

Good News Daily

May 28-June 3, 2017

Sunday, May 28

Ephesians 2:1-10 *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.* (vv.8-9 NKJV)

I can elbow Jesus and God's gift of salvation off the stage as I get behind the microphone and boast of my good works. Sometimes I will be subtler, with my good works showing I earned my salvation in front of all the right "church" people like my pastor, men's Bible study leader, or the cute young lady who sits in the third row every Sunday.

How many times have I slipped into a casual conversation the fact I send monthly donations to a missionary friend in Africa or that I once went for two weeks to serve. Maybe it is the subtle pride of revealing to others that my friend and I are doing a one-year complete Bible study together or letting it slip that I stay after the Sunday service to help clean up.

All those actions are good for the kingdom but mean nothing to my salvation. Too many times I am guilty of pinning them on my chest as the Pharisees did in front of Jesus. We all know our hearts and the difference in wearing them as medals to be seen or as encouragement to glorify God.

It is easy to be a Pharisee. Pharisees dress up in the robes of works and elbow Jesus right off the stage. I want to put Jesus up high on the stage and kneel before him with my head bent because I am not worthy of his great gift of eternity.

Ezekiel 3:16-27; Psalms 66, 67; Matthew 10:24-33, 40-42

Birthdays: Lauren Neita, Janette Phillip and Tonisha Simon

Anniversaries: None

Monday, May 29

Luke 9:51-62 *"For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them."* (v.56a)

I remember the many years of thoughts before I finally accepted Christ as my savior. Thoughts like "Christians don't have any fun. Why would I want to follow this Jesus character?" This Jesus guy would ruin or destroy all my fun. I did have several people witness the transforming love of Christ to me, but I wanted no part of it.

So for years I went on my merry way living the "fun" life. Then one day I found myself broken—on my knees in tears because my life had become unmanageable. I was an alcoholic. My life of fun had come crashing down like a house of cards and I was empty inside. All the money I had saved, the status I had earned in my business, nor my friends could save me from my own destruction.

There was one friend waiting named Christ. The one I had snubbed my nose at years earlier. He was not

there to destroy my life. I had done that all on my own. Christ was there to save my life from my own lousy habits—and he did. Isn't that great news? We are not stuck with destructive habits because Christ can transform our ways. Transform habits like alcoholism, daily worry, pessimism, envy, anger, pride, etc. The list is truly endless. All of this potential change in addition to the gift of salvation.

Ezekiel 4:1-17; Psalm 89:1-18; Hebrews 6:1-12

Birthdays: Albert Cutie', Dennis Kelley and Bryce Nachtwey

Anniversaries: None

Tuesday, May 30

Psalm 97 *The heavens declare His righteousness, and all the peoples see His glory.* (v.6)

A simple and true principle is that when you see something awesome and complex there must be a maker. I have been blessed to travel to most parts of the world and witness the awesome power of our God's creation in the heavens.

I have slept under the Alaskan sky seeing the glory of the northern lights while working three summers for a backcountry outfitter. I have watched two months of shooting stars peeking out of a cold sleeping bag at 10,000 feet in a wilderness area in Montana. I have been blessed to see the sunset over the Great Barrier Reef in Australia and the beauty of a sunrise sleeping in the jungles of Thailand. God allowed me on the east African plains of Tanzania to watch herds of animals run by full moonlight.

Maybe the most spectacular night sky was after a two-day camel trek into the Sahara dessert between Morocco and Algeria. We sang worship songs that night around a fire after dinner. As I tried to sleep on the camel blankets we rode out on, my mind settled on what inspired people over two thousand years ago to worship our God. He was the maker of the heavens herding those sheep late at night.

