

Good News Daily

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Sunday, January 15

Psalm 150 *Let everything that has breath praise the LORD.* (v.6 NKJV)

Thirteen times the word “praise” is used in this psalm. Go ahead, count them. Praise the LORD; Praise God; Praise Him; Praise Him; Praise Him; Praise Him; Praise Him; Praise Him; Praise Him; Praise Him; Praise Him; Praise the LORD; Praise the LORD. Do you think the psalmist is trying to tell us something? Worship blesses God’s heart.

Like many churches today, the church I attend has three services: two traditional and one contemporary. Only hymns are sung in the historic sanctuary. The other service includes a choir, special music, and children’s chat. It’s generally quiet despite an occasional cough. I usually feel humble in this service. The contemporary service is high energy with modern Christian music, guitars, and drums. Some say it’s too loud, but I feel more of the Spirit as we quietly sing “Holy Spirit you are welcome here.” Many hymns sung in the traditional service are unfamiliar and many are old favorites from childhood.

This psalm says, praise Him with all instruments, loud and clashing cymbals, and dance. However you choose, praise the Lord.

Isaiah 43:14—44:5; Psalms 148, 149; Hebrew 6:17—7:10; John 4:27-42

Monday, January 16

Isaiah 44:6-8, 21-23 *Do not fear, nor be afraid.* (v.8a)

Throughout the Word of God, I’ve read do not fear, do not be afraid. Yet, I’m fearful when the emergency room transported me to the hospital. Except for a couple days for outpatient surgeries, I’d never stayed in the hospital for any length of time without knowing why I was there. This was different. It had already been a long couple of days without a diagnosis. Concern showed on my son’s face. My daughter phoned each day. My window was lined with flowers to cheer me from her and two friends, Margaret and Jennifer.

I was told, “You can’t be a Christian and be afraid.” Then God appeared in two nurses sent to care for me. Their names—Margaret and Jennifer. Our connection was immediate and when they commented about my flowers I told them my friends, Margaret and Jennifer sent them. A coincidence? Of course not.

God tells us not to fear, but when we do He sends an angel—or perhaps two—to remind us to fear not. God is with us always.

Psalm 25; Ephesians 4:1-16; Mark 3:7-19a

Tuesday, January 17

Ephesians 4:17-32 *...and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore, putting away lying, “Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,” for we are members of one another.* (vv.23-25)

The apostle Paul tells us to put away lying, among other things, and clothe ourselves with the righteousness of God. Proverbs 6:16-19 gives us six things the Lord abhors; *a lying tongue* is one of them. I wonder about lies by omission or lies to protect yourself or others? They’re called *white lies*. I’ve told such lies in the past to protect myself and children and, on occasion, I’ve told lies of omission.

As a five-year-old, a friend coerced me into doing something I knew was wrong. When a note from her mother was delivered by her little brother, I couldn’t read it so I tossed it into the fire. Although it burnt away my wrong, a great guilt replaced it. I continued to ask God’s forgiveness for many years. Lies by omission may not hurt the intended recipient but it hurts the one who withholds the confession.

White lies are not intended to harm, but to protect. Can they really be a lie God hates? My God is a loving God incapable of hate.

Isaiah 44:9-20; Psalms 26, 28; Mark 3:19b-35

Wednesday, January 18

Mark 4:1-20 *And He said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?"* (v.13)

Just as the disciples didn't at first understand the parables Jesus told, I, too, have not understood. Even though I've read different interpretations of the parable of the sower, as a writer, I prefer a picturesque meaning. I imagine God as the sower (just as He shall be the harvester). He breathes life into each of us and scatters us across the world. But where did I land—on a smooth pathway, hidden in large rocks, a field of weeds, or rich soil? What I accomplish in my life depends on how well I listen and obey.

Or the more likely meaning of the parable is the seed as the Word of God. Yet, I must be somewhere in this definition or how would the Word spread? How would I grow and bear fruit?

Spiritual truths are difficult to understand. So what can I do? Pray for the Holy Spirit to open my mind to the understanding of God's Word—recognize God's call, follow it, and experience the profound transformation.

Isaiah 44:24—45:7; Psalm 38; Ephesians 5:1-14

Thursday, January 19

Mark 4:21-34 *"It is like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth; but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade."* (vv.31-32)

Anyone can purchase a small necklace or other items with a barely visible seed inside. The Parable of the Mustard Seed comes with it. Tucked away in the pocket of the cover of one of my Bibles I found a plastic bag containing a tiny mustard seed. I remember placing it there as a reminder of the beginning of my quest for more of the Holy Spirit. On the first day of the Women's Retreat we were each given the gift as a reminder of our new faith journey.

In Jesus' parable of the mustard seed, He uses it as a symbol of how the kingdom of God is growing. I love growing plants and flowers and I'm sometimes tempted to plant the seed. I've read they can grow to a height of ten to twelve feet. How impressive it would be. However, I return the seed to the safety of my Bible where it will continue as a reminder of my humble beginning as I grow and await the return of Jesus and his reaping of the fields.

Isaiah 45:5-17; Palm 37:1-18; Ephesians 5:15-33

Friday, January 20

Mark 4:35-41 *But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?" And they feared exceedingly and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!"* (vv.40-41)

The wind whispers through the oak trees and grows to a roar. Leaves race to the ground. Acorns roll across the roof in a hurry to get to the other side. Branches swing back and forth. Now silence. The cycle begins once more, increasing to a rumble. Then all is quiet. Now the wind softly sways the branches and I wonder where the birds and squirrels go when the wind blows the branches holding their nests. The windstorm rises above the sea and stirs up great waves. Only the whitecaps are visible in the black night and I wonder if the sea creatures escape to the depth of the ocean floor.

In Genesis 1:20, it tells how God created birds to fly above the earth and every living thing which abounds in the waters. Doesn't it stand to reason the God of all creation will protect what He created?

As we face the storms of our lives we should feel no fear. We can take comfort in the knowledge the Great Creator of all things is in control.

Isaiah 45:18-25; Psalm 31; Ephesians 6:1-9

Saturday, January 21

Ephesians 6:10-24 ...and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. (vv.19-20)

I'm an avid reader and I love a good mystery. I read Nancy Drew mystery stories as a young girl; *The Secret in the Old Attic* among my favorites. As a teenager the laziness of long hot summers drew me to the hammock with a book. Even though my *bucket list* includes a Mystery Dinner Theater and Mystery Theater Train, a book still draws me.

Mysteries in the greatest book of all time, the Bible, fill my thoughts. The many mysteries in the Old Testament, commencing with "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1), the burning bush, and the parting of the Red Sea, are difficult to count. The New Testament, from Mary's virgin birth through Jesus' ascension, is filled with mystery.

Apostle Paul references *mysteries* throughout his letters in the New Testament. Even Jesus tells his disciples they will "know the mystery of the kingdom of God" (Mark 4:11). The dictionary defines mystery as a religious truth no one can know except by revelation and cannot fully understand.

Love a mystery? Open the Bible.

Isaiah 46:1-13; Psalms 30, 32; Mark 5:1-20

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