

*Good News Daily*

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**Sunday, May 26**

Matthew 13:24-34a *“Which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.”* (v.32 NKJV)

Jesus is telling the parable of the mustard seed which gives such a complete image of what can happen to us when we accept the seed of Christ into our lives. That first quiet “yes” to accepting Christ can seem so small. How can a heartfelt whisper change your life?

I accepted Christ many years ago at the darkest moment of my life. I was throwing my life away due to alcoholism. I had tried to quit drinking through my own will power, with no lasting results.

Finally, from a place of brokenness, I bent my knee and, with tears running down my face, asked God for help. I remembered the words of my oldest brother. Words from years earlier about how Christ had changed his life. I prayed silently out of pain and desperation.

The alcoholic cravings didn’t magically leave me, but there was a quiet change that got me through that first night. That small mustard seed of faith in Christ started to grow. Jesus and I worked out each new day together. That small seed planted on that lonely night has grown into a tree to help support others. Today I’m blessed to counsel and pass on to other struggling alcoholics what Christ did for me that dark night.

Joshua 24:1-28; Psalms 93, 96; 1 Timothy 3:14—4:5

**ANGLICAN CYCLE:** **Pray for** all members of the Anglican Communion around the world, For the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd Justin Welby, and all primates and bishops, For members of the Anglican Consultative Council, For the Secretary General, the Most Revd Dr Josiah Idowu-Fearon, For the staff at the Anglican Communion Office in London and the UN offices in Geneva and New York

**DIOCESAN CYCLE:** St. Mary's, Robinson, The Rev. Ann Tofani, Vicar; Ushiroombo Parish, Tanzania, Rev. Can. Amos Ndelema, Rural Dean; The Missions of Choco and villages of the Colca Canyon, Peru, Rev'd Justo Maqqe. Deacon; The Ven. Shawn W. Denney, Springfield, Ordination to the Priesthood; Birthday of Alethea, wife of The Rev. Matthew B. Kemp, Chicago.

**ST. MATTHEWS:** Stephanie Davingman’s birthday.

## **Monday, May 27**

James 1:1-15 *But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by wind. (v.6)*

In the past, I doubted God or had little faith that He would follow through; but that is not my problem today. I had to take an honest look at myself. The Lord showed me several things I needed to do in order to correct my part in our partnership. At first, I prayed and worshiped with passion, like my friends, but they seemed to have their prayers answered more often. Dynamic people, situations, and opportunities came their way. I would get frustrated. Why not me?

After an honest evaluation, I saw they weren't just praying about a vision for their life. They were also coming up with daily tasks to walk alongside God and help make things happen. I was probably just sitting on my hands praying and waiting for God to do all the work. Faith is an action word. God wants us up and moving at times, completing those actionable tasks.

I heard a story once about a woman who had a beautiful garden. One day a man walked by and said, "You have such a beautiful garden. Did you pray hard to God to get such a garden"? She replied, "Yes I did pray and every time I prayed, I went and picked up the hoe."

Deuteronomy 8:1-10; Psalm 80; Luke 9:18-27

*ANGLICAN CYCLE:* Natal (*Southern Africa*) The Rt Revd Dino Gabriel; Natal, The Rt Revd Tsietse Edward Seleokane; Aguata (*Nigeria*) The Most Revd Christian Efobi

*DIOCESAN CYCLE:* God of small beginnings, you bring strength out of weakness and hope out of fear.

*ST. MATTHEWS:* Penny Smith's birthday.

## **Tuesday, May 28**

Deuteronomy 8:11-20 *"Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes which I command you today. (v.11)*

I'll be honest with you. When things are tough and rocky in my life, I am at my best keeping a strong daily relationship with God. My quiet time, prayer life, and obedience are usually stronger when the boat is rocking. But let me look out and see lots of calm seas ahead, feeling a little fat and happy, and my daily walk with God seems to lessen a few degrees each week. I know I'm not the only one guilty of this because my close friends tell me of their struggles in this area.

It is just like working out to keep your body in shape. You shouldn't wait to work out until the doctor tells you your health is going down. Better to jog three miles a day, every day, than to run ten miles in one day once a month. Keep jogging, spiritually and physically.

Psalm 78:1-39; James 1:16-27; Luke 11:1-13

*ANGLICAN CYCLE:* National Indigenous Bishop (*Canada*) The Rt Revd Mark Lawrence MacDonald;

Ahoada (*Nigeria*) The Rt Revd Clement Ekpeye

*DIOCESAN CYCLE:* Holy Spirit, guide us in our work for the Church

### **Wednesday, May 29**

Psalm 119:97-120 *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.* (v.105).

Last night I made a big mistake. I live on a ranch and always have sprinkler pipes and hoses to move around to keep things irrigated. In the dark, last night, I headed out into the fields for a few simple irrigation changes. It looked so easy until I got out there without the flashlight I usually carry. I was a little overconfident, but that changed quickly on my way back to the house. I took a new path out of the field and climbed through the fences. I hit my shins two or three times and got several thorns stuck in my hands. Without a flashlight, I never saw the danger that was hidden in the shadows.

Isn't that what happens when we head out into life each day without God's guidance from reading His Word and our prayers? At the end of one of those days, without His Word, I feel beaten up and lost. It makes me anxious to stumble home from the dark to the warmth of His arms.

