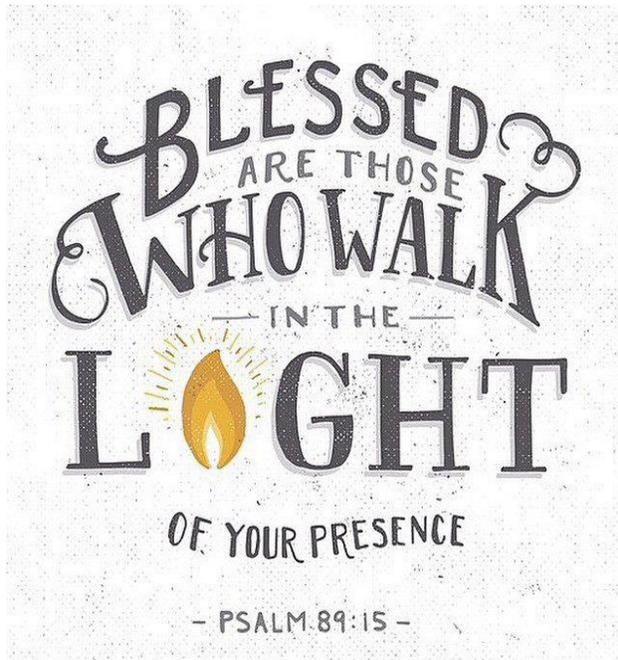


March 25



Psalm 89:15

Blessed are those who know the joyful sound, who walk in the light of your presence, O Lord.

What is walking? It is a deliberate movement of one's self from one place to another. We walk for many reasons. For exercise to keep our bodies healthy (or because we have a pet that needs exercise!), to increase our strength and endurance and to decrease stress. Walking also provides a great

opportunity for bonding with others as you walk together.

So what does it mean to walk in the light of God's presence? Perhaps we could think of it as a deliberate movement of one's self away from sin and evil and toward righteousness and good works. Perhaps we could try to be conscious of God's presence as we walk the road of our journey through life.

When I walk, sometimes I am reminded of a young children's song that goes like this:

A great grey elephant, a little yellow bee, A tiny purple violet, a tall green tree,

A red and white sailboat on a blue sea, All these things you gave to me, when you made my eyes to see.,

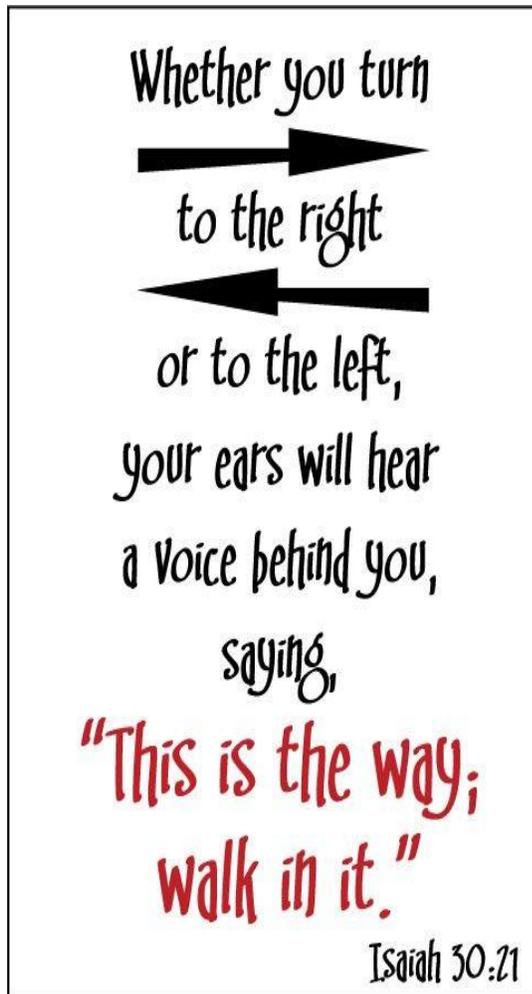
All these things you gave to me, thank you God.

Everything I see when I am walking helps me be conscious of God's presence, as he is the giver of all things.

March 26

Isaiah 30:21 *And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, This is the way, walk in it, and do not turn aside, either to the right hand or to the left. Lamsa (Ancient Eastern Manuscripts)*

Isaiah 30:21— *“And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, this is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.” NIV*



So many times, I hear that still small voice inside, telling me it's ok to keep going, or it's better to go another way. One of the things you know about Fayetteville quickly when you move here, is that there are lots of ways to get anywhere you are headed. Some more round about, some more direct, but all will arrive at the destination. Some take longer, some are shorter but require you to deal with more traffic or lights, according to the time of day. Consideration for the time of day is one you learn to pay attention to as well, is it 5 o'clock? Is it mid-month pay day? Also, we are aware if there will be a school crossing in our path and we should pay attention to the time of release of students.

