

can just be aware of God, resting with a general, nonspecific comprehension of Him.

In this state, I am not inactive. Rather, I am remaining alert and receptive to God's infused word which is alive and active, penetrating and transforming me through gifts of knowledge, understanding and wisdom. I and others can measure results roughly by the degree to which my desires and actions correspond more to God's desires, my love for God and others grows, and by my increase in humility before God and detachment from the things of this world.

Lord, may I always understand and joyfully respond to Your invitations and give You the glory and honor.

Job 19:21-27a; Psalm 88

*by Herbert Kierulff*

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## ***Good News Daily***

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### **Sunday April 13**

1 Timothy 6:12-16 *Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.* (v.12 NIV)

Paul tells Timothy to “keep this command without spot or blame.” When I read these lines as a new practicing Christian, I thought I should bravely take on the enemies of Christ who sinned daily—the devil, atheists, agnostics, and, especially, wayward Christians. Then I began to wonder: Have I kept the faith without spot or blame? Not always. Are my will and intellect strong enough to keep the faith in the future, or will I fall short from time to time? No doubt the latter, and most certainly the latter unless God helps me directly.

I remembered Walt Kelly's famous cartoon where Pogo Possum proclaims: “We have met the enemy and he is us.” I realized I was part of the Christian “us.” What was I doing taking the fight to others when I faltered myself? It was not that I should overlook weakness or ignorance of the Truth in others; but wisdom insisted that I proceed with great care and humility and only after recognizing and confronting the enemy in myself. That's the most important good fight.

Zechariah 9:9-12; Psalms 24, 29; Matthew 21:12-17

### **Monday, April 14**

Philippians 3:1-14 *I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.* (v.14)

There is a breathless, all-in, all-hands-on-deck sense of urgency to this verse and the ones immediately prior to it. The goal is of massive consequence—no less than the opportunity to participate forever in the grand celebration of love in the Trinity through Jesus Christ. The goal and prize is heaven. Paul must have his heaven if he is to know the full joy for which he was created. I must know that joy as well.

Paul said he was not yet a prize winner and it's certain that I am not, either. God wants all of me and I have yet to yield everything I am. But thanks be to God, I have had a taste of that great gift. It will take my all-in good faith effort and most especially God's loving help beyond that to reach my potential in participation with Him in heaven. I can't waste time in sin, nursing old grudges, or living in my past failures and successes. Instead, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, I must press on every day.

Jeremiah 12:1-16; Psalm 51; John 12:9-19

## Tuesday, April 15

John 12:20-26 *“Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life.”* (v. 25)

Radical rejection of the blandishments of this world—material and spiritual—is what it takes to attain highest heaven. That and becoming an obedient servant of Christ. People may slip into the kingdom with less, but do I want to be least in that place given eternity and the infinite Good that God is? Absolutely not. Unworthy as I am, I still wish to be among the first in the kingdom. Being last makes no sense.

The challenge is in the difficulty of rejecting the blandishments that death to self requires. The promises of this life are so enticing: material things for my senses and power, prestige and privilege for my spirit. And Jesus’ way is so very hard at times. Frankly, these powers and the rough roads I must travel as Jesus’ disciple are too much for me. Praise God in Christ who lifts the weight of my sin and darkness onto his own shoulders and steadies me as I falter along the way.

Jeremiah 15:10-21; Psalms 6, 12; Philippians 3:15-21

## Wednesday, April 16

Philippians 4:1-13 *And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.* (v.7)

What is this strange and wonderful state that suddenly enfolds me and immediately calms my fears and revives my courage? It first appeared in my life one evening years ago when I was deeply concerned about my future and the future of my family. A warm glow encompassed me and an intimate, intuitive voice clearly said: “Everything is going to be all right.” The voice commanded my trust, changed my perspective and immediately calmed me.

When I recall that experience, I am reminded of Jesus telling his disciples: “Be not afraid.” And instantly, they were no longer fearful. I think of Julian of Norwich who wrote in her *Revelations of Divine Love*: “All shall be well and all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well.” I believe this peace to be a supernatural gift of God, transcendent, independent of me and freely given by the One who loves me and will guard me. And, as I look back over a long life, there were trials, but everything did turn out all right.

Jeremiah 17:5-10, 14-17; Psalm 55; John 12:27-36

## Thursday, April 17

John 17:1-26 *“I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”* (v.23)

This verse, in fact the whole of Chapter 17, is awe-inspiring to me. The verse makes clear that Jesus’ mission was not to lead the children of Israel to an earthly kingdom. Rather, he was to lead the children of God into the

kingdom of heaven existing within each of us, where the God of love dwells in infinite triune majesty.

I have come to believe that this unity involves something vastly more than an intellectual assertion of belief or an emotional outpouring of affection, although both may be present. To dwell with God in the union of love means a merger of wills, or desires—to want the same things, desire the same outcomes, work toward the same goals. In complete unity, God’s will becomes my will, always. Such perfection is not possible in this life because my sins and imperfections separate me from God. But the good news is that Jesus, by his perfection and sacrifice, overcame sin and opened for me the way to partial union in this life and complete union in the next.

Jeremiah 20:7-11; Psalm 102; 1 Corinthians 10-14-17, 11:27-32

## Friday, April 18

Psalm 22 *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?* (v.1a)

I believe that Jesus, always the teacher and ever mindful of his flock, used his own distress as a teaching opportunity. Just prior to his death he directed his followers to Psalm 22, in his case a parable he was actually living that instructs us all in what the righteous person does with personal disaster.

I learned that in the midst of travail I should:

1. Trust that God will not despise or scorn my suffering. In Jesus, God understands from experience.
2. Remember that God will listen to my cry for help, even if it does not appear to be the case at the time. My suffering, no matter how harsh, will not last forever. God will bring it to an end that will benefit me in one way or another.
3. Always fulfill my vows.
4. Praise Him (for dominion belongs to Him and doing so will take my mind off my own troubles).
5. Have faith that, finally, “All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord...” (Psalm 22:27). Ultimate victory is His, and by extension, mine.

Genesis 22:1-14; 1 Peter 1:10-20; John 13:36-38

## Saturday, April 19

Hebrews 4:1-16 *For anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from their works just as God did from his.* (v.10)

At times I sense God’s invitation to enter a rest in Him which I understand to be infused contemplation. Signs announce it: First, I cannot meditate using words as I usually do. Nor do I wish to. Second, my imagination will either be quiet or wander freely, not fixed on anything in particular. Finally, I will want to be by myself, quiet, at peace, away from distractions so I