continue to have that authority until it's revoked when Jesus Christ returns and he is cast into this bottomless pit and sealed up. Currently he is blinding minds, he is pitting people against people and nation against nation and it's just going to continue. Matthew 24:21.

Matthew 24:21 *For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.*

22) And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. (KJV)

We've all read Christ's prophecy in Matthew 24 and yet we go about our daily lives and I don't think it really sinks in. We go about our daily lives and think it's far away, but it isn't far away. These current problems are going to increase repeatedly and are going to get worse. They are going to reach a crescendo before Christ returns. Guarding our minds at this time against all these evil influences is going to take a lot of effort—mentally, spiritually, physically. Effort especially in prayer—being close to God and keeping God's influence in our minds, praying for that. We definitely need what I might call, a firewall for our minds and God does provide that and we have to take advantage of that. It involves replacing this world in our minds with God's world. Replacing what's in our minds with God's world. I'd like to turn to 2 Corinthians 11:23. Paul is speaking about all he had gone through.

2 Corinthians 11:23 *Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.*

24) Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.

25) Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

26) In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

27) In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

28) Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

29) Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?

30) If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.

31) The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not.

32) In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me:

33) And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands. (KJV)

What Paul went through in serving God really is almost mind boggling. Think about the example that he set. How did he manage such a life, how did he keep going? I think he gave the answer in Philippians 4:8 which is really my main scripture for today and one that we have all read and I think many of us have memorized.

Philippians 4:8 *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever*

things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. (KJV)

This is really describing God's world as opposed to man's world. A little context, let's back up to verse 6.

*6) Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.
7) And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (KJV)*

We should be filling our minds with these things and God promises to give us some peace of mind. Philippians 4:8 one more time.

Philippians 4:8 *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. (KJV)*

I think it's worthwhile going through this list of things—I call them the Philippians 4:8 virtues—and finding things to think about that fall into these categories. To try and build up a little category of things we can fill our minds with and drive out the things of this world.

How about things that are **true**.

Romans 3:4 says *let God be true and every man a liar*. God is the ultimate source of truth in this world. I like 2 Timothy 3:16. This is a scripture I think we have all read many times.

2 Timothy 3:16 *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: (KJV)*

I think that is a key; God's scripture really is true, it's all true and given for us. He gives us all kinds of things to meditate on. I'd like to turn back to the book of Daniel 4:37. This is talking about Nebuchadnezzar. If there was ever a king who was more arrogant and prouder, I think you could say he was one and God humbled him, drew him out to be with the wild beasts for seven years, took his mind away and after that time gave it back. He of all people came to realize that God really was in charge of everything.

Daniel 4:37 *Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase. (KJV)*

Even Nebuchadnezzar came to realize that. Romans 1:20.

Romans 1:20 *For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: (KJV)*

It's truly amazing how blind this world is when you can see around us all that God has made and it is not attributed that to a Creator and a tremendous designer. The design of this environment we're in and of our bodies, really is a product of an incredible, infinite mind. All creation functions under laws that are absolute. We can build 400,000-pound airplanes that can actually fly in the air which seems incredible. We can do this because we have learned the laws of aerodynamics which are absolute and they don't change. We can send a spacecraft to Mars because we know exactly how the orbits of the different planets work and they never change.

How about things that are *noble*?

Of course, God the Father and Jesus Christ are ultimate examples of what is noble and good. Ezekiel 14:19, I won't turn there, it mentions that Noah, Daniel and Job as being special individuals to God, in God's eyes. I'll mention Noah later but I think it would be good—we were just in the book of Daniel—to look at Daniel and Job. Daniel 10:11.

Daniel 10:11 *And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling. (KJV)*

Daniel was a man greatly beloved by God. Let's turn back to Daniel 6; it shows how Daniel stood up for what God commanded no matter what was commanded by any earthly authority. If it meant going against the king's command as opposed to following God, he had to follow God.

Daniel 6:7 *All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions.*

8) *Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.*

9) *Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.*

10) *Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.*

11) *Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God.*

12) *Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's decree; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den*

of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.

13) Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day.

14) Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him.

15) Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed.

16) Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee. (KJV)

Down in verse 18.

18) Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him.

19) Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions.

20) And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? (KJV)

I think this shows that even Darius loved Daniel; he loved his attitude and his obedience to God. How about Job? Let's look at Job 1:8.

Job 1:8 *And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? (KJV)*

Job was very concerned about being perfect before God. It really became quite a vanity and self-righteousness even though he did very well at obeying all of God's commandments. Here is an example of tough love that God uses sometimes. God has what I call educational programs for each and every one of us. He sees our problems and knows what to do and He knew what to do with Job. He took away everything he had and later after Job learned his lesson, He gave it back. The lesson at the end of the book of Job, and that's a blessing for all of us. Job 42:7.

Job 42:7 *And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.*

8) Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job

shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job. (KJV)

These people had characteristics that God pointed out and I think that we have to think about and add to our collection of things that are Godly. I believe there are physical things also in God's creation that fill that category of being noble. What about the giant redwood trees? They are quite amazing; there's even a tree in the Northwest called the "Noble Fir". Joyce Kilmer wrote, "I think that I will never see a poem as lovely as a tree". At the end of the poem, it ends with, "but only God can make a tree". I think those are very true words.

Mountains have always impressed me a great deal and in my teens and early twenty's I loved hiking through the Cascade mountains. They are just grandiose and awe inspiring. I look at the majestic mountains and I see something noble. You can drive through the Cascade mountains—Snoqualmie pass or Stevens pass or the North Cascade Highway, our family has done it many times—and it gives you a feeling of something noble and makes you feel pretty small. Some years ago, our daughter Dorothy drove us through South Dakota and through the badlands and we were able to see Mount Rushmore. I think if ever there is a noble site it's looking at Mount Rushmore. Not just the artwork that somebody actually chiseled out, this awesome thing out of a mountain of rock, but then, picture there, a man: George Washington, or Thomas Jefferson or Theodore Roosevelt or Abraham Lincoln—men who have really made this country what it was initially and now it's changing but they really set did the tone of our great country.

How about being **just**?

David said in 2 Samuel 23:3, "*he who rules over man must be just, ruling in the fear of God*". Perhaps there are some, somewhat righteous, rulers in the world, I think they are very rare. King Solomon prayed for wisdom that he might rule righteously the people of Israel and since he didn't ask for riches or other physical things, God really honored that prayer. He gave to Solomon wisdom more than anyone has ever had or will have as a human being. Solomon ruled, I think, in justice, ruled justly for many years until finally his human nature got the best of him and he turned from God. He had many wives and set up statues for other gods. That's a lesson too, of our human nature and how it can get the best of us.

There are kings in Judah who tried their best to rule righteously. There are a couple of examples I would like to look at. One is Hezekiah in 2 Kings 18:1.

2 Kings 18:1 *Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, that Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign.
2) Twenty and five years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Abi, the daughter of Zachariah.*

3) *And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father did.*

4) *He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan.*

5) *He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him.*

6) *For he clave to the LORD, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses. (KJV)*

This was the story of Hezekiah. Another one is Josiah; you can go to 2 Kings 22:1 and 2.

2 Kings 22:1 *Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah of Boscath.*

2) *And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left. (KJV)*

Continuing in verse 8)

8) *And Hilkiyah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiyah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it.*

9) *And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the king word again, and said, Thy servants have gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of them that do the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD.*

10) *And Shaphan the scribe shewed the king, saying, Hilkiyah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king.*

11) *And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes. (KJV)*

So, he was thunderstruck by what God had commanded and what was being done. You can read through all of 2 Kings 23 and it tells how Josiah had cleansed the tabernacle and restored the Passover service which hadn't been done for generations. So, he was I think one that could be looked upon as a noble ruler. When we think about God's Kingdom to come, there are only going to be noble rulers.

How about things that are **pure**?

