

Good News Daily

November 13-19, 2016

Sunday, November 13

Matthew 23:13-24 *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others.”* (v.23 NRSV)

Various activities can get in the way of living a life dedicated to Christian principles. Over emphasis placed on good deeds, working hard at a job to the exclusion of family, going to church many times a week, helping a friend who may be hurting, and over-exercise are examples of activities that at various times have become too important to me. Treating each other with love and respect is the essence of community, where we can learn to practice justice, mercy, and faith—activities like reaching out to a quiet person who seems uncomfortable or helping the poor or mentally ill.

Participating in observable signs of religion and feeling proud is often a sign for me that my priorities are misaligned. It took me some time to realize I am like my brothers and sisters in this world, made by our Creator to need love and to share love. Love, in all its fullness, is what leads me closer to wholeness in God’s family.

Habakkuk 1:1—2:1; Psalms 66, 67; Philippians 3:13—4:1

Birthdays: Clayton Johnson, Joanna Lee, Deirdre Lord, Ryan Officer, Zara Rose Peart and Ruby Ying

Anniversaries: John & Sonia Persico

Monday, November 14

James 2:14-26 *So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.* (v.17)

Faith feeds and supports good works; faith helps me be open to what the Holy Spirit is directing me to do. With my faith I have the motivation, the encouragement, the belief to go forward. Because of my faith I listen for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. I recognize the Holy Spirit’s promptings by the joy, peace, and eagerness my spirit feels. I receive blessings (good feelings) when I see that God has used me as an instrument to spread His love.

After prayer and spiritual direction, I recently made a big decision—to postpone my Spiritual Director’s program. I had serious back surgery, various critical family issues arose, and I needed more rest to recover. My faith helped me to make the decision to postpone my studies, even though I did not know what was next. Quitting this program broke a life-long principle of finishing whatever you start. It took my faith that God has more work for me in His time.

Faith and works are basically inseparable.

Habakkuk 2:1-4, 9-20; Psalm 89:1-18; Luke 16:19-31

Birthdays: Cynthia Blackwood, Sabrina McIntosh, Paul Moran and Heather Trebbien

Anniversaries: Maulan & Gina Wong

Tuesday, November 15

James 3:1-12 *Or look at ships: though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits.* (vv.4-5)

The tongue, though a small part of the body, has important functions within that help keep the body healthy. It also impacts on my way of relating to others through talking. Without making the decision to bridle the tongue, destructive talk can inflict damage on others. Yet with discipline, the tongue can sing praises, make an observation about someone which is nourishing to their growth in Christ, or express love to a person who is seriously hurting.

I experienced someone’s untamed tongue when I was in preschool. A girl who was much older came to my table, looked at my picture and threw it on the floor, saying that it was so ugly. I was devastated and, though I repressed the memory, it still influenced my life in significant ways.

As an adult through spiritual direction, I went through substantial work related to the healing of memories. We all have a choice. The tongue, though such a small appendage, can create havoc and evil or growth and joy.

Habakkuk 3:1-18; Psalms 97, 99, 100; Luke 17:1-10

Birthdays: Brandon Deshaies, Cooper Durning, Trevor Edwards, Patricia Lewis, Dave Luichinger and Joyce Restal

Anniversaries: Robert & Liria Huber

Wednesday, November 16

Psalm 101 *I will walk with integrity of heart within my house; I will not set before my eyes anything that is base.* (vv.2b-3)

As a Christian I work hard to emulate Christ’s teachings so that other people want to know what inspires me, what I believe. My integrity is important. When a person asks me about how I can be so calm, I share my faith.

Parenting has been my passion. When I was a new parent I began having trouble controlling my anger, especially with our children. I would get overly tired, stressed with the boys arguing, upset about how other areas of my life were unfolding, distressed by family illness, etc. My anger was hurtful to others around me and I knew I needed help. I studied parenting books; I took classes, read books, worked with a prayer counselor and a spiritual director, and found significant help in the areas needing attention.

In looking back to that time, I see I was given a gift of compassion for struggling parents and the faith to pursue ways I could improve my parenting skills so I could share my new skills with others.

Malachi 1:1, 6-14; Psalm 109; James 3:13—4:12; Luke 17:11-

Birthdays: Beverley Hanson, Raquelle Newman and Denese Williams

Anniversaries: None

Thursday, November 17

Luke 17:20-37 *"The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For, in fact, the kingdom of God is among you."* (vv.20b-21)

Love is the essence of the kingdom of God, and we are in the kingdom or near the kingdom when we are loving one another and loving God. I do not believe there is a physical entity called heaven. It is a profound mystery to me and I can live with that mystery and the resultant tension.

I feel closest to being near the kingdom when I am exercising my gifts and/or recognizing the nudging of the Holy Spirit. I also find it helpful to recognize Jesus in people. My goal is to see Jesus in everyone; and then I believe I will have come close to the kingdom, or be in the kingdom, when I can see the Creator in everyone I meet. I find this rather difficult at times and I have not accomplished being able to see Jesus in every person. When I feel peace and joy and I am letting my gifts produce fruit, I know I am at least approaching the kingdom of God.

Malachi 2:1-16; Psalm 105:1-22; James 4:13—5:6

Birthdays: Zahra-joye Brown, Noelle Corris, Thomas Donnellan, Eulalie Ferguson, Annie Laryea, Adrienne Slover, Michael Tromans and Matthew Wild

Anniversaries: None

Friday, November 18

Luke 18:1-8 *Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart.* (v.1)

Scripture urges us to pray with consistency and tenaciousness, never giving up. My mother is a woman of prayer. She prays throughout all experiences and times. She has had many answers to prayer for herself and others. Her last child should have had some critical times with the Rh factor, but he was fine. Her serious skin cancers have healed. Most recently she had been in kidney failure, and over a period of time she faithfully hung on and then started getting stronger. Her blood levels were such that the doctor told her this couldn't be; this doesn't happen. It can only be a miracle.

My father broke his neck and it healed so he can continue to live his gift of life as fully as possible. Mom assists him actively. I am grateful and in awe of how my children, on their own, work out special times to visit Nanny and Pop and help out in their unique ways. Her example has helped me to not lose heart even when life is challenging.

Malachi 3:1-12; Psalm 102; James 5:7-12

Birthdays: Valarie Adebayo, Pascal Anglade, Jachin Ashterman, Edward Corbin, Debra Edwards, Aaron Hudson, William Saunders and Tacita Williams

Anniversaries: Ralph & Margaret Rogers

Saturday, November 19

Luke 18:9-14 *"Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted."* (vv.10-14)

In my everyday life I see this judgmental behavior, where one person holds up the "victim" and proclaims how happy they are to not be like that person. I have become much more aware of how subtle this comportment can be and gasp internally when I hear it come out of my mouth. Why do I judge so harshly? Maybe it has helped me to have more positive thoughts about myself because I erroneously felt like a better person than someone who would do such a thing. This goes along with being special, which is a false assumption, because it requires separation from the others in the God's kingdom. This is not the same as having different gifts.

I find that in my household it is easy to judge politicians because of the decisions they make or don't make. At the same time, I realize that these judgments do nothing but make the situation worse by giving so much attention and energy to the negative. We are all the Creator's beloved children.

Malachi 3:13—4:6; Psalms 107:33-43, 108; James 5:13-20

Birthdays: Gordon Chuck, Janet Findlay, Emily Rodriguez, Kevin Rose and Cecile Torrence

Anniversaries: None

by Jean Hess

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