

Good News Daily

**January 31-February 6,
2016**

Sunday, January 31

Genesis 18:16-33 *Then the LORD said, "The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous...* (v.20 NIV)

Which sin is so egregious that it would cause a personal visitation by the Lord himself? Paul gives us some examples in his letter to the Galatians: "The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry, and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, and factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like" (5:19). How many of these sins we still observe today? The answer is all of them.

Pick up any national newspaper and at least one of these topics will be on the first page (certainly the second if not the first). What does this express about our world, our country, our personal moral fiber? I think it's pretty obvious we are in a state of moral decay. We all know that if tooth decay is not stopped at onset it will eat away the tooth like a cancer—ultimately ending in the loss of the tooth. Can we come to the same conclusion about this topic?

Jesus came and gave his life that we might live; not only live but thrive. It's your choice, smoking or non-smoking? Choose wisely.

Psalms 24, 29; Galatians 5:13-25; Mark 8:22-30

Birthdays: Candy Farley, Teresa Lucchese, Alyssa Prawl, Susan Rodriguez and Valrie Simpson

Anniversaries: None

Monday, February 1

Hebrews 11:1-12 *Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.* (v.1)

Faith can be a concept that's hard to grasp. You have faith when you are in the church and you sit in a pew. You know that the pew supports you. It's a trust issue. It's a belief system. Can you believe in someone you have never seen before?

Belief, trust, and faith all mean the same thing. For example, Jesus says, "My Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day" (John 6:40). We could replace belief with trust or faith. That's the question he asks us every morning. Do you trust me? Do you really trust me? Only you can answer for yourself. No one else

can answer for you. Can others see you and I demonstrate our faith? Smoking or non-smoking? Choose wisely.

Genesis 19:1-29; Psalms 56, 57, 58; John 6:27-40

Birthdays: Noah Grabin, Taura Hindsley and Isabella Williams

Anniversaries: None

Tuesday, February 2

Psalm 62 *Yes, my soul, finds rest in God; my salvation comes from him. Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken. My salvation and my honor depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge. Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your heart to him, for God is our refuge.* (vv.5-8)

When you're faced with a chronic illness, you look at life differently. I know from personal experience. I need the fortress around me so the challenges of the world do not overcome me. On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand. Therefore, I will not be shaken. Does this make life in bed of roses? No, it makes life bearable.

No other human being, even your closest friend or spouse can meet all your needs. It is unreasonable to expect them to do so. That is not a burden they were designed to carry.

The psalmist says to trust in God at all times. There is that word "trust" again. We could just as easily say believe in Him; or have faith in Him. Note that the psalmist says "in all times"; not "part of the time"; not "some of the time"; But, "all of the time." Is it always easy? No, it is not. But I cannot imagine any other way. The choice is ours to make individually. Smoking or non-smoking. Choose wisely.

Genesis 21:1-21; Psalm 61; Hebrews 11:13-22; John 6:41-

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Birthdays: Amber Nicole Hixon, Rene' Kocher, Michael Sinanan and Sonia Williams

Anniversaries: None

Wednesday, February 3

John 6:52-59 *Then the Jews began to murmur among themselves, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"* (v.52)

Jesus' hearers continue to misunderstand his statements, taking them on a purely physical level. Understood literally, what Jesus said would be highly objectionable since it would involve cannibalism and a use of blood that was strictly forbidden in the Law. Jesus uses the language of eating and drinking to illustrate the intimacy of the union between Christ and the believer. There's that word "belief" again.

This spiritual union by which Christ imparts new life to the believer, as portrayed later in the gospel, is the union of the vine and its branches.

Apart from a personal union with the Savior, there is no salvation. It's not about religion, it's about a relationship. To hear with your heart and see with your soul, to be guided by a hand we cannot physically hold—that's what faith must be. Thank You, Father, for the gift of faith. All we have to do is to ask and receive, trust and believe. Again, it is our choice, smoking or non-smoking. Choose wisely.

Genesis 22:1-18; Psalm 72; Hebrews 11:23-31

Birthdays: John Edmondson, Elizabeth Gibbs, Douglas Gray and Patricia Howe

Anniversaries: None

Thursday, February 4

Hebrews 11:32—12:2 *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles us. Let us run with perseverance the race marked for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.* (vv.1-2)

Two things struck me in this passage for today. First was the phrase "the sin that so easily entangles us." We all have a besetting sin. But I feel the sin mentioned here is the sin of unbelief. Have you ever had a time when it was hard to believe, to keep the faith, to trust? To be honest, we all have had such a time. The common thread I see in all the passages this week is to trust, to believe, and to have faith. But remember from Tuesday's lesson how Scripture says, "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). Remember, all you need is a mustard seed size of faith; but if you want more, just ask.

The second passage that struck me was, "Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, pioneer and perfecter of our faith." Perseverance means you never give up, you hang in there; you keep your shoulder to the wheel. The pioneer of your faith will ultimately perfect it. All you must do is believe in Him, trust Him, and have faith in Him. Smoking or non-smoking. Choose wisely.

Genesis 23:1-20; Psalms 70, 71; John 6:60-71

Birthdays: Dana Brown and Leslie Fabara

Anniversaries: Merrit and Velda Daley-Tate

Friday, February 5

Hebrews 12:3-11 *Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so you will not grow weary and lose heart.* (v3)

Have you ever been rejected by anyone? If not, you are truly unique. Was it painful? It sure was for me. Now consider Jesus. He was dying on the cross for you and me; everyone rejected him. We will never know how much it cost to see our sins upon that cross. He did it because he loves us and wants us to live with him forever. Smoking or non-smoking. Choose wisely.

Genesis 24:1-27; Psalm 69; John 7:1-13

Birthdays: Stephen Felix and Roy Reid, Jr.

Anniversaries: None

Saturday, February 6

John 7:14-36 At that point some of the people of Jerusalem began to ask, "Isn't this the man they are trying to kill?" (v.25)

Throughout Jesus' ministry, some people thought he was a prophet, some a teacher, some a good person, and some merely a carpenter. Some called him the Messiah, the Savior. Who do you say he was, he is, and he always will be? Do you know him as more than the Son of God? Do you know him personally as your Savior? Smoking or non-smoking. Choose wisely.

Genesis 24:28-38, 49-51; Psalms 75, 76; Hebrews 12:12-29

Birthdays: Nicholas Allen and Gillian Newman

Anniversaries: None

by Richard Mead

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