

Good News Daily

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Number 1

Sunday, January 5

Proverbs 4:1-27 *Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget my words or turn away from them. Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you; love her, and she will watch over you. Though it cost all you have, get understanding. Cherish her, and she will exalt you; embrace her, and she will honor you. (vv.5-8 NIV)*

The Proverbs are replete with pithy little sayings and sound advice. Chapter 4 tells me to get wisdom at any cost. Paul's letter to the Colossians supports this position: "Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (Colossians 3:16-17). How often do we attempt to teach and admonish one another with all wisdom in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him? The wisdom here comes from God, not man. We do not have all the answers; if we did who needs Him?

Jesus tells us: "It is written in the Prophets: They will all be taught by God. Very truly I tell you, the one who believes has eternal life" (John 6:45, 47). What does it mean to believe? I learned early on in my journey that if you don't live it you don't believe it. Is it always easy? No. Do I stumble? Yes. We've come full circle. You can doubt or believe. The choice is yours.

Psalms 66, 67; Colossians 3:12-17; John 6:41-47

Monday, January 6

Matthew 12:14-21 *A large crowd followed him, and he healed all who were ill. "A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he has brought justice through to victory. In his name the nations will put their hope." (vv.15b, 20-21)*

Today is Epiphany in the church calendar. An Epiphany is a sudden realization or a sudden intuitive leap of understanding, especially through an ordinary but striking occurrence. When I see a truth or prophecy concealed in the Old Testament being revealed in the New Testament, that is an Epiphany for me.

I had to read Isaiah 49:7 several times as well as Matthew 12:19-22. Picture you and me as a bruised reed that Jesus will not break. Picture you and me as a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. No matter what your condition, issue, or concern, verse 15b says Jesus healed all who were ill—not a few, not some, not many, but all. Have you been healed? Revelation 21:27 tells us that "Nothing

impure will ever enter heaven, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life." The only way to do that is to trust in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and his redeeming and finished work on the Cross.

Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalms 46, 97; Revelation 21:22-27

Tuesday, January 7

John 6:30-33, 48-51 *"For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."* (vv.33)

Jesus often used the physical world to teach about the spiritual world. We will always have hungry people in the world, physically and spiritually. We can all do something about physical hunger. The key is only God can satisfy the spiritual hunger.

The Father humbled the Israelites in the wilderness to test them, to know what was in their heart and whether or not they would keep His commands. He also humbles us at times on our journey. This is to teach us that that we do not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. We must always be conscious of following His commands. Blessings follow obedience. Try it out for yourself. As for me, I would rather go to heaven physically hungry and spiritually fed then to hell physically fed and spiritually hungry. How about you?

Deuteronomy 8:1-3; Psalm 103; Colossians 1:1-14

Wednesday, January 8

Exodus 17:1-7 *So they quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses replied, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the LORD to the test?" But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?"* (vv.2-3)

Have you ever been around people who always grumble? Good is never good enough. They may not realize grumpiness is not a gift of the Spirit. If you have never been around anyone like this you've never been to church. Moses was there in today's reading. The Israelites wanted water; they were thirsty and did not trust God to provide. Did God ultimately provide? Keep reading.

Anyone who can raise someone from the dead has no problem bringing water from a rock. Jesus spoke of rivers of living waters flowing from within whoever believes in him. The problem was none of the rulers or Pharisees believed in him (John 7:38, 48-49). As with the people of Moses' time, the people of Jesus' time, through and including the people of our time, too many, having heard, do not believe. If they do, do their actions demonstrate such belief, or is it the sin of unbelief that so easily entangles all of us?

Before we close today's devotional, I would like to leave you with a little Bible trivia. Did you know the shortest chapter in the Bible is Psalm 117 and the longest chapter is Psalm 119? The middle verse in all of Scripture is in Psalm 118:8, right between 117 and 119: "It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in humans." If we do this, take refuge in the Lord, unbelief goes away.

Psalms 117, 118; Colossians 1:15-23; John 7:37-52

Thursday, January 9

Colossians 1:24—2:7 *My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments.* (vv.2-4)

Can you name someone you know that you do not love? I think we all can. Can you name someone you love that you do not know? I know I could not. How could I possibly love someone I did not know? The Pharisees of Jesus' time disputed his testimony about himself in today's gospel passage. In the Colossians passage, Paul encourages us to admonish and teach everyone about Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Paul also throws in a caution; let no one deceive you with fine-sounding arguments. Deception comes from the enemy. Truth comes from Jesus Christ.

The people in the Treasury Department do not look for counterfeit bills by studying phony money. They study the real bills to spot the flaws in the counterfeit money. So it is with Christ. If we have not studied the truth on our own, how do we know we are not being deceived? The religious leaders of Jesus' time had this problem. If it existed then, it still exists today. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are found in the truth of God's written Word. To know and love the Living Word, study the *written* Word.

Isaiah 45:14-19; Psalms 121, 122, 123; John 8:12-19

Friday, January 10

Psalm 139 *Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.* (vv.23-24)

Rules, rules, rules—there are too many rules. If you ever have any concern of identifying some sin in your life, pray the above two verses of Psalm 139 and standby. The Holy Spirit will gently reveal it to you. Take them one at a time, from one who has experience. Do not rely on rules, which have to do with things that are all destined to perish with use and are based on merely human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-

imposed worship, their false humility, and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence identified in the above two verses of Psalm 139.

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. If we desire the wisdom from an earlier lesson, this sounds like another charge to study the written Word to me. Will you accept the challenge?

Jeremiah 23:1-8; Psalm 138; Colossians 2:8-23; John 10:7-17

Saturday, January 11

John 14:6-14 *Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."* (vv.6-7)

There are only two events that separate Christianity from other world religions. First, no other religion claims to have had someone die for the forgiveness of sins. Other world religions claim we have to do something to earn salvation, rather than believe the price has been paid in full by the finished work of Christ on the Cross. Secondly, the founders of every other world religion can be found in a container somewhere. For Christianity, there are no bones in a box as a result of the bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus said no one comes to the Father except through him—not a few, not some, not many, but none. That's why I prefer to call Christianity a relationship, not a religion. Religion connotes we must do something; relationship with the Living God connotes it's already been done for us. We can accept, receive, and believe, or we can deny and claim another way. There is no fence sitting. We cannot have one foot in two camps. One theme that has woven through this week's devotionals is wisdom. It culminates today—choose wisely.

Isaiah 55:3-9; Psalms 148, 150; Colossians 3:1-17

by Richard Mead

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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.