

Good News Daily

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Sunday, February 7

Hebrews 12:1-6 *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles.* (v.1a NIV)

Have you ever pondered the fact that a great cloud of witnesses is surrounding you and me 24-7-365? Who are these witnesses? I submit they are those who have gone before us, knowing Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. They are literally cheering for us until we are reunited. Then we are told to throw off everything that hinders us, for all of us that would be sin. Which habitual action separates us from the Father? There are too many to list. That brings us to the sin that so easily entangles us.

So, what is that sin that so easily entangles us? I submit it is unbelief. That is why so many have it and it is so easy to stumble over it. Did you know that the word “believe” appears 289 times in the Bible, most are in the New Testament? The most well-known verse in Scripture contains the word “believe” (John 3:16). What does believe mean? Chuck Colson, founder of Prison Ministries, said if you do not live it you do not believe it.

The world says, “First I see it, and then I will believe it.” The Christian says, “I believe it, and then I will see it.” We all have choices in life. Choices have consequences. Choose wisely. Ponder these things.

Isaiah 57:14-21; Psalms 93, 96; John 7:37-46

Monday, February 8

Mark 9:30-41 *“They will kill him, and after three days he will rise.”* (v.31b)

Jesus is always teaching, and in that process, he is laser focused. This is his second prediction of his final days (Mark 8:31, 10:33-34 are the others). He and his disciples passed through Galilee on his way to Jerusalem to suffer and die. Thanks be to God I do not have to make a similar trip. Life is not about who I am, it’s about what He has done. It’s not about what I’ve done, it’s about who He is.

Then Jesus sits down to teach the disciples about who is the greatest. Then he states anyone who wants to be the greatest must first be the last and the servant of all.

People often ignore those who have no influence and treat with favor those who do. We rub shoulders with the great in order to boost our own egos and status in the eyes of others. Jesus calls us to humble ourselves. We should care nothing about the world’s status symbols because the true way to greatness is humility. One sign of this humility is welcoming those whom the world considers insignificant. Ponder Jesus’ trip to the cross and his humility.

Isaiah 58:1-12; Psalm 80; Galatians 6:11-18

Tuesday, February 9

Psalms 78:1-39 *They willfully put God to the test...* (v.18a)

The Israelites were wandering in the desert after their exodus from bondage in Egypt. What does it mean to put God to the test? It implies a lack of trust in God’s goodness or His power. The Israelites tested God during their wilderness wanderings by challenging Him to meet their demands. They seemed to threaten that if God did not satisfy their various ultimatums, they would not believe in His ability or willingness to help them.

With God’s power all around them, why didn’t the Israelites believe? It’s hard to sympathize with people who witnessed God’s miracles, possessed God’s law, and still did not believe. But, in their defense, they never doubted God’s existence. The problem was that they often worshiped other gods as well. They simply wanted to hedge their bets; in case God didn’t come through for them, perhaps one of the other gods would.

Doesn't God ask us the same basic question today? Do you trust me? Do you really trust me? Ponder that for a while.

Isaiah 59:1-15a; 2 Timothy 1:1-14; Mark 9:42-50

Wednesday, February 10

Mark 10:1-16 *"Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."* (v.15).

Why were the disciples upset about people bringing children to Jesus? The disciples probably meant well. Jesus was under great pressure from the constant crowds and a demanding schedule that sometimes left no time to even eat. Like a receptionist for a busy executive, the disciples apparently thought their role was to protect the Lord from what they considered annoying interruptions and petty distractions. Jesus, however, always had time for children, seeing them as models of innocence, humility, and trust.

Should adults act like children? Jesus doesn't call people to childish behavior; he calls them to childlike faith. The qualities of humility, trust, receptivity, and a lack of self-sufficiency all characterize the person of faith. The kingdom of God is not earned by human effort but is received in childlike trust as a gift of the mercy and grace of God

Ponder these thoughts for a while.

Isaiah 59:15b-21; Psalm 119:97-120; 2 Timothy 1:15—2:13

Thursday, February 11

Psalm 146 *Do not put your trust in princes, in human beings, who cannot save.* (v.3)

Should we not put any trust in people? Not if it means abandoning trust in God. If we must choose between trusting God or human leaders, we should trust God every time. Human nature, depraved as it is because of sin, makes putting our faith in individuals a dangerous venture, especially in matters of salvation. People can be trusted. It requires choices. Choices have consequences. Choose wisely. Only God can be trusted all the time, any time without reservation.

I had the pleasure of a trip to Israel. Just a year ago from when this article was written, a month after our return from an awesome trip, we were thrust into the pandemic COVID-19. In less than a month our world was turned upside down. Man got us into this mess. Only God can get us out of this mess. It will be good to see where we are as of the time this writing is published. May we all be able to look back with a liberating, hopeful, and faithful perspective on life.

Isaiah 60:1-17; Psalms 83, 147; 2 Timothy 2:14-26; Mark 10:17-31

Friday, February 12

2 Timothy 3:1-17 *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.* (vv.16-17)

How and why are the Scriptures God-breathed? They have the breath of God in them; they give life. The Scriptures are unlike ordinary books; they are God's authoritative word. God initiated the Bible and inspired its writers. He safeguarded it from error and guided its compilation. The Bible we have is precisely the word God wants us to have.

I do not purport to understand every verse in the Bible. But I do believe every word is true and inerrant. Why? Because, if you can find a lie in the Bible it would become a house of cards and our faith would be in vain. The Bible does not contain *all* truths, but it is entirely true. It is all about relationships with a living person. It's the only book you will ever need on relationships. Ponder that.

Isaiah 61:1-9; Psalm 88; Mark 10:32-45

Saturday, February 13

2 Timothy 4:1-8 *They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.* (v.4)

The guidance to us as laity is not meant for clergy only. We can all preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke, and encourage with great patience and careful instruction. If you meditate on this reading in 2 Timothy, you will discover that you can do all these things without speaking a word—initially by how you act.

If we fail to follow these actions, there will come a time when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. Just look at the church today compared with 40 to 50 years ago. Where are we headed? Why? Hang in there. Fight the good fight. Your retirement plan is out of this world. Ponder this passage.

Isaiah 61:10—62:5; Psalms 87, 90; Mark 10:46-52

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