

Good News Daily

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Sunday, January 19

Ephesians 4:1-16 *But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.* (v.7 NIV)

Have you ever received an unexpected gift out of the blue? No warning, no anticipation, no foreknowledge and yet, once received, your heart is full, overwhelmed, grateful? Such is the grace of God given to us every day, completely unearned and undeserved. It's very humbling to receive something with no things attached. That kind of love is grace, freely given to each of us through the love of Christ.

Several years ago, my son and his wife were foster parents for an infant for about six months. From the beginning they felt certain he would be returned to his mother, which did happen. The grace they showed this family under such difficult and emotional circumstances came full circle this week when we were invited to his second birthday party. His mother and her family expressed appreciation for the openness and compassion shown by our family during this difficult chapter. That I happened to be visiting was just additional grace. Our hearts were full as we saw this active little boy thriving and surrounded by his loving family.

Genesis 7:1-10, 17-23; Psalms 148, 149, 150; Mark 3:7-19

Monday, January 20

Hebrews 4:14—5:6 *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.* (vv.15-16)

Our Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—can be a difficult concept to grasp. That's when I find comfort in the mystery of God. It comforts me to realize that Jesus, the Son of God who is divine, was also once human. What a gift and blessing as I trust God truly understands our human needs, emotions, temptations, and challenges. He is not a remote God who is beyond our reach, but rather invites us to have a personal relationship with Him. That comforts me. Through the difficult chapters in my life I've relied on the Lord's humanity to comfort and sustain me. May you also find that peace that passes understanding.

Genesis 8:6-22; Psalm 25; John 2:23—3:15

Tuesday, January 21

Psalms 28 *The Lord is strength to his people, a safe refuge for his anointed one.* (v.8 REB)

Everyone needs a safe place to fall; perhaps it's your home or being with your family and loved ones. Maybe it's not so much a place but a feeling of knowing you're loved and can reach out to those who love you back. Are there people who love you just because you're you—your parents, your children, a special friend, your spouse? When you feel loved, you find inner strength. What a precious gift, one that we all need.

Fortunately, I grew up in a loving family, a place where I truly knew I was loved unconditionally. Not everyone has been so blessed by their earthly families. The good news is that our God loves us totally and completely. His love is not conditional. It is unearned, undeserved, and totally one-way—from Him to you. There is nothing you can do to make the Lord love you more or love you less. My friends, that is Good News! Trust in the Lord and let Him be your safe refuge, your safe place to fall.

Genesis 9:1-17; Psalm 26; Hebrews 5:7-14; John 3:16-21

Wednesday, January 22

Psalms 38 *O Lord, do not forsake me, be not far from me, O my God. Come quickly to help me, O Lord my Savior.* (vv.21-22)

The pleading in this passage strikes a chord. There are times, when we may feel that God isn't close by, that lead to a sense of urgency—but is this reality? No, the Lord is with us at all times and there is nothing that can separate us from Him. Paul's letter to the Romans says in 8:38-39 "neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Another way to say this is simply, "If you don't feel close to God, guess who moved?" There's great truth in this quote from an old cross-stitch book and much reassurance knowing our God is steadfast and omnipresent.

Genesis 9:18-29; Hebrews 6:1-12; John 3:22-36

Thursday, January 23

John 4:1-15 *Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well.* (v.6a NIV)

Fatigue is a real thing and even Jesus, the Son of God, experienced being physically tired during his journeys. The effects of growing old are also very real for those of us blessed with the privilege of aging. Though our bodies change and often "speak" to us in ways they never did before, there's a wisdom that comes with growing older. God's love and mercy have a richer, deeper meaning. Later in this passage, Jesus offered the Samaritan woman "living water," water that brings eternal life. That hope and God's promise to be with us always make each day a gift from above.

Genesis 11:1-9; Psalm 37:1-18; Hebrews 6:13-20

Friday, January 24

John 4:16-26 *The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he."* (vv.25-26)

Can you imagine speaking to a man and then being told he is Jesus, the Son of God, Emmanuel, Savior, the Messiah? What would you do? I have no idea! Despite the Samaritan woman's human flaws and mistakes, she found the face-to-face encounter with Jesus a life-changing, hope-bringing experience. We may not see Jesus face-to-face, but we are invited to know and experience the unwavering, unconditional, unchanging, and complete love that God has for each of us, His children.

Genesis 11:27—12:8; Psalm 31; Hebrews 7:1-17

Saturday, January 25

John 4:27-42 *"Thus the saying, 'One sows and another reaps' is true. I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor."* (vv.37-38)

These words from John's Gospel are as relevant today as when they were written centuries ago. All of us benefit from those who've gone before. Whether it's life lessons or advances in technology or medical science, often our successes are products of seeds sown years before. The soil may not have been tilled adequately or perhaps there was not enough moisture. Whatever, the timing was not right until now. May we keep our eyes fixed on the goal, the end product, and trust that we've all stood on the shoulders of those who came before us. Jesus humbled himself, becoming human, and died on the cross for our sins, a reminder and example of true humility and a powerful lesson for us all.

Genesis 12:9—13:1; Psalms 30, 32; Hebrews 7:18-28

ST. MATTHEW'S: Philip Brooks' birthday.

by Suzanne McKee

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Pray for the sick and those in distress: Margret L., Allan H., James G.

Pray for the Faithful Departed: Charlie C. and Steve W.

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