

Good News Daily

Volume XVI

May 8-14, 2016

Number 19

Sunday, May 8

Psalm 66 *Shout for joy to God, all the earth! Sing the glory of his name; make his praise glorious. Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds! So great is your power that your enemies cringe before you. And the earth bows down to you; they sing praise to you, they sing the praises of your name."* (vv.1-4 NIV)

This psalmist was praising God, perhaps after release from captivity in Egypt or possibly Babylon. We may not have been prisoners of war in captivity but we could have been released from other types of imprisonment, such as, illness, addiction, sin, debt, and the list goes on.

In each case, the psalmist was probably leading the people in praise of God before, during, and after their calamity. Is it much different today? Israel was, until recently, the only nation in the world not authorized a seat at the United Nations. Israel and the United States are the only two nations on earth that have a death threat from other countries upon them. The Israelites have been, are now, and always will be God's chosen people. Woe to the United States if we ever give up alliance with Israel.

The United States will likely never be defeated militarily. If we ever lose the war for our souls, it will be a result of moral decay. Think of it like going to the dentist. You lose your teeth because of tooth decay, not because someone hit them with a hammer. Every nation that has fallen has fallen from within.

Exodus 3:1-12; Psalm 67; Hebrews 12:18-29; Luke 10:17-24

ANGLICAN CYCLE: PRAY for The Anglican Church of Korea The Most Revd Paul Kim Primate of the Anglican Church of Korea and Bishop of Seoul

DIOCESAN CYCLE: The Cathedral of St. Paul, Springfield, The Very Rev. Andrew S. Hook, Provost; St. Stephen's Cathedral, Tabora, Tanzania, The Rt. Rev. Elias Chakupewa, Dean, The Rev. Canon Rogers Kashimba, Sub Dean, Rev. Lucas Ngassa, Curate; The Cathedral of the Good Shepherd, Lima, Peru, The Very Rev. John Park, Dean; Wedding anniversary of The Rev. Eugene A. and Janet Stormer, Springfield. St. Matthew's celebrates the birthday of Liam Halt.

Monday, May 9

Joshua 1:1-9 *After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: "Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites. I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses."* (vv.1-3)

Moses' death concludes the judgment of God on the generation that came out of Egypt. Even "after the death of Moses" the Lord was faithful to His promises.

Joshua's name was changed from "Hoshea" ("salvation") to "Joshua" ("the Lord is salvation") by Moses. He was one of the men sent from Kadesh-barnea to explore the land, and he joined Caleb in calling on the Israelites to trust the Lord and not to rebel against Him. Like Caleb, he escaped the judgment that fell on that generation because of its refusal to obey God at Kadesh-barnea. The land is God's gift to the Israelites, in faithfulness to His promise to Abraham. The land is an expression of what the New Testament calls "grace" (see Ephesians 2:8-10). We are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. This is true for both you and me. If so, do we believe it? If we believe it, do we act like it? If we do not act like it, we do not believe it. If not, why not? If there were any other way, why did Jesus have to die?

Psalm 89:1-18; Ephesians 3:1-13; Matthew 8:5-17

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Central Tanganyika – (Tanzania) The Rt Revd Dickson Chilongani

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Gregory A. Tournoux, Springfield, ordination to the Priesthood.

St. Matthew's: pray for the mentally ill.

Tuesday, May 10

Ephesians 3:14-21 *I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.* (vv.16-17a).

This is some of Paul's most pointed language about the work of the Holy Spirit within individuals. Much of Ephesians addresses believers' corporate identity. But Christ also dwells in individual hearts. Christianity is neither a common confession to the exclusion of individual experience, nor a private piety without corporate vision. As the "living stones" are linked in love, God's dwelling grows and is filled with Christ himself. God uses the love among "all the saints"—Jew and Gentile alike—to build a whole that is greater than any of its individual parts. That is called synergism. The spatial language exalts Christ's love for his people—a love that is inclusive, inexhaustible, and self-sacrificing.

The Christian rock group, Casting Crowns, expresses this in the chorus to one of their hit songs, *Thrive*: "Joy unspeakable, faith unsinkable, love unstoppable, anything is possible." Say that three times very fast. If that does not light your fire, you've got wet wood.

1 Samuel 16:1-13a; Psalms 97, 99, 100; Matthew 8:18-27

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Central Zambia – (Central Africa) The Rt Revd Derek Gary Kamukwamba

DIOCESAN CYCLE: M. Joan Coleman, Belleville, ordination to the Diaconate.