Of course, I doubt if God was telling the Prophet Isaiah that we should pay attention necessarily about trips to work, school or church, but I do think he was telling us to pay attention to that still small voice. Do you recognize it as your conscience? Your parent's admonishment? Your church teachings? Your co-workers, friends or other groups you may belong or hang around? Folks will tell us quickly if we get off the path, they assume is the norm. If not by word, certainly by looks or body language that denotes disapproval, or hopefully approval.

In my daily walk with our Lord, Jesus, I am all too aware of who I can insert an opinion about my active daily walk with Him. I will instantly know who is uncomfortable with my actions, such as praying out loud in a restaurant, thanking God for my meal. Or when someone tells me of a family with problems, and I offer to pray for them, they might become anxious to leave the conversation. Quickly I realize who I can share my listening to that still small voice with daily.

My prayer for you is that you are able for your "ears to hear a good word behind you".

Tonie Neal

March 27

Proverbs 3:5-6 New International Version (NIV)

⁵Trust in the LORD with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
⁶in all your ways submit to him,
and he will make your paths straight.^[a]

Bible verses come to you in strange ways and places. It seems God knows when you need Him most. This verse was delivered to me in a very unusual way.

A number of years ago, a childhood friend of mine named Greg was killed. We were neighbors growing up. He was a Methodist minister and I had pretty much lost touch with him. He was working at a camp in the mountains of NC along with his wife, Jane. Their 4 year old son was with them. They had just learned she was pregnant and expecting their second child. To celebrate, they left their son with a friend and headed down the mountain to celebrate together. They never returned! A tragic auto accident took their lives leaving a very young child orphaned.

Greg and Jane's death worried me for a long time. Their son was about the age of my son. I could never quite come to grips with it. I was angry with God as I watched the custody battle rage for his son. I could not understand how God could let this happen! Greg was a minister who had answered the call to teach and spread God's word. Why? The question lurked in the back of my mind.

One day, on my way to work, the question was again on my heart. Greg and Jane were in my thoughts that morning and I was once again struggling with why God would allow this to happen. I was angry. As I approached the intersection of Rowan St. and Bragg Blvd, a merchant had a sign in front of his building with this Bible verse on it.

As I digested this verse, I realized God was speaking to ME, right then. He was telling me that it was okay for me not to understand what happened, and that I needed to trust Him. He was assuring me that he had things under control and that there will always be things beyond my comprehension, but that if I would trust Him, and follow Him, he would lead me and take care of me.

I felt peace at that time. Finally. Still today when I think I can fix everything and am frustrated finding out that I simply cannot, it is this verse that helps center me.

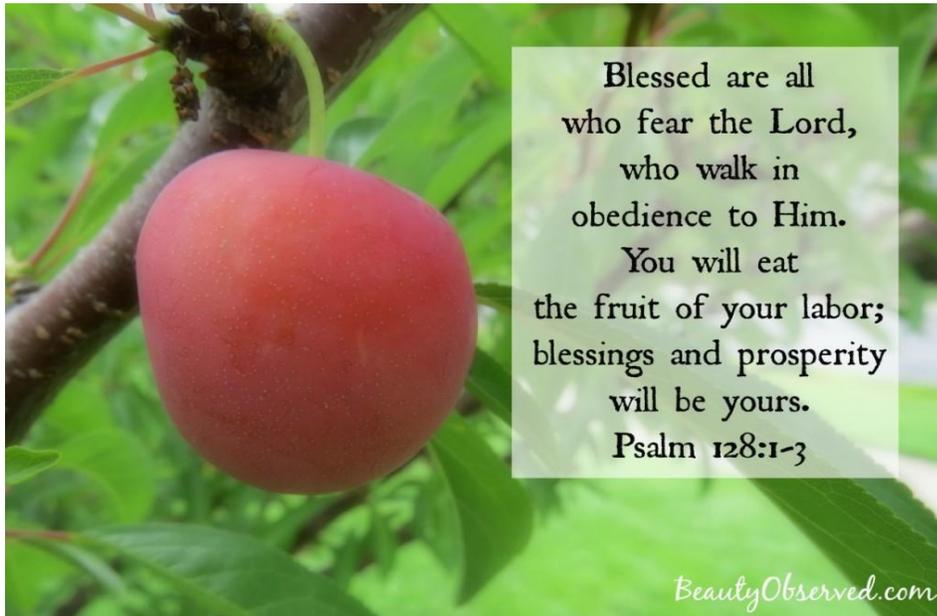
We live in a crazy time. There are things happening all the time that are outside of our control, and way beyond our ability to understand. But God is good, all the time. We have to find a way to give these things to Him, and trust the He is in control.

