

# Good News Daily

December 11-17, 2016

## Sunday, December 11

Psalm 63 *I will praise you as long as I live.* (v.4a, NIV)

David wrote this psalm, and it reveals the intimate connection he had with God all through his life. Because he was so close to the Lord, he rarely hesitated to call on Him for guidance, protection from his enemies, comfort and healing in times of trouble, and shelter from the storms of life. I think that David probably talked to the Lord often, and understood the power and sovereignty of God, so much so that he was able to both lean hard on the Lord, *and* accept the consequences of his own sins, knowing that true repentance would bring forgiveness and reconciliation.

All through the book of Psalms we find David and others praising God, not just for what He has done, but also for who He is. It makes me realize that I don't give the Lord the praise He deserves. I must remember to praise Him for His majesty, great power, unfathomable love for me, and His incomprehensible wisdom and grace. Every day I must remember that my very life and breath are a gift from Him, and that He has placed me in the midst of His earthly beautiful creation, and desires that I stay focused on Him and not on all the other distractions in life.

Forgive us, Father, when we fail to give You the praise You so rightly deserve. Help us to be like David, praising You as long as we live!

Isaiah 13:6-13; Hebrews 12:18-29; John 3:22-30

**Birthdays:** Bradley Ally, Matthew Bernsen, John Cathcart, Sharlene Lacey, Mercia McKenzie, Sandra Scott, Maria Tromans and Chadia Ying

**Anniversaries:** Beau & Joanne Michael Dussau

## Monday, December 12

2 Peter 1:1-11 *His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.* (v.3)

This is the secret for abundant life: believe on Jesus Christ, heed his call, and allow him to give you everything you need...not just to "get by," but to live a godly life. Taken in its simplest terms, we might say that Jesus is truly all we need. He is at the center of the full, joy-filled life. He is the giver of every good and perfect gift, and the source of love, life, and light. If you've got Jesus, you've got it all. No one and no other thing known to mankind can sustain such a claim.

The sad news is that we all too often forget and ignore this incredible gift. The enemy seduces us into thinking that we "need" or "deserve" the prideful things of life, such as power, fame, popularity, wealth, self-indulgent leisure time, control of others, etc. etc. So we go off on our own, working very hard to accomplish

these ends, only to discover the great emptiness of a God-less, self-centered life.

The good news is that Jesus loves us unconditionally, and is quick to forgive when we confess and repent. Remember the story of the prodigal son and know that our Father rejoices to have us come back home.

Lord Jesus, help us to empty ourselves so that we may be filled with you, and your life-giving spirit.

Isaiah 8:16—9:1; Psalms 41, 52; Luke 22:39-53

**Birthdays:** Vickie Madaloni and Irma Olivier

**Anniversaries:** Alexander & Noelle Corris

## Tuesday, December 13

Isaiah 9:1-7 *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.* (v.6)

Isaiah wrote these words roughly 700 years before the Messiah was born. And less than two weeks from today, 2,700+ years after Isaiah's wonderful prophecy, we will celebrate again the birth of our Savior. So much is said about him in this one verse; for those who originally heard and believed Isaiah's words, there must have been a great sense of peace, comfort, and joyful, confident anticipation.

Meditating on each of the names of Jesus Christ strengthens my faith and gives me a wonderful, child-like security knowing that I was created by and am loved by such an awesome person. "Wonderful Counselor," who listens patiently to me 24 hours a day; "Mighty God," whose strength I can call on and count on in any situation; "Everlasting Father," who loves me unconditionally, will never leave me, and with whom I will spend eternity; "Prince of Peace," a royal, regal embodiment and source of peace for the world and for my inner being.

Thank You, God, for the gift of Your son. Help us to worship and love him with all our hearts, souls, minds, and bodies.

Psalm 45, 2 Peter 1:12-21; Luke 22:54-69

**Birthdays:** Connie Hoyes

**Anniversaries:** Spencer & Apolonia Browne and Patricia & Geoffrey Ireland

## Wednesday, December 14

2 Peter 2:1-10a *But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you.* (v.1)

In this second and last letter of Peter to the early Christian church, we can almost feel Peter's deep concern for the young and growing believers. This is a letter of encouragement but also one of stern warning, lest any should fall away from the Way, which he, Paul, and all the others had tried so hard to teach and exemplify. He wanted his brothers and sisters in Christ to be aware of the "wolves in sheep's clothing," who had

arisen in the past and would surely appear again to try and corrupt the Word, and "bring the way of truth into disrepute" (v.2). In verse 17, Peter characterizes false teachers as "springs without water and mists driven by a storm," and elsewhere as arrogant, bold, greedy, seductive, hypocritical, and sinful.

