

Good News Daily

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Sunday, July 25

2 Samuel 1:17-27 *“How the mighty have fallen! The weapons of war have perished!”* (v.27 NIV)

Here David laments for Saul and Jonathan. David had many reasons to hate Saul; yet, he chose to look at the good Saul had done and ignored times when Saul had attacked him. They were enemies; yet David chose respect, honor, and love. Here is David in action, a man after God’s own heart.

How did I choose to love my first enemy? Only with God’s help. It was a long-standing wound with consequences of criticism, impatience, dependence upon self. In desperation I prayed, “Help me, Jesus!” All my weapons of war for that circumstance were obliterated that day, as I began my journey with the True and Living God.

David’s strength to bless Saul and Jonathan continues to be a picture of the path to be seen and to be chosen by me. It is God’s path for me and for you. It is the path of His way, His Truth, and His Light.

Psalms 24, 29; Romans 12:9-21; Matthew 25:31-46

Monday, July 26

Mark 6:14-29 *...because Herod feared John and protected him, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man. When Herod heard John, he was greatly puzzled, yet he liked to listen to him.* (v.20b)

Herod bridled at Jesus’ condemnation of his adulterous relationship with his brother’s wife. John had earned Herod’s respect. Yet, drunken Herod succumbed to public pressure and ordered John’s beheading. I suspect all of us have either contributed to or suffered from such consequences.

But I turn my attention to thanksgiving and praise for the living legacy of John the Baptist. He preached repentance and baptism for remission of sins *and* predicted the coming of our Messiah, Jesus Christ, who would and has given each of us a direct relationship with our living and loving God. Herod could not change God’s plan for us to have ongoing communication with our Lord.

I take a deep breath, open my hands and heart, and kneel in humble thanks to all the saints who prepared the way for each of us to glorify the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

2 Samuel 2:1-11; Psalms 56, 57, 58; Acts 15:36—16:5

Tuesday, July 27

Psalms 62 *Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken.* (vv.5-6)

True rest comes from hearing the word, loving others, and trusting God. Surrender is the operative word. Easy to say, not so easy to do depending on the situation.

Has anyone else ever held a “tiger by the tail” so to speak? You know, a long-standing issue that just seems to go in uncontrollable, dangerous directions? It has been surrendered and taken back again for years for self-repair and restoration? Well, I have. It was only in complete surrender and trust in God and his word that I had the strength. The long process involved friends with some self-discoveries, too, washed away with God’s grace. Learning to laugh at myself is one of the best! I value every piece of this beautiful tapestry of God’s love for me and for you which is available 24/7.

Now, when I am not “acting like myself,” the only solution is what David did to find hope and protection. Find shelter. Listen. Love. Pray. Receive. Give thanks and praise.

2 Samuel 3:6-21; Psalm 61; Acts 16:6-15; Mark 6:30-46

Wednesday, July 28

Psalms 72 *Endow the king with your justice, O God, the royal son with your righteousness. He will judge your people in righteousness, your afflicted ones with justice.* (vv.1-2)

Solomon prays for his son to rule with justice and righteousness in order to provide a life of peace for everyone. Isn't that what we want in our government leaders? What do we do or say to others who speak words of division and judgment, instead of unity?

We know that the source of perfect peace can only come from our Triune God. God alone provides perfect justice to insure perfect peace. What we can and should do is what King Solomon did—pray.

Here is a prayer of absolute surrender that may be helpful: “Grant to the President of the United States, the Governor of this state, and to all in authority, wisdom and strength to know and to do thy will. Fill them with the love of truth and righteousness, and make them ever mindful of their calling to serve this people in thy fear; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, world with our end” (p.821 *BCP*).

2 Samuel 3:22-39; Acts 16:16-24; Mark 6:47-56

Thursday, July 29

Acts 16:25-40 *At about midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God and the other prisoner were listening to them.* (v.25)

Imagine yourself in this scene. Because Paul and Silas healed a girl, they were attacked by a crowd; stripped, beaten, flogged; thrown into prison with their feet in stocks; and awaited death in the morning. They didn't choose blame, judgment, or regret. Adoration of God came forth *first* in songs of praise and worship. All they wanted was God's presence.

Do you realize one third of Jesus' ministry consisted of healings? We know Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8) and that with God all things are possible (Matthew 19:26). Paul and Silas story has an impossible ending because of God's fingerprints. What I cherish about this encounter is their pure and absolute surrender without boundaries into God's hands; they trusted the good and perfect will of God. The Lord has similar blessings for each of us; I challenge each of us to surrender and receive them.

2 Samuel 4:1-12; Psalms 70, 71; Mark 7:1-23

Friday, July 30

Mark 7:24-37 *At this, the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly. Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone. But the more he did so, the more they kept talking about it.* (vv.35-36)

The people brought Jesus a man who was deaf and could hardly talk and begged him to place his hand on the man for healing. Jesus restored his hearing and speech in a different way. Imagine the air abuzz with amazement and discussion! Why, then, did Jesus command them not to tell?

I believe Jesus was warning us not to focus on what he can do, but what his message is. Focus on the giver, not the gift, a good friend simplified for me. That is, shift focus from our wants to what God desires and wills. Jesus gives us a window into God's love and mercy through these miracles. But he is *not* a vending machine. For it is by grace you have been saved through faith—and this is from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).

From my own experience of hopelessness and grief in a circumstance covered with options, each one worse than the other, I give thanks for Jesus' message: “I am the way and the truth and the life” (John 14:6). These were the words that gave me hope and brought me to my knees in absolute surrender.

2 Samuel 5:1-12; Psalm 69; Acts 17:1-15

Saturday, July 31

Mark 8:1-10 *“I have compassion for these people, they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. If I send them home hungry, they will collapse on the way, because some of them have come a long distance.”* (vv.2-3)

Here is the Lord we worship and adore. He is compassionate, knows the unexpressed hunger of his people, and is concerned some will collapse on the journey home. I imagine Jesus was exhausted from

teaching and healing in these three days, too. Here is the love of the Lord beautifully displayed showing us he knows our needs and will provide.

Have you ever been sick but refused prayer or didn't pray because God has more important needs to meet? Or given up because it started a long time ago, even though it causes acute interruptions in daily life? How about someone who has undeserved barriers in his path, lingers in his options, and isn't sure about prayer?

Jesus knows our daily needs; our prayers connect us with him. He tells us when asked about what we will eat, drink, wear, to seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, all these things will be given to us as well (Matthew 6:33). Whether for ourselves or others, let's open our eyes and pray. He responds with more than we can imagine.

2 Samuel 5:22—6:11; Psalms 75, 76; Acts 17:16-34

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