

Good News Daily

August 14-20, 2016

Sunday, August 14

Psalm 118 *Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.* (v.29 NIV)

Psalm 118 begins and ends with this same verse, reinforcing the great truth and wisdom of these words. In one concise sentence we are instructed to give our thanks to the Lord and then we are told the reason why we should come to Him with grateful hearts. Our creator, sustainer, and Savior is “good”; the Lord is totally, unfailingly, and infinitely good, beyond all our imagining. And, His great love for us endures forever, no matter what we do or how much we sin. He never stops loving us or longing for us to return to Him when we have turned away.

I have been reading and journaling in a wonderful daily devotional, *One Thousand Gifts*, by Ann Voskamp, in which the author shares how one of her friends dared her to begin daily naming all the gifts she was grateful for and see if she could get to one thousand. Ann quickly learned that in giving thanks for these daily graces/love gifts, naming them, whether great or small, she was receiving peace and joy as her focus moved away from herself and her problems to the Lord and the wonder of all He does. It became a transformative journey, strengthening her faith, deepening her joy, moving her through all the broken places in her life, and bringing her into the light of God’s presence. As I have begun this discipline of daily (or at least I *try* to make it daily) thanking the Lord for His blessings/graces, I, too, am growing in my love for Him.

As Ann points out in the book’s introduction, this practice of naming daily gifts is a way to make thanksgiving a lifestyle, not just a holiday. Amen.

Judges 16:15-31; 2 Corinthians 13:1-11; Mark 5:25-34

Birthdays: Gloria Hood and Robert Mulvaney

Anniversaries: None

Monday, August 15

Psalm 106:1-18 *Praise the LORD. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good: his love endures forever.* (v.1)

Here it is again: a reminder and invitation to praise and thank our gracious, loving Father. I really don’t think there is any better way to start each day, and each prayer, than by praising and thanking our Lord for all He has given us.

When my husband and I were raising our children, we insisted that they say, “Thank you,” for everything and to everyone. Whenever one of them would come home from school and tell me about a friend or teacher who did something special for them that day, I would always say, “Did you remember to say “Thank you?” Likewise, any time they asked for something, as I handed it to them I would say (after an appropriate pause), “What do you say?” Early on, they each learned what the correct response was. After years and years of gratitude training in saying thank you or in writing thank you notes, I began to see that our persistence had paid off.

While this practice helped mold our growing children, the more important lesson was to teach them who the real Giver of all good gifts is, and to direct our thanks and praise to Him, always remembering that it is the Lord who gives us life and breath. He *is* good and He loves us for all eternity!

Judges 17:1-13; Acts 7:44—8:1a; John 5:19-29

Birthdays: Trevor Colley, Barrington Edwards, Olivia Lewis, Maryletta Mathias, Evangelia Mendiola and Nergal Williams

Anniversaries: Kevin & Alicia Walford

Tuesday, August 16

Psalm 12 *He will not let your foot slip—he who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.* (vv.3-4)

This short psalm reassures us that God is constantly watching over us, and we can count on Him to always be there for us. Think about our Father in heaven who never sleeps! If we try to compare God to even the best earthly parents, we know that there are limitations to their ability to protect and watch over their children, like the necessity of sleep, for one. Human parents *do* get weary, grow impatient, sometimes become ill, sometimes are not quick to forgive disobedience, sometimes influenced by their own pride and may temporarily withhold love as a means of punishment, etc. In short, even the best “best” parents cannot offer what God, the Father, gives so freely: His constant loving protection and presence.

Psalm 121 closes with, “The Lord will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life; the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.” This is the blessed assurance, the reason we can sleep confidently and peacefully, and face each new day with hope.

Thank You, Father, for Your bountiful love and grace.

Judges 18:1-15; Psalms 120, 122, 123; Acts 8:1-13; John 5:30-47

Birthdays: Chelsea Rodriguez, Aurora Seidner and Alejandra Stoddart

Anniversaries: None

Wednesday, August 17

Acts 8:14-25 *“You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God.”* (v.21)

These are the words of Peter, directed to a man who approached him and offered him money, asking him to give him the ability to lay hands on people so that they would receive the Holy Spirit. Peter rebukes the man because he knew that this man was seeking glory for himself, not seeking to glorify the Lord. Because Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit, he is given this amazing insight into the man’s heart and motives. I am reminded here of Jesus himself, who always knew (and continues to know) the unspoken thoughts of a man and the condition of his heart. Luke 6:8 says, “But Jesus knew what they were thinking,” and in Luke 9:47 we find the phrase, “Jesus, knowing their thoughts...”