I think it is fair to say that today's church is not without such people, and we must all continue to uphold God's truth and loves in our hearts and lives, lest we become foolish and let ourselves be deceived.

Dear Father, thank You for giving us Your Holy Scriptures, Your Holy Spirit, and fellow Christians more mature than we, to guide us and keep us steadfastly in Your path of love and righteousness.

Isaiah 9:8-17; Psalm 119:49-72; Mark 1:1-8

**Birthdays:** David Benson and Christelle Rivera

**Anniversaries:** None

### Thursday, December 15

Matthew 3:1-12 *"His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire."* (v.12)

As I read this verse, I have a mental image of Jesus, standing on the threshing floor, scooping up the grain, tossing it into the air so that only the portion of the wheat kernels that is good falls back to the floor and the near-weightless chaff is scattered and then consumed by fire. (The portion desired by the harvester was only that which had weight, substance, taste, and usefulness. The outer chaff lacked these qualities and had no purpose after being separated from the wheat.)

Jesus is being spoken of in the Scripture passage by John the Baptist, and he is telling the listeners that Jesus is coming to baptize "with the Holy Spirit and with fire." He paints a really clear picture for us, doesn't he? Some of us are like the wheat and some of us are like the chaff. Some of us will be gathered into the Lord's barn, and others will be consumed by an unquenchable fire. It is up to each one of us who hears the Word of God to choose which we will be.

We must choose, because not choosing makes us like the chaff.

Help our unbelief, Lord, that we may make the right choice and dwell with You forever.

Isaiah 9:18—10:4; Psalm 50; 2 Peter 2:10b-16

**Birthdays:** Carrol White

**Anniversaries:** None

### Friday, December 16

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)

This verse prompts me to do some self-examination before the Lord, asking myself if I am genuinely *trusting* the Lord in my daily walk, or is my trust placed more in people and material things?

Trusting is not the same as believing, as it implies giving over control of one's life, not just verbally acknowledging that Jesus is the Son of God. Trusting God involves the heart, mind, and soul. I think of trusting the Lord as a way of life, where everyday decisions are made in the prayerful context of seeking to do God's will, of reading and absorbing His Word, and then giving the reins to the Lord, in the confident assurance of His sovereignty over my life and the entire world.

Christian psychologist and author Brennan Manning, wrote a wonderful book called, *Ruthless Trust*, which I read some years ago and found very thought-provoking and also encouraging. It helped me see that there is great freedom and peace that can result by trusting the risen Lord above all others. Living day to day, trusting Jesus, is a challenge, to be sure, but is *so* worth the effort.

Dearest Lord Jesus, help me to deeply, truly, consistently put my trust in you alone.

Isaiah 10:5-19; Psalm 54; 2 Peter 2:17-22; Matthew 11:2-15

**Birthdays:** Jada Howden

**Anniversaries:** Ken & Taura Hindsley

### Saturday, December 17

Jude 17-25 *To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power, and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.* (vv.24-25)

I find such great assurance in these verses. I can't seem to keep myself from falling into sin, but Jesus is by my side to do it for me, if only I will ask. No one else has such power; not my mother, father, brother, sister, spouse, child or friend. Only the Savior can keep me on the higher road to righteousness. And when I ignore his offer of help, I suffer the consequences of being on the lower road of sin, which leads away from light and life, toward darkness and death.

The second thing Jude mentions here about our Lord is his ability to joyfully present us to the Father "without fault," i.e., sinless and pure, washed in his blood so that we become unblemished and cleansed of all unrighteousness. This is the only way our holy God can look at us, which is why we must have Jesus. I cannot purify or cleanse myself, even if I dedicated my every waking moment to that end. I am a sinner in great need of a Savior.

Thank You, Father, for the gift of Your precious son.

Isaiah 10:20-27; Psalm 55; Luke 3:1-9

**Birthdays:** Sean Burke and Camille Mason

**Anniversaries:** None

*by Anna Cash*

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