

## ***Good News Daily***

**Volume XXV**

**August 3-9, 2025**

**Number 31**

### **Sunday, August 3**

Psalm 93 *Mightier than the thunders of many waters, mightier than the waves of the sea, the LORD on high is mighty!* (v.4 ESV)

Water can seem so docile, but it is persistent and strong. Think of the white cliffs of Dover in England, the rocky shores of Ireland, or the Grand Canyon in the United States. Water flow laps at the land it encounters and slowly, steadily shapes it.

I grew up on a river in Texas and loved how the green, spring-fed water could be cool and calm under the sun-lit ripples. Heavy rains upstream would turn it into a milk chocolate-colored turbulent force. At times, floods altered the direction of the riverbank by leaving behind rich sediment to nourish the landscape.

And yet God is even mightier than water, the psalmist reminds us. Never doubt His power! He is steadily, slowly shaping your life. But He can also roar like a flood to change the direction of your life. It may be disturbing but it will be for the best.

2 Samuel 6:12-23; Psalm 96; Romans 4:7-12, John 1:43-51

### **Monday, August 4**

2 Samuel 7:1-17 *He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.* (v.13 NRSV)

David loved the Lord and had good intentions. He wanted to honor God in thanksgiving for all His blessings. The trouble was, David wanted to honor God in his way. He wanted to build a temple to house the Ark of the Covenant. Sounded good. But, God told David through his prophet Nathan, that was not how He planned to do things. It was not yet time for the temple.

Often times, I think we are the same way. We love God. We want to honor Him, but we try to do it our way instead of asking Him what He wants us to do. We forge ahead and expect Him to bless our efforts. Then when he slams that door closed, we become bewildered and wonder why.

In the Lord's Prayer we state, "Thy will be done," but do we practice that? Do we wait until God gives us clear instructions in how to use our talents or do we, like David, decide to do something for God without asking His permission?

Psalm 80; Acts 18:1-11; Mark 8:11-21

### **Tuesday, August 5**

Acts 18:12-28 *He began to speak boldly in the synagogue; but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained the Way of God to him more accurately.* (v.26)

Apollos had the right intentions. He loved God and wanted to evangelize. He obviously could draw a crowd and influence them. But his message was not complete. Apollos needed to be corrected. Priscilla and Aquila took him aside and explained the gospel to him. They didn't chastise him in front of his followers. They handled the situation in love. Apollos' ministry grew after that and he converted many, many people.

There are a lot of misconstrued interpretations of Scripture floating around, usually populated by preachers or TV personalities who take only half a verse and expound on it without researching the context of verses around it or considering the customs and idioms of the times. For example, they claim if we are good, God will bless us and make us prosperous. The Christian life should be a happy, stress-free one. If you are a true believer, Jesus will heal you.

When we encounter such errors how do we respond? I hope we will take Priscilla's and Aquila's example and quietly, respectfully have a conversation off to the side, be it on social media or in person.

2 Samuel 7:18-29; Psalm 78:1-39; Mark 8:22-33

### **Wednesday, August 6**

Mark 8:34—9:1 *He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. (v.34)*

What does it mean to take up your cross? Surely there is yielding your will to God's. Following what God has planned instead of your own agenda. But there is more to it. In Jesus' day, a person the Romans deemed as a criminal would carry a wooden rod across their shoulders to the place where they were to be crucified. Along the way people would heckle them. It was meant to be demeaning and humiliating.

Christ proved that the way of the Cross did not lead to death, but eternal life and reunion with the Father. Death, and the corruption of this world, was defeated on Good Friday. But He paid the price for our sakes. He calls us to sacrifice our will to benefit others as He did.

In other words, following Christ's ways instead of our own devices and desires *it ain't always gonna be easy, folks*. People may laugh, ridicule, or even persecute us. But, in a twist of fate, they are the ones who will be condemned, and they need our prayers.

2 Samuel 9:1-13; Psalm 119:97-120; Acts 19:1-10

### **Thursday, August 7**

Psalm 145 *The LORD is just in all his ways, and kind in all his doings. (v.17)*

Psalm 145 is a "feel good" psalm. It reminds us what an amazing God we believe in and that all is not lost. He still reigns. If you feel down or discouraged, read this psalm out loud.

