

Good News Daily

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Sunday, May 15

Acts 4:18-21, 23-33 *So they called the apostles back in and commanded them never again to speak or teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, "Do you think God wants us to obey you rather than him? We cannot stop telling about everything we have seen and heard."* (vv.18-20 NLT)

The Book of Acts is like a Baby Book—it is stuffed with pictures and vignettes showing the first days of the infant Christian church. There are many amazing moments, but few pages tell a more compelling tale than this one about Peter and John facing the Temple priests.

Peter and John had been hauled in front of the powerful rulers and elders of the Jews because they'd healed a lame man (not a problem) in Jesus' name (a big problem). The authorities magnanimously agreed to let them go—providing they dropped this whole "Jesus business." And what did they answer? "We cannot stop telling about everything we have seen and heard."

Sooner or later every Christian faces the modern equivalent of the Temple priests. Our belief in the Risen Christ will be challenged—that's a given. But when it is, think back to those two crazy fishermen who were commanded to silence by the assembled might of the wise and powerful leaders in Jerusalem. Don't stop talking about Jesus. And when you do, you will add your own page to the ever-expanding "Baby Book of Acts."

Deuteronomy 16:9-12; Psalm 118; John 4:19-26

ANGLICAN CYCLE: PRAY for The Anglican Church of Melanesia The Most Revd David Vunagi
Archbishop of Melanesia and Bishop of Central Melanesia

DIOCESAN CYCLE: St. Thomas, Glen Carbon, The Rev. Anthony Clavier, Vicar; Igagala Parish,
Tanzania: Rev. Samwel Zakayo; The Mission of Tariachi, Santisima Cruz De Maravillas, Peru; Rev'd
Ruben Mancilla; Rev'd Luis Vizcarra; St. Paul's, Alton, admitted to the Diocese of Illinois, 1837.
St. Matthew's celebrates the birthday of Rutger Bachman.

Monday, May 16

Matthew 11:1-6 *John the Baptist, who was in prison, heard about all the things the Messiah was doing. So he sent his disciples to ask Jesus, "Are you the Messiah we've been expecting, or should we keep looking for someone else."* (vv.2-3)

John was discouraged. He was in prison for the crime of speaking truth to a powerful, foolish king. Like so many others of his generation, John had expected the Messiah to remove this king with a wave of his mighty hand and finally bring justice to the earth. However, that hadn't happened. Now, facing certain death, John wondered if everything he'd believed in all his life was just a pipe dream.

But God's plans are much vaster and more wonderful than anything we can imagine. John's faith ushered in the Messiah's remarkable earthly ministry. After John's death, his trained disciples joined Jesus and recruited others. If Peter was Christ's rock, John's followers were his mortar. John died, but his spiritual children saw the resurrected Lord.

When I get discouraged or doubt my faith, I remember John the Baptist. By worldly standards his ministry failed miserably. Even he thought so. But John's voice was the first to proclaim Christ's kingdom, and the baptism he performed was the first step toward our salvation. And Jesus himself said that no one who'd ever lived was greater than John the Baptist. Pipe dream? I think not.

Proverbs 3:11-20, Psalms 1, 2, 3; 1 John 3:18—4:6

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Chester – (York, England) The Rt Revd Peter Robert Forster; Chester –
Birkenhead – The Rt Revd Keith Sinclair; Chester – Stockport – The Rt Revd Libby Lane

DIOCESAN CYCLE: St. Mark's, West Frankfort, admitted to the Diocese, 1923.
St. Matthew's celebrates the birthday of Regina Bray.

Tuesday, May 17

Psalm 6 *I am worn out from sobbing. All night I flood my bed with weeping, drenching it with my tears.* (v.6)

“Most men lead lives of quiet desperation” wrote Henry David Thoreau. He wasn’t far wrong. So often I find myself going through my day wearing a sunny mask, but I’m covering up pain. I become exhausted. I grow weary. And, because I never feel I can show this part of myself, even to my closest friends and loved ones, I “flood my beds with weeping.”

David was one of the most powerful, beloved kings in history, but he was not immune to hiding his pain behind a mask. He seemed to have everything, yet Psalm 6 clearly shows he didn’t. He sobbed in secret. He hid his tears. At least, he hid them from everyone except God.

The Lord listened to David’s tears as fervently as He listened to the king’s public prayers. Our Father didn’t love David less for his weeping. God knew what David looked like under his mask of “quiet desperation” and saw nothing but His beloved child. Sometimes tears are the way He mends my heart.

Proverbs 4:1-27, Psalm 5; 1 John 4:7-21; Matthew 11:7-15

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Chhattisgarh – (North India) The Rt Revd Purna Sagar Nag

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Birthday of The Rev. Sylvia L. Howard, Mt. Vernon.

St. Matthew’s celebrates the birthday of Daniel Kohlhase.

