

Good News Daily

Volume XXV

October 5-11, 2025

Number 40

Sunday, October 5

Psalm 118 *The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.* (v.22 NASB)

As a young man Sir Issac Newton was said to be absent-minded, neglected chores, and more notably disappointed his college tutors. At 23, Abraham Lincoln apparently served the Illinois militia starting as a captain but finished a private. He was defeated seven times in politics before his Presidency. Walt Disney was said to have been so poor at one point that he ate dog food. His first studio went bankrupt. Was told he lacked imagination from the Kansas City Star. And later received 300 rejections notices from banks for startup projects.

While today's reading is, of course, believed to be a central prophesy of Christ, it also speaks of what seems to me as God's love of the element of surprise. David and Goliath. The stuttering Moses. The mustard tree (likely *Brassica nigra*). Newton. Lincoln. Disney.

In many ways my faith has amounted to an endless series of challenges from an unsuspecting carpenter who rode into Jerusalem on a donkey and proved to have more tricks up his sleeves than anyone can shake a stick at.

2 Kings 20:1-21; Acts 12:1-17; Luke 7:11-17

Monday, October 6

1 Corinthians 10:14—11:1 *Let no one seek his own good but that of his neighbor.* (v.24)

The hardest thing about Christianity for many is whether or not Jesus was real. Did he really turn water into wine and feed 5,000 people? Did he raise Lazarus from the dead? Did he resurrect?

Subsequent to my own epiphany at age 16, these were never hard questions for me to believe. They actually made sense. Despite the ubiquitous and articulate voice of skeptics, I never had a problem with the tales of Christ. Even today, I still find the accounts extraordinarily wonderful and believable.

No, the hardest thing about following Christ for me is in denying myself in deference to others. Putting their needs ahead of mine. Losing my life in order to find it. I am grateful to live in this country, but I am so often in conflict. The American culture I live in promotes, feeds, and affirms selfishness. It worships self. The Sermon on the Mount does not. It leaves a question always before me: how, Lord, do I live in this world?

2 Kings 21:1-18; Psalm 106:1-18; Matthew 8:28-34

Tuesday, October 7

Psalms 123 *Be gracious to us O LORD... for we are greatly filled with contempt.* (v.3)

In the 2017 film *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri* one of my favorite actresses, Frances McDormand, plays *Mildred*, a bitter parent who lost her daughter by an unsolved rape-murder. Mildred's anger soon becomes very public and at one point a priest visits to admonish her, to which Mildred responds by declaring the priest himself guilty by association—with pedophiles discovered in priesthoods.

Granted, any mother facing such unbearable devastation has a right to unfettered rage, at least I would agree. But as a friend also watching commented, Mildred's contempt at the priest stretches logic. For which I also agreed. Because it would follow that everyone would then be guilty by association to companies, families, even cultures.

The film reminded me at how my own rage can steer off course and of James who warned the tongue is a "tiny member yet how great a forest it can set aflame." When I have revenge it always feels sweet—but, ugly. Forgiveness, though far more difficult, brings a healing and a resolve that is different from revenge. It's harder, but better.

2 Kings 22:1-13; Psalms 120, 121, 122; 1 Corinthians 11:2, 17-22; Matthew 9:1-8

Wednesday, October 8

2 Kings 22:14—23:3 “...because your heart was tender... I have truly heard you...” (v.19)

Ancient scripture is very clear that God chose Israel early on as a special nation. But the book of Kings clarifies time and time again that no one gets carte blanche, not even Israel. Ancient Israel was a pendulum. Bad king. Good king. Back and forth.

Today’s reading is one of the heart-warming ones. Josiah, a king at only 8 soon learns of the treachery of previous rulers. He tears his shirt in shame of the past to which God seems taken aback, is moved by the King’s humility and, consequently, promises to delay His wrath.

I recall an elder once saying that God is a person and that Scripture says we can grieve the Holy Spirit. It is profound to me that we can cause such a grief. But as today’s reading teaches it is also remarkably profound that repentance and humility can also move a loving God. And that possibly such a single person can even turn the tide of history.