When a man and a woman reserve sex for marriage it really is a wonderful thing and a beautiful thing. It has become pretty uncommon in today's world, in our culture. In the time of my parents, it was a standard thing and it will be again in God's Kingdom.

I enjoy gardening and it makes me think of pure food. A lot of our food is doctored up these days. One of our sons had twenty acres back in the Midwest and was renting it out to a farmer and we were back visiting one time and the farmer had just sprayed the field with roundup and planted genetically modified corn. That's what we buy today—that's what is on the market. Modified corn and soy beans. It's wonderful if you happen to have corn growing out in the garden and you can go out and pick an ear of corn and know it's fresh and good and wholesome.

Many years ago, I sold an old tractor that I had to a man who was doing some vegetable gardening outside of Spokane. He told me, I'm growing cabbages and if you knew what I sprayed on these cabbages you would never eat one. I've tried growing cabbages and they are so full of aphids I finally gave up. Roger Maine knows how to do it and he gave me a sack of cabbages and they were really good, I appreciated those. Right now, we have apple trees at home those are just busting with blossoms. I've never sprayed them so occasionally there is a worm here and there. I'm willing to share. I think the worms are doing a service, they're telling us the fruit is good to eat. I would like to go to Zephaniah 3:9.

Zephaniah 3:9 *For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent. (KJV)*

I often wondered what will we be speaking as a language in the World Tomorrow. I don't think it will be English. I think, in general, the languages today have been so corrupt with fewer words and vulgar expressions that we need a clean sweep; we need to sweep away all the language and have God give us a pure language. A language that He says we can pray to Him and honor Him with one accord. We can know God's name and pray to Him with a pure language. We need that fresh start.

James speaks about a pure religion. If there's something that needs to be purified, really, it's this world's religion which Satan has corrupted essentially completely. That's something else to think about.

How about things that are **lovely**?

My first Feast of Tabernacles was at Squaw Valley and the Ambassador Chorale was there and did a lot of the special music. One day they sang what they called the World Tomorrow medley. There were three songs: Bluebirds Over the White Cliff of Dover, Tomorrow Is a Lovely Day and Beyond the Blue Horizon and at the end of that, I was crying—my eyes were all watered up and I think everybody was too. It was so beautiful. In Seattle there's a major radio station KOMO, which is one of the large 50,000-watt stations and they have an AM station that is 50,000 watts. Back when I was in my early teens, they had a program at 6 every night, a half hour program of beautiful music called Candlelight in Gold and we used to listen to that when we were having dinner. There's nothing like that anymore, it's all gone and been corrupted. But again, music can be wonderful, it can be such a help to our minds to get our minds off the things of

the world. Today about all you can find is classical music and some of that is good and some is bad. You have to find music yourself.

Back then there was also beauty in art and entertainment. Women dressed to be lovely instead of being "hot". These things are gone but they'll be coming back. Last Monday night we had a thunderstorm and there was the most beautiful double rainbow I think I've ever seen and that was something lovely.

How about things of good **report**?

Ecclesiastes 7:1 *A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth. (KJV)*

A good name comes from living well, following God, trusting in God. Hebrews 11 we call the faith chapter but there's so much to learn from that. I'm just going to read through it because it mentions things of a good report.

Hebrews 11:1 *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

2) *For by it the elders obtained a good report. (KJV)*

So, God connects good report with being faithful to Him.

3) *Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*

4) *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.*

5) *By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.*

6) *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

7) *By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.*

8) *By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.*

9) *By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:*

10) *For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*

11) *Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.*

12) *Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.*

13) *These all died in faith, not having received the promises ... (KJV)*

This is interesting because if we look back at verse 5 it says Enoch was translated that he should not see death and while he was saved from death in whatever circumstance he was in at that point, but verse 11 it clearly says these all died in faith not having received the promises.

