

Good News Daily

Volume XX

January 26–February 1, 2020

Number 4

Sunday, January 26

Genesis 13:2-18 *And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen; for we are brethren.* (v.8 ASV)

When I was answering the call to become an ordained deacon, I looked at the story of the first deacons called with new eyes. Their job was serving food (Acts 6:2-4), not voicing an opinion about what they served—or about what the apostles were preaching!

More recently, the Lord expanded this image for me. What if a waiter worked in a vegetarian restaurant, but he himself enjoyed steak and BBQ ribs at his own meals? Would that be okay for his own nourishment? *Yes.* Would it be okay for the waiter to sneer and criticize customers who came for the healthy vegetarian menu where he worked just because he liked a different cuisine? *No.*

It's the same in God's house, among His children. God is more concerned about peace and loving service between brothers and sisters in His household than about the particular menu they choose from among His chain of "restaurants."

Psalm 63; Galatians 2:1-10; Mark 7:31-37

ANGLICAN CYCLE: **Pray for** the Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil, The Most Revd Naudal Alves Gomes - Primate of Brazil & Bishop of Curitiba.

DIOCESAN CYCLE: St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Glen Carbon, The Rt. Rev. Anthony F.M. Clavier, Vicar; Ng'ambo Parish: Rev. Naftari Mathew, Tabora, Tanzania; The Parish of Christ The Redeemer and St. Peter, San Juan de Miraflores, Peru, The Rev. Misael Varillas, Regional Vicar; Birthday of The Rev Sean D. Ferrell, Champaign.

ST. MATTHEW'S: Teddy Smith's birthday.

Monday, January 27

John 4:43-54 *Jesus said to him, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe."* (v.48 ESV)

Forty-five years ago, my girlfriend stood in front of a bunch of people and said she would love, honor, and obey me "till death do us part." I had no way to prove it was so that day.

People sit front of their computer or smart phone and type in somewhere they want to go. Soon a total stranger they've never met drives up to their door, they get in the car, and believe the stranger will drive them safely to where they want to go.

In restaurants, I've told total strangers what I would like to eat and in a few minutes they set it before me. So far, I haven't been harmed by eating it, though I haven't seen where the food was prepared or who did the cooking.

In each case I believed without seeing proof first. So, I know it can be done. Why do I have such trouble believing God will keep His promises to me?

Genesis 14:1-24; Psalms 41, 52; Hebrews 8:1-13

ANGLICAN CYCLE: London (England), The Right Revd and Right Hon Sarah Mullally.

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Trinity Church, Mattoon, Admitted to the Diocese, 1908; Birthday of The Very Rev Zachary D. Brooks, Jacksonville.

Tuesday, January 28

John 5:1-18 *When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be healed?" (v.6)*

Sebastian van der Schrier, a social anxiety expert, says it's easy to start a conversation with complete strangers. "You simply observe what is happening and you then ask a follow up question. Simple!" Even if the answer to your question should be obvious, people do enjoy a chance to talk about something they're an expert at. Everyone is an expert at what they think. And they're usually glad to tell you what that is!

After a moment, polite strangers who have answered your question are apt to ask *you* some return question and give you a chance to say what's on *your* mind. The ice is broken.

Often, we begin our prayers as if God has asked and wants to know what we think. Do you ever get to that moment where you finally ask God what *He* has to say to you? Do you listen carefully and give Him time to say what's on His mind?

Genesis 15:1-11, 17-21; Psalm 45; Hebrews 9:1-14

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Long Island (The Episcopal Church), The Right Revd Lawrence Provenzano; Swansea & Brecon (Wales), The Most Revd John Davies (Primate); Guadalcanal (Melanesia), The Right Revd Nathan Tome.

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Birthday of The Very Rev. Canon Gus L. Franklin, Springfield, and Carla, widow of The Rev Canon Dr. William N. Malottke, Carol Stream.

ST. MATTHEW'S: Rachael Kimmerling's birthday.

Wednesday, January 29

Psalm 119:49-72 *You are good, and what you do is good; teach me your decrees.*
(v.68 NIV)

When I was young, I used to get excited when my parents announced that we were going out for supper at an all-you-can-eat buffet. I knew that meant I could take as much as I wanted of the good stuff. That was good! But after a while, I learned that all buffets were not the same. If the food and selections offered were not very appealing to me, it made no difference that I could have all I wanted. I didn't want much.

