

**经节：祂在耶和華面前生长如嫩芽，像根出于干地。（以赛亚书五十三章2节上）**

耶稣的降临就像干地中的嫩芽。植物在干地只有极渺渺的生存希望，因为土质又干又硬，大部分的植物很难冲破地壳坚硬的表面。然而，耶稣被预言像一株嫩芽，穿过坚硬的土壤，并且克服干旱和无生命迹象的环境，带来了新的生命。

当耶稣诞生的时候，祂的百姓对神的话语无动于衷。有四百年之久，没有任何记录记载神对祂的百姓说话。耶稣时代的宗教领袖研读并记忆经文，但是神的话语对他们毫无生命力。当神的儿子来到他们中间，他们变得对真理满怀敌意，他们杀了祂。纵然百姓憎恶祂，耶稣仍把生命带给所有相信祂的人。

耶稣有足够能力把生命带给任何人、社会及文化，不管他们的心是如何坚硬或怀有很深的敌意。即使那些对罪无动于衷的罪人，也会发现耶稣能穿越苦毒的心灵，带来生命的气息。耶稣在某人身上的工作，乍看之下也许并不牢靠，但它会像芥菜种一样，最终会变为强壮。

当你为自己所关心的人祷告时，如果此人对耶稣没有兴趣，不要灰心。就像一株嫩芽在干旱之地会找到一条成长之道，耶稣的爱有能力穿透似乎完全没有反应的生命。

#### **A Tender Plant**

*For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground.*

*Isaiah 53:2*

The coming of Jesus was like a tender plant in the midst of a parched ground. Parched ground offers little hope for survival; it is dry and too hardened to allow most plants to penetrate its crust. Yet Jesus was prophesied as a tender plant that would break through the hostile soil and overcome the dry and lifeless environment in order to bring life.

When Jesus was born, His people were hardened to God's Word. There is no written record of God's having spoken to His people for four hundred years. The religious leaders of Jesus' day had studied and memorized the Scriptures, but the words were lifeless to them. So hostile had they become to the truth that when God's Son came to them, they killed Him. Nevertheless, despite the enmity of the people, Jesus brought life to all who believed in Him.

Jesus is capable of bringing life to any person, society, or culture no matter how hardened or hostile they have become to the gospel. Even the most calloused sinner will discover that Jesus knows how to penetrate the heart and bring life where there was only bitterness. The work of Jesus in a person's life may seem fragile at first, but like the mustard seed, it will eventually grow into something strong.

As you pray for someone you care about, don't be discouraged if this person has not responded to Jesus. Just as a tender plant finds a way to grow in a hard and unreceptive environment, so the love of Jesus has the ability to emerge in a life that seems completely unresponsive.

12月5日（星期一）- 标题：**要持守**

**经节：但要凡事察验；善美的要持守，各样的恶事要禁戒不做。**

**（帖撒罗尼迦前书五章21…22节）**

要持守美善之事，不然这世界会夺走它。撒但是美善之事的恶敌。当牠看到神给亚当、夏娃的一切是那么美好，牠就设计夺走它们。当牠看到大卫王讨神的欢喜，牠就设法毁坏大卫与神的关系。永远不要视生活中的美好之事是理所当然，如果没有坚守它，它可能会被遗落。

人们可能会质疑你所行的善事，他们可能会批评你的道德标准、教养孩子的方式、使用金钱的原则，或在教会的参与。时间的压力也会攻击你生命中美善之事。你的祷告生活、读经时间、与家人的相处、在教会的事奉，都可能被其它事物所挤压。也许你对教会事工及其它基督徒事工慷慨解囊，但是你也可能遭到试探，想自私地运用手上的金钱，减少在经济上能做的美善之事。

圣经揭示持守美善之事的秘诀，是禁戒不做各样的恶事。邪恶会掠夺神在你身上的美意。配偶与家人是极大的祝福，但是婚外情会摧毁神所赐的美善家庭。祷告是神所赐的美好礼物，但是罪会掠夺祷告的能力（以赛亚书一：15）。倘若不禁戒恶事，罪会夺走神所赐予的美善之事。神的诫命不是限制你，而是释放你，让你经历祂的美善。你要儆醒，禁戒不作各类恶事，你将会自由地享受神所赐的多样美善之事。

### **Hold Fast**

***Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.***

***1 Thessalonians 5:21-22***

Hold fast to what is good, or the world will take it away. Satan is the relentless enemy of good. When he saw that what God gave Adam and Eve was good, he set about to take it away from them. When he saw that King David was pleasing to God, he attempted to destroy David's relationship with God. Never take the good in your life for granted. If you do not hold on to it firmly, it may be lost.

