

Sunday, August 9

2 Samuel 13:1-22 *Her brother Absalom said to her, “Has Amnon your brother been with you? Be quiet for now, my sister; he is your brother; do not take this to heart.” So Tamar remained, a desolate woman, in her brother Absalom’s house. When King David heard of all these things, he became very angry, but he would not punish his son Amnon, because he loved him, for he was his firstborn.* (vv.20-21 NRVS)

But what about Tamar? To whom could she turn—her mother Maacah, daughter of King Talmai of Gershur? Her father King David? Her brothers or sisters? Tamar was the daughter of a king, the granddaughter of a king, but that was not sufficient to protect her.

I am a Tamar, and my rape was not known (or at least not acknowledged) within my family of origin. I am not the daughter of a king—but I *am* the daughter of *The King*! Through God’s grace and loving Christian communities who knew, proclaimed, and ministered in God’s healing power, the years of the locust in my life were redeemed.

Do we know who the Tamars are in our communities, churches, and families? We know *The King* who knows. Are we doing all He calls us to do to protect, proclaim, and restore that which has been lost? We know *The King* who knows.

Psalms 66, 67; Romans 15:1-13; John 3:22-36

ANGLICAN CYCLE: PRAY for Rochester – (Province II, The Episcopal Church) The Rt Revd Dr Prince Singh

DIOCESAN CYCLE: St. Christopher Episcopal Church, Rantoul, The Rev Steven Thorp, Vicar; Choma Mission, Tanzania, Rev. Gershon Charles The Parish of Christ The Redeemer and St. Peter, San Juan de Miraflores, Peru, The Rev. Misael Varillas, Regional Vicar; Birthday of Suzanne, wife of the Rev. John F. Wall, Fredricksburg, VA.

ST. MATTHEW’S: Birthday of Mary Kaufman.

Monday, August 10

Acts 20:17-38 *Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son.* (v.28)

I am a life-long Episcopalian, and I was blessed to grow up in a family that was very active in the church—Sunday school, choir, youth groups—the whole nine yards. In preparation for confirmation at age ten, I was introduced to “An Outline of the Faith” (commonly called the Catechism), which includes “The Ministry: Who are the ministers of the Church? The ministers of the Church are lay persons, bishops, priests, and deacons.” In spite of that head knowledge, it was (and is) easy for me to think “keeping watch, overseeing, and shepherding” were somebody else’s job—namely the ordained clergy.

Where is God calling each of us, the ministers of the Church, to “keep watch, oversee, and shepherd”? There are no free passes based on age as eldership and maturity in Christ is not bound by chronological years! Who needs to hear from *me* that Jesus is Lord?

“Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another” (Mark 9:50).

2 Samuel 13:23-29; Psalm 89:1-18; Mark 9:42-50

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Rockhampton – (Queensland, Australia) The Rt Revd David Robinson
DIOCESAN CYCLE: Feast of Title, St. Laurence's, Effingham.
ST. MATTHEW'S: Birthday of Dave Kaufman.

Tuesday, August 11

Mark 10:1-16 *“Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.”* (v.15)

What does Jesus mean by this? What are the characteristics of childlikeness that he wants us to possess? As I was trying to figure this out, the Holy Spirit revealed to me that what I really wanted to do was find the answer so I could “be that” for God. Instead, He just wants me to “be the me” He created me to be. It was difficult for me to believe that God accepted me “just as I am” and receive His unconditional love. Pride and shame were roadblocks to my relationship with Him.

Twenty years ago, and still with doubt and fear, I chose to believe that God could and did accept and love me “just as I am.” Three days later, as His confirmation to me in a way He knew I needed, we sang “Just as I Am” in church. I did not even think that hymn was in “our” hymnal—it was (and is)—#693! Shortly thereafter I accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior.

What are the characteristics of childlikeness that I claim in Jesus' name? Powerlessness, openness, trust, expectancy, dependence, wonder, and teachability. What does He want you to claim? What are you willing to claim?

2 Samuel 14:1-20; Psalms 97, 99, 100; Acts 21:1-14

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Rokon – (Sudan) The Rt Revd Francis Loyo Mori
DIOCESAN CYCLE: Wedding anniversary of the Rev. T. Larison and Patricia Phillips, Champaign.

ST. MATTHEW'S: Anniversary of Russell & Susan Waring.

Wednesday, August 12

2 Samuel 14:21-33 *There were born to Absalom three sons, and one daughter whose name was Tamar; she was a beautiful woman.* (v.27)

“What's in a name?” What does it mean when we name someone for another or when we ourselves are named for another? What honor, duty, responsibility are implied and/or expected? In 2 Samuel 13 we read of Absalom's beautiful sister Tamar, and now we learn that Absalom named his own beautiful daughter Tamar. I wonder what the relationship might have been between this aunt and this niece.

