

## *Good News Daily*

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### **Sunday, May 5**

Luke 12:13-21 *“But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’ This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God.”* (vv.20-21 NIV)

When asked how much John D. Rockefeller left when he died, the response was “Everything.” In the parable of the rich fool, Jesus tells us the rich man suffered the same fate. I don’t know about Rockefeller, but the rich fool had no thought that his possessions really belonged to God and his responsibility was to manage them so others would benefit from his wealth. Recently I heard a stewardship message based on four words: “God owns it all.” While pondering this short but powerful phrase, I pray the following thoughts would remain in my heart and keep me rich toward God and generous toward others:

God owns it all. He enables me to hold things of this world with open hands rather than clenched fists.

God owns it all. He enables me to weather the inevitable changes in my life with grace and peace rather than despair.

God owns it all. He enables me to give to others with joy and thanksgiving rather than begrudgingly.

God owns it all. He enables me to live free from greed and its heavy burdens.

Leviticus 25:1-17; Psalms 93, 96; James 1:2-8, 16-18

Include in your prayers: Our country; for wisdom and guidance for our leaders and the leaders of all nations; for our armed forces and their families, especially Kyle Irving, Dylan Jenkins, Nick Layden and Rhett Price, and those now in danger and any continuing to struggle; for our enemies; for peace – especially in Ukraine, justice and reconciliation in all places where there is conflict, especially among the peoples of the Middle East; for Haiti and Bondeau, and for Todd and Patsy McGregor and their work with SAMS training missionaries.

### **Monday, May 6**

Colossians 1:9-14 *For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of His will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives.* (v.9)

The following prayer is attributed to Bobbie Richardson, a former New York Yankee second baseman: “Dear God, your will, nothing more, nothing less, nothing else.” How do we know when we have the knowledge of God’s will for our lives? I recently made Raggedy Ann dolls for our Christmas fair. Because I had the instructions I could embroider the dolls’ faces, sew on their hair, make the dolls’ clothes, and be satisfied that what I made really were Raggedy Ann dolls!

Our manual for knowing God and discerning His will for our lives is the Bible. In the Gospel of John, we see that Jesus never spoke a word except what God told him to speak and he never acted contrary to what the Father asked him do. By his example he showed us how to live in God’s will every moment of every day. Spending time with God in Scripture and in prayer each day are key ingredients to being filled with the knowledge of His will. Once we are filled with the knowledge of God’s will, then, of course, we should obey Him—nothing more, nothing less, nothing else.

Leviticus 25:35-55; Psalm 80; Matthew 13:1-16

Include in your prayers: Ricardo Acuña, the family of Kevin Allen, Rick Anderson, Ann Ballard, June Baxter, Paul Beresford, Margaret Brewster, and Linton and Gloria Chung.

## **Tuesday, May 7**

Leviticus 26:1-20 *"I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people."* (v.12)

In today's reading from Leviticus, God has announced His decrees through Moses and tells the Israelites that if they obey His commands things will go well with them. He will reward them with rain for their thirsty crops, their harvests will be bountiful, there will be peace in the land, and they will be safe from their enemies. Why on earth would the Israelites want to live apart from that kind of care and protection? Life was peaceful and full of God's abundant riches, and yet the Israelites had, on more than one occasion, willfully moved into forbidden territory.

In *A Shepherd's Look at the Twenty Third Psalm*, Phillip Keller tells of providing lush green meadows for his flock only to have one of his sheep deliberately push through the fence into an adjoining pasture riddled with poisonous weeds. Sadly, like the Israelites, we have a tendency to stray from the lush fields of God's safety and protection and get ourselves entangled in the poisonous weeds of the world. God, in His infinite mercy, however, is ready at any moment to pick us up and bring us home where we belong. Thanks be to God!

Psalm 78:1-39; 1 Timothy 2:1-6; Matthew 13:18-23

Include in your prayers: Our Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, Margaret Dunstan, Sue Drinkwater, Joan Engskow, Jerry Hardin, and Tom Henry.

## **Wednesday, May 8**

Psalm 119:97-120 *Your statutes are my heritage forever; they are the joy of my heart. My heart is set on keeping your decrees to the very end.* (vv.111-112)

A few months ago, we received a call in the middle of the night. We knew it could come but were not ready to receive it. The heart of a beloved brother in Christ had stopped. There had been bypasses, medications, and other procedures over the years, but suddenly his heart failed. Life depends on this amazing organ to pump blood throughout our body and when it stops physical life ends. The psalmist understood the heart as the essence of what it means to be human. It was considered the center of the human spirit, the seat of emotions, wisdom, and understanding, and the source of our response to the grace God lavishes on us.