Psalms 119:145-176; 1 Corinthians 11:23-34; Matthew 9:9-17

Thursday, October 9

1 Corinthians 12:1-11 *Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit.* (v.4)

A pastor once said that the reason there are so many people in the world is that God needs all of us to be able to fully express Himself.

There is something about the endless expressions that exists in nature—and in humans—that has always amazed me. There is the vast variety of plant life, of terrain, of weather throughout creation. Colors of the spectrum. The Chemical table. Even clothing design is endless. How many different ways are there to clothe a person?

How many different designs in architecture? And so, Paul suggest are our spiritual gifts. Endless, yet distributed “individually—just as God wills.”

I have a neighbor right now who is smart, good looking, immensely popular, engaging, inviting, curious, adventurous, and always celebrating other people’s gifts rather than being jealous or envious of them. I venture to say my neighbor unwittingly teaches, by example, precisely Paul’s message. Gifts are timeless and wonderful. My neighbor helps me want to celebrate them in others, and be grateful.

2 Kings 23:4-25; Psalms 131, 132, 133; Matthew 9:18-26

Friday, October 10

1 Corinthians 12:12-26 *And the eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you.”* (v.21)

This year the US Chamber of Commerce reported there are 8.5 million job openings but only 6.5 million unemployed US workers. At the same time our southern border is brimming with immigrants facing an ironic political pressure to ward them off.

Today’s immigration is complex. But there is a sentiment reminiscent of wealthy Sodom and Gomorrah whose leaders reasoned: “Why should we suffer wayfarers, who come to us only to deplete our wealth? Come, let us abolish the practice of traveling in our land” (Sandhedrin 109a).

In contrast, Paul’s message is inclusive. That not only might I have different talents from others but, just as important, that I recognize my need for them. The antithesis being a spirit of superiority, discrimination, and disconnect which, apparently, the Corinthians wrestled with. Sodom and Gomorrah was a wealthy land of milk and honey but had natives who hated strangers. What I learn from Scripture is that I should not be so quick to disregard others. Not just for their sake. But for mine as well.

2 Kings 23:36—24:17; Psalms 140, 142; Matthew 9:27-34

Saturday, October 11

1 Corinthians 12:27—13:3 *...if I have all the faith so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.* (v.2)

Scholars tell us that by Jesus’ time the faction between Samaritans and Jews was so strong Jewish travelers were said to cross over the river Jordan rather than pass through Samaritan territory. As one scholar put it “rather than contaminate themselves.” Even though Samaritans faithfully worshiped Yahweh they

were considered heretical for various reasons. I can never hear today's reading enough. It and Jesus' parable of the good Samaritan are powerfully haunting.

I am capable of enough self-righteous indignation to believe anyone who doesn't think the way I do is heretical-comparable. I have learned how to argue and be pretty good at it. My college education taught me how to support beliefs with research, scholars, and even ancient text. And frankly my epiphany left me so affected I feel at times to have the faith to move mountains.

But if my scholarship and lofty faith leads me to avoid "contaminating" myself with others, Paul says all that is for nothing. I am nothing. Certainly less than a selfless and caring heretic.

Jeremiah 35:1-19; Psalms 137, 144; Matthew 9:35—10:4

by William Bacon

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Sunday, October 12

Acts 14:8-18 *Even in [the light of] these words they with difficulty prevented the people from offering sacrifice to them. (v.18 AMP)*

Paul and Barnabas had a chance for power. The people wanted to crown them Hermes and Zeus, respectively. Even the top priest for Zeus brought animals and flowers to offer a sacrifice to them. They could have just run with this glory for as long as the people were fooled.

However, Paul and Barnabas made a big display of their disapproval of the people's actions—they tore their clothing and began shouting that only the Almighty God could have performed the healing.

This story reminds me of the times I've run with "temporary glory" over something God accomplished through me; that people complimented me for. It felt good to be spoken well of and have people's approval.