But does God *always* seem just and kind? I think if we are honest, there are times when He feels as if He isn't listening or has gone off to help someone else. "Hold that thought. Betty is in crisis. I'll be back later."

"Wait. What about me?"

No, our Lord is omnipresent and omnipotent. He never leaves. It is our perspective that may make us think that way. Maybe His silence is in order to get us to listen, or what appears to be His inaction is simply our not seeing what He is doing in the background. Perhaps, like any great parent, He doesn't always give us what we want, just what we need.

Seek Him out. Trust in the process.

2 Samuel 11:1-27; Psalm 83; Acts 19:11-20; Mark 9:2-13

### **Friday, August 8**

2 Samuel 12:1-14 *Nathan said to David, "You are the man!" (v.7a)*

God could have come to David in a dream. He could have spoken to his heart the way He did as David tended sheep and wrote songs of praise. But David had turned a deaf ear. The beloved one of God had sinned, big time. So, God spoke through the prophet Nathan to get David's attention.

There have been times in my life when a friend has expressed what I knew to be truth from the Holy Spirit. And it pierced me. But in hindsight, I know it was the best way for God to get His point across.

If God is prompting you to speak to someone, pray for the Holy Spirit to guide your thoughts and words then obediently seek out that person in private. Remember earlier this week the way Priscilla and Aquilas handled Apollos?

Verse 15 says, "Then Nathan went to his house." Nathan obeyed God and spoke to David in a way David would listen. But afterward, he left the rest up to God. We should do the same. We are only messengers, not the judge.

Psalm 88; Acts 19:21-41; Mark 9:14-29

**Saturday, August 9**

Acts 20:1-16 *And they took the youth away alive, and were not a little comforted.* (v.12 ESV)

This verse may seem strange, until we delve into it. The writer is understating the situation. In other words, to be “not a little comforted” means they were greatly relieved. It would be like us saying today, “Oh, yeah. I was *so* afraid.” The rhetorical response would be, of course not.

Don’t let it trip you up. This story shows Paul’s compassion. He didn’t get angry at the guy who fell asleep during his speech and caused a commotion. And because Paul didn’t, the people continued to stay and learn more about this God Paul spoke of.

The takeaway for me is to always not let me own emotions get in the way. Someone may say or do something that hurts or shocks me, but I do not know their circumstance. We all have hidden hurts and things going on in our lives.

Paul halted his agenda and came to the young man’s aid. Then he realized the people needed rest and food before he continued. He thought of others first.

I want to be more like Paul.

2 Samuel 12:15-31; Psalms 87, 90; Mark 9:30-41

*by Julie B Cosgrove*

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## ***Good News Daily***

**Volume XXV**

**August 10-16, 2025**

**Number 32**

### **Sunday, August 10**

Romans 15:1-13 *May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (v.5 RSV)*

We try to live our lives in a way that will glorify God. The key words that bring us trouble are “we try.” We look at those around us who don’t agree with us, and we try to reconcile our differences, or we try to relinquish the things that keep us from unity, or we try to convince others to relinquish their beliefs. Even the most noble of efforts are futile.

How often I have come to a place in my life where there is absolutely nothing that I can do to remedy a certain situation. When I admit that, it is almost as though I can hear an “Alleluia!” from above.

We see in Romans that it is God’s steadfastness and encouragement that is enabling us to live in harmony as we live in accord with Jesus. There is no way for one person to create “one voice” with others; one can only offer up his voice and let the Father weave his offering into the offerings of others who know and love Him. Rather than “we try” it becomes “we let,” and the harmony becomes gloriously His own.

2 Samuel 13:1-22; Psalms 66, 67; John 3:22-36

### **Monday, August 11**

Mark 9:42-50 *“And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell.” (v.47)*

This is not a popular Scripture in our modern culture. To modernize Mark, one would probably write: “If your eye causes you to sin, it’s okay, because you were abused and there is nothing you can do about how you react.” As Christians, we cannot do anything less than what this Scripture calls for from us.

