

Good News Daily

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Sunday, February 12

Isaiah 62:6-12 *You who call on the LORD, give yourselves no rest...* (v.6b NIV)

As I grew up, I fell into some bad prayer habits. I grew restless if the church service went longer than normal. When the pastor invited us to spend time around the altar praying, I assumed this meant that when I had told God whatever was on my list, I was through.

When I started dating it never occurred to me to be in such a hurry with the girl I was spending my time with. It took me awhile to realize I wasn't the only one on my "prayer dates" either. And if I did all the talking I could never get to know what my date was like. I wondered if it would be worth giving Jesus a few extra minutes in case there was anything he wanted to say to me.

My prayer times began to grow longer. I was in less of a hurry to leave and do something else. Nothing else seems quite as important now.

Psalms 66, 67; 1 John 2:3-11; John 8:12-19

Monday, February 13

Isaiah 63:1-6 *I looked, but there was no one to help, I was appalled that no one gave support...* (v.5a).

When I was doing a study of the Kingdom Parables taught by Jesus, I was struck in particular by the stories where the king would send out invitations to a great feast or wedding. His servants would be ignored or even killed. Then the king would send out more invitations! It was as if he couldn't believe people were passing up a chance for a free meal with the king! So he would give them another chance—and then another.

Isaiah noticed the same indifference to God's invitations in his day. It is not hard to find the same indifference and hostility in our day. Isaiah reveals how such rejection hurts and surprises God. It's not that God isn't reaching out to us. Our hearts are often just too busy, or too hardened, to respond.

How have you responded to God's invitations this week? Are you aware that God is disappointed when you tell Him, "No"?

Psalms 89:1-18; 1 Timothy 1:1-17; Mark 11:21-11

Tuesday, February 14

Isaiah 63:7-14 *I will tell of the kindnesses of the LORD, the deeds for which he is to be praised, according to all the LORD has done for us—yes, the many good things he has done for the house of Israel, according to his compassion and many kindnesses.* (v.7)

What a wonderful Valentine card for Jesus in today's lectionary!

Today, people will be sending cards and messages to loved ones that recite all the warm memories and good feelings they have brought to our lives. We are glad to have the excuses to relive the feelings and anticipate more to come with those we love. It is a joy to tell them again, with hugs and kisses, what they mean to us. And we don't care if people watch!

Don't forget to send a Valentine to Jesus, too. Tell someone of the kindnesses the Lord has already shown you in your life. Part of our witness every day should include remembering and telling others all that the Lord has done for us.

Psalms 97, 99, 100; 1 Timothy 1:18—2:8; Mark 11:12-26

Wednesday, February 15

Isaiah 63:15—64:9 *We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.* (v.8b)

I remember playing with lumps of clay when I was a child in school. I made "pets" that were decorated with my fingerprints. I thought of clay as a toy to be left behind as I grew older in the real world. But an article in the *Wall Street Journal* tells how, even in an age of computerized design software,

car manufacturers still make full size clay models of new cars before committing to production. It helps to see a full-scale mock up that you can put your hands on.

Isaiah used the image of potters and clay to describe God's creative control over our lives. In a very intimate sense, God wants to touch and shape our lives to fit His plans. The shaping process can be painful. But those are the fingers of God Himself that we feel running over us, carefully bringing forth a design that pleases Him and suits His purpose.

Psalms 101, 109; 1 Timothy 3:1-16; Mark 11:27—12:12

Thursday, February 16

Isaiah 65:1-12 *"I am inquired of by those who didn't ask. I am found by those who didn't seek me."* (v.1a)

A friend and I used to play a game when we were out shopping, to see who could find the most pennies dropped in the store aisle or parking lot. Sometimes I could even play the game at home by finding coins lost in the living room couch. It was a huge failure if my friend could find those stray coins before I could.

You wouldn't think God ever played games like that. Why would He want to or need to? But Isaiah says that's how God lets Himself be found by some people, by "accident" when they weren't looking.

Even Paul wasn't looking for the encounter he had on the Damascus road. But it turned his life in a whole new direction. It's a reason we can and should pray for others when it seems like our door of witnessing is closed. God knows how to make Jesus known even when people aren't looking.

Psalms 105:1-22; 1 Timothy 4:1-16; Mark 12:13-27

Friday, February 17

Isaiah 65:17-25 *But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create...* (v.18)

My wife and I enjoy getting away and staying at the beach for a day or two. We have lived in the hills of the Ozarks and seen winters of the far north. Both are beautiful, but we prefer the beach.

We enjoy the tropical vegetation. We love the palm trees, their fronds waving in the wind. We love the exotic birds flying overhead or walking with us on the sand. We tell Jesus over and over how much we love the beauty he has made for us to enjoy. We cannot imagine a better place on earth to relax.

But God has something even better planned for us. The Bible declares "no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9). If what we can see now looks so beautiful, just wait. We'll have even greater reason to be glad and rejoice forever!

Psalms 102; 1 Timothy 5:17-25; Mark 12:28-34

Saturday, February 18

Isaiah 66:1-6 *"Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?" declares the LORD. "This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word."* (v.2)

The quip, "It's not bragging if it's true," comes to mind reading today's verse. God is telling us why He deserves credit and praise from us. Then God tells us another true thing: He tells us who He esteems and honors. As Henry Blackaby writes, "You deny the Lord honor that is rightfully His every time you find yourself in difficulty and you fail to call upon Him for help!"

As we come to the end of another week and prepare to gather for worship tomorrow, let us take time to say, "Thank you," to Almighty God our Father. Even before we knew we were in trouble, He sent His Son Jesus Christ to help us and save us from sin.

Psalms 107:33-43, 108; 1 Timothy 6:6-21; Mark 12:35-44

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