Wednesday, May 18

Matthew 11:16-24 *“For John didn’t spend his time eating and drinking, and you say, ‘He’s possessed by a demon.’ The Son of Man, on the other hand, feasts and drinks, and you say, ‘He’s a glutton and a drunkard, and a friend of tax collectors and other sinners!’ But wisdom is shown to be right by its results.”* (vv.18-19)

It’s not always easy to stand up for what’s right. As Christ relates in this story from Matthew, the people around him were dissing John because he didn’t feast, and dissing Jesus because he did. Basically, Jesus and John could have said anything and these folks would have criticized them.

Two thousand years has only made things worse. I’ve met people who’ve made careers out of criticizing others, in viciously charming ways. In a world where perception is reality, the only goal is winning, even if truth gets kicked to the curb. It’s downright discouraging.

But take heart. Though these naysayers might seem to triumph, wisdom has the final word. Standing up for what is right might not have immediate success, but it will prove the best way in the end. So when I’m attacked for my faith, I take heart. Both John and Jesus were vilified by their contemporaries, but God’s wisdom lasts for eternity.

Proverbs 6:1-19; Psalm 119:1-24; 1 John 5:1-12

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Chicago – (Province V, The Episcopal Church) The Rt Revd Jeffrey Lee; The Rt Revd John Buchanan, Assisting Bishop

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Almighty God, make us gentle and courteous in word and deed.

St. Matthew’s: pray for the church.

Thursday, May 19

1 John 5:13-21 *Dear children, keep yourselves from idols* (v.21)

Growing up, I thought that Commandment #2 (Thou shalt not make idols) was one of the easiest to follow. My suburban neighborhood didn’t have many temples dedicated to Zeus and the like, so there was little chance I’d stumble upon one and be tempted to bow down and worship. I felt I could pretty well check that temptation off my list.

Then one day I took a good look in my bathroom mirror, and met my number one idol—*Me*. Whenever I settle for excuses rather than repentance, or try to “fit in” at the expense of Christ’s judgment and mercy, or imagine that any part of my life can function outside of the guidance and grace of the Holy Spirit, I am worshipping a false idol.

Being Jesus isn’t my job description. Striving to become more like Jesus is.

Proverbs 7:1-27; Psalm 18:1-20; Matthew 11:25-30

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Chichester – (Canterbury, England) The Rt Revd Martin Warner; Chichester – Horsham – The Rt Revd Mark Sowerby; Chichester – Lewes – The Revd Richard Charles Jackson
DIOCESAN CYCLE: God, fill us with your grace, for the sake of your anointed Son.
St. Matthew's: pray for the mentally ill.

Friday, May 20

Matthew 12:1-14 *Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." So he stretched it out and it was completely restored, just as sound as the other. But the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus.* (vv.13-14)

The Pharisees were not villains. They were wise, good men who had devoted their lives to God. They had studied His word, and done their very best to lead His people in the ways of righteousness, which was particularly hard with Rome shoving false gods at them at every turn. Most of all, the only miraculous healings they'd witnessed were done by street magicians and charlatans. To them, Jesus was just another con artist.

I used to be a Pharisee. I was a good person who'd studied God's word, but I trusted my own knowledge over the Scriptures. I didn't believe the Lord still did miracles today—or rather, I didn't until I started working at the Glennon House Healing Ministry, and saw miraculous healings happening “up close and personal.” It's been quite an education in the reality of the Holy Spirit.

Don't settle for a Pharisee faith. Stretch out your hand to Christ and trust him to restore it. You won't be disappointed.

Proverbs 8:1-21; Psalms 16, 17; 2 John 1-13

ANGLICAN CYCLE: The Most Revd Hector Zavala Muñoz Presiding Bishop of the Anglican Church of South America & Bishop of Chile; The Rt Revd Abelino Manuel Apeleo, Suffragan Bishop

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Grant us, we pray, Almighty God, that we may always believe in your only begotten son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

St. Matthew's pray for those in need.

Saturday, May 21

Psalms 20 *Some nations boast of their chariots and horses, but we boast in the name of the LORD our God.* (v.7)

Psalms 20 is King David's war prayer for victory over enemies. While I don't often employ David's horses and chariots (at least not usually), I engage in battles every day.

These battles might be easy to define, like the stress of finding some quiet time alone with God, or dealing with difficult personalities in my neighborhood. Or the battles might be complex, like encouraging someone who is fighting an addiction or enduring a long-term illness. Sometimes it's enough of a struggle for me just to believe God is listening.

But hard as they are, it is these battles that make me who I am. Countless times Scripture tells us how important it is to keep our eyes on God, especially during those times when we are struggling. At times like these, it's good to remember, as King David did, that it's not what equipment you bring to the battle that brings victory, it's who is fighting at your side!

Proverbs 8:22-36; Psalms 21; 3 John 1-15; Matthew 12:15-21

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Chotanagpur – (North India) The Rt Revd B Baskey

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Springfield, consecration of present church building, 1913.

St. Matthew's: pray for the less fortunate.

by Ruth Owen

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