Names are significant in my family, and I was named for my aunt as well, who had been named for her grandmother. I had a wonderful, loving relationship with my aunt, who would remind all of us that she had taught me everything I knew! Fortunately, most of that was good, but unfortunately, it also included an almost idolatrous attitude toward my family of origin.

I am blessed to be a member of a church family and to carry the name “Christian.” According to dictionaries, the definition of “ian” includes: “of, relating to, or resembling...one related to, belonging to, or resembling.” How does my life reflect the fact that I belong to Christ? In what ways does my life indicate that I am related to or resemble Christ?

“I will study the way that is blameless. When shall I attain it? I will walk with integrity of heart within my house” (Psalm 101:2).

Psalms 101, 109; Acts 21:15-26; Mark 10:17-31

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Rorya – (Tanzania) The Rt Revd John Adieme
DIOCESAN CYCLE: Birthday of the Rev. Brant V. Hazlett, Mt. Carmel.
ST. MATTHEW'S: Birthday of Brent Davingman.

Thursday, August 13

Psalm 105:1-22 *O give thanks to the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the peoples. Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wonderful works.* (vv.1-2)

I know that God has blessed me in so many ways, and I am thankful. However, to be perfectly honest there are days that I not only forget to thank God, I am also only vaguely aware of His blessings and presence.

Not long ago I called a 90+-year-old friend who had fallen and was in rehab recovering from a broken leg. As I started to commiserate with my friend, she stopped me short by thanking God for her broken leg. She was grateful that she had a leg God could heal; her neighbor down the hall had just had her leg amputated. What perspective and a heart of thanksgiving!

When I woke up this morning my aging joints were aching, and I did not want to get out of bed. I rolled over, flipped on a light—and remembered. Thank You, God, that I have a roof over my head and a bed to sleep in. Thank You, God, that with the flip of a switch I have light, clean hot and cold running water. With every move I make I can choose to remember and give thanks.

As I thanked God, my spirit, soul, and body began to rise—not only dutifully but with expectation. What's next? Thank You, God, that I have friends with whom I will have dinner tonight. How do you want me to reflect You in these relationships this day? Thank You, God, that You were with us, are with us, and will be with us always.

“Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice. Seek the Lord and his strength; seek his presence continually” (Psalm 105:3-4).

2 Samuel 15:1-18; Acts 21:27-36; Mark 10:32-45

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Rumbek – (Sudan) The Rt Revd Alapayo Manyang Kuctiel
DIOCESAN CYCLE: Birthday of the Rev. Joan M. Coleman, Belleville.
ST. MATTHEW'S: Anniversary of Jeffrey & Susan Clark.

Friday, August 14

Acts 21:37—22:16 *“Then he said, ‘The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear his own voice.’”* (v.14)

My conversion experience was not as dramatic as Paul's on the road to Damascus. It was a sequence of events rather than a particular event. My pride stood between God and me as I tried to figure out what I needed to do to make myself acceptable to Him. The answer is that there is nothing we can do to make ourselves acceptable to God—it is His grace alone that does that.

When I accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior and began to experience and know God, my spiritually deaf ears were opened. “My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me” (John 10:27).

I believe God is now calling me from passive listening to active listening—to get up, to move, to be about his business. With God's help I am willing. Do you know His voice? Are you willing to follow where He leads?

“And now why do you delay? Get up, be baptized, and have your sins washed away, calling on his name” (Acts 22:16).

2 Samuel 15:19-37; Psalm 102; Mark 10:46-52

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Rumonge – (Burundi) The Rt Revd Pedaculi Birakengana

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Birthday of the Rev. Paul R. Dicks, Pewaukee, WI.

ST. MATTHEW’S: By thy Cross and Passion, save us, O Lord.

Saturday, August 15

Mark 11:1-11 *“If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ just say this, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.’”* (v.3)

I grew up with an “I can do it myself” attitude. Even today it is a struggle for me to ask anyone, including God, for help. Does that sound like anybody you know?

There are many times I need to ask other people for help. Even though I know God is faithful and will provide what is needed (Mark 11:3, for example), it is still hard for me to ask for help. I can get complacent with my vertical relationship with God—He is faithful, we are not. We have disappointed, hurt, and rejected other people and, in our brokenness, will continue to do so. Yet God calls us into reconciled, horizontal relationships with each other.

Lord, I want to be obedient to and used by You. I submit my spirit to the Holy Spirit in order that I may be aligned with You—spirit, soul, and body. Help me to listen to You. Help me to forgive and to ask for forgiveness. Help me to ask others for help in Your name. Help me to listen for others who are asking me for help in Your name.

2 Samuel 16:1-23; Psalm 107:33-43, 108; Acts 22:17-29

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Rupert’s Land – (Rupert’s Land, Canada) The Rt Revd Donald David Phillips

DIOCESAN CYCLE: St. Matthew’s, Bloomington, dedication of original church building, 1876.

ST. MATTHEW’S: Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Hail Mary, full of grace... Pray for Fr. Kari & Kandis Marcelle on their wedding day.

by Sara Allison

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