Sometimes the days following a political election are like that. I've voted for some person who was promising everything I liked. After the election, memory loss must set in, at least with the winning candidates. I don't hear much from them until the next election.

It's not enough to have the words and label that say you're good. Actions speak louder. God knows that. That's how He presents Himself to me. He not only *is* good, He *does* what is good for me.

Genesis 16:1-14; Hebrews 9:15-28; John 5:19-29

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Los Angeles (The Episcopal Church), The Right Revd John Harvey Taylor; Swaziland (Southern Africa), The Right Revd Ellinah Ntfombi Wamukoya.

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Trinity Church, Lincoln, Anniversary of the Consecration of Church building, 1921.

Thursday, January 30

John 5:30-47 *"I can do nothing on My own initiative."* (v.30a NASB)

I am writing this alone in my house, at my computer. Just me.

Of course, someone else built the computer I'm using. Someone wrote the software code that is running the word processor on it. Someone else built the circuit boards and chips inside the computer. Someone else built the big screen where I can see what I'm punching into the keyboard I didn't make. A stroke made it difficult for me to climb under the desk and connect cables between the computer, keyboard, and screen, so someone else did that for me. Someone is working at the local power plant tonight to generate the electricity to run the computer. Someone is running the internet connection that my modem is connected to. That's how I was able to get the email from someone who gave me the assignment to write this short devotional entry.

But I'm doing that tonight all on my own. It's hard for me to understand what Jesus' problem was.

Genesis 16:15—17:14; Psalm 50; Hebrews 10:1-10

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Louisiana (The Episcopal Church), The Right Revd Morris Thompson, Jr.; Sydney (Australia), The Most Revd Dr Glenn Davies; Tabora (Tanzania), The Right Revd Elias Chakupewa.

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Almighty God, to truly know you is everlasting life.

Friday, January 31

Psalm 40 *Sacrifice and meal offering You have not desired; My ears You have opened.* (v.6a)

We love to talk. In 1880 there were 47,900 telephones across America. By 1904 there were over three million. In 2002 10% of the world's population used cell phones. By 2005 that had risen to 46%. By the end of 2010 there were nearly 6 billion mobile and fixed-line telephone subscribers worldwide. 95% of American adults own a cell phone. And today more people use their phones to text than talk. Only 20% of people answer calls they aren't expecting. Texts are read usually within five seconds. In 2014, American adults sent and received about 32 texts per day. Today the count is 94 text messages per day.

Why did God go walking through the Garden of Eden each evening? One writer wryly concluded it was not because He wanted to count how many apples were still on the tree. The Father was there to talk with people He loved. That's why He gave us ears. It was so we could hear Him and talk with Him.

Genesis 17:15-27; Psalm 54; Hebrews 10:11-25; John 6:1-15

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Luapula (Central Africa), The Right Revd Robert Mumbi; Taita-Taveta (Kenya), The Right Revd Liverson Mng'onda.

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Ordination to the Priesthood, Richard A. Pugliese, Topsham, ME; Birthday of Theresa, widow of The Rev. Canon Anthony C. Viton, Mt. Carmel.

Saturday, February 1

Hebrews 10:26-39 *For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.* (v.36)

As Olympians line up to race each other down the track, they all look strong and confident in their clean new athletic gear. Moments later at the finish line you'll see them with squinting eyes and pained expressions, bent over, hands on knees, gasping for air, sweat soaking into their clothes. The winner may raise a weak arm, thanking those in the stands cheering for him. But he looks a ragged mess.

Psychiatrist M. Scott Peck began his 1978 book *The Road Less Traveled* with three pithy words: "Life is difficult." Pastor Jason Helveston says, "Life is hard because God is good." He points out that hard things make us strong through our effort to endure and overcome them. It is only if we endure that we ever reach

the finish line. We don't have to look pretty then. That's not what the prize is for. It's not for endurance, either. But without that, there's no prize to collect.

Genesis 18:1-16; Psalm 55; John 6:16-27

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Lucknow (North India), The Right Revd Peter Baldev; Guatemala (Central America), The Most Revd Armando Guerra Soria.

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Almighty God, we ask for power, but even more for grace.

by Rick Hoover

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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.