

Good News Daily

Volume XVIII

January 21-27, 2018

Number 3

Sunday, January 21

Galatians 2:1-10 *As for those who seemed to be important—whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not judge by external appearance—those men added nothing to my message.* (v.6 NIV)

This morning I worked out at the gym with my best friend, Sarah. As I did my sit-ups (which really kill me!), Sarah said, “Play your own game.” “What are you talking about?” I asked her. She told me I am my only competitor. It’s not about looking as good or being as strong as anyone else. It’s my game. In Galatians, Paul defends his mission to the Gentiles before the Jerusalem council. They could have rejected his calling to the Gentiles, but they sent him back to continue spreading the gospel. Paul “played his own game,” confident that his only affirmation comes from God.

We often spend our lives following Jesus, but glancing right and left to locate everyone else. I know that I’m guilty! But Jesus says, “Play your own game.” As Psalm 63 says, “Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you.” It’s about me and Jesus, no one else.

Genesis 13:2-18; Psalm 63; Mark 7:31-37

ANGLICAN CYCLE: PRAY for The Church of Bangladesh; The Most Revd Paul Shishir Sarker Moderator, Church of Bangladesh & Bishop of Dhaka

DIOCESAN CYCLE: St. Barnabas Episcopal Church, Havana, The Rev. Michael J. Newago, Priest in Charge; Ilalwansimba Parish: Rev. Joel Kahindi, Tabora, Tanzania; The Mission of St John the Evangelist, San Juan de Miraflores, Peru, The Rev. Luis Villalobos, Priest in Charge; Pray for Christian Unity.

Monday, January 22

Hebrews 8:1-13 *They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is seen in heaven.* (v.5a)

Having recently joined the Altar Guild in preparing the church, I am constantly amazed at the beauty and intricacy of the Sanctuary. We polish the chalice and paten every week to make sure that everything shines for the glory of the Lord. I can only imagine what the Temple must have looked like, with ornate gold-laden altars, rich fabrics, and treasured symbols of the Jewish faith. Yet, they are only a shadow of what is in heaven. Can you imagine the splendor and beauty of that Heavenly Sanctuary?

The Book of Revelation says an earthly Temple will not be needed after the second coming of Christ—God will make His dwelling with people in the Holy

City. Part of my heart longs deeply for this coming. To know I am truly home, to see the face of God, to walk with him as Adam did, to see justice come to the earth, to not sin, to not sorrow! Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Genesis 14:1-24; Psalms 41, 52; John 4:43-54

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Amichi - (Niger, Nigeria) The Rt Revd Ephraim Ikeakor

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Pray for Christian Unity.

Tuesday, January 23

John 5:1-18 *When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, “Do you want to get well?” (v.6)*

A man beside a pool—38 years, paralyzed. Why would Jesus ask such a question: “Do you want to get well?” Of course he did—or did he? 38 years is a long time. What would life be like if he was well? Would it be painful? Would it be hard? How would he behave? Everything he had even known would change.

Do you want to get well? In Exodus, the wandering Israelites wanted to go back to slavery in Egypt. In Southern states, slaves chose to stay with their masters, even after they were freed.

Do you want to get well? Will you allow Jesus to heal you, even if it is painful, even if it is risky? It took a lot of faith for the invalid to stand on his feet, pick up his mat, and go home. Do you have that faith?

Do you want to get well?

Genesis 15:1-11, 17-21; Psalm 45; Hebrews 9:1-14

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Amritsar - (North India) The Rt Revd Pradeep Samantaroy; Andaman & Car Nicobar Islands - The Rt Revd Christopher Paul

DIOCESAN CYCLE: O God, give us work 'til our life shall end, and give us life 'til our work is done; Pray for Christian Unity.

Wednesday, January 24

Hebrews 9:15-28 *For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant. (v.15)*

I love the movie *Man on Fire*. One of the most powerful scenes is when Crease trades his own life for the life of a kidnapped little girl. He literally dies for her! That is what Christ did for us. We, too, were kidnapped—kidnapped by the serpent in the Garden of Eden. And we grew so used to living that way that we didn't know how to live differently. Any action we took trying to redeem ourselves came up short, insufficient. The only way to ransom us from the kidnapper was with blood—perfect blood: “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (v.22). A sacrifice was needed and the only one sufficient to take away the sins of

the world was God Himself. Does that amaze you? Sometimes I get so used to hearing it that I am no longer awed by it! Just as Crease gave his life for Pita, Jesus gave his life for me, for us. Amazing!

Genesis 16:1-14; Psalm 119:49-72; John 5:19-29

ANGLICAN CYCLE: The Most Revd Jackson Ole Sapit Primate and Archbishop of All Kenya

All Saints Cathedral Diocese - Garissa Missionary Area - (Kenya) The Rt Revd David Mutisya

Suffragan Bishop All Saints Cathedral Diocese - (Kenya) The Rt Revd Cleti Ogeto

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Pray for Christian Unity.

