

Good News Daily

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Sunday, July 18

Matthew 25:14-30 *His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy lord.* (v.21 KJV)

As I write this it is the beginning of Lent and, with this scriptural reminder, it is appropriate for me to confess my selfishness and to contemplate my accountability for God's resources. I have also recently read in Psalm 37:20, "Once I was young, and now I am old; yet I have never seen the godly forsaken, nor seen their children begging for bread."

As a young veterinarian, one of my vet mentors gave me a copy of a book called *The Richest Man in Babylon*. It was a collection of worldly wisdom to help me become a successful businessman.

Another mentor of mine chose the Bible to advise me using Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the Lord with all thy heart and rely not on your own understanding and He will make your path straight."

Now, at age 80, it is a time for reflections. The first book taught me that a part of all I was to earn was mine to keep but I should always save ten percent and invest it well for the future. The second advised me to trust God and seek His wisdom. I have tried to do both.

By God's miraculous gift for the opportunity to become a veterinarian, which I have truly loved, the profession has provided us a steady income and with good investments. We have always had all we have needed. Now, I hope I can finish the race well and He will consider my life well done and give me my inheritance of eternal life.

1 Samuel 23:7-18; Psalms 63, 98; Romans 11:33—12:2

Monday, July 19

1 Samuel 24:1-22 *Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats.* (v.2)

As I read this Bible story, it reminds me our trip to the Holy Land several years ago. The site where this story takes place is a beautiful oasis in the desert near the Dead Sea. Our group ascended a path between two mountains with many caves. We followed a stream to the top with a waterfall and pool where our Rabbi leader swam. It was in one of these caves David had the opportunity to kill his enemy, King Saul. The king had pursued David to that point to kill him but, instead, David spared Saul's life.

I think these quiet places were special to me because they had been unchanged by history. Like my experience earlier in our trip, worshiping on the Sea of Galilee and visiting the creek where David slew Goliath, they were spiritual experiences. Others were more busy tourist attractions or buried under some monument. Today, in one of my readings, I was told the Bible is not a book of history but a relational account of other people's lives. A wise man once said, "There is little new, it is all the old retold."

A visit to the Holy Land has provided a new picture of both the Old and New Testaments for my Bible study. I will never forget it. If you have never been, my prayer is for you, too, to someday make your own pilgrimage.

Psalms 41, 52; Acts 13:44-52; Mark 4:1-20

Tuesday, July 20

Mark 4:21-34 *And he said unto them, Is a lamp brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed, and not to be set on a lampstand? For there is nothing hidden, which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come to light.* (vv.21-22)

I read this morning in my devotional by Joan Chittister (*The Rule of Benedict*) that worship and prayer should always be a fresh miracle each day for us. Our prayers should be brief and enable our lives

to become a prayer outside of prayer, to become “pure of heart,” one with God, centered in the truth that is Truth and the power that is Power and the love that is Love. We should live under the influence of the Scriptures and to live in the breath of the Spirit.

1 Samuel 25:1-22; Psalm 45; Acts 14: 1-18

Wednesday, June 21

Acts 14:19-28 *And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.* (v.23)

During this season of Lent, our church small groups are studying The Lord’s Prayer. We are looking more deeply into how Jesus taught us to pray. It seems to me it can be a preparation for us to share the light of the gospel message with others. The opportunities each of us will have today can be turned into holy moments. In his prayer, Jesus assures us of our oneness with the blessed holy Trinity which empowers us to answer the call to ministry.

1 Samuel 25:23-44; Psalm 119:49-72; Mark 4:35-41

Thursday, July 22

Psalm 50 *Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me; and to him that ordereth his conduct will I will show the salvation of God.* v.23

As I write today on this Tuesday of Holy Week, I have just finished watching Morning Prayer with our associate priest and his wife live-streamed over the internet. Worship and prayer are very important for us now as we all contemplate this time in our lives like none other. Certainly, we have an unsure future with this new virus pandemic. During Holy Week we are assured of God’s New Covenant with us climaxed by the glorious resurrection victory over Christ’s death on Easter. It seems to me this is an important time for us to be reminded what life is really about—where it came from, why we have it, and for whom we are to live for. It is a time for community prayer and to remember we are not in this world unto ourselves. Praise God.

1 Samuel 28:3-20; Acts 15:1-11; Mark 5:1-20

Friday, July 23

Mark 5:21-43 *And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee well. Go in peace, and be well of thy plague.* (v.34)

Normally, we have a healing service at our church each Tuesday evening, with trained prayer ministers to support the needs of our parish or others in the community. At this time, however, we’re missing that service because of the coronavirus. We miss the encouraging praise reports from parishioners of their healings, the community prayers for one another, and the worship communion with anointing from our clergy.

Our church also has a healing ministry that is a chapter of the International Order of St. Luke the Physician, ecumenical organization dedicated to Christian healing ministry. As a member of this ministry, we have studied the 24 healing miracles of Jesus. There are two miracles of healing in today’s Scripture readings.

The first is the woman in Mark 5:34 who touched Jesus’ robe and was healed of the plague. This reminds us of our present plague with the coronavirus. As I write this, we are all praying for God’s healings across our state, country, and world for the sick, jobless, and hungry and for our economic recovery.

The second miracle is in Mark 5:39 where Jesus brings back to life the ruler of the synagogue’s daughter. This healing will always remind me of my son’s miraculous healing during our family’s near drowning experience. He was two years old then, and my six-year-old daughter pulled him off the bottom of the pool with no sign of life. Our faithful maid, Ella, prayed to Jesus at poolside as I resuscitated him. God answered our prayers and gave him life, as he did for the father in this Scripture.

Remember how Jesus, riding on a colt came into Jerusalem, was praised and joyously worshiped for all the miracles they had seen. Yet, it took Calvary and Easter for us to be saved.

Healings seem to always come from faith—which is what we need now.

1 Samuel 31:1-13; Psalms 40, 54; Acts 15:12-21

Saturday, July 24

Acts 15:22-35 *Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain who went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law, to whom we gave no such commandment.* (v.24)

I have just finished reading a book written by an Episcopal priest friend of mine, Fr. Sam Clarke, titled *The Holy One of Israel and His Chosen People*. The book is about the biblical relationship between Israel and the Church.

Several years ago, my wife and I went with Fr. Sam and his Messianic church members on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. When I read this Scripture, it reminded me of how the early Christian church, who were Messianic Jews, debated the requirements of being a Christian. The apostle James clarified to the new Gentile Christians that they did not have to be circumcised, as the old Jewish tradition required. They would be members of the New Covenant by way of Romans 6:14: “Ye are not under the law, but under grace.”

2 Samuel 1:1-16; Psalm 55; Mark 6:1-13

by R. Bruce Keene

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