People will challenge the good that you are practicing. They may criticize you for your moral stand, your child rearing, your use of money, or your involvement in church. Time pressures will attack the good in your life. Your time to pray, study Scripture, be with your family, and serve in your church will all be pressured by the many other time demands you face. You may give generously to your church and other Christian causes, but you will be tempted to spend your money selfishly and minimize the good you are doing with your finances.

Scripture reveals the solution for holding on to what is good—abstain from every form of evil. Evil robs you of what God intends for you. A spouse and family are great blessings, but the evil of adultery can rob you of the good that God has given. Prayer is a wonderful gift from God. Yet sin robs the power of prayer (Isa. 1:15). If you will not abstain from evil, it will rob you of the good things God has given. God's commandments do not restrict you: they free you to experience God's best. Diligently abstain from every form of evil, and you will be free to enjoy every good thing God has for you.

12月10日（星期六）- 标题：**一切关乎生命之事**

**经节：神的神能已将一切关乎生命和虔敬的事赐给我们，皆因我们认识那用自己荣耀和美德召我们的主。（彼得后书一章3节）**

身为基督徒，你已经拥有每一件你所需要的宝贝，让你活出圣洁及丰盛的生活（彼得后书一：3—11）。你的聪明才智、所受的教育、或家庭的背景，并不能够决定你生命的圣洁与否。要活出得胜、喜乐和丰盛生活，你所需的每项资源，可在内住你心中的圣灵里找到（加拉太书五：22—23）。

据彼得所说，每个基督徒凭信心就能得到如下的品格：良善、对神的认识、节制、忍耐、敬虔、仁慈和仁爱。如果你继承一笔遗产，却不知它的存在，这遗产对你毫无用处。同样地，如果你继承了像基督的特质，却不去取用它，你所继承的产业则于你无益。

当神所赐予的自制是唾手可及，而我们却一直缺乏自制，我们就掠夺了自己，也掠夺了周围的人。神要将仁慈徐徐地加入我们的行为举止，而我们的言行却没有仁慈，致使周围的人痛苦无助地度日。

得到神所赐的宝贝之钥，是我们的信心。我们必须相信神要建立这些生命的品质在我们的生命中。在四福音里，耶稣依着人的信心行事（马太福音八：13，九：29，十五：28）。祂以救恩与医治，回报那些有真信心的人。当祂遇见没信心的人，祂并没有回应他们（马可福音六：5—6）。

回顾彼得所说的生命品质，那是神要慢慢加添给你的。如果你自觉缺乏其中任何一项品质，求神在你身上动工，建造你，好叫你愈来愈有基督的形像。

### **All Things Pertaining to Life**

***As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue. 2 Peter 1:3***

As a Christian, you have everything you need to live a holy and abundant life (2 Pet. 1:3-11). Your intelligence, your education, or your family background do not determine the holiness of your life. Everything you need to live a victorious, joyful, and abundant life is found in the Holy Spirit who resides within you (Gal. 5:22-23).

According to Peter, each Christian, by faith, has access to these qualities: goodness, knowledge of God, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. It would be of no use to inherit a fortune if you did not know it was yours. Likewise, it is of no benefit to inherit everything necessary to become like Christ if you do not claim it.

If we continue to lack self-control when God has made it available, we rob ourselves and those around us. If God is willing to instill brotherly kindness into our behavior, but we never display it, people will suffer needlessly as a result.

The key to all that God has made available to us is our faith. We must believe that God wants to build these qualities into our lives. In the Gospels, Jesus related to people according to their faith (Matt. 8:13; 9:29; 15:28). He rewarded genuine faith by granting salvation and healing.