St. Matthew's: Pray for those in need.

Wednesday, May 11

Ephesians 4:1-16 *There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.* (vv.4-6)

At each baptismal service we recite these words. Did you ever notice the word "one" is repeated seven times—three times for Persons of the Godhead, and four times for aspects of His salvation. As believers, we are called to a certain life. As Christians we share the grace of salvation through faith. Each of us is also given some particular gift of grace to benefit the church. It is a spiritual gift, not something you are born with the first time. God does not call the equipped, He equips the called. Is Jesus more than a name? Is church more than a place? Are parishioners more than a face? If the answer is yes to these questions, why does the body of Christ have unmet needs? If the answer is no to the questions, are we hoarding our time, talent, and treasure gifts?

Isaiah 4:2-6; Psalms 101, 109; Matthew 8:28-34

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Central Zimbabwe – (Central Africa) The Rt Revd Ishmael Mukuwanda

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Lord, help us and your whole church to walk as children of the light.

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

Thursday, May 12

Ephesians 4:17-32 *So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.* (vv.17-19)

This passage closely resembles the critique of Gentile culture in Romans 1:24-31. I recommend you read it now. While the letter to the Romans shows God as giving Gentiles over to a reckless and wanton life, Ephesians presents the same progression from the human side: those who have turned aside "have given themselves up" (v.19). God has broken the cycle of death by giving them an understanding of His Son and His work on their behalf. Do we truly believe that? If so, why do we behave as described here and in Romans?

Belonging to Christ involves repudiating an old life and embracing a new one. The image is that of taking off fraying clothes and putting on new ones. Do you wear old tattered clothes when you have new? You cannot have a foot in both camps. You have to choose between the old life and the new. There

is no plan B. Life is full of choices. Choices have consequences. Choose wisely, your ultimate destination depends on it.

Zechariah 4:1-14; Psalm 105:1-22; Matthew 9:1-8

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Chandigarh – (North India) The Rt Revd Younas Massey

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Almighty God, to truly know you is everlasting life.

St. Matthew's celebrates the anniversary of Ron and Elizabeth Gordon.

Friday, May 13

Ephesians 5:1-20 *Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.* (vv.18-20).

At the beginning of today's reading we get a continued dose of what not to do. But we also get guidance on how to do what we should and not do what defiles us. The answer is that believers must extend to others the forgiveness and love God has extended to them. How do we do that? Be filled with the Holy Spirit.

While the sealing of the Spirit is a once-for-all initiation into the Christian life, the filling of the Spirit applies to all the Christian life. This filling is not only repeatable, but is to be sought again and again. Why do we need continual fill-ups? Because we leak (sin). The one who is filled with the Spirit is filled with Christ and his word. Have you checked your gauge lately?

Jeremiah 31:27-34; Psalm 102; Matthew 9:9-17

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Chelmsford – (Canterbury, England) The Rt Revd Stephen Geoffrey Cottrell;

Chelmsford – Barking – The Rt Revd Peter Hill; Chelmsford – Bradwell – The Rt Revd John Wraw;

Chelmsford – Colchester – The Rt Revd Anthony Brett Morris

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Lord, help us to hear your words – you are the way!

St. Matthew's: pray for the church.

Saturday, May 14

Ephesians 6:10-24 *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.* (vv.10-11)

So how do we tie a ribbon around this week's passages? The answer is in today's Scripture readings. The Christian duty of unity and purity is complicated by the presence of hostile spiritual powers. Christ's cross and resurrection are the devil's undoing. You can read the battle equipment list as well as I can. I would invite your attention to the fact there is only one offensive weapon, the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. All the rest are defensive. Note nothing is stated for the back. We are not to turn and run but to stand firm and fight. Is it time we became prayer warriors in God's army? Remember the terrorist attack on Paris, France in November 2015? That happened as I was writing this. Are you ready for battle?

Ezekiel 36:22-27; Psalms 107:33-43, 108; Matthew 9:18-26

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Madras – (South India) The Rt Revd Dr Vedanayagam Devasahayam

DIOCESAN CYCLE: St. James' Chapel, Marion, admitted to the Diocese, 1924; St. Michael's, O'Fallon, consecration of present church building, 2000.

St. Matthew's celebrates the birthday of Alex Davingman.

by Richard Mead

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