

Good News Daily

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Sunday, June 20

James 1:1-18 *My brethren, count it all joy when you all in various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.* (vv.2-3 NKJV)

The New King James study Bible tells me trials are outward circumstances—conflicts, sufferings, and troubles—encountered by all believers. Trials are not pleasant and may be extremely grievous, but believers are to consider them as opportunities for rejoicing. Troubles and difficulties are a tool which refines and purifies our faith, producing patience and endurance.

What does all this mean? Are we supposed to want trials? This Scripture and others tell us Christians will suffer trials, but where does it say we should want them? Nearly every one of us suffered some sort of trial during the past year and a half of the pandemic. I, like many others, were already going through trials when the order came to isolate at home.

I once believed if I was a Christian, my life would be sunshine and roses. I soon found out differently. If I can give thanks for the good and the bad, I'm halfway up the mountain. Thanks be to God.

1 Samuel 4:12-22; Psalms 66, 67; Matthew 19:23-30

Monday, June 21

Luke 21:29-36 *"Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."* (v.36)

The end times may not come to pass for a long time; but lately, I'm asking myself, "Am I ready?" I feel as if there's a crack in my soul, and I no longer know how to fill it. Months of isolation played havoc with my mind and body. Anger sometimes fills me and rises like steam from the tea kettle and I don't know why. With no one to yell at, my short temper fills me as I hold the words in. As the abyss grows wider, I fight to close the gap. Where are you God? I know you're there, walking beside me, even when I'm not going anywhere. But...where are you. God? Satan comes like a thief in the night, stealing my joy. Jesus told his disciples to watch and pray.

The last couple years have brought me one health problem after another, along with unbearable pain. A friend recently told me I'm one of the strongest persons she knows and very humble. Am I? Will I be ready?

1 Samuel 5:1-12; Psalm 89:1-18; Acts 5:12-26

Tuesday, June 22

Psalm 100 *Make a joyful shout to the LORD, all you lands! Serve the LORD with gladness; Come before His presence with singing. Know that the LORD, He is God; It is He who has made us and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.* (vv.1-3)

Joyce, a member of our small congregation, greets each person who comes through the door with smiles and bear hugs. Throughout the months our church shut down due to the pandemic, I've wondered how she survived not able to hug her friends due to social distancing.

I periodically receive text messages from her containing the lyrics of hymns. She calls them "Song of the day." "I can't even walk without you holding my hand, the mountains too high and the river's too wide. Down on my knees I learned to stand, because I can't even walk without you holding my hand." "Nearer my God to thee, nearer to thee." "I have decided to follow Jesus, no turning back, no turning back." "Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me, mold me, use me, fill me...Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me."

What a blessing this Godly woman of faith is to us who receive her message through the lyrics of song. When she couldn't hug, she found another way to show she cares.

1 Samuel 6:1-16; Psalms 97, 99; Acts 5:27-42; Luke 21:37—22:13

Wednesday, June 23

Psalm 101 *I will sing of mercy and justice; To You, O LORD, I will sing praises. I will behave wisely in a perfect way. Oh, when will You come to me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.* (vv.1-2)

Six years ago, I began to give individual sewing lessons in my home studio. Two girls started taking lessons in the same month. For more than five years they came every week for an hour lesson. When they started at the ages of 10 and 12 years, they didn't even know how to turn on a sewing machine. They made such progress it gave me reason to be proud of their accomplishments. Over the years, some students continued, and some didn't.

We're now at the beginning of a new school year, different than any other year in the past. Just as teachers taught at the end of the last school year, I, too, found it necessary to teach sewing virtually. This became part of the new normal. I continue to search for ways to teach sewing other than hands-on. At this time, I've only four students—three young girls and one adult.

I pray I'll be remembered as a woman of integrity, one who keeps her word and doesn't give up when the going gets tough.

1 Samuel 7:2-17; Psalm 109; Acts 6:1-15; Luke 22:14-23

Thursday, June 24

Psalm 105:1-22 *He is the LORD our God; His judgments are in all the earth. He remembers His covenant forever, The word which He commanded, for a thousand generations, The covenant which He made with Abraham.* (vv.7-9a)

Just as in the days of the Old Testament, we sometimes need to remind ourselves of God's promise to Abraham. The people needed to remember to be faithful to God, just as we do. God has never forgotten to be faithful to us. God is good and He loves us.

In the past months I found myself asking, "Where are you, God? I can't see you. I can't feel you. I can't pray." It's then the Holy Spirit steps in and offers prayers to God on my behalf. When I'm overwhelmed with all that's happening in the world and my own life of pain, isolation, and medical bills, the Holy Spirit steps in. When I wonder why I'm being punished and I want to give up, it's then the Holy Spirit shows me the way back and reminds me God has not forgotten His promise to me: "I will never leave you."

1 Samuel 8:1-22; Acts 6:15—7:16; Luke 22:24-30

Friday, June 25

Luke 22:31-38 *Then He said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me."* (v.34)

I was talking to my friend in California when a rooster crowed so loudly that I pictured this fine feathered chicken sitting on her lap. Knowing this was silly, I then thought it the ring tone on another phone. Having grown up in the country, I'm familiar with the rooster's crow. However, the roosters I'm familiar with crowed at dawn. I soon found out the rooster with the loud voice belonged to a neighbor.

Have you ever heard a rooster crow without thinking of Peter and his denial of Jesus? Peter professed his devotion to Jesus, telling him he would lay down his own life for him. In John 13:38, Jesus tells him, "the rooster shall not crow until you have denied Me three times." Mark 14:30 says, "today, even this night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." And, "Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times" (Matthew 26:34).

If you know this story, you also know the rest of the story (see Luke 22:54-62).

1 Samuel 9:1-14; Psalm 102; Acts 7:17-29

Saturday, June 26

Psalm 108 *O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory. Awake, lute and harp! I will awaken the dawn. I will praise You, O LORD, among the peoples, And I will sing praises to You*

among the nations. For Your mercy is great above the heavens, And Your truth reaches to the clouds. (vv.1-4)

What a gift it is to be able to play a musical instrument to praise the Lord. Unfortunately, I'm not musically talented, even though my Mom tried her best to teach me. I grew up in a musically talented family. Mom played the piano and drums while Dad played the tenor saxophone. My siblings played whatever instrument interested them at the time. This was our Saturday night entertainment and I was expected to stand by the piano and sing. When my Dad was young, he played at the famous Coconut Grove during the Big Band Era for a short time before joining the Navy during World War II.

When Mom and Dad made their parting journey, I couldn't bear to part with my Mom's piano. Over the years, I moved the old 800-pound upright at least four times before having to part with it. Every once in a while, I would take out the old hymnals from the box of ancient sheet music and pick out the songs with my right hand. A not too perfect offering to God.

1 Samuel 9:15—10:1; Psalm 107:33-43; Acts 7:30-43; Luke 22:39-51

by Shirley J. Conley

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