

## *Good News Daily*

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### **Sunday, August 15**

Galatians 3:6-14 *Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because “the righteous will live by faith.”* (v.11 NIV)

Most of us are law-abiding citizens, aren't we? We know we shouldn't steal or murder. We should pay taxes and not drink and then drive. But, what about those little yields instead of halts at the stop sign? Or going a few miles over the speed limit when we are in a hurry. Or making photocopies of personal emails and documents on the office copier. When the clerk gives us back too much change, do we pocket it?

The Holy Spirit nudges us to act the right way and do the right thing. He helps us resist the temptation to fudge a little here and there. But even then, only one man, who walked on earth, lived without sin. And he died for ours.

Before we judge others, let us remember we all have fallen short (Romans 3:23). Our faith reminds us that we all need Jesus, and he is the only way we are made righteous enough to kneel before the throne or be worthy to gather the crumbs under his table.

2 Samuel 17:1-23; Psalm 118; John 3:30-47

### **Monday, August 16**

Psalm 106:1-18 *Then they believed his promises and sang his praise.* (v.12)

They say seeing is believing. For the most part, isn't it true? It isn't until we experience Christ breaking through into our lives that we then grab hold of faith. Even if raised in the church, at one point we must accept Jesus as our personal Savior and confirm the faith that we have been taught as children.

The Hebrews were no different. God had spared them from plagues and given them freedom from slavery, but it wasn't until they were stuck between death by spear and drowning that they believed His intervention on their behalf was real.

Some people must reach the end of their own strength before they ask for help. It is human nature to do it ourselves, thank you very much. But when we witness God's almighty power, it changes our way of thinking.

May we be a people who believe without seeing, as Jesus told Thomas in the Upper Room (John 20:29). Then we will be truly blessed.

2 Samuel 17:24—18:8; Acts 22:30—23:11; Mark 11:12-26

### **Tuesday, August 17**

2 Samuel 18:9-18 *“You are not the one to take the news today,” Joab told him. “You may take the news another time, but you must not do so today, because the king's son is dead.”* (v.20)

Although the Israelite armies had achieved a great victory, Joab knew King David needed time to mourn because his son, leading the enemy, had died during the battle. Despite his past actions, the fact Absalom was David's son mattered more.

No matter what a person does, who they are—or were—is even more important in the eyes of their loved ones. Wrong actions often do not reduce the sorrow, hurt, or helplessness of those left behind. The person may have been a mass murderer but somewhere someone is grieving over them. They should not be blamed for their relative's actions, but instead should be extended sympathy.

We need to give people time to work through their emotions and honor their right to have them. Pray with them and over them. Sometimes, just being there to hand them a tissue, hold their hand, or listen is the better path. The rest can wait.

Psalms 120, 121, 122, 123; Acts 23:12-24; Mark 11:27—12:12

### **Wednesday, August 18**

Acts 22:23-35 *The commander went to Paul and asked, "Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?" "Yes, I am," he answered. (v.27)*

This passage might seem a bit confusing. Paul, who writes that he only boasts of Christ and not himself (2 Corinthians 10), suddenly uses his clout to get out of sticky situation. However, Paul worked within the parameters of the law. And that law stated a citizen of Rome had certain rights. He didn't ask for a special concession, only that he be treated justly.

In many places in the world, Christians face persecution for stating their beliefs. They have no laws to protect them. In fact, by proclaiming Jesus as their Savior they may be breaking laws. However, like Paul, they have a defender that goes beyond the laws of human governments.

Eventually, citizen or no, Paul would be imprisoned and executed for his faith. The Romans, who stated no citizen could undergo a humiliating punishment or death, would behead him.

Ultimately, we cannot place our faith in human laws, but in the Truth of God. And if Christ is for us, Paul would later write from prison, who is against us? (Romans 8:31).

2 Samuel 18:19-23; Psalm 119:145-176; Mark 12:13-27

### **Thursday, August 19**

Mark 12:28-34 *Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him... (v.28b)*

Some of the religious leaders and scholars of the day would ask Jesus questions to trap him. But this man asked because he honored Jesus. In other words, his questioning was sincere. Jesus told him he was not far from the kingdom of God (v.34).

There will always be people who will try to dispel our faith or trip us up. They will nit-pick. They will argue. Their intentions are not honorable.

However, some question out of an open desire to know more about Jesus. Their hearts have been softened. The door Jesus had been knocking upon opens a crack. We all at one time or another were in this category even if we were brought up in families of faith. At one point, we whispered our questions and believed the Lord would answer.

Doubt is not the absence of faith. We should ask questions. Our Lord doesn't mind an open and honest discussion. Have the faith that God will answer when the time is right, and possibly in a way you may not have anticipated.

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

### **Friday, August 20**

Psalm 140 *Let burning coals fall upon them; may they be thrown into the fire, into miry pits never to rise. (v.10)*

Yipes. Not a very loving and forgiving response, David.

Passages like this clash with my New Testament understanding of how I should live as a follower of Jesus. After all, are we not to help lead everyone to salvation? To forgive and even love our enemies? To judge not less we be judged (Matthew 7:1)?

For me, however, there is comfort in passages such as this. If anything, David felt comfortable enough in his faith to be honest with God and express his feelings. I admire him for that, and I believe God did as well.

Daddy will stand by while we have our temper tantrums. Sometimes, wise parents realize the emotions must come out first before reason kicks in. God knows how we are wired. He made us.

Like David, we should feel confident to approach Him with our thoughts and emotions, even if they are unloving at the time. It is better to emote to our Father in prayer first than lash out to others in haste.

2 Samuel 19:24-43; Psalm 142; Acts 24:24—25:12; Mark 12:35-44

**Saturday, August 21**

Mark 13:1-13 *“Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to be fulfilled?”* (v.4)

Pandemics, floods, earthquakes, violence, secularism, and persecution... many Christians believe we are in the end times and it will get even worse before Jesus comes. Not everyone can agree on the sequence of the end times. Camps of eschatology are divided. Will we escape the wrath, have to endure some of it, or have to grin and bear it until the end when Christ appears? They have fancy names such as Postmillennialism, Amillennialism, and Premillennialism.

There is one thing for certain: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again. Believers have eternal life and nothing here on earth is so intolerable that it can destroy true faith. The devil will not win the war, even though he may take credit for the outcome of skirmishes.

Jesus stated that we should watch out so that no one deceives us. The issue is not when and how but that it will happen, in God's time. Our focus should be to remain in the faith and live each day in clear conscience as if it was our last on earth.

2 Samuel 23:1-7, 13-17; Psalms 137, 144; Acts 25:13-27

*by Julie B Cosgrove*

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