

Good News Daily

April 17-23, 2016

Sunday, April 17

1 John 2:18-29 *Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist—he denies the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father.* (vv.22-23a NIV)

Just as in John's day there were men who claimed faith in God while denying and opposing Christ, so it is in today's Christian church that here and there we find clergy and laity who will talk a lot about God but never mention Jesus. Worse yet, if Jesus is spoken of, he is not accorded his rightful majesty, power, or importance. I met one of these "antichrists" face to face many years ago and I was both shocked and saddened that he was an active, ordained minister in a large, mainline Protestant church.

John tells us in verse 26 that he is writing about those who would lead us (believers) astray so that we can be forewarned and not be duped by such counterfeits. We have been sealed and anointed by the Holy Spirit, and if we remain and abide in Christ, we can stand firm against any who would draw us away from Jesus. Anybody can talk about God in a general way, but only the true Christian can speak of his personal relationship with Jesus Christ, the Lord and Savior of the world.

Pray always for the wisdom, discernment, and faith that keeps our eyes focused on Jesus.

Exodus 28:1-4, 30-38; Psalms 63, 98; Mark 6:30-44

Birthdays: Cheryl Burley, Michelle Cathcart, Evelyn Lee and Jermaine McCarthy

Anniversaries: None

Monday, April 18

Colossians 3:18—4:18 *Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.* (v.2)

Prayer is a powerful thing. I don't think many of us have even begun to realize how being devoted to prayer could mightily alter our lives. Paul instructs the Colossians here, and in his first letter to the Thessalonians he says, "Pray without ceasing" (5:16 KJV). In his letter to the Philippians, Paul urges, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" (4:6-7).

I have had a personal relationship with the Lord for much my life, but only in recent years have I come to understand how critical prayer is to living the abundant life that Jesus promises us. I used to think of prayer as more of a last resort than as the absolute first line of action! I would say to others, "Well, if I can't do anything else for you, at least I can pray for you." Wrong thinking. Prayer should and can be the first thing we do in every situation.

Prayer is not wishful thinking. It is honest communication with a living, loving, merciful and almighty

God who always knows what is best for all of us.

Watch what happens when you devote yourself to prayer with thanksgiving, as Paul urges. You just might be amazed.

Exodus 32:1-20; Psalms 41, 52; Matthew 5:1-10

Birthdays: Joanne Michael Dussau and Norma Roberts

Anniversaries: Wil & Mother Tracy Dugger

Tuesday, April 19

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10 *We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.* (v.3)

In praying for and thanking God for the church at Thessalonica, Paul characterizes the motivations behind their work, labor, and endurance as faith, love, and hope in Jesus. As I read this, it dawned on me that this is precisely what would please God, and I am certain that He expects this of every church as well as of every individual believer.

If the works I do are indeed produced by my faith in Jesus Christ, rather than selfish interests, isn't God honored? If my labors are prompted by my love of Jesus, rather than my love of accolades, isn't it God who receives honor? And if I am able to endure anything from irritation to hardship to pain and suffering, not because I grit my teeth and push blindly on but because I am inspired through my hope in Jesus, isn't God pleased and aren't I blessed?

Thank you, Lord Jesus Christ, for forgiving us when our motivations are misplaced. Thank you for showing us the blessings that flow from keeping you on the throne and in the center of our everyday lives.

Exodus 32:21-34; Psalm 45; Matthew 5:11-16

Birthdays: Dizonne Nembhard and Lynette Nembhard

Anniversaries: William & Niamh Saunders

Wednesday, April 20

Exodus 33:1-23 *The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend.* (v.11a)

The whole story of Moses, from his birth to his death, is a fascinating account of one of the most courageous, godly, and devoted men of all time. Imagine carrying on a conversation with God and audibly hearing his voice—not once, but daily for many years! Imagine the faith and courage Moses must have possessed as he led a rebellious people day by day through the wilderness for 40 years, as God personally directed him. Imagine the frustration he must have felt, time and again, when the people turned from God. Imagine the disappointment he must have felt when his own brother, Aaron, directed the building and worship of the golden calf.