God gives us commands not because He loves control or just wants to wield His power over us. He gives us commands because He loves us, and He wants to make our lives as unencumbered as they can be. Our inclination, like both Adam and Eve in the garden, is to blame another for our sin. Even in the blaming we are separating ourselves from God.

We need to be able to look at our loving Father and know His love in a way that makes us want to relinquish anything we embrace that is not of Him.

2 Samuel 13:23-39; Psalm 89:1-18; Acts 20:17-38

### **Tuesday, August 12**

Psalms 97 *Light dawns for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart. (v.11)*

Psalms 97 offers a rich picture of the power of God, a power that molds and shapes the earth and forms and fashions human beings. So often we get caught in the darkness, seeing what is happening in the world and in the church, and wondering where that power might be.

It is hard to wait out the dawn. I remember many a summer morning waking up and coming out of my tent before dawn. The stars had left the sky and there was a darkness that was almost paralyzing. There was no way to know, save through experience, that this darkness would soon give way to light.

“Light dawns for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart.” As Christians we need to stand together waiting for the Light; we need to witness the dawn in one another so that we can be encouraged to wait and to trust in the One who loves us the most.

2 Samuel 14:1-20; Psalms 99, 100; Acts 21:1-14; Mark 10:1-16

### **Wednesday, August 13**

Acts 21:15-26 *After greeting them, he related one by one the things that God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. And when they heard it, they glorified God. (vv.19-20a)*

One of Satan's greatest ploys is to make us feel isolated. When we sin or struggle with problems or temptations, he wants us to think that we are alone, that no other Christian has ever thought such thoughts. The further away we pull, the more likely we are to fall into great discouragement and self-condemnation.

In Acts we see how it is that we are drawn back. Paul came to Jerusalem and began to tell the elders "one by one the things that God had done."

Throughout the Old Testament God says, "Remember...." In the remembering we are brought back to the love and the faithfulness of our Father. The circumstances that plague our lives, the sins that torment us, begin to lose their power in light of the heart of God.

When we remember corporately, we encourage and build one another up. The natural response is an outpouring, glorifying God. And no longer are we standing on the outside, but we are drawn into the heart of a loving Father.

2 Samuel 14:21-33; Psalms 101, 109; Mark 10:17-31

### **Thursday, August 14**

Mark 10:32-45 *And he said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" (v.36)*

In God's grace, He does not always do what it is that we ask Him to do. We have only a small part of the picture, and if He met all of our desires, we would find ourselves in anguish rather than the expected delight.

When Jesus asks, "What do you want me to do for you?" he gets us to articulate what it is that we really want. Often, we seek temporary satisfaction of our longings, thinking that satisfaction will "cure all." But Jesus' question takes us to a deeper level, to a level where the question becomes: "What do you really want?"

A request for a particular job might really be translated as a quest for worth. A plea for a relationship might be an attempt to fill the God-shaped void within us.

When we hear Jesus question what it is that we want, we need to pray to be able to hear the answer of what we really want, and we need to pray to want him most of all.

2 Samuel 15:1-18; Psalm 105:1-22; Acts 21:27-36

### **Friday, August 15**

Psalm 102 *Let this be recorded for a generation to come, so that a people yet unborn may praise the LORD. (v.18)*

We live in a time in which it is hard for people to think beyond themselves. Credit card debt reflects a concern for the "here and now," a concern for acquiring for myself, with little care for the financial well-being of those to come.

We cannot afford that selfishness in the spiritual realm. To be lax with our faith, to not allow ourselves to be moved with passion and purpose as we walk through these dark days, is to rob the generations to come of the purity of the gospel. That is a selfishness that will not go unpunished.

We must pray continually for God's heart, so that we will not be unmoved, but so that we will allow ourselves to be fully used by Him for His purposes. Then we can rest in the assurance we find at the end of Psalm 102: "The children of thy servants shall dwell secure; their posterity shall be established before thee."

2 Samuel 15:19-37; Acts 21:37—22:16; Mark 10:46-52

### **Saturday, August 16**

Psalms 107:33-43 *Whoever is wise, let him give heed to these things; let men consider the steadfast love of the Lord. (v.43)*

In this verse, to consider is really to observe and discern. When we consider something, our focus goes to that thing. So, to consider the steadfast love of the Lord is to let ourselves be swallowed up in thought and wonder about the Father.

