

## *Good News Daily*

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### **Sunday, May 31**

Psalm 118 *The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner. This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.* (vv.22-23 RSV)

This passage is quoted by Jesus as an explanation of the parable of the unfaithful tenants, the ones who went to the extreme of killing the son of the absentee vineyard owner. It is also used by Peter in his great sermon recorded in Acts 4, as well as by Paul in Ephesians, and Peter in his first letter, to explain the fact that the rejected and killed Jesus had, in fact, become the cornerstone of the new church.

Is this not a principle which we praise in our worship, but resist in our lives? Is it possible that the very parts of us—our family, our history, our psychology—which we reject because they expose our weaknesses, are the very parts of us that Christ wants to become the foundation of our relationship with him?

Oh, Lord Jesus, help me to not be ashamed of the parts of me that I naturally reject. Help me to present to you my “dirty feet” for your cleansing.

Deuteronomy 16:9-12; Acts 4:18-21, 23-33; John 4:19-26

### **Monday, June 1**

Ecclesiastes 2:1-15 *The wise man has his eyes in his head, but the fool walks in darkness; and yet I perceived that one fate comes to all of them.* (v.14)

The writer of Ecclesiastes has much to boast about in his life: riches, success, and especially, wisdom above all. Yet, even wisdom dies when he dies. One fate comes to us all.

What would it mean to live my life with the constant understanding that I will die, and scarcely be remembered by anyone within a few years? Jesus tells us to put our treasure in the things which will last.

Where am I storing up treasures on earth, which will pass away? What, if anything, of me will last beyond the grave?

Lord, show me how to live my life today, aware of what is temporal and what is eternal.

Psalms 41, 52; Galatians 1:1-17; Matthew 13:44-52

### **Tuesday, June 2**

Matthew 13:53-58 *And he did not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.* (v.58)

I often wonder what it means for us today that Jesus was limited in what he could do in Nazareth, because of the unbelief of those who had known him his whole life. Are there situations today where he cannot do “mighty works” because we think we already know the “facts on the ground”? It was not just that they did not believe in him; they thought they already knew him.

With true faith in Jesus comes humility. We are given to see that he has something we do not. He has more wisdom and more power and more love than we do. Admission of our need of what he has, and we lack, may be the first step to reaching out to him in faith.

Lord Jesus, give me eyes to see who you are and what you can do.

Ecclesiastes 2:16-25; Psalm 45; Galatians 1:18—2:10

### **Wednesday, June 3**

Galatians 2:11-21 *For before certain men came from James, he ate with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party.* (v.12)

Paul is describing an all-too-familiar behavior, this time in Peter. Peter goes back to the Jewish restrictions regarding eating companions when James arrives with the Jewish contingent from Jerusalem. That is, he goes back to the law rather than enjoying the new freedom he has in Christ to eat with whomever he wishes.

The point is, why does he do this? He does it because he is afraid of what the Jewish leaders will think of him. It is the same with Herod in the Gospel reading for today. He orders the head of John the Baptist because he fears how he will look to the crowd gathered if he backs down.

How easy it is to “cave” before the opinions of others, rather than stand firm in what we know to be true.

Lord, give me the courage to follow through on what I know to be right action, regardless of what others may think of me.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-15; Psalm 119:49-72; Matthew 14:1-12

#### **Thursday, June 4**

Matthew 14:13-21 *Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there to a lonely place apart. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him...and he had compassion on them.* (vv.13-14)

Poor Jesus. He has just gotten word that his cousin and friend, John the Baptist, is dead. He wants to be alone, to think and pray. But the people hear this news and want more of *him*. Their need overwhelms his own.

I love this window into the humanity of Jesus. I feel for him, I identify with him. But, would I have compassion for the crowd who is denying my need for a quiet time alone with God? Probably not, at least that would not be my immediate response, as it is with Jesus.

Yet, this is often the case in my own life. Just when I want time alone, someone needs me. The phone rings, or an email appears with a pressing need.

Thank you, Lord Jesus, that you understand my need for time alone. Give me your compassion for those who need me when I think I have nothing left to give.

Ecclesiastes 3:16—4:3; Psalm 50; Galatians 3:1-14

#### **Friday, June 5**

Ecclesiastes 5:1-7 *Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven, and you upon earth; therefore, let your words be few.* (v.2)

Whenever “therefore” appears in Scripture, an important connection is being stated. What then is the connection between God’s being in heaven and my words being few?

I love the phrase, “the God’s eye view,” which is a term used in the cinema when the camera pulls back and up to show a scene from a distance. Think *The Birds*, by Alfred Hitchcock.

A helpful question to ask when I am faced with a dilemma: What is the “God’s eye view”? God sees more, understands more, is properly un-attached to my problem. Asking that question has the immediate effect of giving me a better perspective. And, it has the effect of silencing me, opening my ears to what God has to say.

Lord, give me “the God’s eye view” on my life today.

Psalms 40, 54; Galatians 3:15-22; Matthew 14:22-36

#### **Saturday, June 6**

Matthew 15:1-20 *“Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man, but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man.”* (v.11)

Jesus’ answer to the Pharisees, who are judging his disciples for not keeping the Jewish laws of cleanliness—namely, washing their hands properly before they eat—goes to a much deeper level than mere handwashing. Jesus is concerned with the heart, the motivation, not the outward behavior. The motive of the Pharisees is to trap Jesus and his followers in the judgement that the law always brings. The Pharisees have an *internal* problem.

Why is this so important to us today? Because we have a natural tendency to focus on outward behavior rather than inward motivation. I judge others by how they look, or what they say, or how well-behaved their children are. Jesus looks deeper, and always has compassion rather than judgement.

Lord Jesus, give me your eyes to see deeper than outward behavior, and give me your compassion for the hearts of those around me today.

Ecclesiastes 5:8-20; Psalm 55; Galatians 3:23—4:11

*by Mary Zahl*

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