

## *Good News Daily*

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### **Sunday, July 4**

Psalm 146 *Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no help.* (v.3 RSV)

I have come to love the Lord more deeply through the adoration and exhortation of the psalms. My spirit is lifted and my confidence strengthened when I'm reminded that it is the Lord who "opens the eyes of the blind...heals the brokenhearted, and binds up their wounds...[and] lifts up the downtrodden." "The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love." "The LORD will reign for ever." As you read today's psalms, can you feel your spirit being lifted and an enthusiastic "Yes" welling up within you, only to explode from your lips?

As the world's noisy distractions continually pull us in a hundred different directions, what a blessing it is to be nourished by God's holy word and prepared to meet the challenges of the day. When we realize that "he prepares rain for the earth...gives to the beasts their food" and assures us of "his steadfast love," why on earth would we, even for a moment, consider putting our trust in mortal man "in whom there is no help"?

1 Samuel 14:36-45; Psalm 147; Romans 5:1-11; Matthew 22:1-14

### **Monday, July 5**

1 Samuel 15:1-3, 7-23 *"I repent that I have made Saul king; for he has turned back from following me, and has not performed my commandments."* (v.11)

Saul was given an opportunity to demonstrate his allegiance to the Lord by completing a task. The message Samuel brought to Saul was clear, you are to destroy completely the Amalekites. No one and no thing were to be spared.

It is easy to second guess Saul, but it appears that he thought God was asking too much or that He did not really mean what He said. Saul disobeys, spares the Amalekite king and the best of the sheep and oxen; he only destroys what was weak, despised, or worthless. Saul set his will above the command of the Lord. Because of his disobedience, God rejected him and could no longer use him to rule His chosen people.

If I were honest, I would have to say I do not like this story, because Saul's story is mine as well. I am not a public official ruling a nation, but where is my allegiance—to the Lord or to myself? What is He asking me to do that demands my full obedience? What is He asking of you as you read His word today?

Psalms 1, 2, 3; Acts 9:19b-31; Luke 23:44-56a

### **Tuesday, July 6**

Acts 9:32-43 *And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; rise and make your bed." And immediately he rose. Peter put them all outside and knelt down and prayed; then turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, rise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up.* (vv.34, 40)

During Peter's travels, he stopped in Lydda where Aeneas, a paralytic, was healed. Word spread and believers in Joppa asked Peter to come quickly. They brought him to Tabitha, who had become ill and died, and he raised her from the dead. The man of action was at both miracles, yet it was not his power, but the power of Jesus that healed. "Jesus Christ heals you," Peter said to Aeneas and he dropped to his knees in prayer before speaking to Tabitha.

These are powerful examples of Jesus' words, "...he who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do...." What a privilege it is to call on the power of Jesus when a friend or loved one needs healing! As Christians, we have access to a power that is beyond our imagination, yet how often do we avail ourselves of what Jesus promised?

Lord Jesus, help us to believe that we do not need to act in our own power, but to allow you to act through us.

1 Samuel 15:24-35; Psalms 5, 6; Luke 23:56b—24:11

### **Wednesday, July 7**

Luke 24:12-35 *While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them.* (v.15)

It's easy to be critical of the two who walked on the road to Emmaus. How was it possible for them, who had seen Jesus in the flesh, heard his words, and perhaps experienced his healing touch, to be so blind as he drew near to them? Yet so much was going on in their lives. Jesus had been delivered into the hands of the Romans, condemned by false testimony, put to death on a cross—and then they heard fantastic stories about Jesus being alive.

As I reflect on this passage, I think how busy we get with our families, jobs, church activities, and the pressures and responsibilities of our lives and I wonder how often Jesus draws near to us. Do our preoccupations, our busyness, and a longing for the way things used to be, prevent us from seeing him? Yet just as “he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself,” he continues to do the same for us. And, if we are open to his presence, our hearts also will burn within us as he talks with us on the roads we travel.

1 Samuel 16:1-13; Psalm 119:1-24; Acts 10:1-16

### **Thursday, July 8**

Luke 24:36-53 *Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures.* (v.45)

The travelers to Emmaus told the disciples what had happened. As they told their story, “Jesus himself stood among them.” Just as he had spoken to them, now “he opened [the disciples’] minds to understand the scriptures.” They had witnessed all Jesus had said and done and his suffering, death, and resurrection, but they began to understand God’s word in an entirely new way that day. The plan had been there all the time, but now it became clear.

As Christians, we stand in a long line of witnesses beginning with the men who gave our risen Lord a piece of broiled fish, listened to him, received a promise, and, empowered by the promised Holy Spirit, went out to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins in the name of Jesus. As followers of Jesus, we can never be satisfied to stop with studying the Scriptures; we must understand that we are a people with a mission. We are witnesses called to present Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, in such ways that persons may be led to accept him as Savior, and follow him as Lord, within the fellowship of his Church.

1 Samuel 16:14—17:11; Psalm 18:1-20; Acts 10:17-33

### **Friday, July 9**

Mark 1:1-13 *And he was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to him.* (v.13)

What does Jesus’ temptation have to do with us? Mark is clear—Jesus was not immune from temptation and testing. It molded and shaped him and prepared him for his ministry. Mark’s focus is on Jesus, but there are implications for us because, by our baptism, we also are God’s sons and daughters.

As God’s adopted children, we may be driven into a wilderness. Our wilderness may be the frustration of unfilled dreams, mistakes we’ve made, or the mistakes made by parents who did the best they knew how. It may be an addiction destroying a family, sickness and suffering, or the loss of a job.

It’s easy to wonder where God is at times like these. Yet, just as the angels waited on Jesus, God provides angels for us if we are willing to accept their help. Jesus’ victory assures us that God is with us, and with assurance like that, we can face our times of testing.

1 Samuel 17:17-30; Psalms 16, 17; Acts 10:34-48

### **Saturday, July 10**

Mark 1:14-28 *And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes.* (v.22)

What was it about Jesus that prompted Simon, Andrew, James, and John to leave their nets and follow him? What was it that provoked the unclean spirit to come out of the man in the synagogue, or

caused people to be amazed at his teaching? Whenever Jesus spoke, it was with authority. He did not rely on the detailed interpretations of God's word by the learned, religious experts of his day, for his authority came from an intimate relationship with his heavenly Father.

It is like a breath of fresh air to hear, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the words of Jesus. As we read the Bible, we have direct access to his words, and need not rely on some "authoritative filter" for their meaning. When Jesus speaks, the authority is there. As we read Scripture, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it is his authority that captures our hearts and minds.

1 Samuel 17:31-49; Psalms 20, 21; Acts 11:1-18

*by Gail and Jack Potter*

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