If we are swallowed up in thought about God, if we allow ourselves to respond to who He is, then the other things that bite at our spirits throughout the day will pale in comparison; there will not be room to contemplate them. Some might consider that avoidance; but what is happening is we are focusing on the truth which will then allow the circumstantial to fall into a lesser place. It is then truth that will call us to respond, and that which is not truth will lose voice.

Let us give heed to these things and, in so doing, be fully immersed in the things of the Lord, where all life resides.

2 Samuel 16:1-23; Psalm 108; Acts 22:17-29; Mark 11:1-11

*by Sallie Ross*

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## ***Good News Daily***

**Volume XXV**

**August 17-23, 2025**

**Number 33**

### **Sunday, August 17**

John 5:30-47 *"You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me; yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life."* (vv.39-40 RSV)

Jesus chastised the Jewish authorities because they did not accept him. They were blind to the significance of his teaching, his healing, the witness of others, and the writings of the prophets. They searched the Scriptures to find eternal life, yet were blind to the witness fulfilling those Scriptures. As we might say today, they could not see the forest for the trees.

Are we also blinded to the truth, sometimes, by our cherished convictions? Or do we feel threatened by the truth because it might upset traditions to which we cling?

Every time there is a change in our worship patterns, or a new hymnal is introduced, it is a problem for many people. Some have difficulty accepting the fact that Bibles and Christian publishers now fail to capitalize personal pronouns for God. My problem came when references to God changed from "Thee" to "you."

A college professor once observed that in studying we are tempted to underline only what we agree with. Do we ever search the Scriptures that way: seeking what we can agree with? If so, what may we be missing?

2 Samuel 17:1-23; Psalm 118; Galatians 3:6-14

### **Monday, August 18**

Mark 11:12-26 *And he said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again."* (v.14)

Did Jesus curse the fig tree in a fit of anger? I have often wondered. Did hunger leave him short-tempered that morning, as it might me? Was it the tree's barrenness that produced this seemingly petulant outburst? Or did he, perhaps, want to teach the disciples a lesson?

That evening, when they saw the tree had withered, Jesus told them to have faith and not doubt in their hearts. God would do similar things for them or for whomever prays with such confidence. But who has such faith? Do you? I cannot seem to purge my heart of all doubt. Some always lingers.

Perhaps that's why Jesus demonstrated with the fig tree. Seeing is believing. When we learn of answered prayers and hear the witness of others, our faith grows and doubt diminishes.

Jesus also commands us to forgive those against whom we hold grudges. Won't this, too, leave more room in our hearts for faith?

2 Samuel 7:24—18:8; Psalm 106:1-18; Acts 22:30—23:11

### **Tuesday, August 19**

Psalms 123 *To thee I lift up my eyes, O thou who are enthroned in the heavens!* (v.1)

The orbiting Hubble and Webb telescopes are glimpsing magnificent views of deep space, showing us what the universe looked like many billions of years ago, the time it has taken for light from distant stars to reach us. It has also enabled astronomers to estimate that the universe contains some 50-billion galaxies! Recent documentaries have used computer enhancement to depict awesome scenes of swirling stellar clouds, spiraling nebulae, and exploding stars.

To think of God enthroned amidst such vastness and energy stretches one's imagination far beyond its limits. "What is man that thou art mindful of him?" we marvel. Can we really believe that God will keep up with our goings out and our comings in? Yes, praise God! "He will not let your foot be moved," sings the psalmist. "He who keeps (you) will neither slumber nor sleep."

What great potential can our Creator see in us? Whatever does He see in me? How could He love us enough to risk His Son, Jesus, among us? Is it because we are His, and He made us?

2 Samuel 18:9-18; Psalms 120, 121, 122; Acts 23:12-24; Mark 11:27—12:12

### **Wednesday, August 20**

2 Samuel 18:19-33 *"O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!"* (v.33)

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was so moved by these grief-filled words of King David that he wrote *The Chamber over the Gate*. Is it so long ago, he asked, that we cannot remember the desolate old man in that room "weeping and wailing sore for his son, who is no more?"