Moses had a unique and powerful relationship with God, and God used him mightily. God desires from us the same whole-hearted obedience and reliance that Moses had.

In the midst of disappointments and frustrations, help us, Lord, to remain true to You, and to honor You and

desire Your friendship more than gold.

Psalm 119:49-72; 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12; Matthew 5:17-20

Birthdays: Jonathan Burley and Kimberly Simmons

Anniversaries: Charlton & Grace Wallace

Thursday, April 21

Matthew 5:21-26 *"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift."*(vv.23-24)

Reconciliation is really important to the Lord. He doesn't want us at His altar if we have a relationship that is in jeopardy. I think this is closely related to forgiveness as well. God desires all His children to be united in His love so that forgiveness is freely given and accepted, and broken relationships can be mended, healed, and restored.

Sometimes bonds between people have been so badly damaged over time, that it just seems as though reconciliation is far beyond the realm of possibility. But when we feel this way we are forgetting that God is in the business of bringing to pass the seeming impossibilities in life. Luke 1:37 says: "For nothing is impossible with God."

I once prayed for nearly 10 years for reconciliation between two brothers, and then one day the walls of separation crumbled and their relationship was restored. Never underestimate what God can do if we just persevere in praying expectantly.

Thank You, Lord, for showing us the importance of staying connected to You and to each other, and for equipping us to do the hard work of reconciliation.

Exodus 34:1-17; Psalm 50; 1 Thessalonians 2:13-20

Birthdays: Patrick Graham, Tyrese Harris, Steve Moody, Migeul Salgado and Bianca Yacinthe

Anniversaries: None

Friday, April 22

Psalm 40 *Blessed is the man who makes the LORD his trust, who does not look to the proud, to those who turn aside to false gods.* (v.4)

We live in a time and in a culture which encourages pride in self-achievement, which worships physical perfection, no matter the means used to attain it, which decries aging and worships the attainment of youthful beauty, which measures success primarily by how much money and "things" you possess. The emphasis of our day is all on the externals and the appearance of well-being.

Where this is the prevailing philosophy we also find more and more people suffering from anxiety and depression. Why? Because they are running after false gods, ignoring real spiritual needs in order to satisfy their physical desires. This quest for the so-called "good life" never seems to satisfy the soul, and it invariably leads to restlessness and emptiness.

God tells us over and over again all through the Bible that the true "good life" is one of blessedness. Being blessed means being filled with God's grace, love, and mercy. It is a state of inner calm, peacefulness, and well-being that results from a life lived in obedience to God's will. Here in Psalm 40, we see a key to being blessed: making the Lord your trust, i.e., your rock, provider, and your source of all goodness.

Thank You, Lord, for never disappointing us.
Exodus 34:18-35; Psalm 54; 1 Thessalonians 3:1-13;
Matthew 5:27-37

Birthdays: Marcus Norman, Portia, Alicia Sibblis, Grace Wallace and Nella Wallace

Anniversaries: None

Saturday, April 23

Matthew 5:38-48 *"But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."*(v.44)

This is what I used to consider one of the hard sayings of Jesus. I had no idea how you could possibly love someone who hated you, much less pray for people who were really treating you badly. If another person is focused on hurting me and trying to make life miserable for me, how can I be expected to do anything other than retaliate? Isn't it my right to fight back?

One day a friend explained it to me. In the process of answering my questions, she directed me to Jesus and his Holy Spirit and it was the beginning of my new life in Christ. The Lord opened my heart to hear his truth and gave me spiritual eyes I never had before. My friend, in essence, said, it's like this: No matter how hard I try, I can never love my enemies or pray for my enemies. I don't have it in me; nobody does. But when we are believers, the Holy Spirit lives in us and he can love our enemies through us because he is God and God is love. What a revelation!

God never asks us to do anything that He is not ready and willing to equip us to do. Without His Holy Spirit, we could never carry out His commands.

Thank you, Jesus, for empowering us to live a life of love.

Exodus 40:18-38; Psalm 55; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

Birthdays: Terrace Lee

Anniversaries: Mr. & Mrs. John Howe

by Anna Cash

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