

Good News Daily

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Sunday, November 3

1 Corinthians 12:27—13:13 *So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.* (v.13 RSV)

We may be apostles, prophets, teachers, miracle workers, healers, helpers, administrators, speakers or interpreters of tongues, seminary professors, clergy or lay leaders—but Paul tells us to earnestly desire the higher gifts.

Speaking with the eloquence of angels does not do it. Understanding the mysteries of the universe and even having faith strong enough to move mountains without love is nothing, Paul says. Giving 100% tithe or being a martyr gains nothing.

The more excellent way that Paul encourages is love that is patient and kind, not jealous or boastful, not arrogant or rude, does not insist on its own way, is not irritable or resentful, but rejoices in the right. This love bears, believes, hopes, and endures all things. And as the popular song says: what the world needs now is love, sweet love.

Where can we get this much-needed love? Only from our loving friend Jesus, the giver of every good and perfect gift.

Ezekiel 20:18-26; Psalms 24, 29; Matthew 18:21-35

Monday, November 4

Psalms 56 *Be gracious to me, O God...* (v.1)

Fears come to all of us—fears about health, finances, jobs, family members, the future. The psalmist assures us that God had kept count of our tossing and turning and has put our tears in His bottle! We can put our trust in Him—He will send forth His steadfast love and faithfulness.

He is gracious and merciful: “Be merciful to me, O God...” (Psalm 57:1). As 2 Timothy 1:7 reminds us, “God did not give us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power and love and self-control.” His perfect love casts out all fear.

The psalmist shares an important truth: “When I am afraid, I put my trust in Thee. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust without a fear. What can flesh do to me?” (Psalm 57:3-4). In the shadow of His wings, we can take refuge until the storms of destruction pass by. He has delivered our feet from falling so that we may walk before Him in the light of life.

Then with the psalmist we can sing and make melody, giving thanks to God among the peoples and praises to the Lord among the nations, for His steadfast love is truly great!

Ezekiel 20:27-44; Psalms 57, 58; Revelation 14:1-13; Luke 12:49-59

Tuesday, November 5

Luke 13:1-9 *“And if it bears fruit next year, well and good, but if not, you can cut it down.”* (v.9)

Election Day—it is all so confusing: so many issues, so many candidates. It is hard to know how to vote. But vote we must as good citizens. However, first let us pray for God’s will to be done in this election and for wise leaders who will look to Him for guidance.

I sometimes fear that America is like the fig tree in Jesus’ parable in today’s reading. He has come seeking fruit each year and finds none. He keeps giving us one more chance, but like the Chosen People Israel we only turn to him when our backs are against the wall—times of war (“no atheists in foxholes”) or depression or terrible storm or national catastrophe.

We also need to ask God’s forgiveness for our national sins of arrogance and pride, of not feeding the hungry and clothing the naked, of wasting our natural resources and not being good stewards of all His blessings.

God promises: “If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, forgive their sin and heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Ezekiel 24:1-14; Psalms 61, 62; Revelation 14:14—15:8

Wednesday, November 6

Psalm 72 *Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things.* (v.18)

Less than fifty days until Christmas—we have a lot to get done before the end of the year!

This is the month to stop and count our blessings: life and health and strength, faith, family and friends. We have seen the amber waves of grain brought in for harvest (to feed people and cattle). The fruit is ripening on the trees. We have seen the golden leaves of fall and the glorious colors of autumn—what wondrous things our generous Creator gives us!

The psalmist assures us that God delivers the needy and crushes the oppressor. A Disney film, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (which has many spiritual themes) teaches that lesson and reminds us to look beneath the surface of people and events to find the wonder hidden there. Quasimodo may not be attractive to the eye, but he has a beautiful spirit. The film gives us a chance to teach our children an important lesson, and it is an excellent reminder to us adults as well.

Let us make the whole month of November a time of counting our blessings! In fact, how about a daily habit?

Ezekiel 26:1-14; Revelation 16:1-11; Luke 13:10-17

Thursday, November 7

Luke 13:18-20 “*What is the kingdom of God like? It is like a grain of mustard seed which a man sowed in his garden and it grew and became a tree.*” (vv.18a-19b)

From the tiny seed of faith of eleven frightened disciples and a few faithful women, the Christian Church has grown to the present-day world-wide body of Christ on every continent, and the gospel is proclaimed in almost every language and dialect. This parable is seeing its fulfillment before our very eyes.

How about in our personal lives? Are we scattering seeds of faith at our places of work, schools, homes, shops, and athletic fields? Are we using our opportunities to help others find their way to faith? Have the seeds of faith that have been planted in our lives grown up to be trees that give shade and shelter to others on their pilgrimage?

It only takes that tiny seed to be planted by us, and the Holy Spirit will water it and fertilize it, God’s Son will shine on it and help it grow. Then more seeds will be planted. It is called spiritual multiplication!

Ezekiel 29:17-21; Psalms 70, 71; Revelation 16:12-21

Friday, November 8

Psalm 69 *Save me, O God! For the waters have come up to my neck. I sink in deep mire, where there is no foothold.* (vv.1-2a)

The psalmist cries out for deliverance. The wonderful Alcoholics Anonymous program participants know this feeling. In Step 3 of the Twelve Steps, they turn control of their lives over to God, in Step 5 they confess their wrong-doings, and in Step 9 they make amends to people they have harmed. It is such a healing and freeing program.

God does indeed save us. I remember a story in Time magazine that pointed out the connection between faith and healing and showed evidence that spirituality promotes better health—our faith can make us whole!

The article set forth the healing power of prayer and also stated that people who regularly attend religious services are found to have lower blood pressure, less heart disease, lower rates of depression, and generally better health than those who do not attend worship.

According to a Dartmouth study, one of the strongest predictors of survival after open-heart surgery is the degree to which patients draw strength and comfort from their faith.

Ezekiel 12:12-28; Revelation 17:1-18; Luke 13:31-35

Saturday, November 9

Psalm 75 *We give thanks to thee, O God; we give thanks; we call on thy name and recount thy wondrous deeds.* (v.1)

“Rejoice always, pray constantly. Give thanks in all things for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

As we go through our day are we thankful for everything: our comfortable bed, toothbrush and toothpaste, hot water and our shower, soap and towels, breakfast and family, a job to go to and transportation to get us there? Are we grateful for skills and intelligence to do our work, pleasant colleagues to share the workload, the paycheck at the end of the week (or month), our peaceful home and loving family to whom to return, hobbies to pursue in our free time, a family of faith to join in worship and service, community efforts in which to be involved?

Conversely, do we give thanks when our work hours are cut back, a friend disappoints us, our health fails, we struggle with finances, our home or car need repairs? Are we thankful people in all things?

Let us give thanks as we call upon God’s name and recount all His wondrous deeds.

Ezekiel 13:1-16; Psalm 76; Revelation 18:1-14; Luke 14:1-11

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