David had doted on his handsome but vain son with his magnificent long locks cut but once a year. But he had spoiled Absalom, denying him nothing, condoning his misbehavior, forgiving even his insurrection. Finally, David waits at the city gates while a watchman above spies the messengers bringing news that the King has won the last battle, but Absalom is dead.

David is not alone in his sorrow. "Somewhere at every hour," writes Longfellow, "the watchman on the tower" sees the approach of similar "tidings of despair."

It is too late for David to rectify his failings toward his son. But his grief can be a lesson not to withhold the love and discipline our children need. Lest we, like David, have to retreat to that room above the gate and weep, "Would that I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son!"

Psalm 119:145-176; Acts 23:23-35; Mark 12:13-27

### **Thursday, August 21**

Mark 12:28-34 *And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God."* (v.34a)

When Jesus compliments the divinity student for the understanding and approval of the summary of the Law that Jesus has just given him, our Lord does not say, "You are in the kingdom of God," but rather that the student is not far from it. Do you ever wonder why, as I do?

Is it perhaps because the scribe's approval is intellectual, not from the heart? Might Jesus have spoken differently had the student exclaimed, "That's what I believe! I love God so much I can't stop thinking of Him!" Jesus wants us to love his Father personally; not just agree that it is something everyone should do.

I remember a picture in a childhood Sunday School lesson of Jesus patiently standing outside a door on a snowy night waiting to be let in. I'm sure he knew what you may already have discovered: that if you open your heart to receive someone's love, you will also love him back.

Let's hope that as the scribe gazed into our Lord's loving eyes, he opened his heart to receive this love, and entered the kingdom of God.

2 Samuel 19:1-23; Psalms 131, 132, 133; Acts 24:1-23

### **Friday, August 22**

Mark 12:35-44 *And in his teaching he said, "Beware of the Scribes who like to go about in long robes..."* (v.38)

Jesus wants people to worship and to give to the church because they love God, not because they want credit from the rest of us. He chastises those who want to be recognized for their piety, admired for their charitableness, and rewarded with special favors. And lest we be too quick to pontificate, maybe we should look inward and perhaps glimpse the same temptations within ourselves.

A politician whom I admired for his effort to lead a Christian life in Congress once told me he wanted no media reporting about the Congressional prayer group to which he belonged. "People may think I'm seeking to win political favor," he said. "I am not."

We need always to monitor our motivations for the way we follow Jesus. We are human and, like sheep, we can easily go astray. "Love God first," taught Jesus. Let that motivate our Christian giving and our Christian deeds.

2 Samuel 19:24-43; Psalms 140, 142; Acts 24:24—25:12



**Saturday, August 23**

Psalm 137 *How shall we sing the LORD's song in a foreign land?* (v.4)

In my Bible I keep a clipping of Lt. Col. John Glenn's testimony before the Senate space committee following his return as the first American to orbit the earth. Wisconsin Senator Alexander Wiley asked, "I was wondering whether you felt that God was up there as well as down here...?"

"Absolutely," replied Glenn. "I think to try to limit God to one particular section of space...is a very foolish thing to do....I think He will be wherever we go."

The psalmist may not have felt like singing during the captivity in Babylon; but he did not forget his faith. "If I forget you, O Jerusalem," he said, "let my right hand wither!"

"Happy the people," sang David, "whose God is the Lord!"

2 Samuel 23:1-7; Psalm 144; Acts 25:13-27; Mark 13:1-13

*by Ben Aycrigg*

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## ***Good News Daily***

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### **Sunday, August 24**

John 8:12-20 *When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world.”* (v.12a NIV)

Well, those words certainly ignited the Pharisees. The “I am” part was almost as volatile as “the light” part. That was because the sacred name of God was YHWH, Hebrew for “the Great I AM.”

And light? The Creator’s first words were, “Let there be light.” Jehovah provided the pillar of fire to light the way for the Hebrew wanderers in their 40 years in the desert. In the Psalms there are many references like “The Lord is my light and my salvation” (Psalm 27:1) and “God is the light of life” (Psalm 56:13). Especially the crowd would remember Isaiah’s words: “I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth” (Isaiah 49:6b).