If He met unbelief, He did not reward it (Mark 6:5-6). Review the qualities that Peter said God wants to instill in you. If you lack any of these qualities, ask God to work them into your character, so that you will be more like Christ.

12月9日（星期五）- 标题：**不靠势力**

**经文：他对我说：「这是耶和华指示所罗巴伯的。万军之耶和华说：不是倚靠势力，不是倚靠才能，乃是倚靠我的灵方能成事。」（撒迦利亚书四章6节）**

在关键时刻中，神的话语临到祂的百姓。他们当时是一群沮丧、被人恐吓、梦想幻灭的人。他们流浪在巴比伦有七十年之久，在这段时间，他们亲眼看见当代最具优势的军事武力，也看到巴比伦军队征服其它国家，见识到巴比伦王的富强与显赫。后来，巴比伦被波斯征服，以色列人看到世界舞台上，出现了超级富强与军事武力强盛的国家。当他们将自己软弱及俘虏的身份，与当代超级富强的能力比较，他们灰心沮丧。

当以色列人在七十年被俘之后回到耶路撒冷，他们发现整个城市已被蹂躏毁坏。他们庄严华丽的教堂也被摧毁，城墙都已倒塌，他们没有建材来重建壮丽的城市。当这些过去曾是难民的居民，看到眼前这个巨大的工程，他们意识到自己的贫穷及软弱，他们变得十分沮丧。接着，神的话就临到了！祂允许他们真的能够重建这个城市。但是祂告诉他们，这不是靠他们的能力及资源来完成，而是靠圣灵成事。只要他们有神的灵同在，他们就拥有所需要的一切。

有时候，顺服神会领你到一种看来完全不可能的处境。如果只注意自己的才能、知识和资源，你会灰心沮丧。然而，当你成为基督徒，神将祂的灵放置于你的心里。你现在可以随意使用天堂的资源。你竭心尽力的成果，不是取决于手上握有的资源，而在于你如何顺服神的灵。

#### **Not by Might**

***This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit," Says the LORD of hosts." Zechariah 4:6***

God's word came to His people at a critical time. They were a despondent, disillusioned people who faced a daunting task. They had been exiled in Babylon for seventy years. During this time they had witnessed the strength of the most dominant military power in their world. They had watched the Babylonian army marching off to conquer other nations. They had seen the wealth and splendor of the Babylonian king. When Babylon was in turn conquered by the Persians, the Israelites saw an even greater superpower emerging on the world stage. They lost heart when they compared their own weakness and captivity with the enormous strength and wealth of the superpowers of their day.

As the Israelites returned to Jerusalem after seventy years in captivity, they found their city in ruins. Their magnificent temple had been destroyed. The city walls had been torn down. They had no resources to rebuild their splendid city. As these former refugees looked at the mammoth task before them, they realized their poverty and weakness, and they became greatly dismayed. Then came God's word! He promised that they would, indeed, rebuild their city. But, He told them, the rebuilding would not be accomplished by their own power and resources but by His Spirit. As long as they had God's Spirit, they had everything they needed.

There will be times when obeying God will lead you to impossible situations. If you look at your own skills, knowledge, and resources, you will become discouraged. However, when you became a Christian, God placed His Spirit within you. You now have the resources of heaven at your disposal. The success of your endeavors will not depend on the way you use your own resources but on how you obey the Spirit of God.

12月6日（星期二）- 标题：**一颗爱神的心**

**经文：我喜爱良善，不喜爱祭祀；喜爱认识神，胜于燔祭。（何西阿书六章6节）**

对神而言，再多的行动也抵不上一颗爱神的心。历世历代以来，神的百姓以为，不管内心状态如何，自己的事奉及金钱奉献足以讨神欢喜。扫罗王慷慨地奉献祭品，希望神会不计较他的不顺服（撒母耳记上十五：22—23）。大卫可能以为，自己为神做那么多事，神会宽容他的罪（撒母耳记下十二：7—15）。亚拿尼亚与撒非喇以为，自己对教会慷慨捐献，可以抵消他们欺诈的行为（使徒行传五：1—11）。保罗本来以为，自己的热心能够讨神欢喜。但在信主之后，他下了个结论说，如果他有全备的信心可以移山、将所有财产周济穷人、献上性命成为祭物被焚烧，然而，只要他的心态不对，一切都没有益处（哥林多前书十三：1—3）。