However, I am aware that any instrument of the Lord's can be done away with. I believe that if Paul and Barnabas had begun to bask in the limelight of popularity, God would have withdrawn His power from them. I am a small vessel for the Lord, but even my God-inspired speech, written word, or action must be credited to the Holy One.

Jeremiah 36:1-10; Psalms 146, 147; Luke 7:36-50

Monday, October 13

1 Corinthians 13:1-13 *When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; now that I have become a man, I am done with childish ways and have put them aside. (v.11)*

What was Paul thinking when he wrote to the Church at Corinth this line about giving up childish ways? Was he thinking about how he gave up playing marbles in the streets of the old neighborhood, pulling the hair of the girl-next-door, or occasionally skipping Hebrew class when he became an adult?

Paul wrote ten of the most powerful verses on godly love preceding this verse. I believe he's talking about giving up adult "childish ways." These are behaviors that do not promote the love of the Father. Things like gossip, retaliation, envy, strife, mockery, tit-for-tat attitude, or prejudice. Some of these are character traits we observed in our parents and chose to make them our own. Others we embraced because of personality deficiencies or past hurts.

These "childish ways" of doing things are different from the ways of a child, but they are still childish. Paul is encouraging the church and us to let go of old tendencies and embrace this new concept of godly love.

Jeremiah 36:11-26; Psalms 1, 2, 3; Matthew 10:5-15

Tuesday, October 14

1 Corinthians 14:1-12 *Eagerly pursue and seek to acquire [this] love [make it your aim, your great quest].... (v.1a AMP)*

As I write this piece, Mother's Day approaches. A mother's love is often held up as a standard of sacrificial love—somewhat like the love that Christ had for us. A mother pours her life into the lives of her children, often putting careers, hobbies, desires, and dreams on hold. If she's done a good job, the children do leave and become contributing adults. The time spent with her children is sacrificial because they don't stay and then pour their lives into hers.

The love Paul expresses in chapters 13 and 14 reflects what Eugenia Price wrote about in her book, *Make Love Your Aim*. She writes, "Making love our aim is quite simply giving God the freedom to act as He would act. We do not learn how to give God this freedom in a minute, even when we have decided to make love the aim of our life. Loving requires practice...." Just as mothering takes practice, loving others requires commitment to a long-term apprenticeship.

Jeremiah 36:27—37:2; Psalms 5, 6; Matthew 10:16-23

Wednesday, October 15

1 Corinthians 14:13-25 *Nevertheless, in public worship, I would rather say five words with my understanding and intelligently in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a [strange] tongue (language).* (v.19)

In this passage, it sounds as though the Corinthians found too much of a good thing when they were blessed with the gift of tongues!

I attend a church where the gifts of tongues are not used and the Christians I associate with do not use another language in my presence. But often times, how I long for five, wise, intelligent words to speak to my soul. All the pretty Christian phrases and slogans don't always penetrate the dull ache in my heart and the desire to feel the touch of God.

Do I spew forth words pell-mell when others need a word of the Lord spoken through me? Am I, too, caught up in being religious-sounding when I speak to others?

Dear God, please forgive me for my need to sound theological when someone needs Your words. Give me discernment to know when a prayer for Your wisdom, understanding, and message is needed for another brother or sister in Christ.

Jeremiah 37:3-21; Psalm 119:1-24; Matthew 10:24-33

Thursday, October 16

1 Corinthians 14:26-33a, 37-40 *For He [Who is the source of their prophesying] is not a God of confusion and disorder but of peace and order.* (v.33a)

Our God is a God of peace and order. Paul has really been laying down some rules to the church at Corinth in this chapter. Now he's instructing them in the ordering of prophecy and interpretation. Apparently, some members were more caught up in their spiritual gift and own edification than the church body's. As their pseudo-parent, Paul admonishes them to take specific steps to give order to their service.

Does our place in our church body reflect peace and order? Are we receiving orders directly from above or are we following tradition and man's expectations? Is the focus of the worship service too much on us? Would a first-time visitor sense the serene influence of God's spirit, or confusion and disorder?

Our church services may or may not have concerns over the presentation of prophecies and their interpretations, but we can look to a God of order and peace to refine our services to better reflect His glory and majesty.

Jeremiah 38:1-13; Psalm 18:1-20; Matthew 10:34-42

Friday, October 17

1 Corinthians 15:1-11 *But by the grace (the unmerited favor and blessing) of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not [found to be] for nothing (fruitless and without effect).* (v.10)

I would not have chosen Paul, a killer of Christians, to recruit to further the kingdom of God. But the Lord took this unlikely candidate and revealed to Paul His purpose for him.

Have you wondered "why" God made you, saved you, and if there is a divine purpose to your life? I have. I want to know what He has planned for me. I believe that besides fulfilling my blessed roles as wife and mother, God created me for a special reason—a reason that will further His kingdom. I'm not expecting it to be a highly visible calling, like Billy Graham, or an easy task. I'm expecting it to be an adventure with my heavenly Father that will give me satisfaction and peace as nothing else can.

Paul claimed that God's grace toward him wouldn't go unappreciated or unused. Let's pray that we will live up to that same commitment.

Jeremiah 38:14-28; Psalms 16, 17; Matthew 11:1-6

Saturday, October 18

1 Corinthians 15:12-29 *The last enemy to be subdued and abolished is death.* (v.26)

Paul points out the heresy of not believing in the resurrection of the dead. It is basic to our belief as Christians, not only in relation to Christ's rising but to our own someday.

Verse 26 says that death is the last enemy from which we are delivered. In a sense, death is a stronger enemy than Satan. By the grace of God, we are overcomers through Christ against Satan; but in this lifetime, we can't overcome death. Its force will be stronger in the end than our will to live.

Even with heaven as our eternal hope in glory, the thought of death is often not a welcomed thought. We associate it with grief, separation from loved ones, possible physical suffering, and mystery. There is little coaching available for it, and we feel powerless against it. It's often untimely or painful.

How gracious and loving of God to promise to take this experience away one day. Until then, our hope is the cross and the heavenly gift of salvation.

2 Kings 25:8-12, 22-26; Psalms 20, 21; Matthew 11:7-15

by Nancy Ferguson

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Sunday, October 19

Luke 10:1-12, 17-20 *He said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."* (v.2 NRSV)

This verse reminds me of my Florida childhood and the orange groves that my father owned and labored in. Dozens of acres of green trees were dotted with beautiful juicy oranges at harvest time. But it was always difficult for the companies that bought the crops to recruit laborers to pick the oranges. Anyone who wanted work could always find it in the orange groves at harvest time, and I earned a lot of extra money that way.

The labors of ministry differ from the labors of fruit harvesting in one important way. Harvesting fruit is physical work. Ministry for Christ may involve physical work, but it must begin on our knees because it draws its strength from our relationship with God.

This week we will reflect on every Christian's call to ministry and its implications in everyday life. What we do for Christ begins with who we are in Christ. As we grow closer to Christ through prayer, our outward lives will consciously and unconsciously take on his character. A strong prayer life makes ministry into a way of life rather than a list of tasks or things to do.

Jeremiah 29:1, 4-14; Psalms 148, 149, 150; Acts 16:6-15

Monday, October 20

Matthew 11:16-24 *Then he began to reproach the cities in which most of his deeds of power had been done, because they did not repent.* (v.20)

Despite our honest intentions, strong effort, and hard work, our labors for Christ sometimes result in what appears as failure. I spent two years ministering to a friend who lived with depression. That included sharing many meals together and trying to help him find some direction and meaning in life. Despite all that I and several others had done for him, he committed suicide. The year before that happened, I tried to help a troubled friend by letting him stay at my house for a month. I also gave him several hundred dollars. He left after some disagreements we had, and I've never heard from him again.

Despite the disappointing results, I never felt I had failed God or wasted my time with these friends. I felt that I had done what God asked me to do. You've probably heard that God asks us only to be faithful and to leave the results to him. It's true. I've discovered that God enables me to accomplish a whole lot more if I'm not concerned with who gets the credit or whether I see any results.

Jeremiah 44:1-14; Psalm 25; 1 Corinthians 15:30-41

Tuesday, October 21

1 Corinthians 15:41-50 *Be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.* (v.58)

I took the four-page newsletter I edit to a copy shop to have them make 350 copies. When I returned to pick them up, there were dark streaks all over the pages. I refused to accept them. The clerk told me, "They don't look that bad compared to some I've seen that we've done." What a pitiful excuse! I didn't want anything looking that poor going out with my name on it.

Mediocrity is an enemy of faith. Anything that bears the name of Christ in ministry should be of the highest quality. No task of ministry is so lowly or small that it doesn't deserve our very best. If you're washing dishes at the church supper, it means doing the very best job you can do at washing those dishes. If you're emptying the trash, it means you empty the can completely and don't spill anything on the way out.

I believe that God rewards us with large tasks only after we demonstrate our faithfulness with the small ones he gives. When he sees that we have handled them well, he says, "Well done, good and faithful

servant. You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things.” (Matthew 25:21).

Lamentations 1:1-12; Psalms 26, 28; Matthew 11:25-30

Wednesday, October 22

Psalm 38 *Those who seek my life lay their snares; those who seek to hurt me speak of ruin, and meditate treachery all day long.* (v.12)

Not only does ministry sometimes result in disappointment, it sometimes arouses outright opposition. I have read several stories about church-sponsored soup kitchens and homeless shelters opposed by local government leaders who fear they will attract “undesirable” elements into their pristine neighborhoods. In many countries, it is illegal to practice Christianity or openly share the gospel with others. You have probably read that more Christians have died as martyrs in the 20th century than in all previous nineteen centuries combined.

The late Cardinal Bernardin of Chicago wrote in his book *The Gift of Joy* about the ordeal he suffered when a young man accused him of sexual molestation. When questioned at a press conference, the cardinal said he simply told the truth with confidence that the truth would eventually prevail. He said that members of the press seemed to believe him. During these months, he prayed for his accuser and was eventually reconciled with him after the man publicly recanted his accusation.

We can remain confident because truth prevails. Even when following Christ results in martyrdom, truth prevails. Martyrs are remembered and revered for centuries, while those who ordered their executions are forgotten or remembered in ignominy.

Lamentations 2:8-15; 1 Corinthians 15:51-58; Matthew 12:1-14

Thursday, October 23

Matthew 12:15-21 *Many crowds followed him, and he cured all of them, and he ordered them not to make him known.* (vv.15b-16)

Jesus typically avoided publicity and deflected public attention away from himself. He also admonished his followers to avoid the ostentatious display of religion shown by the Pharisees. However, while he said, “Let not your left hand know what your right hand does,” he also taught his followers to “Let your light shine before men that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

I have faced situations, such as in writing articles or talks, where I wasn’t sure whether to mention one of my “good deeds.” Sometimes a personal experience is a good way to turn an abstract point into a practical illustration. The test of whether to reveal our good works should be whether they direct honor to God or attention to ourselves. Note that Jesus said, “that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” In 2 Corinthians 11, Paul boasts of his sufferings. Yet, he concludes by saying, “If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness,” and that it is God “who is to be praised forever.” (v.31).

Ezra 1:1-11; Psalm 37:1-18; 1 Corinthians 16:1-9

Friday, October 24

1 Corinthians 16:10-24 *Keep alert, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.* (v.)

Christians have a ministry of justice. The word “ministry” has been over-romanticized. We associate it with tender feelings, warm hearts, and good relationships. That is why some members of the media find it difficult to explain Christians who get arrested or speak out against a public evil. We aren’t always “nice guys.”

Being alert and standing firm means opposing evil. People may become angry or get their feelings hurt if we criticize what they do. Yet, it doesn’t mean we are not displaying love. Sometimes when a public figure has done something despicable or criticized Christians, I’ve been tempted to write this person an

angry, stinging letter. There's nothing wrong with writing a stinging letter. Yet, if we criticize, we must criticize a person's actions, but not the person's character or integrity.

