

Good News Daily

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Sunday, May 24

Psalm 66 *If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened, but God has surely listened and heard my voice in prayer.* (vv.18-19 NIV)

These verses really speak to me of the necessity of confessing my sins before going to God in prayer. Those times when I'm not feeling close to the Lord can always be traced to my "cherishing sin in my heart." For example, maybe I'm making mental plans to do something that I think I have every right to do and I rationalize that it isn't considered "wrong" or "sinful," but nevertheless I feel a check in my spirit. That check is the Holy Spirit prompting me to reconsider whether or not it's something that glorifies God. And that will lead me to confess that it does not.

I always feel better after confessing these things because the Lord is so gracious and forgiving and just. He gives me his peace and this psalm assures me that now God will listen and hear my voice in prayer.

Thank You, Lord, for the blessing that comes to us when we confess our sins. Thank You for showing us those sins we are often blind to.

Exodus 3:1-12; Psalm 67; Hebrews 12:18-29; Luke 10:17-24

Monday, May 25

Joshua 1:1-9 *"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."* (v.9)

In verses 6-9, God says, "Be strong and courageous" three times! You think he was trying to make sure Joshua understood this command? It would certainly seem so. Because the Bible is the "living word" we can know that this command applies to us in the twenty-first century.

Being strong and courageous in the face of the unknown is not easy to do. I watched a dear and precious friend battle ALS for three years before she went to heaven, and she obeyed this command so beautifully. She knew from her earliest diagnosis that this was going to be a hard road, and that unimaginable things were going to happen to her body. Nevertheless, she drew strength and courage from the Lord each step of the journey. In addition to learning all the facts she could about this horrible disease, she faithfully attended the weekly healing service at our church and she, along with many friends and family, prayed for her healing. I know that she was confident that the Lord was with her all the way to the end of her earthly life.

Thank You, Father, for the blessings of obedience to Your word, and that my friend now lives with You in heaven with a beautiful new body!

Psalm 89:1-18; Ephesians 3:1-13; Matthew 8:5-17

Tuesday, May 26

1 Samuel 16:1-13a *"The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."* (v.7b)

Wow! This hits me right between my eyes! I am so very guilty at looking at other people's outward appearance and not at their hearts, as the Lord does. It is easy to draw the wrong conclusion about people by just looking at them without taking the time to get to know them and what is in their hearts.

Recently, the Lord orchestrated some circumstances so that I was placed on a committee with a woman I had totally misjudged. As we worked together on a project, I came to see that she was an extraordinarily kind and unselfish person, not at all what I had thought she was like. Through our working together, the Lord revealed her beautiful heart to me, and I begged His forgiveness for my sin of being judgmental, which led me to drawing a completely wrong conclusion about who this lady was.

Thinking about this experience I am reminded of an old cliché that says: Don't judge a book by its cover. And the Lord says don't judge others at all. Judgement belongs to God alone.

Psalms 97, 99, 100; Ephesians 3:14-21; Matthew 8:18-27

Wednesday, May 27

Ephesians 4:1-16 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. (vv.1-2)

Pondering these verses, I first thought about what Paul meant by “the calling you have received.” One of the things to which all believers are called is to be image-bearers of the Lord. If this is true, then I must consider what that looks like. Verse 2 gives us a wonderful description of the essence of Jesus: “completely humble and gentle,” patient and loving. So how in the world can I be like him? I am not naturally any of these things; I’m prideful, tough and impatient, especially with other people, and I am not always loving.

So, I grab onto an enduring truth about the Lord: He will not call us to be or do anything that He isn’t capable of and willing to equip us for. He knows I am not naturally humble, gentle, patient and loving, so He gives me His Holy Spirit who empowers me to be an image-bearer of Jesus. He transforms my heart, and I want to be the person He wants me to be because His Son gave his very life for me. Isn’t this a way for me to show my gratitude and love for Him?

Thank you, Jesus, for speaking to me through your word, and for transforming my heart to conform to yours.

Isaiah 4:2-6; Psalms 101, 109; Matthew 8:28-34

Thursday, May 28

Ephesians 4:17-32 Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. (vv.26b-27)

My husband and I have been married for 53 years now, and I have learned through experience that this is one of the greatest things you can do for yourself—and also for your marriage. What used to happen in the earlier years of our marriage is that I would become angry with my husband about something just when it was time to turn off the lights and go to sleep. It didn’t bother him one bit; he would just turn over and go to sleep, dismissing me and my anger. The consequence for me? I wasn’t able to sleep, stewing and fuming until I would get out of bed and go do something elsewhere in the house until I calmed down enough to get back in bed and go to sleep. I suffered. He didn’t. And that truly gave the devil a foothold. Either I thought of more ways to justify my anger against my husband, or I fell into the pity pit—or both!

I think this holds true whether we’re angry at someone in our family, or a friend or acquaintance. We must let go of our anger and seek the Lord’s guidance as to how we can confront the situation that caused us to become so. Often, I find that it is a result of my pride.

Thank You, Lord, for this wonderful advice in the form of a command. As always, You have our best interests at heart!

Zechariah 4:1-14; Psalm 105:1-22; Matthew 9:1-8

Friday, May 29

Matthew 9:9-17 When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” On hearing this, Jesus said, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.” (vv.11-12)

Like he often does, here Jesus makes a statement that is profound in its simplicity and has a much deeper meaning or implication than you would receive from a cursory reading of his words. The Pharisees thought of themselves as righteous because they were experts in the law, but the truth is that they were self-righteous. They considered the tax collectors and sinners to be too foul to eat at the same table with the righteous people such as themselves.

Jesus hears the Pharisees ask this question of his disciples and answers for them—rightfully putting them in their place by this simple statement. The irony is that the Pharisees didn’t realize that they were just as sick as the tax collectors and others that Jesus chose to have dinner with.

Lord Jesus, I thank you that you have shown us that we are like sick people who need a doctor. We are all sinners in need of your saving grace, love, and forgiveness. Please help us to never lose sight of our need for you to be the one doctor who can heal us completely.

Jeremiah 31:27-34; Psalm 102; Ephesians 5:1-20

Saturday, May 30

Ezekiel 36:22-27 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. (v.26)

God is in the business of transforming, renewing, and enriching our lives. God gave this promise to the Israelite nation through His prophet, Ezekiel. This was an incredible promise to His chosen people who, as a nation, were disobedient and unfaithful. What awesome mercy God shows to those He loves!

This passage promises a new covenant between the Lord and His people, which was one day to be fulfilled through His one and only Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus is the only one who can take away a “heart of stone” and replace it with a “heart of flesh.” Only Jesus can put a new spirit, his Holy Spirit, within our hearts.

Thank you, Jesus, for this miraculous thing you offer to all who come to you in faith. Thank you for your unending love and the incredible gift of your life to us.

Psalms 107:33-43, 108; Ephesians 6:10-24; Matthew 9:18-26

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