

Good News Daily

Volume XVII

January 8-14, 2017

Number 2

Sunday, January 8

Isaiah 40:1-11 *He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.* (v.11 NIV)

There are few verses in all of Scripture that find such a deep place in my heart. To *feel* God's embrace—who can fathom it? Yet, I can *sense* being carried close to the heart of God. His gentle leading of those with young was well-known to me as a young adult, years ago, as I carried and bore six children. Some years later, when our enlarged family went overseas on a mission, we knew the Good Shepherd's tending presence every day. So much was new, absolutely untrodden territory, and so little was known about what we could expect. *But...*the Good Shepherd had not forgotten us. Though the path was sometimes bumpy, the Lord sustained us *every step* of the way.

Psalms 146, 147; Hebrews 1:1-12; John 1:1-34

Monday, January 9

Ephesians 1:1-14 *Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.* (vv.13b-14)

We would do well to compare the inheritance of worldly “stuff” to the one we have obtained in Christ. Here on earth someone has to die before our worldly inheritance comes plainly into view. Concerning heaven, *we* are the ones who must pass through the gate of death before our heavenly inheritance is fully revealed. Even now we can catch glimpses, of course. Just today I heard from a friend both of whose parents died recently. He was able to provide a faithful, peace-filled presence (my words, not his) with his siblings as they gathered to settle the family estate. Even now, the Lord reminds me, we are to live only and always “to the praise of his glory.”

Isaiah 40:12-23; Psalms 1, 2; 3; Mark 1:1-13

Tuesday, January 10

Isaiah 40:25-31 *Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.* (v.31)

Do you know this, in the depths of your being? All of us go through periods when our strength needs renewing, when we may feel faint or unsteady. I am in one of those periods just now. Life is a river with many currents; we feel its ebb and flow. Those are the times we can reach out in faith and *step out on the word*—the word of God.

Stepping out on the word of God gives our faltering feet a firm place to stand. But we are the ones who must reckon it so, and *do* the stepping out. We are the ones who must affirm that, since we have placed our hope in God, God *will* renew our strength and give us eagle wings for soaring!

Psalms 5, 6; Ephesians 1:15-23; Mark 1:14-28

Wednesday, January 11

Ephesians 2:1-10 *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.* (vv.8-9)

And it *is* amazing—this grace by which we have been saved. No wonder people the world over sing about “Amazing Grace.” It never ceases to amaze. We are left with nothing to brag about, and everything to be thankful for! Most of us have agonized over, prayed about someone dear to us—a family member perhaps—who seems to have gone astray. “Step back, watch, and pray” is the directive we hear from God. We have to get out of God's way in a sense. The results can be amazing. It may take months, or even years, to see results, but when they come we are filled with joy! We have nothing to boast about,

and *everything* to be thankful for.

Isaiah 41:1-16; Psalm 119:1-24; Mark 1:29-45

Thursday, January 12

Ephesians 2:11-22 *Therefore you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ himself as the chief cornerstone.* (vv.19-20)

An architect could explain much better than I the significance of a cornerstone to the strength and stability of a building. All I know is: it sounds very secure! This verse of Scripture has been the focus of many a sermon. Yet when I recall it, it is not through many words of many sermons, but through one bouncy little tune that conveys the joy of being a living stone in God's house!

God is building a house, God is building a house,
God is building a house that will stand.
He is building by His plan with the lively stones of man,
God is building a house that will stand!

Other verses include "We are part of this house" and "Christ is head of this house." Thank You, Lord, for happy tunes that convey the joy of *being* part of Your house!

Isaiah 41:17-29; Psalm 18:1-20; Mark 2:1-12

Friday, January 13

Mark 2:13-22 *"No one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, he pours new wine into new wineskins."* (v.22)

There is a constant flow of new wine into our Spirit-tuned lives. We need those new wineskins to store it and not burst the old. "We've always done it this way before" cannot be the Christian mantra. "Where he leads me I will follow" describes our heaven-bound journey. One of the new wineskins the Lord has graciously provided me is a small group of Christian friends who gather monthly to pursue *the gift of years*. That is a term used by Sister Joan Chittister to describe the challenges and choices we face as we age. What joy there is in sharing with friends of faith! And how blessed we are to have Sr. Joan "sit in" with us. How faithful our Lord is to provide new wineskins for our use.

Isaiah 42:1-17; Psalms 16, 17; Ephesians 3:1-13

Saturday, January 14

Mark 2:23—3:6 *Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."* (v.27)

The Lord *knew* we needed a Sabbath—a day of rest, a day of reflection, a day of ceasing all frenetic activities, a day of learning God's quietude. Let me say it again: The Lord *knew* we needed a Sabbath. *How we need that*, each of us. How we need that in our too-busy country. Pray that the Good Shepherd will lead us to green pastures where He may restore our souls. Pray that we may learn to "rest in the Lord, wait patiently for Him," as the prophet Isaiah recommended.

Isaiah 43:1-13; Psalms 20, 21:1-13; Ephesians 3:14-21

by Betty Carr Pulkingham

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