Whether we think of the heart's physical function or envision it as what makes us unique, it is at the center of our lives. It is not surprising that the psalmist wrote of the Lord's commandments as the joy of his heart and how he longed to keep them. Are the Lord's commandments the joy of your heart? Do you long to keep them to the very end? "My flesh trembles in fear of you; I stand in awe of your laws" (v.120).

Leviticus 26:27-42; Ephesians 1:1-10; Matthew 22:41-46

Include in your prayers: Cindy Islip, Jacqui and Harry Kapinowski, Fran Labossiere, Nick Layden, Tom Lefevre, Taylor Lunn, and Elaine Mariggio.

## **Thursday, May 9**

Matthew 28:16-20 *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, ...teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."* (vv.19-20)

Jesus gathered his disciples on a mountain in Galilee and gave them their marching orders, "go and make disciples." While surfing the Web recently, I came across the web site of a church in Connecticut. The home page states, "Every member a disciple." Eugene Peterson defines discipleship as: "Anything that causes what is believed in the heart to have demonstrable consequences in our daily life" (*A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*).

Christian discipleship begins with our relationship with Jesus. His words apply to us just as much as they did to the early followers with him on the mountain 2,000 years ago. The message is still the same, go and make disciples. This is not simply a great suggestion; it is Jesus' Great Commission and all Christians are called to be Great Commission people.

We are truly his disciples when we follow him and then go out and bring others to our Lord. It is not our responsibility to convert another person, that's the work of the Holy Spirit, but we are commanded to go, to tell and to invite others into presence of Jesus.

Daniel 7:9-14; Psalms 8, 47; Hebrews 2:5-18

Include in your prayers: Bob Montheard and Pam DeFelice, Marilyn Pariseleti, and Jim and Jerre Rannie.

### **Friday, May 10**

Ephesians 2:1-10 *For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.* (v.10)

I like to contemplate how our Great Designer lovingly and joyfully created our world. The air we breathe is perfectly designed for us. The rotation of the earth is exactly the spin needed to sustain life. If the sun and moon were a bit closer or farther away, our world would be a very different place.

Then there are our amazing bodies! I imagine God lovingly deciding who gets what color hair, skin, and eyes; who is to be tall, or short or in between. God surely loves diversity, and yet beyond the world we live in and our physical bodies, He has written His signature on each and every heart that says, "You are mine. I made you for a purpose and until you come to me you will never be truly yourself." We can try to erase or ignore His signature, but eventually we must come to the end of ourselves. He has uniquely designed us and given us the gifts to do the good works He has prepared in advance for us to do. As we serve Him, we find our true identity and bring glory to God's Holy Name.

1 Samuel 2:1-10; Psalms 85, 86; Matthew 7:22-27

Include in your prayers: Howard Smith, Allison Spencer, Carolyn Tefft, Mary Ella Turner, Bob Vail, Margaret Weems and family, Bobbie Weigold, Russell Wheelock, and Peter and Mirabelle Wrist.

### **Saturday, May 11**

Ephesians 2:11-22 *He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.* (v.17)

In *What's So Amazing about Grace?*, Philip Yancey writes of the ungrace that is so common in our world. We don't have to look very far to find it. There is ungrace in our relationships with family members and neighbors who choose to argue with each other. One ethnic group treats another in ways that they themselves would never want to be treated. People and nations war with each other, sometimes as the result of feuds that began centuries ago. Sadly, even within members of God's household there are disputes that cause division and the establishment of new churches and denominations. There may appear to be winners and losers, those who are inside the wall and those who are outside, but there is no real peace.

The peace missing in human relationships is only offered to the world by the one who came as the Prince of Peace. He is our peace who has made the two one. We may like to believe that we are good enough and smart enough to devise wonderful peace plans but, in the end, it is only Jesus who is both peacemaker and peace.

Numbers 11:16-17, 24-29; Psalms 87, 90; Matthew 7:28—8:4

Include in your prayers: Andie S., Ben, Chris K., Jacob, Natalie, Sean and Christine, for caregivers and receivers, those in recovery, and St. Raphael's Episcopal Church.

*by Jack & Gail Potter*

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