13 continued) *... but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*

14) *For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.*

15) *And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.*

16) *But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.*

17) *By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,*

18) *Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:*

19) *Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.*

20) *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.*

21) *By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.*

22) *By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.*

23) *By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.*

24) *By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;*

25) *Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;*

26) *Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.*

27) *By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.*

28) *Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.*

29) *By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.*

30) *By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.*

- 31) *By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.*
- 32) *And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets:*
- 33) *Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,*
- 34) *Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.*
- 35) *Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:*
- 36) *And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:*
- 37) *They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;*
- 38) *(Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.*
- 39) *And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:*
- 40) *God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. (KJV)*

Many people, really some of our ancestors, who went before us, through faith obtained a good report. I think there are a lot of things to fill our minds with.

How about **virtue**?

There can be virtue or excellence in human things and physical things. The bedroom of our oldest son really has become a prayer closet for Karen and I and we can lean on the bed and across from the other side is a window and we can look out and there's a power line that goes across and more often than not there's a little bird there wishing us good morning. There are trees out there and blue skies and puffy white clouds and I think these are virtuous things. We have hummingbirds that came about a month ago—lots of hummingbirds. We have three feeders out; I put one out before we left home so they would have enough. They are drinking at least a quart of sugar water every day. At night they just flock the porch. I heard some scientist say it's impossible to fly the way they do. That's obviously not true; they can fly frontwards, backwards, upside down, they can stand still midair while they are eating. Some things that God has designed are in my mind, beyond miraculous and bordering on magical if you read what Michael Behe says about intelligent design. For instance, on how the human eye functions. It's so fantastically complicated it boggles the mind. Likewise, the blood clots, our immune system and virtually every system in the body is self-regulating—it's amazing all these self-regulating control systems that are in our body. Psalm 107:8.

Psalm 107:8 *Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! (KJV)*

If men would only **praise** God.

I read that the invisible things are clearly seen by what God has made—if we would just have eyes to see those things. If we do, that's a tremendous blessing.

What's praise worthy? I believe that we can all think of some people who we thought were praiseworthy; people who tried to do the right thing. Our parents always wanted to be honest and do the right thing but they made mistakes. I think they tried so I put them in that category. I'll always remember one particular math teacher we had in high school. He was an elderly man, quite wise and his life goal was instilling in us wisdom; not just knowledge but trying to give us some wisdom. I can remember ministers that have served tirelessly and really given all of themselves to try and serve God.

Karen is an avid reader and more recently she had been finding books about people who saved Jews during World War II. An example is Nicholas Winton; he had what he called the Kindertransport. He was able to bring 669 Jewish children out of Czechoslovakia when it was occupied and help resettle them in England. Some of you may remember, if you're old enough, a program that started on radio on CBC in 1948 called This Is Your Life. They would call somebody up from the audience and it was prearranged but the person didn't know and they would have the story of his whole life that they would give and bring in relatives and acquaintances and it was neat to see. CBC did this with Nicholas Winton and they surrounded him with the whole audience of the grown-ups of these people he had saved. It was quite a wonderful thing to see. There is a video on it that Karen has.

There are many other stories. Irena Sendler who smuggled babies out of the Warsaw ghetto. Probably a lot of you have seen the movie Schindler's List; he kept many Jews from being transported to the death camps. There are many praiseworthy people we can read about and think about. I would like to look at Matthew 5:28.

Matthew 5:38 *Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:*

39) But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

40) And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also.

41) And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

42) Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

43) Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

44) *But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;*

45) *That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*

46) *For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?*

47) *And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?*

48) *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*

(KJV)

We won't be able to right the wrongs of this world, that's for God to do. Our responsibility really is to demonstrate a humble and loving attitude which God would have us have, and try to live a life that is honorable before God. Back where I started, Philippians 4:8.

Philippians 4:8 *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. (KJV)*

There's a scripture, one of my favorites, some may think of it as a little funny, it's in the Song of Solomon. We need to fill our minds with things of God, with God's Kingdom instead of this world's kingdom. To me this is a verse that really looks to God's Kingdom. Song of Solomon 2:11.

Song of Solomon 2:11 *For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone;
12) The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; (KJV)*

Whatever is good and wholesome, we need to fill our minds with these things. Whatever is lovely and true and beautiful. "Raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens".