

Good News Daily

September 3-9, 2017

Sunday, September 3

Psalm 149 *Let the faithful rejoice in their glory, cry out for joy at their banquet, with the praise of God in their mouths...* (vv.5-6a NAB)

Until 3 years ago, I never realized I needed to praise God—not just for God's sake but for mine. I was spiraling into overload that fall, with too many commitments and flawed feelings of indispensability. Three children, foster children, a new job, home remodeling, and volunteer obligations all took their toll. A bad case of flu was the straw that broke this camel's back. I crashed before Christmas.

I requested a Stephen (lay) Minister from church for spiritual support. Ellen, the Stephen Minister, invited me to attend a weekly healing prayer group. I was desperate enough to go. I almost didn't return, though, when I found that we spent the first hour of each two-hour gathering praising God!

"How is it possible to spend an entire hour praising God?" I thought. Some members even lifted their hands and prayed and sang, apparently as the Spirit moved them. I had only seen this on TV. To say that this challenged my religious comfort level was an understatement.

But, guess what? Our gracious Father healed and blessed me immensely. I discovered a very real need to praise God that is akin to my need to breathe. I still pray with the group and sometimes, if you open your eyes, you'll even catch me lifting my hands.

1 Kings 8:22-40; Psalms 148, 150; 1 Timothy 4:7b-16; John 8:47-59

Birthdays: David D'Costa, Ingrid Minott and Marilyn Rogers

Anniversaries: None

Monday, September 4

Psalm 25 *Look upon me, have pity on me, for I am alone and afflicted.* (v.16)

When I read Psalm 25, I am struck by the amazing relationship the Lord, Creator of the universe, develops with His children, meeting us exactly at our point of need. In David's searing description of his circumstances, from enemies hating him, to large-scale affliction and suffering, I can feel the abject desperation with which he prays. David models an intimacy and humility with our Father that startles me out of my religious propriety.

His approach is in stark contrast with my lifelong pattern of trying to fix things myself "before" I approach the Father for help. Pretty sad, I know. I have somehow always believed that I must do something before I am worthy of coming to Him.

Recently, our family has careened from one hardship to another in, what I humanly hope, is a brief

run. David's words speak to my heart and instruct me right where I am—in desperate need of God's help. They also remind me that all I need to do is to humble myself before my Father as I plead for His help and guidance. Lord, help me do just that.

2 Chronicles 6:32—7:7; James 2:1-13; Mark 14:53-65

Birthdays: Rupert Guy and Robert Sonderman

Anniversaries: Ivylin & Joseph Adlam

Tuesday, September 5

Psalm 28 *LORD, you are the strength of your people, the saving refuge of your anointed king. Save your people, bless your inheritance; feed and save them forever.* (vv.8-9)

As I write this assignment, the self-appointed preacher in me wants to begin with a couple of wise rhetorical questions: "When was the last time we humbled ourselves before God? When did we acknowledge our total dependence and fervently pray David's words above?" Fortunately, by the time I type these words, God has humbled me and prompted me to first ask the question of myself. Thank You, Lord.

Every day, I am tempted to believe anew that I am a self-reliant, independent, self-starter who cleverly navigates the challenges of the world with my human wisdom and a few amazing products that promise to change my life. There is a part of me that actually believes that if I could only get myself and my family organized, we would lead the sublimely anointed life that the Father intended for us. I am embarrassed to acknowledge this stronghold belief. I know I'm not alone in confronting this daily delusion. My gracious Father helps me remember the truth, especially if I remember to ask for help.

So, this is me, humbling myself before Him. Father, please forgive my arrogance in believing I depend on anything or anyone but You.

1 Kings 8:65—9:9; Psalm 26; James 2:14-26; Mark 14:66-72

Birthdays: Shannon Fiebelkorn, Jill Thompson and Marjorie Weekes

Anniversaries: None

Wednesday, September 6

James 3:1-12 *For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, but no human being can tame the tongue.* (v.7)

I like to believe that my many years of living on this earth has taught me to tame my tongue. My mama raised me right: I do my best not to gossip. (Well, at least I am very selective and discrete with whom I gossip.) I usually think before I speak. I almost always consider the impact of my words on the hearer. Overall, not a bad effort, but not good enough according to the radical message in today's Scripture. Because I'm a grownup who has accumulated a few social skills, I realize I can easily mistake my socialization for the humble response called for in God's Word today.

As I open my heart to today's reading, I realize that this is not an area of my life in which I tend to ask the Lord for guidance. The bottom line: I cannot, without God's help, tame my own tongue. It requires divine intervention for my fellow humans and me. Wow, one more area of my life to turn over to the Father. Thank You, Lord.

1 Kings 9:24—10:13; Psalm 38; Mark 15:1-11

Birthdays: Logan Carr, Sherry Fitch, Aeon "John" Lacey and Yashpal Reid

Anniversaries: Lawrence & Vilma Trager

Thursday, September 7

1 Kings 11:1-13 *Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD; he did not follow him unreservedly as his father David had done.* (v.6)

Chapter 11 of 1 Kings is titled "The Sins of Solomon." The Lord had forbidden Solomon and the Israelites to intermarry because, he said, "they will turn your hearts to their gods." But Solomon "fell in love with them" and had seven hundred wives and "his wives turned his heart."

It's hard to acknowledge, but the sins of Solomon are my sins, too. I just have one husband, but the underlying sins, defiance, and disobedience are the same. Our household includes two teenagers. They are wonderful people, but maddening in their determination to do things their way and not benefit from the guidance and direction their father and I eagerly provide. As a parent, it breaks my heart to see them making shortsighted choices and flirting with danger. I can only imagine how it grieves our Father as we each stumble along in our stubborn willfulness, determined to act independently.

The Lord has said we are to love Him with our whole heart. Almost daily, I discover one more stronghold that "turns my heart" and interferes with our relationship. I seek His help to identify and release each idol in my life. Lord, I pray that we each survive and grow through our "adolescence" with increasing speed and grace.

Psalm 37:1-18; James 3:13—4:12; Mark 15:12-21

Birthdays: Ernie Curinga, Bryson Forbes, Kiera Hopper, James Nganga Mungai, Eric Sala, Miguel Salgado, Jr. and Jonathan Valare

Anniversaries: Howard & Tanya Holmes and Lionel & Marie Vilsaint

Friday, September 8

Psalm 31 *Incline your ear to me; make haste to rescue me! Be my rock of refuge, a stronghold to save me.* (v.2)

In Psalm 31, a prayer in distress and thanksgiving for escape, King David essentially spills his heart. He teaches me, millennia later, that I am to hold nothing back as I approach the Father for help.

When my children were young, I learned a child development principle. It says a stressed child will often

"hold it together" until he/she can safely fall apart with a parent. When I would pick up my daughter Grace from preschool, she would happily scramble into the car and then proceed to wail, "I'm hungry" all the way home. At first, I tried logic. I brought a snack for the ride home. She wailed. I asked her about school: "she loved it," the ride home: "fine," and what I could do to help her: "nothing." Each day, the wailing continued. I checked with her teacher: "no problems." Still, she wailed. Eventually, I began to understand that this daily drama was her way of collapsing safely into my arms after having to be a "big girl" at school.

David demonstrates this same innocent trust for his Heavenly Father. He shows me that I, too, can safely fall into my Father's loving arms and trust Him completely as I pray.

1 Kings 11:26-43 James 4:13—5:6; Mark 15:22-32

Birthdays: Stephanie Simon- Wright

Anniversaries: None

Saturday, September 9

Psalm 32 *Happy the sinner whose fault is removed, whose sin is forgiven. Happy those to whom the LORD imputes no guilt, in whose spirit is no deceit.* (vv.1-2)

I have a confession to make. Now, the Lord already knows and we're cool—I asked for forgiveness and He, of course, faithfully responded. But, I bring it up, on the off chance that you can, in any way, relate.

For several years, in my spiritual journey, I stopped believing in sin. It just didn't fit my worldview and lifestyle. I gravitated toward a "Christian" denomination that believed the Bible very selectively. One of the many conclusions we came to was the belief that because we are brothers and sisters of Christ we are, therefore, peers with God. Notice any similarities to a certain story in Genesis that played out in the Garden of Eden? Suffice it to say I erred gravely, but was delivered magnificently by my loving Father who would not let me stay lost. I am beyond grateful.

You may not have strayed as radically as I did, but please take the time today to ask the Lord if there are any errors in your theology that He wants to correct. You are in my prayers.

1 Kings 12:1-20; Psalm 30; James 5:7-12, 19-20; Mark 15:33-39

Birthdays: Humphrey Braaf, Jeff Distefano, Leonie Peterkin, Nickie Quinn and Maulan Wong

Anniversaries: None

by Terry Fife

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