

Good News Daily

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Sunday, September 13

Psalm 29 *The voice of the LORD causes the oaks to whirl, and strips the forest bare; and in his temple all say, "Glory!" The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD sits enthroned as king forever. May the LORD give strength to his people! May the LORD bless his people with peace!* (vv.9-11 NRSV)

These verses describe the confusion that I feel, and I know others do too, in listening to the news, as well as reading different and recent opinions from other people, groups, and friends. The issue of peace and the Lord's people who are charged with respecting and following God's plan for living life are of great concern.

Living life with each other, with love being the guiding principal, is not an easy charge. God is almighty and He has chosen to work through His children. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to live the life God has laid out for us while working daily on an individual, personal level; yet not allowing ourselves to bypass having a loving, forgiving relationship with our brothers and sisters. If we try to find someone to pin the blame on, we start pointing our finger and dividing our world into separate groups on which we can lay the blame. This in turn makes it easier to divide the world and the people into many camps with various groups justifying their hatred of disparate groups of people. It is their fault.

Our ability is to control our own actions instead of allowing ourselves to succumb to the attacks which "strips the forests bare; and in his temple all say, 'Glory!'"— This is not easy, and, without our faith, we cannot do it.

Job 38:1, 18-41; Psalm 24; Revelation 18:1-8; Matthew 5:21-26

Monday, September 14

John 11:55—12:8 *But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor? Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me." (vv.4-5, 7-8)*

I had this same reaction and found this to be a confusing relationship when considering the beauty of some of the official buildings. Why is it okay to put the poor's needs secondary in such a situation? I've most often heard that in order to worship the Lord we are to help the poor; yet here Jesus points to her reasonable choice to keep the expensive perfume for her own use and desire and to allow Mary to anoint him prior to his death. It seems like a lot of money could be saved by purchasing a cheaper anointing oil for Jesus and that this would be a more consistent message about serving the poor.

My husband and I went to Rome approximately six years ago. I remember feeling amazed at the elaborate decorations that existed within the walls of St. Peter's Basilica, but also thought about the extravagant cost and how many could be fed with those funds. Within a few minutes I was overwhelmed by the beauty and moved to tears. It was as if my soul was responding to the beauty of the perfume—the architecture, of glorifying, praising, exalting God at a different level that is not usually accessible to me.

Job 40:1-24; Psalms 56, 57, 58; Acts 15:36—16:5

Tuesday, September 15

Psalm 62 *Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.* (v.8)

Sometimes I really wonder what God is doing in my life. I tell Him, "Lord I have had enough challenging events and I really don't think I need any more. Could we wait a little bit longer before we tackle another one?" This, of course, is very ignorant and selfish on my part.

God has shown me many times in my life how He is there for me; how He has been there to take me in His arms and comfort me, to give me the strength I need to simply look at experiences in my life and see how I have been able to call out to Him and know He is there. He has consistently provided support

through other people to help me get through each problem. God has demonstrated his consistency in answering my prayers, though they weren't always the ways I thought were right. He has been so consistently true to His word of answering prayer, such as when my brother died of cancer when only 24 years old. I have been much better providing support to people in similar situations when they thought they couldn't talk to anyone else.

The Lord often had answers that made sense a few weeks, months, or years later, and yet sometimes never made sense. I understand the Lord's way is not mine and, often, I may not be able to understand it at all; yet I will continue to accept His way.

Job 40:1, 41:1-11; Psalm 61; Acts 16:6-15; John 12:9-19

Wednesday, September 16

Job 42:1-17 *"My wrath is kindled against you and against your two friends; for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has."* (v.7)

Mom took care of Dad the last several years of his life, so her time was limited. After he had joined the community of saints, she reached out to many people who were lonely and felt like something was missing. Throughout her life, Mom had a special commitment to education, especially to those who had learning problems or felt embarrassed to start learning later in life—sometimes learning as adults the same lessons their kids were learning. Mom began to give private instruction and helped them to see how it was beneficial for the students to interact, and that it was something of which to be proud.

Often people who she invited to her luncheons were uninvolved in the church family or community. Mom joined the choir she had helped form and reassured people that the Lord said, "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord." He never said make your sounds a well-trained noise, a voice which could hit all the notes. I have great respect for these people who will step out and let others know that they do not know certain things and then show the courage to go forward continuing to learn what they need to most effectively carry out what God has called them to do.

Psalm 72; Acts 16:16-24; John 12:20-26

Thursday, September 17

Job 28:1-28 *And he said to humankind, "Truly, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding."* (v.28)

The Lord has with such care connected all life together. Sometimes I find it easier to understand these connections than some of the more academic ones. I find it truly amazing that God has put the many details together. That nature can live so harmoniously is really quite amazing! God has called us to work together to save the world. He also must be calling us to be cognizant of the need to recognize the importance of each person accepting each person as part of the whole story.

I do not put any theory out as to how to restore world peace, but I do know each of us needs to accept each other as part of the whole story, loving and receiving the wholeness we have within each of us. I've found that when I am pointing my finger at a member of my family, I am dividing rather than calling them into one where we can all work together.

Psalms 70, 71; Acts 16:25-40; John 12:27-36a

Friday, September 18

Acts 17:1-15 *But the Jews became jealous, and with the help of some ruffians in the marketplaces they formed a mob and set the city in an uproar.* (v.5a)

I studied group behavior many years ago in school and learned negative actions are hard to extinguish when members of a group are feeding off one another. Outsiders often seem eager get the crowd stirred up. The "show" this creates can be much more impressive when these groups work together to make the leaders think there is more upset than there may actually be—especially in some political situations. To them, it justifies their right to take it to a higher level, as well as condones the actions that may be abhorrent to others in the community in which they live. This is a strategy that persists and is used today at all levels—sometimes, unfortunately, with great success.

I wonder how I, as an individual person, can choose not to participate in these negative actions. There are simple ways, which may not be so obvious. I can do the easy thing and say I don't believe in what you are doing and then walk away. But the better choice would be to become educated on the issues at hand so I can know the facts and can confidently stand up to the group, loudly, if necessary. I can share my new-found knowledge and encourage others to take a stand as well.

Esther 1:1-4, 10-19; Psalm 69; John 12:36b-43

Saturday, September 19

Psalm 75 *We give thanks to you, O God; we give thanks; your name is near. People tell of your wonderful deeds.* (v.1)

The Lord has taught us, through Bible stories and the teaching of great theologians as well as His children, that one of the best ways to be obedient to God is to praise Him for His glorious works—which we can see through His children who, in turn, share their story. These stories can be shared by ordinary people, relaying how they handled a certain situation.

There are many opportunities to share how God has played a part in my own life. I have had a number of health challenges, which I have been able to use to help others keep a positive attitude. We have certain built-in helpers which help us heal, such as laughter, spending time with family and friends, and reading books that have helped others. Let it be known that you are available to share your story with someone in need.

Esther 2:5-8, 15-23; Psalm 76; Acts 17:16-34; John 12:44-50

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