每个人都很容易受此错误的认知所影响。我们可能被蒙蔽，以为神对我们的活动比对我们的态度更感兴趣。神始终如一地告诉我们，如果我们的态度不对，即使是献上最丰硕的祭物和最热心的服事，神一点也不会满意的（弥迦书六：6—8）。不管你在教会有多少事奉、活动，或在基督教圈子里多有名望，神不会宽容一颗罪恶的心。祂想要的，是我们竭力去认识祂，并且全心全意爱祂。

#### **A Heart That Loves God**

***For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, And the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.***

***Hosea 6:6***

No amount of activity for God will ever take the place of a heart that is right with Him. Through the ages God's people have been persuaded that they could please Him through their service and their offerings, regardless of their heart condition. King Saul offered generous sacrifices, hoping God would overlook his disobedience (1 Sam. 15:22-23). David may have assumed that after all he had done on God's behalf, God would overlook his sin (2 Sam. 12:7-15). Ananias and Sapphira thought that their generous gift to the church would compensate for their deceitfulness (Acts 5:1-11). Paul was certainly one who had thought his zealotry would please God. After his conversion, however, he concluded that even if he had faith to remove mountains, gave all he had to feed the poor, and offered his body to be burned for the sake of God, and yet had a heart that was not right, it would all be for nothing (1 Cor. 13:1-3).

We are susceptible to the same misunderstanding as all of these people were. We can be deceived into assuming God is more interested in our activity for Him than He is in the condition of our heart. God has consistently made it clear that He will not be pacified by even the most generous offerings and zealous service if our hearts are not right with Him (Mic. 6:6-8). No matter how much we do in God's service, regardless of how active we are in our church, no matter how honorable our reputation in the Christian community, He will not overlook a sinful heart. His desire is that we devote ourselves to knowing Him and loving Him with all of our hearts.

12月7日（星期三）- 标题：**公义如雨降临**

**经文：你们要为自己栽种公义，就能收割慈爱。现今正是寻求耶和華的时候；你们要开垦荒地，等祂临到，使公义如雨降在你们身上。（何西阿书十章12节）**

在何西阿的时代，百姓们对神的话语非常冷淡。他们早就听过神的话千百回，并且对神的要求无动于衷。神的解决方法是冲破他们没有生机的心田，软化他们冷漠的心灵。当土又干又硬的时候，农夫会犁田松土，好叫种子可以发芽，雨水可以为庄稼带来生机。同样地，神的百姓也要冲破自己生活中罪的拦阻，这些罪阻止了神的话语穿透其心田。何西阿说，神会使公义如雨降下，为他们带来生命及更新他们。

身为基督徒，我们一定要常常浇灌自己的心思意念，好叫我们能够接收神的话。施洗约翰告诫周围的人，要预备耶稣的到来。我们也可以提醒其他人预备自己，好叫神的公义穿透他们，充满他们的生命。当我们看到罪已经渗入人的生命，我们可以激励他们悔改。我们可以分享神的话语带给我们的喜乐，并且鼓励朋友寻求神的旨意。我们可能成为子女们顺服的榜样，我们可以分享自己因顺服而得到的祝福。我们可以帮助周围的人突破心中的硬土。

何西阿劝神的百姓要寻求神，直到神公义的雨降临在他们的身上。当我们的心田开始对神有冷漠的迹象，要立即耕作我们的心田。如果我们随时预备好自己的心田，当神的话临到时，我们会预备好的。

### **Raining Righteousness**

***Sow for yourselves righteousness; Reap in mercy; Break up your fallow ground, For it is time to seek the LORD, Till He comes and rains righteousness on you. Hosea 10:12***

The people of Hosea's day had become hardened to God's Word. They had heard it many times before and had grown apathetic to what God required of them. God's solution was for them to break up the fallow ground of their hearts. They were to allow Him to soften their hardened hearts. When the earth was dry and crusty, the farmer would plow to loosen the soil so it was receptive to the seeds and the rains that would give life to the crop. Likewise, God's people were to break up the sinful barriers in their lives that prevented God's Word from penetrating their hearts. Then, said Hosea, God would give life and refresh them by raining down on them in righteousness.