Even those we oppose must be opposed with honor, dignity, and respect. Non-Christians know that we are supposed to love others and, if we fail, our hypocrisy shows. We cannot stoop to the same level as the enemies of Christ.

Ezra 3:1-13; Psalm 31; Matthew 12:22-32

Saturday, October 25

Philemon 1-25 *Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the Lord's people.* (v.7 NIV)

God doesn't call every Christian to go into the world fighting evil, opposing the wicked, and risking death as a martyr. Some are called to a ministry within the body of Christ, especially those who are called to an ordained ministry. Every Christian, to some extent, has a ministry to offer love and encouragement to fellow Christians. Paul commends Philemon, for example, as one who has "refreshed the hearts of the Lord's people."

Every congregation has a few members who seem to be the glue that holds it together. While he was dying of cancer, I learned that my uncle continued a ministry in his church by making telephone calls to those who needed encouragement or prayers. Another member of this church, a retired nurse, made special visits to see him during his last year of life. By "refreshing the hearts of the Lord's people," we give each other the strength we need to carry out our ministry in the world.

Ezra 4:7, 11-24; Psalms 30, 32; Matthew 12:33-42

by David E. Sumner

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Sunday, October 26

Luke 10:25-37 *"A Samaritan, as he journeyed...had compassion...and bound up his wounds."* (v.33 RSV)

The lawyer asks Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus tells him to love God with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength and to love his neighbor as himself. The lawyer tries to justify himself by asking, "Who is my neighbor?" and Jesus tells the parable of the Good Samaritan.

It occurs to me that I am often like the priest and Levite—I have to hurry to my church meeting so I cannot take time to help. I am too busy with my "to do" list to respond to the neighbor God puts in my path.

With all the hatred Jews showed Samaritans, the traveler could have easily justified not stopping to help: "When he wakes from his coma, he will probably call me names and have his friends beat me."

Not only does the Samaritan give first aid and take the injured to a safe place, but he also gives two days' wage to provide for him with the promise to pay the rest when he returns. Truly, this is love above and beyond the call of duty. Jesus says, "Go and do likewise."

Dear Lord, help me respond with love and mercy to the neighbor you place in my life.

Haggai 1:1—2:9; Psalms 63, 98; Acts 18:24—19:7

Monday, October 27

Revelation 1:4-20 *"I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."* (v.8)

When John tells about his Revelation of Jesus Christ, he calls Jesus the faithful witness, the first born of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth.

Jesus is the Word from Creation, the Savior freeing us from our sins by his blood, and the One coming with the clouds when every eye will see him and every knee will bow and every tongue confess that he is Lord!

The victorious Jesus is in the midst of the churches, not just Ephesus and Smyrna, Pergamum and Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea, but also Omaha and Orlando, Los Angeles and Las Vegas, Denver and Detroit, Memphis and Manhattan, and all his churches. He gives us his grace and peace. He assures us that he is alive for evermore.

The seven spirits worship at his throne. Can we do anything other than that? We are never without his love, care and concern. He is the beginning and ending of our faith.

Dear Jesus, the Alpha and Omega, to you be glory and dominion for ever and ever.

Zechariah 1:7-17; Psalms 41, 52; Matthew 12:43-50

Tuesday, October 28

Matthew 13:1-9 *"Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty and some thirty."* (v.8)

Four kinds of people hear the Gospel according to Jesus' parable (an earthly story with a heavenly meaning). The hard-hearted are like the path—they might be touched by Christmas music or a visit to a cathedral in Europe, but it does not last.

The rocky ground gives no depth for the roots—like a famous person whose life is touched by Jesus, but the person is immediately put on the platform or in the pulpit and has no chance to grow in faith. They receive the word with joy, but when hard times come they fall away.

The ground with thorns is like the new Christian who is so caught up in their job and sports and social activity that they do not make time for Bible study, prayer, worship, and Christian fellowship. The cares of the world choke the word and it proves unfruitful.

