

Good News Daily

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Sunday, January 10

John 1:1-34 *The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. (v.5 NIV)*

The light of Jesus can never be overcome with darkness. He came to take away (not to whitewash, but to take away) the sin of the world. That is why we feel so clean, so relieved, so new, when we confess our sin and receive his forgiveness. Our sin is truly gone. Jesus has taken it away. We are new creatures.

Something recently happened in our house which illustrated the difference between the darkness and the light. My husband works a four-day week and, on work nights, he goes to bed quite early. Being a "night owl," I often stay up late on these nights. He is a loving and thoughtful husband and always leaves the little light by my side of our bed turned on, so I can find my way to bed.

One night he had forgotten to turn on the night light and, when I came into the room, it was quite dark. So dark that I could not find my way. I didn't want to turn on the overhead light and awaken him, but I felt lost and reached out my hands to feel my way across the room. Our bed is a four poster, and I reached out into the darkness searching for a bedpost so that I could get my bearings. As I groped, I hit the bedpost with my hand, and it shook the bed. My husband awakened with a start and we frightened each other. We ended up having a good chuckle over it, but it could have been avoided if only there had been some light.

How like that is the world—groping its way in darkness, running into trouble. Jesus is the way and the light. All we must do is call on his name, and he will bring his light into our lives.

Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalms 146, 147; Hebrews 1:1-12

Monday, January 11

Psalm 2 *Blessed are all who take refuge in him. (v.12b)*

I recently published a book of genealogy for my husband's family. At the end of the book, I included some reminiscences of family members. My husband is one of 23 first cousins on one side of the family, and they all had memories of the grandparents' home in Georgia. Some of the memories were funny, some tender with emotion. As we spoke with the cousins, eventually each one got around to remembering the back staircase in the old home. The grandparents were a loving Christian couple and their home was filled with love and laughter, but the darkness of the back staircase was frightening to the children. They wanted to find refuge from the darkness.

I, too, remember the stairs in my grandparents' home. I remember having to go upstairs one night to get something and coming back down the stairs with the darkness behind me. I ran down those stairs and across the hall to the living room where my grandfather sat reading. I remember running to his chair and leaning against his shoulder. I felt safe there. His presence comforted me, and I was no longer afraid. I took refuge in him. He was a man who loved God and always remembered to thank the Lord for all his blessings. As a child, I saw God in my grandfather.

Our heavenly Father wants us to run to Him when we are afraid. He is our refuge in time of trouble and our light in the darkness. When we take refuge in Him, His joy becomes our strength. Blessed are we when we take refuge in Him.

Isaiah 40:12-23; Psalms 1, 3; Ephesians 1:1-14; Mark 1:1-13

Tuesday, January 12

Isaiah 40:25-31 *But those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength. (v.31)*

Yes, those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

It is so hard for us to wait upon the Lord. His timing is absolutely perfect, and yet we seem to always want to rush things. He never forgets. He cares about our smallest need and our tiniest desire. The

key, of course, is if we are praying within His will. The more we know Him through the Scriptures, the more we will be within His will. He tells us to wait upon Him. We are impatient creatures and rebellious.

One of our grown daughters is “one year old” in full commitment to the Lord Jesus. He has taught her so much in the past year since she turned her life completely over to him and asked him to come in and teach her and lead her. She honors our Lord in her life, in her family and even in her relationships at work. After 16 years of living away from the rest of our family, she wants to “come home.” She wants to move back, nearer to her parents and her sisters. She hopes for broken relationships from the past to be healed but patience will be required.

God wants us to honor Him with all that we are and all that we have. He desires our love. When we look to Him for our strength and our power, He will not fail us. Wait upon Him. He will renew your strength, and lift you up when His timing is perfect.

Psalms 5, 6; Ephesians 1:15-23; Mark 1:14-28

Wednesday, January 13

Psalm 119:1-24 I live as an alien in the land; do not hide your commandments from me. (v.19)

When I read the newspaper, look at the evening news, overhear other people talking and see the condition of this world, I know that I am an alien in this land. My concepts, my standards are so different from those of the world. It stupefies me to even think that anyone would choose the way of the world once the way of Jesus is presented to them. Paul, in so many of his epistles, refers to the fact that we are not of this world although we must live in it.

I once heard a Christian friend refer to her Earth Suit. She explained that her Earth Suit was her body. She lived in it while she was here on earth but, someday, she expected to have her new, heavenly body (and, she explained, she hoped that the new body would not weigh over 125 pounds). I am not sure that we will get to choose what our heavenly body will look like—I believe that God will give me the very best new body for eternity, made to His specifications. What could be better than that?