As Christians, we must continually cultivate our hearts and minds so that they are receptive to whatever God tells us. John the Baptist exhorted those around him to prepare for Jesus' coming. We, too, can remind others to prepare their lives so that God's righteousness will penetrate and fill their lives. We can urge them to repent when we see sin sinking into their lives. We can share the joy that God's Word brings us and encourage our friends to seek God's will also. We can model obedience for our children. We can tell of the blessings that have come to us as a result of our obedience. We can help to break up the fallow ground in the hearts of those around us.

Hosea admonished God's people to seek the Lord until His righteousness rained down upon them. We should immediately cultivate our heart whenever it starts to become hardened toward God. If we keep our hearts prepared, we will be ready when God's Word comes to us.

12月8日（星期四）- 标题：**不藐视小事**

**经文：谁藐视这日的事为小呢？（撒迦利亚书四章10节上）**

世人喜欢看神迹奇事。神早就证明祂可以行神奇非凡之事，但是祂通常选择使用那些看来很普通、似乎毫不重要的事。藉着这个方式，祂表达祂的爱及祂的大能。

历世历代以来，神对重要关键时刻的解答，是送来一个婴儿。以撒、摩西、撒母耳、施洗约翰和耶稣，都是一个有需要的时代之解答。当神把以色列人由米甸人的压迫中解救出来时，祂故意只使用三百人击败人数众多的敌军。事实上，祂有更多的士兵可以使用，但祂要以祂自己的大能完成所定的目标。当耶稣甄选第一批门徒的时候，祂大可招募一大堆群众跟随祂，但是祂只选了十二名。重要的不是门徒数目的多寡，而是他们与祂同行的品质，才能决定他们如何影响他们的世界。当耶稣行神迹喂饱一大群人，在神的手中，一个孩子的午餐——五个饼和两条鱼——就够了。

耶稣把神的国度比喻成芥菜种子（马太福音十三：31—32），芥菜种子是当时犹太人所知最小的种子，但是它会长成一棵极大的树。祂也把神的国度比喻成酵母，微小不引人注意，却能使一整个面团发酵（马太福音十三：33）。当孩子们来到耶稣面前，祂的门徒以为小孩子是烦人的小东西，要把他们赶走（马太福音十九：13—15）。但是耶稣说，我们若要进天国，就必须回转回到孩童的样式。

基督徒通常接受[愈大愈好]的信念。我们以事工人数的多寡，来衡量成功。我们寻求神迹奇事，来展示神的大能。我们一定要学习以神的眼光来看成功。神看重人的心；祂喜爱顺服的人。

### **Small Things Are Not Despised**

***For who has despised the day of small things? Zechariah 4:10***

The world loves the spectacular. God has proven that He is certainly capable of the extraordinary, but He often chooses to work through the ordinary and seemingly insignificant. In this way He demonstrates His love and His power.

Throughout history, God's answer to a critical time was to send a baby. Isaac, Moses, Samuel, John the Baptist, and Jesus were all born as answers to a time of need. When God delivered the Israelites from the Midianites' oppression, He intentionally used an army of merely three hundred men to defeat a vastly larger army. He had more soldiers available, but He preferred to demonstrate His power in the way He accomplished His purposes. When Jesus selected His first disciples He could have enlisted a multitude to follow Him, but He chose twelve. It was not the number of disciples but the quality of their walk with Him that would determine how they affected their world. When Jesus fed a multitude, five loaves of bread and two fish from a boy's lunch were sufficient in the hands of the Lord.

Jesus compared the kingdom of God to a mustard seed (Matt. 13:31-32). The mustard seed was the smallest seed known to the Jews, yet it grew into an enormous tree. He also likened God's kingdom to leaven that is hardly noticeable but raises the entire batch of dough (Matt. 13:33). When children came to Jesus, His disciples assumed they were an annoyance and chased them away (Matt. 19:13-15). But Jesus said that in order to enter His kingdom, people must approach God as a child.

Christians often accept the adage "the bigger the better." We measure success by the number of people involved in our ministry. We seek spectacular displays of God's power. We must learn to view success as God does. God is interested in the heart; He is pleased with obedience.