

Good News Daily

Volume XXI

March 21-27, 2021

Number 12

Sunday, March 21

Jeremiah 23:16-32 *Who has listened and heard his word?* (v.18b NIV)

“It is up to each generation to reinterpret the Bible to fit their culture,” the preacher of a church I visited said as he gazed from the pulpit into the pews. I couldn’t believe what I heard.

God, speaking through his true prophet, Jeremiah, was concerned that His people had been listening to false prophets. He still is today. Tune into so-called Christian stations, and you can hear all sorts of heretical preaching—from God not wanting anyone to ever be ill to God wanting to bless us with millions of dollars as a reward for obedience. Some preach who God wants us to vote for.

Where do we find the truth? Where it has always been—in God’s word. Believers have what the people in Jeremiah’s time did not. We have the Bible in many forms and translations. The Holy Spirit is there to guide our understanding of what Scripture says. The more we read, mark, and learn, the more we will be able to spot the misleading statements of false prophets.

Psalm 118; 1 Corinthians 9:19-27; Mark 8:31—9:1

Monday, March 22

Psalm 31 *I will be glad and rejoice in your love for you saw my affliction and knew the anguish of my soul.* (v.7)

For close to two years I was suffering due to illness. Month after month the pain increased, and my muscle tone decreased. It took three surgeries and nine months of physical therapy to put this humpty-dumpty together again. It was the most amazing time of my life.

Why? I drew so very close to God. I leaned on His strength, having very little of my own. I penned seven novels, wrote countless devotionals, and became an editor for an international missionary group. When my legs would not support me, my Lord carried me.

Sometimes we must hit rock bottom to find out that Jesus is our rock and our fortress (vv.2-3). It is in those times that we can either embrace the mercy of God or fight Him. I could not have made it through without my faith, and the prayers of others, to bolster me.

If you know of someone going through a difficult time, include them in your prayers and touch base with them often. Help them find the Rock to lean upon.

Jeremiah 24:1-10; Romans 9:19-33; John 9:1-17

Tuesday, March 23

Romans 10:1-13 *Brothers, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved.* (v.1)

Paul was both a Roman citizen and of Hebrew heritage. The Israelites were his people. He always went to the synagogue first to preach when he visited a city. But time and again, it was the Gentiles who heard, understood, and sought salvation through Christ.

I have fervently prayed for some family members to finally move from knowing about God to knowing Him intimately as their Lord. Perhaps you have someone you have prayed for as well.

So many things can get in the way: pride and self-reliance, a bad experience with church as a child, an unloving father, or simply embracing what the world considers important. For the Israelites, many had a false sense of security in being God’s people, and zealously sought to establish their own righteousness instead of bending to God’s will (vv.3-4).

It is against our nature to let someone else drive, take the reins, or try to take over. It is only when we realize that faith is strengthened in our weakness and that God’s will as a loving Lord is better than any we could think of, that we can surrender to the Cross.

Jeremiah 25:8-17; Psalms 120, 121, 122, 123; John 9:18-41

Wednesday, March 24

Romans 10:14-21 *But I ask: Did they not hear? Of course they did: "Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world."* (v.18)

Paul reminded the Gentiles that Christianity came out of Judaism. God's message and covenants were not erased by Christ. They were fulfilled. The Ten Commandments were still in force.

I know of Christians who seem to ignore the Old Testament, except perhaps Genesis, some of the psalms, and a few chosen passages like Chronicles 7:14 and Micah 6:8. Maybe the verses in Isaiah that point to the suffering of Christ... But for the most part, they believe that stuff is no longer valid, especially all the wars and battles. Only the New Testament contains the Truth, the Way and the Life.

How wonderful that in the Anglican tradition (like many others) we read, study, and digest all the Bible in our lectionaries. The heritage of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is ours as well. Jesus was there at creation. So many prophecies point to him. And above all, reading the story of the Hebrews' roller coaster faith can be a lesson for us. Their humanity is similar to ours.

Don't be afraid to dig into the Old Testament. God speaks through it still.

Jeremiah 25:30-38; Psalm 119:145-176; John 10:1-18

Thursday, March 25

Psalms 133 *How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity.* (v.1)

I have heard it said that God unites, the devil divides. And I have known it to be true. Division is one of the devil's most subtle and powerful weapons. "United we stand, divided we fall."

Throughout most of my adulthood, our nation has become more and more severed. The almost 50/50 split has crippled us. Stubbornness on both sides of the legislative aisle has prevented the people we elect to serve us from serving us. Tolerance is passé, as is agreeing to disagree. It's an attitude of "me versus you."

But Christ teaches a different way. Love our enemies. Forgive. Live at peace with one another. Turn the other cheek. He was never wishy washy nor compromised the truth, but responded to those in opposition out of love. Sometimes that meant remaining silent. Other times it was a call to action.

May we, when faced with those who have different opinions and beliefs, pray before we act and listen to the Holy Spirit before we respond.

Jeremiah 26:1-16; Psalms 131, 132; Romans 11:1-12; John 10:19-42

Friday, March 26

John 11:1-27 *Yet he [Jesus] stayed where he was two more days.* (v.6)

I am sure Martha and Mary expected Jesus to appear immediately. They had witnessed his healing powers. They had heard him speak of faith and God's love. But he didn't come that day, or the next, and their brother, Lazarus, became weaker and weaker. Then he died. Had Jesus forgotten them? Was he too busy? Were they not that important to him after all?

Perhaps one of the hardest things we learn in our Christian journey is that God's timing is not always on our time. And yes, in hindsight, which is always 20/20, we see that it was perfect. Things came together at just the correct time and place. And we marvel with a gasped breath when we realize God was there all along and cared.

Notice that the sisters went on as custom dictated when it came to taking care of their brother's remains. And when Jesus did arrive, they yielded to his will. And the miracle unfolded.

May we remember to do the same.

Jeremiah 29:1, 4-13; Psalm 22; Romans 11:13-24

Saturday, March 27

Jeremiah 31:27-34 *"No longer will a man teach his neighbor or a man teach his brother saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest."* (v.34)

Ah, what a day will that be. It reminds me of Paul's vision in Philippians when one day every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Christ Jesus is Lord (2:10-11). How much simpler life would be if everyone acted as Christians should—if we were other-centered, and lived to love, forgive, and serve.

But as long as we live in a broken world, this cannot automatically be a reality for everyone. Sin blinds many. Doubt and pride scale over their faith-eyes.

It is only when we ask Christ into our hearts and allow the Holy Spirit to work in us that we can truly know God, not just know about Him. He changes our perspective and helps us see the eternal purpose in temporal events.

So, until the last day, when Christ returns, we should continue to tell our neighbors and family about the wonderful things God does for us, from the least to the greatest.

Psalms 137, 144; Romans 11:25-36; John 11:28-44 *or* 12:37-50

by Julie B Cosgrove

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