

Good News Daily

November 27-December 3,
2016

Sunday, November 27

Matthew 25:1-13 *"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour."* (v.13 NIV)

It's easy to see this verse as a warning, or as a reason to fear. I prefer to see it as a motivator, or even as a sense of security. If you have accepted the Good News of the gospel, you have complete security. This verse, therefore, should not be scary. It is, however, a reminder of the seriousness, reality, and importance of the life of faith.

Each day, each hour, is an opportunity to live for God and to show His light to others. It would be tragic to miss such an opportunity. This parable of the Ten Virgins reminds us to not only be ready, but also to be proactive. For us, "getting ready" doesn't mean having oil for our candles. It means living a life that reflects the example of Jesus: a life not of fear, but of motivation.

Isaiah 1:1-9; Psalms 146, 147; 2 Peter 3:1-10

Birthdays: Niamh Saunders

Anniversaries: Raymond & Marlyn Ally

Monday, November 28

Isaiah 1:10-20 *"Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow."* (v.17)

This passage reminds me of one of my favorite verses, "And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8). This is a calling for us not only as Christians, but also as human beings. It appeals to the compassion and love we could show each other through understanding our shared human experience: "Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed..." It transcends background, race, nationality, or any other division. "Against such things there is no law" (Galatians 5:23).

One thing that I love about this verse is that it doesn't just say, "Do right." It says something much more compassionate and tangible: "Learn to do right." This doesn't happen overnight. It's a process, one that will never be fully completed on earth. But it's feasible for anyone.

"Seek justice... plead the case of the widow." "Act justly... walk humbly." These statements are so simple, yet so full of meaning. It is our role as Christians to find this meaning, and to live it out.

Psalms 1, 2, 3; 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10; Luke 20:1-8

Birthdays: Erica Doebler-Kokkeby, Robert Huber and Edmund Laryea, Sr.

Anniversaries: Trevor & Charmaine Colley, Kirk & Shauna Peart and Jim & Roseanne Rugg

Tuesday, November 29

Psalm 5 *Listen to my words, LORD, consider my lament. Hear my cry for help, my King and my God, for to you I pray.* (vv.1-2)

Sometimes I just pray out, "God... Please help me. I don't know what to do or where to go." This is the kind of prayer that David was offering up in Psalms 5 and 6. It is a prayer of desperation, a prayer of current hopelessness mixed with the hope of future—legitimate, real hope. This prayer is so incredibly human. Everyone can relate to this most basic act of asking for help.

When a Christian approaches God with this request, He will deliver. We can trust Him to make sense out of the ambiguity and confusion that this world has to offer, because He is a God not of chaos but of order. Let's trust in Him today.

Isaiah 1:21-31; Psalm 6; 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12; Luke 20:9-18

Birthdays: Sharon Alveranga-Jones, Matthew Carey, Lydell Innis and Aubrey Lowe

Anniversaries: None

Wednesday, November 30

Psalm 119:1-24 *Blessed are those whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the LORD.* (v.1)

Faith frees us to walk according to the law of the Lord, to be among His followers. Sin, greed, pride—these things can hold us back from walking that path. However, we know that we do not need to let these hindrances trip us up. Seeking God's will for our walk in life will give us new vision, a new perspective, that helps us see things as they really are. Sin loses its luster, greed its allure, and pride its glory.

It is our choice. We could allow ourselves to stay stuck. But it's God's desire for us all to find His truth (1 Timothy 2:4). It is my prayer that we allow ourselves to be freed.

Isaiah 2:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 2:13-20; Luke 20:19-26

Birthdays: Camilla Cutie', Andre Husbands, Ray Mikes, Rovena Reid, Patricia Sala, Jerry Sehi and Shaneka Williams

Anniversaries: Rick & Jessica White

Thursday, December 1

1 Thessalonians 3:1-13 *May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you.* (v.12)

Christianity is about relationships, about connecting with people and connecting with God. When we lose sight of that, we lose sight of the ultimate vision. When Paul writes to the various churches, his introductions, salutations, and farewells are all incredibly loving. He speaks of loving and praying for one another. He asks his friends to pray for him through his struggles. Paul had an incredibly strong bond with his brothers and sisters of the faith.

Today, it seems that we are missing that. How can we restore it? I'm not sure that there's an easy answer. Maybe this looks like sending a random note to someone you know at church. Maybe it means having your neighbors over for dinner. Maybe it means befriending the person you see at lunch everyday but never talk to. The beauty of this ambiguous mission is that the calling is slightly different for each of us.

Christianity is about relationships. It's about never being alone, and being there for the person who is.

Isaiah 2:12-22; Psalm 18:1-20; Luke 20:27-40

Birthdays: Albert Cunningham, Jeanette Banks, Janet Lewis, Milan Martin and Steve Meyer

Anniversaries: None

Friday, December 2

Luke 20:41—21:4 *"Truly I tell you," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others."* (v.3)

This passage speaks to the enormity yet simplicity of our calling as Christians. At its very core, the job is this: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself'" (Luke 10:27b). We are called to love with everything we have in us. The premise of Christianity is based on this idea, and all of the law stems from it.

We are to be like that poor widow, the one who was dismissed by Pharisees but praised by Jesus. Whatever we have—talents, gifts, resources, abilities—we are to offer those to further the Lord's cause. Just as Jesus gave it all for our salvation, we are to give our lives in service to God's great cause of love. There's no greater offering than this.

Isaiah 3:8-15; Psalms 16, 17; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

Birthdays: Jeanne Cheatham

Anniversaries: None

Saturday, December 3

Isaiah 4:2-6 *It will be a shelter and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and rain.* (v.6)

The "it" in the verse above refers to the "Branch of the LORD." This particular passages connects nicely with today's Psalm: "May the Lord answer you when you are in distress; may the name of the God of Jacob protect you" (Psalm 20:1). The main message is this: with God, we are protected from the evils in this world because we are not bound by it. The reaches of sin cannot keep us from His holiness. The forces of complacency are nothing compared to His passion. The temptation of apathy is overcome by the enormity of His love.

His Branch is our first line of defense. Nothing, absolutely nothing, can keep us away from Him. When we realize this, we are free to pursue Him and His plan without fear of failure, rejection, or even death. "But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33b). Indeed, He has.

Psalms 20, 21; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Luke 21:5-19

Birthdays: John Persico

Anniversaries: None

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