

Good News Daily

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Sunday, May 20

Acts 4:18-21, 23-33 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness. (v.31 KJV)

Yesterday I attended a YMCA mission committee meeting for volunteer chaplains. We were reminded of the mission statement of the YMCA—which is to put Jesus Christ central. In fact, the YMCA seal states its purpose by including the words “John XVII 21” (or, as we would commonly write it, John 17:21) which reads, “that they may all be one...as we are one.”

My “Y” story began at YMCA Camp Clearfork which was in a beautiful national forest near Hot Springs, Arkansas. As a camp counselor working with young boys for two summers, I learned to love nature and how important it was to teach the Y core values for character development.

Many years ago, a church friend asked me to join the YMCA’s Christian Awareness Committee. This is now called the YMCA Mission Committee. Over time, it seemed to me the “Y” had lost some of its “Christian awareness,” so I was excited to see that the downtown “Y” had hired an Executive Director of Christian Initiatives and Community Partnerships. This includes a volunteer Chaplain program. Their goal was to demonstrate the love of Christ by serving and caring for the members, staff, and volunteers. As I sat there at this meeting of fellow Christian volunteers, we were encouraged through the speakers’ teaching and prayers. I believe we experienced what today’s Scripture described in the early church.

Please pray for the Holy Spirit to anoint these chaplains to represent Christ boldly in the YMCA mission. They warned us there will be resistance!

Deuteronomy 16:9-12; Psalm 118; John 4:19-26

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Pray for Colorado - (Province VI, The Episcopal Church)

The Rt Revd Robert O'Neill

DIOCESAN CYCLE: St. John's Episcopal Church, Albion, The Rev. George W. Howard, III, Vicar; Usunge Parish, Tanzania, Rev. Robert Makela; The Mission of St. Philip, Cabanaconde, Caylloma, Peru, Rev'd Justo Maqqe, Deacon.

Monday, May 21

Proverbs 3:11-20 *Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.* (v.13)

As a young graduate veterinarian, my first employment came in Miami, Florida with an older vet who was a pioneer in Florida small animal veterinary medicine. He trained many young vets in his lifetime and was an astute businessman. He had us working nights at the greyhound dog racing tracks, which paid our salaries, and days at his busy downtown animal hospital for experience.

At the end of my year of internship, I interviewed him about his career for an article I wrote for our state journal. One thing I asked him was if he had a personal faith. He told me he was a Christian and had a Bible next to his bed, with his favorite Scripture being Proverbs 3:5-6. That verse became my favorite also, and it is much like today's verse.

At another time, I also interviewed another Florida pioneer veterinarian—also in the later stages of his career. When I asked him the same question, he denied that he had any personal faith. I am thankful to have followed the first mentor in my life now—53 years later.

Psalms 1, 2, 3; 1 John 3:18—4:6; Matthew 11:1-6

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Costa Rica - (Central America) Vacant

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Springfield, consecration of present church building, 1913.

Tuesday, May 22

1 John 4:7-21 *Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.* (v.7)

In my study Bible, it tells me the book of 1 John is a family letter from the Father to the little children who are in the world. My wife and I recently went to the Christian movie *The Shack*, which I related to on a personal level because of my own background with an abusive father. God's love and answered prayers got me through those tough times. Later in life, God allowed me to reconcile the relationship with my father and heal my fear and hatred of him, like in the book and movie.

As a veterinarian, I have always noticed a lot of unconditional love expressed through little children and our "furry children." They both exhibit the child-like faith, trust, and love Jesus said we must have too. With God's gift of grace, we can become like them.

When God told Adam to name all the animals in Genesis 2:19, I'm sure it was not an accident that "God" spelled backwards was "dog." In my exam room, I had a sign with Peanuts reminding us that our dog loves us when no one else does—just like Jesus.

Proverbs 4:1-27; Psalms 5, 6; Matthew 11:7-15

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Coventry - (Canterbury, England) The Rt Revd Christopher Cocksworth

Coventry - The Rt Revd John Stroyan

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Wedding Anniversary of The Rev. David J. and Amy Halt, Bloomington.

ST. MATTHEWS: Wedding anniversary of Amy and Dave Halt.

Wednesday, May 23

Proverbs 6:1-19 *My son, if thou be surety for thy neighbor, if thou hast struck thy hand with a stranger, Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, thou art taken with the words of thy mouth. (vv.1-2)*

Have you ever read something in the Bible and had no idea what they were talking about? That happened to me this week, doing this writing. I have always read the King James Version of the Bible at the recommendation of an older mentor and brother in Christ. With the Proverbs passage above, however, I had to go to my One Year Bible for interpretation, because the language of the KJV was so difficult for me to understand.

Here's what I learned, and I'll pass it on to you. (1) Don't co-sign a loan—but if you do, get out of it quickly. (2) Take a lesson from the ants and don't be lazy. (3) Don't lie or be a trouble maker. And (4) the seven things the Lord hates are: a proud person, a lying tongue, killing the innocent, a heart that plots evil, pursuing wrong, being a false witness, and sowing discord among brothers. Now I understand it, and think I know why God wants us to study His word. Good thing we've got the Holy Spirit to help us interpret and practice it—isn't it?

