

Good News Daily

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Sunday, January 17

Psalm 150 Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD! (v.6 NKJV)

Have you ever desired to soar like an eagle? To sing like a bird? To be free without a concern in the world? If you think a bird is without worries, you're wrong. Each spring I watch as the Cardinal and the Carolina Wren build their nests. Each day I count the eggs, then eagerly await as new life bursts forth. However, it's not always a happy ending. An eagle swoops down and snatches the eggs from the nest. I mourn along with mama bird. Yet, she returns to the backyard each morning to sing her songs of praise to her creator, God.

We're told to praise God in the good times and the bad. The coronavirus kept many of us isolated for months. My son placed box-gardens filled with bright colored flowers and vegetables in my backyard. When I feel less than thankful, I gaze upon it and praise God!

Isaiah 43:14—44:5 Psalms 148, 149; Hebrews 6:17—7:10; John 4:27-42

Monday, January 18

Psalm 25 Turn Yourself to me, and have mercy on me, For I am desolate and afflicted. The troubles of my heart have enlarged; Bring me out of my distresses! Look on my affliction and my pain, And forgive all my sins. (vv.16-18)

After a year of procedures and surgeries, I enter the new year with hope, only to find myself facing a second hip replacement, followed by one procedure and surgery after another in the upcoming months. "When will it end?" I cry out to the Lord. I plead with God, "Please help me!" I know if I could touch the hem of Jesus' cloak, I would become healed. But only in my mind's eye will this happen. "On you I wait all the day" (v.5).

In chapter 3 of Joyce Meyers' book *Battlefield of the Mind*, it tells us we must purposely choose. I scribble the short sentence on a post-it note and tape it to the bathroom mirror. Over and over throughout the day I repeat the words, "I will never give up! God is on my side. He loves me, and He is helping me."

"Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, For I wait for You" (v.21).

Isaiah 44: 6-8, 21-23; Ephesians 4:1-16; Mark 3:7-19a

Tuesday, January 19

Mark 3:19b-35 "If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand." (vv.24-25)

It's nearly seven months since the protests, sometimes called riots, broke out in all major cities in America. It began with the death of an African American man at the hands of a police officer. Other countries rose up in support of what is called "the black movement" or "black lives matter." As I write this devotional we're in the midst of the pandemic, named Covid-19, protest marches, and if you live on the east coast, Hurricane Isaias, now downgraded to a tropical storm. Some will say we're handed a "triple whammy." Unity and disunity. Looting and plundering. Destruction and mayhem. My heart breaks. While I struggle to remain neutral and non-judgmental in this "new normal," I see history destroyed; statues pulled down, broken beyond repair. The good and bad march through cities destroying lives and property. At this date in time, I pray for a peaceful resolution. However, as I write only God knows the outcome of these events. I can only pray, "Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me."

Isaiah 44:9-20; Psalms 26, 28; Ephesians 4:17-32

Wednesday, January 20

Ephesians 5:1-14 Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. (vv.1-2)

To walk is to place one foot in front of the other never having both feet off the ground at the same time. We learn to walk as an infant, often falling, but someone picks us up and we persevere as we continue our journey through life. We walk down the aisle to the all-important music of graduation and weddings.

My wedding consisted of only immediate family. I didn't mind as long as my other requests were allowed. My wedding would be in a church. I would wear my Grandmother's veil and, most important, my Dad would walk me down the aisle and give me away. I'll never forget the look of sadness and his forced smile as he placed the hand of his 17-year-old daughter in the hand of another. However, the most important walk today is my walk with God. Psalm 116:9 says, "I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living." Micah tells us what the Lord requires of us, "...to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God."

Isaiah 44:24—45:7; Psalm 38; Mark 4:1-20

Thursday, January 21

Isaiah 45:5-17 ...I am the LORD, and there is no other; I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create calamity; I, the LORD, do all these things. (vv.6b-7)

When we the people of the world were told we were in a pandemic and we should isolate ourselves from this very dangerous virus, none of us dreamed we would still be in the same place months later. They call it "the new normal." Borders of our state (Florida) were shut down to outsiders (anyone entering from the north by land and air and sea from other ports). Stores were closed. Where's the "toilet paper?" There's "necessary and unnecessary" businesses—hair salons, restaurants, bars, schools, and churches are the unnecessary. We now have virtual learning and no sports. We continue to be told to stay home, wear masks, and sanitize, sanitize, sanitize. There continues to be a fear of the unknown. The impact's a financial loss for most and loss of faith for others. Where are You God? Did you create this calamity as You did in the Old Testament? Lord, bring back the light and bring us Your peace. Amen.

Psalm 37:1-18; Ephesians 5:15-33; Mark 4:21-34

Friday, January 22

Ephesians 6:1-9 And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him. (v.9)

This very long sentence in Ephesians 6 says there's a balance between bondservants and we receive the same from the Lord, whether he's a slave or free. There's much talk about slavery and freedom these days, with uprisings and anti-this and anti-that in the forefront of media news. What's happening today also happened in the past. The Bible tells us in the Old Testament, Egypt's king set taskmasters over the children of Israel who were slaves to Pharaoh. They were starved and whipped into submission, while building the "supply cities." Paul writes in Galatians of "spiritual slaves" and how the Spirit of Christ in our hearts will set us free. We are sons and daughters of God through our faith in Jesus Christ. Let's not turn back to a past we cannot change, but continue forward down the path God has planned for us.

To quote Pastor Nancy Ogne, "God's love is present to us. This cannot separate us from the love of God."

Isaiah 45:18-25; Psalm 31; Mark 4:35-41

Saturday, January 23

Psalm 30 Hear, O LORD, and have mercy on me; LORD, be my helper! (v.10)

I can't remember hearing the words "I love you" when I was growing up. I assumed the words were reserved for the person you married, for one special person in your life, and the lyrics of songs. As I grew older, I expanded my use of the phrase to include my immediate family. I'm not comfortable saying or hearing the phrase from those outside my family unit. If I say "I love you" to everyone, it loses its special meaning and becomes simply three little words. If someone says, "I love you," you're expected to say it back. But what if you don't?

I recall after Mom passed, Dad and I had frequent phone conversations and I would end by saying, "I love you, Dad." I'll never forget his response: "You know I love you, why do I need to say it?" His

response made me think how actions speak louder than words. After months of isolation caused by the pandemic, it's not words I yearn for, but a simple hug. "Abba, Father, I love you Lord."

Isaiah 46:1-13; Psalm 32; Ephesians 6:10-24; Mark 5:1-20

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