

TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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BIBLE READING FELLOWSHIP
PO Box 380, Winter Park, FL 32790
By Ruth Owen

Sunday, November 13

Matthew 23:13-24 *“Blind guides! What sorrow awaits you! For you say that it means nothing to swear ‘by God’s Temple,’ but that it is binding to swear ‘by the gold in the Temple.’ Blind fools! Which is more important—the gold or the Temple that makes the gold sacred?”* (vv.16-17 NLT)

In my senior year of high school, I had a great social studies teacher. Richie wore love beads and walked around in sandals, but he was an incredibly sharp guy. I remember more of his classes than all my others combined, but the advice I recall most was his lesson about the “Doo-doo Detector.” Though he didn’t call it doodoo.

Richie advised all his students to wear this imaginary device on our foreheads, and to filter everything we saw, heard, or were told through it. This, he said, would help us to figure out what was true, and what was, well, doo-doo. He warned that not everyone is honest. And, as strange as it sounds, this has helped me avoid many bad decisions.

Christ was more eloquent when he warned about listening to the “blind guides,” but his message was the same. These “blind guides” were leading people astray by telling them to worship the temple gold and not Almighty God. They were not being honest. They were spouting doo-doo.

I don’t know if Richie was a Christian, but I think Jesus was well pleased with him and his wise advice. Not to mention that they shared the same taste in footwear.

Habakkuk 1:1–2:1; Psalms 66, 67; Philippians 3:13–4:1

Monday, November 14

Habakkuk 2:1-4, 9-20 *“For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.”* (v.14 NIV)

Florida lacks a lot of things: Mountains. Chipmunks. Authentic Chicago Style Pizza. But one thing we do not lack is ocean. Drive a couple of hours to the east or the west and you are on the coast. We have lots and lots of sea all around us. It is vast.

Habakkuk lived during one of the worst times in history, just before Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians. The last king was blatantly corrupt, and God was being ignored and dishonored. Habakkuk had the unenviable task of pointing this out to everyone. His book is full of dire prophecy of warnings from God to His beloved children, but it also contains amazing promises. One of them is above, where the Lord promises that “the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.”

God doesn’t desert us in bad times—even when we cause them. There may be tough times ahead, but the Lord’s promise of a joyful, glory-filled earth is still with us. And it is as vast as the sea.

Psalms 89:1-18; James 2:14-26; Luke 16:19-31

Tuesday, November 15

James 3:1-12 *Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark.* (v.5)

This summer has been a bad fire season. Forest fires are burning everywhere, from the California coast to the Idaho mountains. Entire towns have been consumed, and lives have been devastated or, in some cases, lost. Some of these fires are big and some are small, but they all started with the same thing—a tiny spark.

James points out that a word, foolishly spoken, is just as disastrous a forest fire. Once it’s out of your mouth, you can’t control where it goes. This wise brother of Jesus knew how important it was to consider our words carefully and prayerfully before we speak. Tongues are small, but they can create disasters if used in haste or without thought. Think before you speak is good advice today, just as it was two thousand years ago.

Habakkuk 3:1-18; Psalms 97, 99, 100; Luke 17:1-10

Wednesday, November 16

Luke 17:11-19 *As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice, “Jesus, Master, have pity on us!” Jesus asked, “Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?” Then he said to him, “Rise and go; your faith has made you well.”* (vv.12-13, 17-19)

If asked what qualities I’d like God to grow in me, I’d answer without hesitation: gratitude and thankfulness. Wisdom is amazing and kindness is essential, but without gratitude, wisdom can become a set of rules and kindness can become enabling. Gratitude to the Lord is our foundation. Without thankfulness to God, we cannot flourish.

Luke shows this when he writes about Jesus healing the ten lepers. Christ cleansed all of them, but only one returned to thank him. Our Savior was understandably irked by this, but he didn’t remove the healing from the nine. Instead, he told the grateful man (and only him), “Your faith has made you well.”

Perhaps the other nine lepers had excellent reasons for not thanking Jesus (places to go, people to see), but their lack of gratitude robbed them of complete healing. They were healed physically, but the thankful leper was healed in body, mind, and spirit. An “attitude of gratitude” is the heart of healing.

Malachi 1:1, 6-14; Psalms 101, 109; James 3:13–4:12

Thursday, November 17

James 4:13–5:6 *Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.”* (vv.14-15)

Everything about life can be found in a Jimmy Buffet song. I am serious. The man is awesome when it comes to explaining the human condition. For example, his song, “Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes” has the great line, “If we couldn’t laugh, we would all go insane.” I couldn’t agree more. And this passage from the letter James backs me up.

James was writing to a persecuted church, where livelihoods (and lives) were in constant jeopardy. He doesn't sugarcoat the threat, but he does give hope by pointing out that all life is fleeting, and the Lord's will is eternal. Instead of giving in to despair and anxiety, James focuses on what really matters—living by the will of our sovereign Lord.

Earthly life has its changes and challenges, but living under God's will keeps us sane in the troubled times. And it doesn't hurt to laugh a little, either.

Malachi 2:1-16; Psalm 105:1-22; Luke 17:20-37

Friday, November 18

Luke 18:1-8 *“For some time [the unjust judge] refused. But finally he said to himself, ‘Even though I don’t fear God or care what people think, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won’t eventually come and attack me!’ And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off?”* (vv.4-5, 7)

One of the funniest stories Jesus ever told was the one about the nagging old woman and the unjust judge. A snob of the worst order, the judge didn't care about the woman or her case, but the old biddy bothers him so relentlessly that he finally throws up his hands and says, “I give up. You win your case!” I imagine the crowd laughing their sandals off at the woman's victory. Everyone knows a nag, and probably an unjust judge. When reason fails, pestering works.

I imagine everyone laughing, but as usual Christ turned the entertaining parable into a lesson. He reminds them (and us) that God listens to His chosen people, and He pays attention to the ones who “cry out to Him day and night” just like the judge listened to the relentless old woman.

Some people think they shouldn't bother the Lord with their problems, but Jesus says the opposite. God *wants* to hear about our difficulties, no matter how big or small. He loves it when we seek Him in all things—and He never thinks we nag!

Malachi 3:1-12; Psalm 102; James 5:7-12

Saturday, November 19

James 5:13-20 *Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven.* (vv.14-15)

For many years I was fortunate to work at the Glennon House Healing Ministry at All Saints Episcopal Church. I witnessed many people healed: some emotionally, some spiritually and some physically. It was a great blessing in my life, but one of the most precious times was during the Tuesday evening Healing service. And these services always included this wonderful passage from James' letter.

Today we build hospitals that put cathedrals to shame. Modern medicine is a miracle, and I'm grateful for it, but it's a mistake to think that only our bodies need healing. James knew that souls could bear wounds, just like bodies, and a community of faith is where healing for those wounds begins. And how glorious it is when a sick person says, “The Lord has forgiven my sins and raised me up. Halleluiah!”

Malachi 3:13—4:6; Psalm 107:33-43, 108; Luke 18:9-14

In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer we pray for the Hong Kong Anglican Church

In the Diocesan Cycle of Prayer we pray for Good

Shepherd, Bluemont, St. Andrew's, Burke, and St. Peter's, Oak Grove, Colonial Beach

CURRENT PRAYER LIST

Adam, Alice, Barbara, Becky, Betty, Bob, Bonnie, Caroline, Carrie, Cathy, Christine, Colette, Connie, Craig, Dabney, Dan, David, Davis, Debbie, Deborah, Debra, Dee, Doris, Elaine, Erik, Frank, James, Jan, Janet, Jennifer, John, Johnny, Jon, Josh, Kathleen, Kathy, Kathy M., Kylie, Laura, Lauralei, Lisa, Lynn, Mara, Marci, Marilyn, Mario, Megan, Michael, Mike, Nancy, Nanette, Nick, Nikki, Paula, Phil, Rachel, Ralph, Ray, Raymond, Rich, Richard, Robert, Rusty, Samantha, Shannon, Sharon, Sonja, Steve, Tom, Vaughan, Veronica, Vic, Wendy, Wesley, Anne R. Adams, Dave Adams, John Allen, Susan Anderson, Chuck B., Brian Baldwin, Maria Barnhart, Waldo Beck, Kevin Byrne, Angie Campbell, Mo

Cowie, George & Martha Cox, John Crigler, Sharon D., Alda Dell, Adrienne Dever, Robin Dournaux, Neil Edwards, Bill & Pat Farr, Allan & Holly Feliciano, Betty Frizzell, Pearle Galatas, Rose Gallup, Dorothy Gassel, Alice Glover, Janice Graves, Tony Griswold, Barbara Harkins, Walt & Karen Harrison, Bernadine Hayes, Emily Hinkley, Barry Holliday, Edward Homendy, David Hunt, Janet Jones, Russ Kidd, Scott Kizner, Lois L., Sophie Manning, Karen Maxey, Jack McGraw, Bill Miller, Godwin Nosa, Heather Cameron Ploen, Kelly Powell, Winifred Relyea, Tina Revis, The Richardson Family, David Roberts, Russell Roberts, Danny Sass, Marianne Simpson, Anne Smith, Sherry Tanner, John Thompson, May Jane Tillman, Rosemary Van Brunt, Susy Vargas-Soliz, Tera & Caia Venaglia, James Monroe Walls, Kelly Weber, Alda White, Carol Whitaker, Alva Windham

BIRTHDAYS

November 13th - Patrick Brantley, Bill Clifton
November 14th - Pat Rogers
November 15th - Robin Sutton
November 16th - Carter Fitch, Beverly King
November 19th - Jean Hunt, Mari Ryniewicz
November 21st - Emily Cedarleaf, Alice Glover
November 23rd - David Hunt, Mickey Waring
November 25th - Brennan Gray
November 26th - Jennifer Homendy
November 27th - Claire Curcio, Paul Fugitt, Nancy Griswold
November 30th - Stanley Tetlow

ANNIVERSARIES

November 19th - Wade and Kelly Cagle
November 22nd - Christopher and Alyssa Bledsoe
November 23rd - Pete and Cindy Marshall
November 25th - Frank and Laura Brooks

**Monday through Friday - Morning Prayer 6:30 am, Compline 8:30 pm - via Facebook Live