ST MATTHEWS: Alicia Perry's birthday.

Thursday, January 25

John 5:30-47 *"You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have eternal life."* (vv.39-40)

There is such a difference in knowing God verses knowing about God. Through InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, I encounter college students who know a lot about God, but do not know Him. They think that by following the "rules" of Christianity, they are safe. It is not enough. Just as God has no need of sacrifices (Psalm 50), He rejects those who know about Him, but do not know Him. It is like reading a book about Tiger Woods and thinking that I know him, yet never having met him. It is true that I know about him, but I do not know him. Jesus calls us into relationship with Himself, not just to knowledge of Him. He is Father, Lover, and Friend. He is Comforter, Rescuer, and Healer. Beloved, may you know Christ intimately, deeply, and fully. May you not be satisfied with knowledge of God without meeting Him.

Genesis 16:15—17:14; Psalm 50; Hebrews 10:1-10

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Anglican Parishes of the Central Interior (formerly Cariboo) - (British Columbia & the Yukon, The Rt Revd Barbara Jean Andrews

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Patronal Feast of St. Paul's Alton; St. Paul's, Carlinville; St. Paul's, Pekin; The Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Springfield; Ordination to the Priesthood, Virginia L. Bennett, St. Charles, MO.

ST MATTHEWS: Phillip Brooks' birthday.

Friday, January 26

Psalm 40 *I waited patiently for the LORD; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand.* (vv.1-2)

Today's passages all say the same thing: there is hope in our faithful God. Don't hope in yourself or in others, hope in God. In October 2004, I was suffering from severe depression—dropping 25 pounds and sleeping 4 hours per night. I felt despairing, hopeless, and even suicidal. Where was God? Why would He allow me to suffer so much? I cried out to a (seemingly) unresponsive God. My faith was useless; or so I thought. Then, one day I decided to believe God, not for healing or joy, but for who He is. I found a rock to stand on—Jesus Christ. The mire almost pulled me under, but beneath it I discovered solid ground. Beloved, wait in suffering. Seek the Lord, even if you don't hear His answer. Believe in His faithfulness, even if doubting your own faith. He will answer your cry, not necessarily with immediate healing, but with Himself. And that is better than being happy!

Genesis 17:15-27; Psalm 54; Hebrews 10:11-25; John 6:1-15

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Angola (Missionary Diocese) - (Southern Africa) The Rt Revd Andre Soares

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Birthday of The Very Rev Sean D. Ferrell, Champaign.

Saturday, January 27

Genesis 18:1-16 *Then the LORD said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son." Now Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent, which was behind him. Abraham and Sarah were already old and well advanced in years, and Sarah was past the age of childbearing. So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, "After I am worn out and my master is old, will I now have this pleasure?"* (vv.10-12)

Is it any coincidence that Sarah's son is named Isaac—meaning laughter? Sarah laughed at what the Lord said and then she lied to Him saying that she had not laughed. But God knew. Even more, He had already named Isaac before she laughed. In fact, what he said in verse 10 was true. Sarah did have a son named Isaac and with that son God established an everlasting covenant. What God says, He means. We could all learn from Sarah. God means it when He says not to lie, gossip, or lust. He means it when He says: "I am with you; I will never leave you or forsake you" (Joshua 1:5). God's promises are sure. Maybe we should quit laughing and start taking him seriously.

Psalm 55; Hebrews 10:26-39; John 6:16-27

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Ankole - (Uganda) The Rt Revd Sheldon Mwesigwa

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Trinity Church, Mattoon, Admitted to the Diocese, 1908; Birthday of The Rev Zackary D. Brooks, Jacksonville.

by Kim Koi

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For the St. Matthew's Community, please remember the following in your prayers this week:

Pray for the sick and those in distress: Charlie, Tim H. and family, Greg P., Linda S., Phyllis P., Bill J., Ron G., Bill, Bobbi, Matt, Tori B., Dave M., Bill Mc., Linda T., Dottie T., Roger H. , Jack P.

Pray for the Faithful Departed: Steve, Lewis, Joseph, Kenneth

Pray for those living in nursing homes and other shut-ins: Dale B., Alicia P., Barb W., Daniel T., Ken B., Ina R., and Margaret P.

Pray for: The Diocese of Tabora, Anglican Church of Tanzania, The Rt. Rev. Elias Chakupewa, the clergy and people. The Missionary Diocese of Peru, The Rt. Rev. Alejandro Mesco. Fr. Kari Marcelle, the clergy and people of Holy Trinity St. Vincent. Fr. Dave and all clergy, for whom we light the candle on the west side of the Altar.