Though we may try to conceal our heart motives from other people, we can never hide anything from the Lord. He knows us better than we know ourselves, which is why I am so fond of the part of my church’s worship liturgy which says, “Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord.”

Thank You, Father, for Your patience with me, and for being willing to purify my heart, something that I could never do for myself.

Judges 18:16-31; Psalm 119:145-176; John 6:1-15

Birthdays: Rev. Robert Deshaies, Andrew Grabin, Benito Lazo and Sophia Lazo

Anniversaries: Shane Marsh & Soyini Richards-Marsh

Thursday, August 18

Acts 8:14-25 *"Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked. "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?"* (vv.30b-31a)

In this passage from Acts, Philip is directed by an angel to go down the desert road from Jerusalem towards Gaza. He does so and comes upon an important Ethiopian eunuch, the official in charge of the queen's treasury, who was on his way back home to Ethiopia after having worshiped in Jerusalem. He was sitting in his chariot, reading Isaiah, when Philip was told by the Holy Spirit to go over to the chariot and stay close to it. Because of his obedience to the Lord's leading, when Philip asks the Ethiopian if he understands the reading, the Ethiopian invites him to come and sit with him and Philip ends up sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with this man. (The man had been reading from Isaiah 53, which prophesied Jesus' death.)

The way I see it is that the "take away" for me is (1) if we listen and follow the prompting of the Holy Spirit, the Lord can use us to spread the Gospel and (2) we need to study and know Scripture so that we can help others understand God's Word and come to faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. As the story continues, Philip baptizes the man, as requested, and when Philip left him, Acts says that the eunuch, "went on his way rejoicing." What great joy resulted from Philip's obedience.

Help us quiet our souls, Lord, so that we may hear and obey Your promptings.

Job 1:1-22; Psalms 131, 132, 133; John 6:16-27

Birthdays: Philip Ashterman, Howard Francis and Lois Whitely

Anniversaries: Richard & Linda Spillers

Friday, August 19

John 6:27-40 *Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty."* (v.35)

The people that Jesus addressed here were asking Jesus to give them a miraculous sign so they could be assured that he really was the Son of God. They reminded him that their forefathers had received bread from heaven, the manna, to eat when there was no other food to be found as they wandered in the desert with Moses. So now, Jesus tells them that, "the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." When they ask for this bread, Jesus reveals that he is that bread.

When I think about the Israelites in the wilderness with the miracle of manna appearing each morning, I find it amazing! There was never more manna than a one day's supply, except for Saturdays when God would supply enough for both Saturday and Sunday, so that the people could rest on the Sabbath and not have to go out and gather it. Day after day, God supplied "bread from heaven" because the people would always get hungry again. The manna was temporary.

But now, Jesus has come to permanently satisfy the hunger of our souls. Nothing else in all the world can fill, or even begin the whet, our spiritual appetites with such a rich,

complete, and joyous satisfaction. Anyone who "feeds" on Jesus will truly never be hungry or thirsty again.

Thank You, Father, for filling me with Your life-giving bread, Jesus Christ.

Job 2:1-13; Psalms 140, 142; Acts 9:1-9

Birthdays: Leah Kemp and Monica Leiba

Anniversaries: None

Saturday, August 20

John 6:41-51 *"I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."* (v.51)

Here Jesus continues to explain what is meant by calling himself, "the Bread of Life." He explains that though their forefathers ate manna in the desert, they died. But, he says in verse 50, "here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die." Accepting, believing, and confessing that Jesus is the Son of God who gave himself as a sacrifice for my sin and who died and rose again to new and unending life—this is the bread that give me eternal life!

All I can do is say, "Thank you." Thank you, thank you, thank you, Lord Jesus! There could be no greater gift, ever. I am overwhelmed by such love. Help me to live a life worthy of this great love gift. Help me to love others as You have loved me, dearest Father and Lord, my Creator and the Author of my Salvation. Amen and amen.

Job 3:1-26; Psalms 137, 144; Acts 9:10-19a

Birthdays: Edward Decker, Jessie Gilley. Alvin Hanson and Barbara McKenzie

Anniversaries: None

by Anna Cash

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