

Good News Daily

March 6-12, 2016

Sunday, March 6

Romans 8:11-25 *But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.* (v.25 NAS)

The word "if" is used five times in these verses, which makes it rather clear that a choice is offered. I find it very humbling, and respectful too, that God gives each of us a choice. He wants to partner with us, to guide us through decisions, to give us courage to persevere. The question is why would I ever choose to go my own way? I may have the beginning of an answer.

When life presents its usual challenges I can easily remain on my same level of understanding, following my usual pattern of study and quiet time. But in this past year or so I have found myself in totally "new territory"; patterns of living have changed, responsibilities increased. New territory requires new understandings. Sometimes it takes a seemingly insurmountable situation for me to pause and listen to our Lord more carefully, to take more time to be quiet and to dare to believe more deeply. He is faithful; His ability to guide and support has no end. In verse 16 we are reminded that, "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God." Indeed, we are.

Genesis 48:8-22; Psalms 66, 67; John 6:27-40

Birthdays: None

Anniversaries: Neil & Ayanna Shortridge

Monday, March 7

1 Corinthians 10:14—11:1 *All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify.* (v.23)

We know we are loved, forgiven, and have a place in God's family; however, He wants the best for each of us. Many choices may be lawful but they may not nourish His Spirit within. Early in my spiritual journey I remember the influence of others farther along on their path, how they chose to be more faithful to their quiet times, continuing study of the Bible, seeking ways to serve others, keeping a healthy balance in their lives—sometimes even saying no to worthwhile activities—and how they actively sought guidance when confronted with major challenges.

I still need and am grateful for the positive examples and encouragement of others as I seek to make the best choices, and pray I can do the same for them.

Genesis 49:1-28; Psalm 89:1-18; Mark 7:24-37

Birthdays: Ruhama Cutie', Wil Duggar, Marie Marie Vilsaint and Taija White

Anniversaries: Andre & Marsha Edwards

Tuesday, March 8

Psalm 100 *Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth. Serve the LORD with gladness; Come before Him with joyful singing.* (vv.1-2)

This psalm is a gift! I am to let go of the seeking, doing, and the needing to know and trust in the Lord's love and wisdom. I am to stop, enjoy, and appreciate the beautiful gifts God so generously gives to us. To neglect doing so is like receiving a gift from a friend and being too busy to bother opening it. Again, God is giving us a choice.

Lately, I have chosen to look around and there is so much to enjoy. Some days it is a beautiful rose-colored sunset viewed from a nearby dock while the ducks return home for the night, or going out later to view a full moon framed by huge oaks. It may also be the thoughtfulness of a note or call from a friend.

Focusing on the positives that God gives also has other gifts. In Proverbs 17:22 we are reminded that "a joyful heart is good medicine." How much wiser and more fulfilling it is to do life His way.

Genesis 49:29—50:14; Psalms 97, 99; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34; Mark 8:1-10

Birthdays: Reginald Carty and Samuel Marsh

Anniversaries: None

Wednesday, March 9

Mark 8:11-26 *And they came to Bethsaida. And they brought a blind man to Jesus and implored Him to touch him.* (v.22)

This is a somewhat difficult, yet encouraging, story of one of Jesus' healings because a member of our family is dealing with significant loss of sight. As we pray that he receives the last part of this verse, we are finding this challenge to be a valuable (though uninvited) opportunity for each of us, in our own way, to "see" and experience many aspects of our lives in new ways. Communication becomes even more important as responsibilities are reassessed and we adopt to a number of losses. And, needless to say, this is also a time when we are seeking our Lord on an ever deeper level.

The love, support, and thoughtful caring of the body of Christ assures often, and in a variety of ways, that he is very much with us on this journey. And we are deeply grateful.

Genesis 50:15-26; Psalms 101, 109; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Birthdays: None

Anniversaries: None

Thursday, March 10

1 Corinthians 12:12-26 *But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.* (vv.24b-25)

Surely we can identify with this teaching because it is a rare day when we do not hear of or possibly experience differences and divisions among the church, families, or other groups. Living in community requires us to care for and respect each other. But many times what we observe or experience is anger in an attempt to win or defend, or playing nice to avoid further upset and division. No truth or love there.

As I try to apply this in my life, it seems the more deeply I can accept God's love, the more I will trust Him in this process. So where is my focus? Is it on winning and/or the approval of others, or will I choose to trust Him and follow His way as I seek to live in love, be honest, and truly care for others.

Exodus 1:6-22; Psalm 69; Mark 8:27—9:1

Birthdays: Spugeon Leiba, William McDaniel, Patricia Officer and Aiden Wallace

Anniversaries: None

Friday, March 11

1 Corinthians 12:27—13:3 *Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.* (v.27)

Today gives us another teaching on how we in the body of Christ can best serve and support one another. Each of us are to seek, develop, and offer our own gifts and help and encourage one another to do the same.

Often others can see us better than we can see ourselves. I once had the delightful experience of being a part of this. There was a leadership opportunity in our parish and several of us agreed a certain member would be excellent. However, she could not see herself as capable—but we encouraged her. She did accept and did a great job, growing in many ways as she successfully attended to the many responsibilities.

It is a fact that some talents and gifts may seem more important than others, but without the whole structure functioning—be it in a family parish or a community—success will be more difficult.

Exodus 2:1-22; Psalm 102; Mark 9:2-13

Birthdays: Cliff Bernsen, Geoffrey Chang and Natalie Guy

Anniversaries: None

Saturday, March 12

1 Corinthians 13:1-13 *But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.* (v.13)

This could be a daily reading because it clearly teaches us what love is and what it is not. Love, as described in these verses, is complete and totally out of my ability to achieve on my own. I am grateful that later in verse 9 it includes, "for we know in part."

So how do I begin? As mentioned in a study a few days ago, I have learned to look at my motivations, my needs, and how they affect my responses. As I am reminded in the 12-Step program, "let go and let God." The more my security, hope, peace, and joy are rooted in God's love and care for me, the less will be my expectations of others.

I once found myself in a particularly challenging relationship. I felt unfairly criticized, much disapproval, and left out. Then one day I was reading/praying the Prayer of St. Francis and really heard this one phrase: "Let me not so much seek to be understood as to understand." My hurt began to diminish as I sought to understand; my comfort level increased and slowly, but significantly, the relationship became more comfortable—a true gift and one I cherish.

Exodus 2:23—3:15; Psalms 107:33-43, 108; Mark 9:14-29

Birthdays: Robert Bernsen, Enzo Lolo and Merrit Tate

Anniversaries: None

by Shirley Pipkin

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