Jesus says: He who has ears, let him hear.

Dear Jesus, help us be the good soil which brings forth much fruit for you.
Ezra 5:1-17; Psalm 45; Revelation 4:1-11

Wednesday, October 29

Psalm 119:49-72 *This is my comfort in my affliction that thy promise gives me life.* (v.50)

A wonderful way to cultivate the “attitude of gratitude” is to write down five things for which you are thankful at the end of each day. It is amazing what great benefits this little exercise gives to your spiritual health.

I have suggested to some of the young mothers in our church doing this with children at the dinner table or bedtime. Fabulous reports come back. One mom told how her children were rather flip about it at first: “Thanks, God, for my dad, my mom, my brother, my sister and my bike.” But as the weeks went on, they became much more sincere: “Thanks, God, for helping me with my spelling test, for healing Grandpa, for helping us find the cat, etc.

Our whole attitude improves when we thank God for the ordinary things: our nice lunch with a friend, the helpful clerk in the store, finding a close-by parking place in the rain, and all His other good gifts.

Dear Jesus, thanks for all the loving and generous gifts you have given me.
Ezra 6:1-22; Revelation 5:1-10; Matthew 13:10-17

Thursday, October 30

Revelation 5:11—6:11 *“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!”* (v.12)

It has been said that worship is the essence of our response to God. Worship seems to transcend time and space and meet our deepest needs. It is not what we can get from worship, but what we can give to God—the honor due His name.

In his vision, John sees and hears thousands of angels plus every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea giving blessing, honor, and glory for ever and ever to the Lamb.

One can almost hear the trumpets and great music and see the rainbow, the lightning, and the torches as the twenty-four elders (probably the twelve patriarchs of the Old Testament and the twelve apostles of the New Testament) bow in worship and cast their crowns before him.

I am so thankful to be in a church that has wonderful music and joyful yet profound worship; where we reverence the Cross and use our entire being in worship. It is preparation for heaven!

Praise to You, Lord God Almighty!
Nehemiah 1:1-11; Psalm 50; Matthew 13:18-23

Friday, October 31

Psalm 40 *He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God.* (v.3a)

It is Reformation Day! Today we remember Martin Luther and his sharing the great truth of Scripture—that we are saved by grace through faith.

Indeed, this was a new song for the people who lived in superstition and fear. Luther also gave them the Bible in their own language and many singable hymns for worship.

Faithful witnesses down through the ages have given their lives so the truth of the gospel can be proclaimed: reformers, missionaries, priests and pastors, and all the faithful people of God. The psalms speak of delighting in the will of the Lord, with His law within our hearts; may that be the case with us! Then may we speak of His faithfulness and tell the glad news of our deliverance in the great congregation.

Over five hundred years ago Luther posted his 95 theses on the Wittenberg Castle church door. During the following years of trial and persecution Luther came to know more of God’s sheltering hand and shared the new song God had given him.

Dear God, You are indeed our Mighty Fortress.
Nehemiah 2:1-20; Psalm 54; Revelation 6:12—7:4; Matthew 13:24-30

Saturday, November 1

Revelation 7:4-17 *I looked and behold a great multitude which no man could number; from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb...* (v.9)

Happy All Saints' Day! We think of William Howe's great 19th century hymn: "For all the saints who from their labors rest, who Thee by faith before the world confessed, Thy name, O Jesus, be forever blest. Alleluia!"

The saints now stand in white robes with palm branches in their hands (because they have come out of the great tribulation). Now with the angels and elders and four living creatures they worship God with "blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God for ever and ever!"

They serve Him day and night in His temple and He shelters them with His presence. They will neither hunger nor thirst anymore, the sun will not strike them or any scorching heat. The Lamb will guide them to springs of living water and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

As the African-American spiritual says: "that great gettin' up morning!" We have the exquisite destiny of worshiping the Lamb forever.

Dear Jesus, thank you for making us your saints.

Nehemiah 4:1-23; Psalm 55; Matthew 13:31-35

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