

Good News Daily

Volume XX

October 11-17, 2020

Number 41

Sunday, October 11

Micah 6:1-8 *He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?* (v.8 RSV)

The command is unmistakable, and noble. But to do it, to actually do this—how? That is the question. The answer lies in a one-liner from First John: “We love, because he first loved us” (4:19). Doing the right things—doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God—these are fruits from a root.

When you feel loved, and *are* loved, it comes naturally to “do the right thing,” i.e., to live altruistically and ethically. In fact, when you are working from love, it seems like no effort at all to love another person. It comes naturally. Doing right is best when it’s a response.

Aretha Franklin sang, “Do right, man. Do right, woman.” It’s easy when you’re loved.

Dear Lord, bring love into our life.

Psalms 146, 147; 1 Corinthians 4:9-16; Matthew 15:21-28

Monday, October 12

Psalms 1 *Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.* (vv.1, 3)

When my wife’s father died, the minister said of him to the packed congregation in the church, “Your father was the most trusted man in West Orange County.”

In the context of *real life*—vs. the hollow and often false encomiums one hears at “celebrations of life”—the minister’s words about Mary’s dad were the highest possible praise of a very good man.

Who doesn’t want to live “like a tree planted by streams of water”? What sometimes prevents us doing so is that we are not very securely planted. Our foundations are weak—or weakened. And it takes just one real gust of wind to knock us over.

Lord, re-build our foundations where they are weak, and strengthen them.

Micah 7:1-7; Psalms 2, 3; Acts 26:1-23; Luke 8:26-39

Tuesday, October 13

Acts 26:24—27:8 *And Agrippa said to Paul, “In a short time you think to make me a Christian!” And Paul said, “Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am—except for these chains.”* (vv.28-29)

Who wouldn’t be moved by Paul’s appeal here? He *longs* for the welfare of his hearers, high and low, mighty and weak. The only thing he wants them *not* to get is the chains with which he is bound—his persecuted “lot” in life as an apostle of the Lord.

Paul’s appeal must have gotten through to some, at least, of his hearers. Just reading it to myself, I feel stirred.

Here’s a lesson for us in evangelism. If you truly desire the good of your hearers and your potential hearers, that is going to come through. Sincerity and love *never* miss their mark.

Lord, give us heart for those we love whom we would win.

Jonah 1:1-17a; Psalm 5, 6; Luke 8:40-56

Wednesday, October 14

Luke 9:1-17 *And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal.* (vv.1-2)

Authority over demons!? I’ve got mine. Maybe you’ve got yours.

I used to detest the judgment on someone as in “she is wrestling with her demons.” I thought that was too strong a way to describe an inward problem. And awfully hopeless. After all, who can really hope, in our natural self, to vanquish a *bona fide* demon?

But, we do “wrestle not against flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers” (Ephesians 6:12). Whether we like it or not, there are malicious forces against us and outside us that threaten to undo us.

I am extremely glad that Christ gave his disciples *authority over all demons*. Now... name it and claim it.

Lord, give us (again) Your authority over our demons.

Jonah 1:17—2:10; Psalm 119:1-24; Acts 27:9-26

Thursday, October 15

Luke 9:18-27 “*For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake, he will save it.*” (v.24)

I’ve heard this almost all my life, that in order to get life, or true life, I am somehow required to lose life, which is “my” life and my ends. It has always sounded somewhat threatening, as in, “I like my life, or think I do. So why am I being asked to lay it down?” (Sounds masochistic.)

In other words, I questioned the Lord’s indicative. *Until* I lost it, that is! What I mean is, at a certain point I had no choice but to accept losing what I believed was my life and my prerogatives. Whether through its being taken away, or through punishment, almost everyone loses what they thought was important—at some time or another. (Say it isn’t so. But it is.)

After I actually lost my life—in the sense of vocation, resources, and friendships—well, then Christ’s words made sense. It was as if what I should have known before it happened, became true in hindsight.

Dear Lord, prepare us *now* to lose what we’re going to have to lose anyway.

Jonah 3:1—4:11; Psalm 18:1-20; Acts 27:27-44

Friday, October 16

Luke 9:28-36 *And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, my Chosen, listen to him!”* (v.35)

To whom do you listen in your daily routine? NPR? The Drudge Report? Your husband? Your daughter? The Cooking Channel? Your endless texts?

This is important to ask, because the people you listen to have a big effect on your life. You start to see your life through *their* eyes. And they don’t always have your best interests at heart. (Maybe they sort of do, but sometimes they have their own agenda going into it.)

Up on the mountain, God spoke to Peter, James, and John, and told them to listen to Jesus. God was very specific, and personal.

And I don’t really want to listen to anybody else—if it’s important—other than God. That is because He knows me, but He also loves me.

Lord, help us listen to the voices of the people and of the One who have our best interests at heart.

Song of Solomon 1:2-8; Psalms 16, 17; Acts 28:1-16

Saturday, October 17

Luke 9:37-50 *While he was coming, the demon tore him and convulsed him. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father.* (v.42)

No one could do what Christ could do. At least in this report, for his disciples were unable to help a possessed child until Jesus himself came down, drew out by his sheer presence the demonic spirit (like snake venom), rebuked the spirit, and then gave the child, now peaceful and healed, back to his father.

This is stunning and applies to us. I see demon-possession all the time, though it is not always of the “Amityville Horror” sort. It can be chronic depression, completely engrossing resentment, overwhelming jealousy. Whatever name we give it and whatever form it takes, possession by a bad spirit

literally stops your life in its tracks. It is actually possible to be in a state of arrested development over some past emotional wound *for the whole rest of your life*.

Come to Christ, sincerely and with the best account you can give of your paralysis, and he *will* rebuke it. The secret probably lies in the desiring to be cured.

Lord Jesus, incentivize us to come to you when we are being throttled by forces bigger than we.

Song of Solomon 1:9—2:7; Psalms 20, 21; Acts 28:17-31

by Paul Zahl

Used with permission from the BIBLE READING FELLOWSHIP

P. O. Box 380, Winter Park, FL 32790

www.biblereading.org