Leviticus 26:27-42; James 5:13-18; Luke 12:22-31

*ANGLICAN CYCLE:* Navajoland Area Mission (*The Episcopal Church*) The Rt Revd David Bailey;

Aipo Rongo (*Papua New Guinea*) The Rt Revd Nathan Ingen; Ajayi Crowther (*Nigeria*) The Rt Revd Olugbenga Oduntan

*DIOCESAN CYCLE:* Brant V. Hazlett, Mt. Carmel, received as Priest; Wedding anniversary of The Rev. Matthew B. and Alethea Kemp, Chicago, and The Rev. Cynthia A. and Byron Sever, Alton.

*ST. MATTHEWS:* Kim & Harry Bray's wedding anniversary.

### **Thursday, May 30**

Matthew 28:16-20 *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.* (v.19).

This verse reminds me of the two years I took off from my career to work for a ministry called the *Jesus Film*. It is a two-hour film about Jesus' life that has now been translated into over 800 languages and viewed by more people than any film in history. During a two-week trip to Tanzania, I watched nightly as thousands of people, mostly Muslim, heard and saw the story of Jesus in their native tongue. We set up an outdoor screen and ran a projector with a generator because there was no electricity. Many of these people had never even seen a movie in their life.

Afterwards, local pastors from Christian churches would preach and ask if anyone wanted to receive Christ. Amazingly, hands would rise, and tears were in their eyes. They had been touched by the gospel and God was working. I've seen the same film, shown in Spanish in a Mexican prison, change inmates' hearts. But you don't have to go that far. Sometimes a golf buddy or a carpool friend needs the same message when their life is broken.

Ezekiel 1:1-14, 24-28b; Psalms 8, 47; Hebrews 2:5-18

*ANGLICAN CYCLE:* Ndokwa (*Nigeria*) The Rt Revd David Obiosa; Akobo (*South Sudan*) The Rt Revd John Jock Chol

*DIOCESAN CYCLE:* Lord of creation, show us your purpose for our life that we may not live to be useless.

*ST. MATTHEWS:* Heather & Gus Mather's wedding anniversary.

### **Friday, May 31**

Hebrews 4:14—5:6 *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in the time of need.* (v.16).

What an invitation God leaves out there every day for all of us who are so unworthy. Come boldly to Me for grace and I wait with open arms. I once heard some great wisdom that God does not wait as a stern customs officer ready to go through your moral suitcase. Many people never get over that incorrect vision of God and they miss out on all His love. God truly waits and then runs to you as He did with the long-lost prodigal son. He waits with open arms and a joyful heart that you have come home for forgiveness, love, and guidance.

There are days I feel like a lost man stumbling around in His grace. I am so thankful that God made a bridge to Himself through His Son Jesus. Just come as you are, problems and all. There is no reason to think we can, or should, clean ourselves up first. He says to come boldly to His throne, so our hearts can be healed and transformed.

Ezekiel 1:28—3:3; Psalms 85, 86; Luke 9:28-36

*ANGLICAN CYCLE:* Nebbi (*Uganda*) The Rt Revd Alphonse Watho-kudi; Akoko (*Nigeria*) The Most Revd Gabriel Akinbiyi; Akoko Edo, The Rt Revd Jolly Oyekpen; Iowa (*The Episcopal Church*) The Rt Revd Alan Scarfe

*DIOCESAN CYCLE:* Timothy A. Goodman, Johnston City, Ordination to the Priesthood.

*ST. MATTHEWS:* Nathaniel Jones' birthday.

### **Saturday, June 1**

Luke 9:37-50 *But Jesus said to him, "Do not forbid him, for he who is not against us is on our side."* (v.50).

This teaching by Jesus hits home with me all the time. Sometimes I can be so critical of a fellow Christian who doesn't live out their faith the way I think they should. My self-righteousness can silently attack one person for seeming to be too legalistic or another for seeming to be out of bounds with a more liberal view of their faith than mine. Why do I think there is only one right way to live out the gospel? It is hard, at that moment, to reel myself in and find some common ground with my brother. My Dad always taught me to build friendships by finding an area in life both parties agree on or have a common passion for. Start from shared interests and a friendship can blossom. One of my best friends lives his faith much more conservatively than me, but both of us love to play a competitive game of golf together a few times a week. We discuss and sometimes argue our beliefs on the course, but always finish by praying together. Hopefully, we sharpen each other as we live out the gospel in our own unique way.

Ezekiel 3:4-17; Psalms 87, 90; Hebrews 5:7-14

*ANGLICAN CYCLE:* Nebraska (*The Episcopal Church*) The Revd Scott Barker; Akot (*South Sudan*) The Rt Revd Isaac Dhieu Ater; Irele - Eseodo (*Nigeria*) The Rt Revd Felix Akinbuluma

*DIOCESAN CYCLE:* Phillip D. Boeve, Deerfield, WI; Eugene A. Stormer, Springfield, ordination to the Priesthood.

*by Steve Ford*

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**Pray for** the sick and those in distress: Charlie, Margret L.

**Pray for** the Faithful Departed: Woody S. & Bob C.

**Pray for** those living in nursing homes and other shut-ins: Dale B., Barb W., Daniel T., 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.