Ezekiel 7:10-15, 23b-27; Psalms 99, 100; Hebrews 6:13-20;
Luke 10:1-17

Birthdays: None

Anniversaries: Dennis & Carla Holness and Edmund, Sr. & Annie Laryea

Wednesday, May 31

Luke 10:17-24 *"Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you."* (v.19)

I remember how I resisted giving up alcohol. I could not imagine a life without beer with pizza or pasta without red wine. Then I went to my first AA meeting and there were only two things that I remember from it. At the beginning I heard someone read the promises from the AA Big Book. I knew at once that it was what I had been looking for all my life. I had tried everything to

fine peace, joy, and meaning and purpose in life. The promises offered them to me.

The second thing I remember was that someone came up to me afterward and asked me to come back. I remember saying to him, "I don't think I can give up drinking for the rest of my life." He said to me, "You don't have to. Can you just give it up for today?" I realized at that moment that I only had to give it up one day at a time and I knew I could do without it for that day. That was quite a few thousand days ago. Truly, Jesus has given us authority and power to overcome all the power of the enemy.

Ezekiel 11:14-25; Psalms 101, 109:1-30; Hebrews 7:1-17

Birthdays: Tyna Green, Melvin Mawhinney, Alec Neita, Wesley Pitts Jayden Williams

Anniversaries: None

Thursday, June 1

Hebrews 7:18-28 *Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantor of a better covenant.* (v.22 NIV)

I don't know about you, but I like the new covenant given by Jesus a lot better than the Old Testament covenant. Growing up in a church that preached following the Ten Commandments and "being good" was too heavy for me. After years of rebellion, trying to fill that big empty hole in my heart, breaking many of the Ten Commandments on a regular basis, I finally gave up and committed my life to Christ. At that time, I did not understand that I would be given power through the Holy Spirit to live a life of love—for God, for self, and for others. Letting Jesus live his resurrected life through me is a lot easier than trying hard, in my own strength, to "be good."

Ezekiel 18:1-4, 19-32; Psalm 105:1-22; Luke 10:25-37

Birthdays: Dana Daley, Presley Edwards, Betty Kaczor, Kathleen Martin and Jordan Nachtwey

Anniversaries: Collins & Carla Turnquest

Friday, June 2

Luke 10:38-42 *But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made.* (v.40a)

I don't know if you can relate, but I am easily distracted from keeping the eye of my heart focused on Jesus. I am a lot like Martha. I am easily distracted with worldly endeavors. I like to travel, play and watch sports, TV, movies, and love life in general. I spend a lot of time thinking and acting on the things I like. I love Jesus, but I spend more time in worldly pursuits than I do alone with him in Bible reading and study, in prayer, or in grateful praise.

I hear Jesus saying to me, "My child, my child, you are so easily distracted about many things, but only one thing is needed. Spend more time with me and it will not be taken away from you."

Ezekiel 34:17-31; Psalm 102; Hebrews 8:1-13

Birthdays: Michael Edwards and Kyle Rodriguez

Anniversaries: Alex & Elizabeth Barcellos, Dirk & Ann Doebler and Edwin & Sharon Rose

Saturday, June 3

Hebrews 9:1-14 *Now the first covenant had regulations for worship and also an earthly sanctuary. But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance.* (vv.1, 7)

Sometimes I feel like I am still emotionally tied down to the first covenant. As a product of the Episcopal Church, I became comfortable with the structure of their Sunday worship service. However, over the last few years, I have been feeling the urge to praise God on a different level. I find myself praying before a Sunday service that the Holy Spirit would help me to worship God like King David did when he returned the ark to the City of David: "David, danced before the Lord with all his might" (2 Samuel 6:14).

Jesus, through his death and resurrection, has given me direct access to God. No need for a high priest to sprinkle blood on the alter in behalf of my sins. I am covered with the blood of Christ and have forgiveness of sin and redemption with our Heavenly Father. While I love the Anglican traditions, I believe there is more to worship for me and I am asking the Holy Spirit to help me to break loose and worship Jesus as he directs my heart. I believe the time will come when you may see me dancing in the isle because of my gratitude and joy in the Lord.

Ezekiel 43:1-12; Psalms 107:33-43, 108; Luke 11:14-23

Birthdays: Hyacinth Rhoden

Anniversaries: None

by Steve Ford

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