The Earth Suit concept is a good way to describe this body, though. It is the home for our soul and spirit while we are on this earth. When we believe in Jesus as our Savior, he covers us with the protection bought for us by his blood, shed for us on Calvary.

When we are committed to our Lord, we love his laws and we want to keep his statutes. It isn’t a matter of trying to be good enough on our own. When we are his, we want to follow his ways.

Isaiah 41:1-16; Ephesians 2:1-10; Mark 1:29-45

Thursday, January 14

Ephesians 2:11-22 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. (v.13).

As a child I grew up in the church, attending Sunday School and church services. But I was a doer of the word only and not a hearer of the word. I was a good girl and I cannot witness to having been plucked out of the gutter or saved from drugs. But I was empty inside, for I did not know what I believed. I had never heard the message that I could have a personal relationship with Jesus through the Holy Spirit. I did not know what it meant to “worship.” But I attended church regularly hoping, desperately, that all the things I had heard about Jesus were true.

I had a hungry heart and in 1972, when a group of lay people came to our church to witness to the power of Jesus in their lives, God had prepared my heart to receive him as my Lord and my Savior. He had drawn me to him through a series of events; I was ready. I was about as empty as I could be, even though I had a wonderful husband and three healthy children. I had lived without Jesus as an integral part of my life just as long as I was able. There was a big space inside of me for him to fill, and he did. As I knelt at the altar and prayed a prayer of commitment, he was faithful. He came in and changed me. As a matter of fact, that is still my prayer, “Change me, O Lord, make me more like you.”

I want to stay hungry for more of him. We have been brought near by the blood of Christ. Let us press into him and draw nearer, still.

Isaiah 41:17-29; Psalm 18:1-20; Mark 2:1-12

Friday, January 15

Mark 2:13-22 “Follow me,” Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him. (v.14b)

Jesus was usually brief and to the point. He always had a perfect answer for the Pharisees when they questioned him and tried to trip him up. We can learn a lot by reading about our Lord and the things he said.

I once heard a story about two old women named Polly and Annie who were sitting on the porch chatting when a friend walked by. Polly asked the passerby, “How’re you doing today, Sarah?” Sarah answered and said, “Oh, not too good. My joints are aching and I have a toothache.” “Well,” said Polly, “let’s have a little prayer. Lord, please help my friend Sarah today, and heal her in the name of Jesus. Amen.” Sarah said “Oh, thank you, Polly,” and went on her way. Annie looked at Polly and said “My goodness, Polly, you’re slipping! I could have made a 20-minute prayer out of that.”

Do we waste words? Do we try to make our prayers sound flowery? Jesus said to Levi, “Follow me” and Levi got up and followed him. He didn’t ask “where?” or “for how long?” or “give me a couple of hours to get ready.” Jesus didn’t give him an itinerary. Levi was drawn to Jesus. He got up and followed him.

Jesus came to save the lost, the sinners. He drew them to himself. He still draws us, today. Even those of us who believe, sometimes feel lost. When we call out to him, he is there and provides the way for us. What will you say when Jesus walks by and says, “Follow me”?

Isaiah 42:1-17; Psalms 16, 17; Ephesians 3:1-13

Saturday, January 16

Psalms 20 May the LORD answer you when you are in distress; may the name of the God of Jacob protect you. (v.1)

When I was a child, I was quick to anger when wronged. My mother always cautioned me to wait it out. She used to say, “The truth will out.” I just accepted that although, even now, the wording seems odd. What it meant was that the wicked always overplay their hand and trip themselves up. The truth will come out eventually.

Mother also would say, “Don’t lower yourself to their level.” It usually does no good to run around and defend ourselves to anyone and everyone. It just calls more attention to the lie and may cause others to doubt us. Our true friends will come to us if they hear a rumor about us. Others, who spread rumors, fall into the category of the evildoers.

My grandmother used to say, “Your fun will fly up and hit you in the face!” and that is what will happen to those who do evil. It will fly up and hit them in the face. “The truth will out.”

We are called to be like Jesus. As I read the Scriptures, I see that Jesus did not defend himself. He answered his critics with Scripture saying, “It is said....” We who follow him are called to live in his righteousness and, when we stumble, we are to ask his forgiveness and go on. Let us not waste our time worrying about the ugly rumors of the wicked. If we are like Jesus, our lives will prove them wrong. Let us not give them space in our heads—let’s give them to Jesus. He can handle them—and the problem.

Isaiah 43:1-13; Psalm 21:1-13; Ephesians 3:14-21; Mark 2:23—3:6

by Judy Canant

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