

# Good News Daily

March 19-25, 2017

## Sunday, March 19

1 Corinthians 6:12-20 *"I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial.* (v.12a NIV)

Today's readings drove home to me the hard lesson of the nature of sin. It begins with self-indulgence: "What harm will it do? I'm not hurting anyone. No one will know. Who cares? It's my body; I can do what I please." Whether it is, the rules of the road or the passion of the moment, it boils down to personal choice with little thought of consequences. Like a virus or a forest fire, it can catch on and spread.

What we thought was a private matter develops into corporate sin. We then move from being a disobedient people of God to being a godless people (Jeremiah 6) and, finally, we are totally out of control and in bondage to Satan, no longer able to make right choices (Mark 5).

I seldom think that my personal choices might have such far-reaching effects, yet I know that one person can make a difference in the lives of others. When I look at my own life-story it is peppered with the influences of individuals who have crossed my path or walked with me for a season. One encouraged me and made me feel worthwhile. Another demeaned me until I couldn't do anything right. I thank God that His protection and provision has steered me through the deep waters of past blunders and outside influences. I pray that I may stand firmly rooted in Him during temptation's appealing moments.

Jeremiah 6:9-15; Psalms 93, 96; Mark 5:1-20

**Birthdays:** James Burch, Elam Doharty, Emily Mae Levitt and Elinor Wurz

**Anniversaries:** None

## Monday, March 20

John 7:14-36 *Jesus answered, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from the one who sent me."* (v.16)

Often I try to reason the meaning of Scripture passages. My pondering usually ends in prayer because it has fallen short of the wisdom of God. Oswald Chambers (*My Utmost for His Highest*) says, "The good is the enemy of the best." Our own wisdom will blunt our spiritual insight. The crowd at the Feast of Tabernacles, where Jesus is teaching, is reasoning among themselves that Jesus could not be the Messiah because they knew where he came from, and when the Christ comes no one will know

from whence he comes. As it turns out, they don't all know where Jesus comes from or where he is going. Our own understanding is often grounded on half-truths, lies, or assumptions. Inner healing has shown me that my own beliefs can reveal such a faulty foundation. "Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered" (Romans 4:7).

Jeremiah 7:1-15; Psalm 80; Romans 4:1-12

**Birthdays:** Michael Campbell, Ken Hindsley, David Millar, Dayne Rhoden and Noel Smith

**Anniversaries:** None

## Tuesday, March 21

John 7:37-52 *On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them."* (vv.37-38)

Part of the Tabernacle furniture is a laver (basin) where priests and Levites wash their hands as an act of cleansing before making sacrifice. The Christian enactment of this hand washing can be seen as the priest washes his hands at the altar before consecrating the bread and wine, which represents Christ's sacrifice for us. Living water is mentioned in Scripture to signify the cleansing and life-changing presence of the Holy Spirit within us to purify and set us apart for God's service. Do we grasp the idea of being holy vessels, cleansed by the Holy Spirit and standing on Holy ground? I have a friend whose ministry includes drawing people into old covenant/new covenant connections. Part of the ceremony is pouring water and prayers over peoples' hands as they wash at the laver. A handmaid stands by with towels to dry hands. It is much like a foot-washing. Both hand-washing and foot-washing are powerful expressions of servant ministry, preparing one another to meet their King. Do we hear Jesus calling us to his source of Living Water?

Jeremiah 7:21-34; Psalm 78:1-39; Romans 4:13-25

**Birthdays:** Sadie Lawrence

**Anniversaries:** Jeffrey & Kelly Welling

## Wednesday, March 22

Romans 5:1-11 *Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.* (vv.3-5)

This message makes the most sense to me when I think of "suffering" as "allowing," such as "suffer the little children to come unto me." Thus, when I allow God to work in my life at His own time and in His own way, I am learning perseverance. When I stop resisting, the pain of suffering is diminished. (Dieting became much easier when I gave myself permission to be hungry.) It is not easy to allow circumstances that are not of our own choosing, but I find that when I do they generally turn into blessings. As I suffer God to work in my life, He loves me into wholeness; and what I thought would be painful turns into spiritual muscle.

Jeremiah 8:18—9:6; Psalm 119:97-120; John 8:12-20

**Birthdays:** Laurel Belnavis, Garrett Braaf, Matthew Campbell and Beverley Michelin

**Anniversaries:** None

### **Thursday, March 23**

*Psalm 42 Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your waves and breakers have swept over me. By day the LORD directs his love, at night his song is with me—a prayer to the God of my life. (vv.7-8)*

David's songs are emotional roller coasters. His depression may alter the tune but does not drown the song. His cries and complaints do not destroy his hope and trust. David kept falling into sin but readily repented; he had a heart for God. Unlike the Hebrew people who were disobedient and kept on sinning, David maintained an open love-relationship with God that enabled him to offer sacrifices of worship and thanksgiving even when the chips were down. Despite the devastation and hardship that comes upon us, we are called to offer thanksgiving and praise to our Lord. That is the clean heart that we ask God to create in us. I pray for that. And I thank God for those who keep on singing.

Jeremiah 10:11-24; Psalms 83, 43; Romans 5:12-21; John 8:21-32

**Birthdays:** Deborah Cainto, Paul Dunkley and Eileen Tesh

**Anniversaries:** Stephanie Simon-Wright & Michael Wright

### **Friday, March 24**

John 8:33-47 "*So, if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.*" (v.36)

Jesus tells us we are slaves to sin until we are set free. Sin is *anything* that keeps us away from God's plan for our lives. I remember being in bondage, boxed in and helpless. My sins were/are more socially acceptable than some (procrastination,

control issues, arrogance), but no less effective. Whatever steals our witness and suppresses our song is making old Screwtape happy (You remember C.S. Lewis's letters to the evil one, Screwtape). Arrogance is the sin area in which the Lord had been dealing with me in recent years. Unlike time bondages (procrastination, late, etc.), arrogance is hard to identify in oneself. It is easier to spot in others! It is only as the layers are peeled off that freedom rings out and peace sets in. I rejoice that God's inner healing never stops.

Jeremiah 11:1-8, 14-20; Psalm 88; Romans 6:1-11

**Birthdays:** Douglas Dengler and Norma McBean

**Anniversaries:** None

### **Saturday, March 25**

John 8:47-59 "*Very truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"*" (v.58)

The people didn't understand Jesus' claim, and they tried to stone him. The Trinity has no easy explanation. How often do we throw away those ideas we don't understand? We are told to lean not on our own understanding. The foolishness of God is greater than the wisdom of man. Yet we easily decide that we have the whole truth and begin to throw stones at those who think differently. Stone-throwing has divided the Body of Christ. How often have I avoided contact with people I don't understand or who seem strangely different! When I consider my own ways, I know that I cannot throw stones. O Lord, set us free from our own self-bondage. "If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed" (Romans 8:36). I can rejoice that Jesus is part of the God who formed us—the great "I Am"—and who sets us free, even though I don't fully understand it.

Jeremiah 13:1-11; Psalms 87, 90; Romans 6:12-23

**Birthdays:** Roxanne Williams

**Anniversaries:** None

**by Ellen M. Smith**

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