These words were spoken in the temple treasury—sometimes called Solomon’s portico or the Court of Women—which was the colonnade on the temple’s east side. This was where many of the devout gathered around learned teachers. Here also on the nights of this, the Feast of the Tabernacles, was the Illumination of the Temple. Four huge oil filled candelabra were ceremonially lit and burned all night, shining brightly into Jerusalem below and onto the world beyond.

And Jesus was standing right there, proclaiming himself to be the light of the world.

2 Samuel 24:1-2, 10-25; Psalms 146, 147; Galatians 3:23—4:7

### **Monday, August 25**

Acts 26:1-23 *“I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen and will see of me.”* (v.16b)

“Anything but evangelism” had long been my zip code; however, helping others in little ways was on my “can do” list. That’s how Susan became a friend while I drove her to physical therapy. Like many folks, Susan was pretty sure that there wasn’t a God, but still she searched for something spiritual. Clearly God intended to move stubborn me into a mini evangelism effort. But how?

Asking around for help, I was told that simply sharing my own conversion experience would be honest, inoffensive, non-threatening, and irrefutable. That’s how Paul witnessed here to Festus and Agrippa and he gave the same witness in Acts 22:3-11. After relating his background as a Pharisee, he told of his personal encounter with Jesus. Later Paul taught what the Scriptures had to say about the Messiah.

So I prayed for an open door and for the right words—dare I say it?—“to witness” to the faith within me. That time soon arrived as we sat in a bagel shop. Though scared and excited, I really wanted Susan to hear what Jesus had done for me; maybe later I’ll be able to share what Jesus did in the Bible.

What a joy! Now my new zip code is “willing to share what Jesus has done for me.”

1 Kings 1:5-31; Psalms 1, 2, 3; Mark 13:14-27

### **Tuesday, August 26**

Acts 26:24—27:8 *“Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?”* (v.28)

In yesterday’s devotion, I related how I had shared my conversion experience with my friend Susan while choking down a bagel. What were the results? Well, I haven’t seen any more results than Paul did when he witnessed to Festus and Agrippa.

Festus actually said, “You are out of your mind, Paul!” (v.24). Such a response was my biggest fear, but it didn’t faze Paul. He kept right on going by turning his evangelizing more to King Agrippa. Soon the king said that he was making no quick changes to Christianity. (Think how long it took you and me.) “Paul replied, ‘Short time or long—I pray God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains’” (v.29).

So, like Paul, let’s (1) pray for opportunities to scatter Good News seeds. (2) Proclaim Jesus, not ourselves. (3) Keep praying patiently for others to know him. (4) Go on living the life Jesus calls us to,

letting his light shine through us as best it can. That's: pray it, say it, pray it, and display it. Having planted the Word, we can leave the growth to God. Short time or long, God is the Lord of the harvest. Thanks be to God.

1 Kings 1:38—2:4; Psalms 5, 6; Mark 13:28-37

### **Wednesday, August 27**

Mark 14:1-11 *"She has done a beautiful thing to me...She did what she could."* (vv.6, 8)

She? John 12:1-11 tells this same story with Mary, Lazarus and Martha's sister, identified as the woman who anointed Jesus. She "sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said" (Luke 10:39). Later she watched Jesus call her dead brother from the tomb (John 11:17-45). Shortly after that at a dinner party, she used a precious perfume to anoint Jesus' body for burial. She demonstrated—to the assembled guests and now to the entire world (v.9)—her extravagant love for Jesus.

For the love of Jesus, are we willing to act boldly, without regard to financial cost and undaunted by criticism? Are we willing to do "something beautiful," sacrificially giving of self, time, resources, and our tenderest love? Even if we were willing, Jesus has no earthly form to anoint. Or does he? In Matthew 25:35-40, Jesus suggests that he can be found among street people, illegal aliens, and convicts, to name a few. From that perspective, Mother Teresa of Calcutta is another woman who daily anointed Jesus' body for burial.

Will you or I hear Jesus say of us, "She has done a beautiful thing to me...She did what she could," because "just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me" (Matthew 25:40)?

1 Kings 3:1-15; Psalm 119:1-24; Acts 27:9-26

### **Thursday, August 28**

Mark 14:12-26 *While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body."* (v.22)

Earthly Senses, Eternal Soul

Join the heavenly Host in a simple, life-giving meal  
into which he has poured his own life.