Psalm 119:1-24; 1 John 5:1-12; Matthew 11:16-24

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Connecticut - (Province I, The Episcopal Church) The Rt Revd Ian Douglas; The Rt Revd Laura Ahrens, Suffragan Bishop

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Wedding anniversary of The Rev. Dr. Thomas W. and Elisabeth Langford, Springfield.

Thursday, May 24

Matthew 11:25-30 *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. (v.25)*

I recently listened to a talk on “ideas that helped to shape the world.” One of the topics was religion. Their conclusions were based on a study of the history of mankind. They stated that all religions were created to satisfy mankind's deep psychological need for a moral life, charity, seeking a mothering relationship, or dealing with the fear of death. They concluded all religions are delusional.

The proof was stated through geological findings. The Bible was found irrelevant—being only 6,000 years old while the earth is 4.5 billion years old. They believed medicine and science provide the only reasonable answers for mankind. Furthermore, art could replace man's need for religion.

They said the life of Jesus was a good simple moral example of the life we should aspire to live and that mankind, through his cleverness, has always created a way to keep hope alive and to cope with his needs.

In today's sermon, our preacher presented our Christian counterpoint for what shaped the world. He reminded us how we believe in justification by faith. This began with God's relationship with Abraham. In the Old Testament, Abraham was counted righteous through his faith in God (Romans 4:3).

In my long lifetime as a scientist/veterinarian, it has been my experience that science and medicine only help to strengthen my faith. They prove to me God's wisdom is the only explanation for the great mysteries of His creation. He is the great healer and we are fearfully and wonderfully made.

Proverbs 7:1-27; Psalm 18:1-20; 1 John 5:13-21

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Cueibet - (Bahr El Ghazal, South Sudan) The Rt Revd Elijah Matueny Awet

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Admission of Diocese of Illinois by General Convention, 1835.

Friday, May 25

Matthew 12:1-14 *And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit upon the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? (v.11)*

Again, as a veterinarian, I notice the many times Jesus uses animals metaphorically to teach his lessons. In this case, he uses the value of one sheep to explain the healing of a man's paralyzed hand on the Sabbath. Probably, the most quoted sheep proverb is that of the Good Shepherd in Psalm 23. It is often of comfort in my visits with parishioners in the hospital or homebound.

As I write this, my best friend in vet school has just told me about untangling the legs of two lambs that had a difficult delivery last night. Twinning is very common with sheep. They both died because they called him too late, but he saved the mother. Sheep are "predator" animals, like cattle and horses. This means they are fearful. Without a shepherd to protect them and take care of all their needs, they are vulnerable to many parasites and diseases. They need a lot of care.

If one is missing, as in this parable, it might be that it had rolled over and was on its back and couldn't get up. If the shepherd didn't search and find them, they would die or a predator would kill them. Often, when I find myself

overwhelmed with worries and fear, reciting the 23rd Psalm will give me the same peace the sheep must feel with the security of their protective shepherd and his faithful companion, the sheepdog.

Proverbs 8:1-21; Psalms 16, 17; 2 John 1-13

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Cuernavaca - (Mexico) The Rt Revd Enrique Treviño Cruz

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Grant, O Lord, that from the written word, and by our spoken word, men and women may catch a vision of the Incarnate Word, through the power of the Holy Spirit. *D.Coggan*

Saturday, May 26

Matthew 12:15-21 *Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall show justice to the Gentiles.* (v.18)

This Scripture was Isaiah's prophesy. In May of 2004, my wife and I took a pilgrimage to the Holy Land of Israel. We went with a group of Messianic Jewish Christians from Koi Dali church in Tennessee. We were guided by an excellent Jewish/Christian woman and their church's Rabbi. We also had as a teacher an Episcopal priest who formerly served at our church in Florida.

On our trip, we definitely walked in the footsteps of Jesus. But with our Messianic Jewish friends, there were some special memories different from the traditional tours. The tension between the Jewish and Muslim people was apparent when my wife and I took a side trip as Gentiles to visit the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. At this time in history, I was surprised to hear of the small number of Jewish believers in Jerusalem. Not unlike the number of Christian believers in America.

Today's scripture, reminds me that the gospel tells us Jesus became the truth for both communities of faith.

Proverbs 8:22-36; Psalms 20, 21; 3 John 1-15

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Curitiba - (Brazil) The Rt Revd Naudal Alves Gomes

DIOCESAN CYCLE: The Ven. Shawn W. Denney, Springfield, Ordination to the Priesthood.

by R. Bruce Keene

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For the St. Matthew's Community, please remember the following in your prayers this week:

Pray for the sick and those in distress: Charlie, Tim H. and family, Greg P., Linda S., Phyllis P., Bill J., Ron G., Bill, Bobbi, Matt, Tori B., Dave M., Bill Mc., Linda T., Dottie T., Roger H., Jack P., Zac & Alyssa & Carson C., Jenna A., Mary, James T.

Pray for the Faithful Departed: George K., Alicia P.

Pray for those living in nursing homes and other shut-ins: Dale B., Alicia P., Barb W., Daniel T., Ina R., and Margaret P.

Pray for: The Diocese of Tabora, Anglican Church of Tanzania, The Rt. Rev. Elias Chakupewa, the clergy and people. The Missionary Diocese of Peru, The Rt. Rev. Alejandro Mesco. Fr. Kari Marcelle, the clergy and people of Holy Trinity St. Vincent. Fr. Dave and all clergy, for whom we light the candle on the west side of the Altar