Dave Runkle



March 28

Psalm 128: 1-3: *Happy is everyone who fears the Lord, who walks in His ways. You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands; you shall be happy and it shall go well with you. Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table.*



This was my father's favorite Bible verse - his vision of a happy family. Ironic, because ours was not. There was alcoholism, adultery, just plain meanness and finally divorce. And a young girl who left to find her

own darkness. My own marriage was even worse.

But God is well known for bringing good out of evil. Look what he did for Abraham, Jacob and Esau, Joseph, David, Mary Magdeline....and for the Bourque family! (Of course we go by many different names now) My father died a successful and well-respected man. My mother was the author of several books. Both were wonderful blessings to their grandchildren. And the little olive shoots (Mich and I)? We grew into our own tree - 6 children and 8 grandchildren (2 adopted) between us.

The key is that first sentence. I have learned by experience what happens when you do "walk in His ways" and when you don't.

Dear Lord: Keep me always on the path of your ways. Never let me forget how You redeemed me. Amen.

Sue Rink

March 29

But Ruth said, “Do not press me to leave you or turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; and your people, and your God, my God.

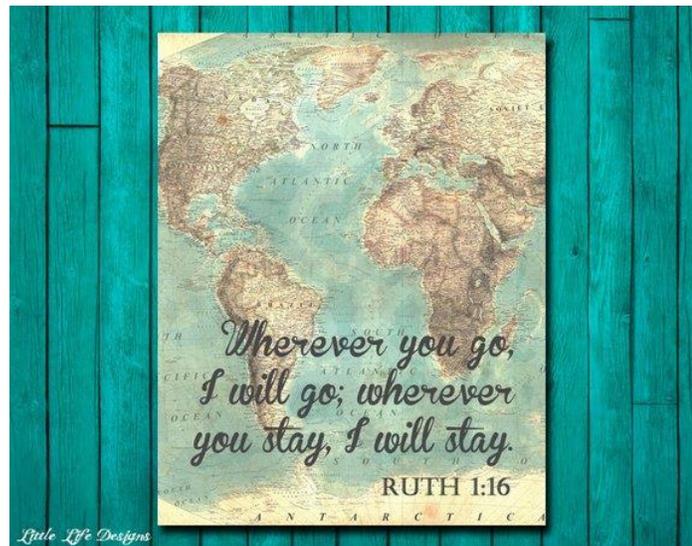
Ruth 1:16

There is another strong woman I know by the name of Ruth, Ruth Ann to be exact and like the Ruth in this scripture, after our marriage she soon found herself thrust into the life of a military spouse. Through our time in the military with our many moves and challenges I always knew that as the Lord was guiding us through our journey I could always count on my wife being by my side willing to follow me no matter where we found ourselves. Her faith in what God had in store for us kept us confident in the knowledge that the Lord is always with us no matter what the circumstances.

Many of us have heard this scripture read at weddings at which a wife swears to follow her husband. These words are also about a woman who puts her future in the hands of the God of Israel and having faith that God would watch over her. She does all of this out of her faith in choosing to follow God and out of love for and loyalty to her chosen family.

Lord, thank You for the words of your scripture and the wonderful truths that it contains. Thank You for using people like Ruth, to demonstrate such devotion to You, leaving every trace of this world behind in order to seek after the one true and living God. Keep me low at the cross so that I may worship You in humble devotion all the days of my life, and thank You that You loved me so much that the Lord Jesus became my Redeemer and brought me back from slavery to sin into the family of God – in Jesus’ name we pray, AMEN.

Gary Crecelius



March 30

Matthew 14:29 *He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus.*



I love this story. Peter is filled with faith and courage to step out of the boat to walk towards Jesus and even as he does, doubts flood into his mind and he starts to sink. Fear can be a useful thing to make

us cautious and keep us from doing things that may end badly. But fear if we let it, can set us to sinking as well. Keep walking! Keep your eyes on Him and stay above the waves of life that may seek to overtake you. Go Peter! Be the rock above the waves!

Nikki Rettmann