Come together with those things of the world  
which are good and lovely, pure and true.

See the high table, the spotless linen cloth,  
the shining silver plate, the waiting goblet,  
the open book, the flickering candles, the attending flowers.

Hear the gathering saints, the music, the silence,  
the Word of God, "The Body of Christ,"  
"The Blood of Christ keep you in everlasting life."

Smell the old wood, the memory of incense,  
the hint of flowers, the bloom of wine.

Touch the wooden rail, the needlepoint kneelers,  
the warm hands of family, the crisp bread, the smooth cup.

Taste the joy and wonder, the supreme gift,  
the Bread of Heaven, the Cup of Salvation.

1 Kings 3:16-28; Psalm 18:1-20; Acts 27:27-44

### **Friday, August 29**

Psalm 17 *As for me, I will be vindicated and will see your face.* (v.15)

There she sat, gazing at herself in the make-up mirror, mesmerized by her own mess. Nothing was really wrong, she thought. Of course, there were the three hampers of laundry, the dirty breakfast dishes, and a smelly Labrador retriever, all begging to be washed. But it was her own filth glaring back at her that was the real culprit.

So she sat staring deep into herself. There they were, the dirty trio: Criticism, Judgment, Control. She'd seen that threesome before, lots of times. So she began to play with them. First, she mulled over all that was wrong with everybody else; then, she launched into herself. Having wasted the better part of an hour, she considered spending more time gazing at herself before remembering the "perspective principle"—gaze at God and glance at self.

Leaving the mirror and turning to her prayer journal, she jotted down her sins, confessing and giving each one to God. Then she just took a walk on that fine summer day, gazing at God's handiwork and humming:

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,  
Look full in His wonderful face,  
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,  
In the light of His glory and grace.

1 Kings 5:1—6:1, 7; Psalm 16; Acts 28:1-16; Mark 14:27-42

### **Saturday, August 30**

Acts 28:17-31 *I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans.* (v.17b)

Grab hold of your Bible and mentally subtract from it the books of Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 2 Timothy and Philemon. That's what Christendom would be missing if Paul hadn't obediently allowed the Holy Spirit to flow through him while on house arrest in Rome. Rather than sitting around feeling sorry for himself, Paul had "learned to be content whatever the circumstances" (Philippians 4:11). So, he could see this time as an opportunity from the Lord to witness both in writing and in preaching to those who visited him.

Chained to a Roman guard and with the prospect of martyrdom ahead, Paul surely had some down times. But having passed through other imprisonments, stonings, beatings, shipwrecks and the like, Paul had been prepared to handle the present. We might say his past experiences were fertilizer for the hope he needed anew. Paul articulated this himself: "We also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us." (Romans 5:4-5).

1 Kings 7:51—8:21; Psalms 20, 21; Mark 14:43-52

*by Martha Emerson*

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## ***Good News Daily***

**Volume XXV**

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### **Sunday, August 31**

1 Timothy 4:7b-16 *Train yourself in godliness.* (v.7b NRSV)

Before I used a word processor I learned to use a typewriter. It seemed impossible to strike the right keys without looking at them, but all it took was practice. When I tried my first computer program called WordPerfect I felt right at home, because I knew that Jesus is the Word Perfect. That's because my training in religion began with Bible lessons I heard before I knew how to read.

Our religious muscles never grow flabby when we keep in training by reading the Bible, praying frequently, loving each other, practicing our religion in church, at home, at work, at play. Religion is not something simply to be read about, but something to be strengthened through discipline. Unlike bodily discipline, spiritual training helps prepare for this life and the life to come.

1 Kings 8:22-40; Psalms 148, 149, 150; John 8:47-59

### **Monday, September 1**

Mark 14:53-65 *Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for testimony against Jesus to put him to death; but they found none.* (v.55)

Many individuals and institutions have sentenced Jesus to death despite the evidence of his eternal life. A temptation endangering Christians is to accept the false witness against Christian values portrayed in some television shows, novels, and advertising.

Just as Jesus was not the one on trial in Mark's account, his teachings are not on trial in the present day. It is the cynics who are on trial, for their fear empties them of hope, even hope for the fulfillment of God's promises.

Do I yield to negations, or do I affirm the living Christ at the center of my experience? Do I let "the whole council" of the weak and self-absorbed pass daily death sentences on the goodness God has revealed? Or do I know, with those who testified to the resurrection, that Jesus lives?

2 Chronicles 6:32—7:7; Psalm 25; James 2:1-13

### **Tuesday, September 2**

Psalms 28 *The LORD is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts; so I am helped, and my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.* (v.7)

One day when I was driving home there was a sudden noise, my car spun around, overturned. There were flames under the hood. All I could do was pray. My prayer was instantaneous, almost coincidental with the crash. I had no strength apart from the Lord in whom my heart trusts.

Miraculously, it seemed then and now, somebody appeared to open the door when I could not, to lead me to a quick escape from a car that was soon destroyed by fire. My heart exults, as the ancient and inexorable words put it, and "I give thanks to him."

The psalmist knew that his prayer had been heard. Our prayers are heard and "giving thanks to him" is part of every fervent prayer.

1 Kings 8:65—9:9; Psalm 26; James 2:14-26; Mark 14:66-72

### **Wednesday, September 3**

James 3:1-12 *With it [the tongue] we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing.* (vv.9-10a)

My wife asked me to pick up some string beans at the supermarket. Not baked beans, she added. You're probably ahead of me: I remembered her final words and brought home baked beans.

Jesus tells us that by our words we will be justified and condemned (Matthew 12:37). I've thought about pasting that message on the sun visor in my car. I need to be reminded to bless the Lord in every word my tongue forms, to bless men and women made in God's loving likeness.

Abraham, my cat, uses his tongue to drink and to wash. He can't bless or curse with it. God has given you and me the gift of speech. Words sometimes speak louder than actions. Do my words call forth holy actions, as God intends?

1 Kings 9:24—10:13; Psalm 38; Mark 15:1-11

#### **Thursday, September 4**

1 Kings 11:1-13 *Then the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, and had commanded him concerning this matter; that he should not follow other gods; but he did not observe what the LORD commanded.* (vv.9-10)

The wisdom of Solomon is legendary, but he still got sidetracked. When I turn away from the Lord, it is because what I want zooms, like a lens, focusing on one thing while details are fuzzy.

Fuzzy, myopic vision lets me head for a local theme park instead of helping a friend who broke his arm and needs some chauffeuring. It lets me apply more energy to Saturday night than to Sunday morning.

Nobody knows what it means for the Lord to be angry. My anger comes when I don't get what I want. God loves me and may be angry when I don't love Him back.

May you and I be wiser than Solomon in letting God love us and loving Him back.

Psalm 37:1-18; James 3:13—4:12; Mark 15:12-21

#### **Friday, September 5**

Psalm 31 *Blessed be the LORD, for he has wondrously shown his steadfast love to me when I was beset as a city under siege.* (v.21)

I want my hometown to be a city most secure, but the secure city that earns the praise of the psalmist is more than a place. The psalmist, who probably wrote this in the fullness of life, and I, writing also from the joy of more than threescore and ten, thank the Lord for creating an embracing environment of love.

Given the perspective of living long, we know that most of the fears told earlier in this psalm will disappear like smoke from a campfire in safe campgrounds.

"For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory."

1 Kings 11:26-43; James 4:13—5:6; Mark 15:22-32

#### **Saturday, September 6**

Mark 15:33-39 *Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"* (v.39)

In times of insatiable talk shows with pop theology to complement pop psychology the audience may get more confused than Pilate about what's truth. Even members of the clergy win fans and royalties in mocking the accounts of Scripture and tradition.

The centurion, a witness to the crucifixion, started out watching the execution of a criminal. What he saw was extraordinary love and courage, a refusal of the victim to blame anyone (and thereby become victimized), a triumph of life in the moment of death.

This witness to the execution spoke a truth that surely amazed him, the truth that Christ Jesus is God's very Son. And when he prayed, Jesus embraced you and me when he said, "Our father."

1 Kings 12:1-20; Psalms 30, 32; James 5:7-12, 19-20

*by A. E. P. Wall*

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