

Good News Daily

Volume XXV

April 6-12, 2025

Number 14

Sunday, April 6

Psalms 118 *This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.* (v.24 NRSV)

What a wonderful way to start the day, by reciting this verse. Even better, for one member of the family to call out the first part of it, and for others to respond with the second part. So, when we had our grandchildren with us last year, we used this method of starting each day. In their sleepy voices, our two grandchildren consistently came forth with, “Let us rejoice and be glad in it.”

Some months later, my wife was visiting our son and daughter-in-law and these grandchildren. She wanted to see if the “new tradition” had been carried home with the grandchildren. So, with a big smile on her face, she said, “This is the day the Lord has made,” to which our grandson sleepily replied, “We just say ‘Good morning’ around here.”

Well, good try. The fact is that the memorization of a few special verses from Scripture can enrich our days. This verse is certainly an excellent example of how to start the day. Another, when we are faced with temptation, is: “Resist the devil, and he will flee” (James 4:7).

You probably have your special verse or verses that aid you in getting through the day. If not, start with this one and build a “new tradition” in your home by memorizing and speaking forth special verses of Scripture at appropriate times.

Jeremiah 23:16-23; 1 Corinthians 9:19-27; Mark 8:31—9:1

Monday, April 7

Psalms 31 *My times are in your hand.* (v.15a)

If people live long enough, they reach a point of beginning to think about their mortality, or thinking about it more seriously than they have earlier in life. This has occurred recently to me. I am now the oldest male in my family, and that has caused me to think of responsibilities I have to my broader family in a way I had never envisioned before. It has also caused me to think of what I need to be doing to make plans for when I will no longer be here on earth.

It started as a somber thought: “getting ready for heaven.” But, the more I faced up to it, the more positive that thought became. I reflected on the characteristics I should be building into my life that I may be prepared for eternity. I remembered the quote that the purpose of man is to enjoy and glorify God forever. Then I got to thinking what that would mean.

To my pleasant surprise, what began to be revealed to me not only applies to people conscious of their mortality, but to all Christians. Every day of our lives, no matter our age, we need to be “getting ready for heaven” (i.e., doing those things that will help us enjoy God and glorify Him forever). That means growing in our relationship with God, learning better how to praise Him, building up for ourselves “treasures in heaven” (which I think are those unselfish things we do for others because of God’s love in our hearts). All sorts of good things.

Jeremiah 24:1-10; Romans 9:19-33; John 9:1-17

Tuesday, April 8

Psalms 121 *I will lift up my eyes to the hills.* (v.1a)

This is a very special verse of Scripture for me. Years ago, I was in the western part of the United States to take part in a church meeting. I was doing something that I thought the Lord wanted me to do, but nothing had gone right. In my own mind, I had been obedient to the Lord, and He had let me down.

Sitting alone in a restaurant at the end of the meeting, the more I thought about the situation I was in, the angrier I got at God. Finally, I banged my fist on the table, and said to the Lord, “The way You’re treating me just isn’t fair!” What then happened was most unexpected. All of a sudden, I was overwhelmed with the love of the Lord; a reassuring warmth of love filled my body from the tips of my toes to the top of my head.

Then, for the first time, I lifted my eyes from the table and toward a window in the back of the restaurant. There, reflected in the setting sun, was a range of majestic mountains. And the next morning, as I looked out on those beautiful mountains once again, the reading for my daily devotional was, “I will lift up my eyes to the hills.”

Jeremiah 25:8-17; Psalms 120, 122, 123; Romans 10:1-13; John 9:18-41

Wednesday, April 9

Psalms 119:145-176 *I will rise before dawn and cry for help; I put my hope in your words.* (v.147)

You might have guessed from Sunday’s comments that I am a morning person. My wife and I get up between 5 and 5:30 most mornings, and, three mornings a week, go to the “Y” for exercise. You might say that, on those mornings, we do indeed “rise before dawn” and, at the “Y”, find ourselves “crying for help.”

But the best part of getting up early is having time with the Lord at the start of the day. Maybe, again, it is because I am a morning person, but I find that I am more alert at that time of day, more prepared to deal with what faces me in the day ahead, and more open to the Lord’s help in doing that. And God does help!

It is my experience that, if we lay the day before the Lord in prayer, He can really help us. Things that I am dreading, He often shows me how to handle in a way that removes the fear. Delicate situations I will face, He often shows me how to deal with them lovingly and gently. Overwhelming demands that seem to lay ahead of me, He shows me how to prioritize my day, weeding out those things that really aren't all that important and focusing more effectively on those things that really do need to be done. Inspiration, guidance, comfort—"hope in the words of God" that come when we rise early and cry for help.

Jeremiah 25:30-38; Romans 10:14-21; John 10:1-18

Thursday, April 10

Psalm 131 *But I have calmed and quieted my soul.* (v.2a)

I was reminded this morning of an incident that happened a couple of years ago that changed the way I react to disgruntled drivers. As I drove through a residential area and then a school zone, there was a woman in the car behind me who was in too much of a hurry. I could feel the pressure she was exerting on me to speed up by virtue of how closely she was following me and the facial expressions and body language she was exhibiting.

When we reached an intersection that allowed her to go her separate way, she blasted me with her horn as she swung her car onto the other street. My first reaction was, "I hope a cop nails her for speeding before she gets to where she is going this morning."

But the Lord then got my attention and "calmed and quieted my soul." I realized that, as a Christian, my attitude toward that woman should have been entirely different. I have no idea what problems she was facing that morning. My responsibility as a Christian was not to judge her and wish her harm. What I should have been doing was praying for her, asking the Lord to bless her and help her with her problems. If that included her getting arrested for speeding to get her to slow down, that was God's business, not mine.

Jeremiah 26:1-16; Psalms 132, 133; Romans 11:1-12; John 10:19-42

Friday, April 11

Psalm 22 *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?* (v.1a)

Despite the bragging I have done about being a morning person, and how the Lord directs me for the day, I now have to admit that there are times when I have the spiritual "blahs" in the morning (and at other times as well!). I don't feel like praying. I seem to want to wallow in my own problems rather than giving God a fair chance to help me. Maybe you sometimes feel like that, even that God has forsaken you.

The first thing I have to deal with at times like that is to admit that it isn't God who has forsaken me, but that I am "forsaking" Him. I try to be honest with Him that I just don't feel like praying, that I'm not conscious of His presence and, for some reason, don't much seem to care. With great effort, I lift up my "blahs" to Him, I give them to God.

Three things here. First, doing that is being honest with God. That's what the incident related on Tuesday was all about: God's wanting us to be honest with Him about the way we feel, even when we are angry with Him. The second thing is to try to get to the bottom of what is causing the blahs. The third thing is to keep on praying, even when we don't feel like it and think our prayers are bouncing off the ceiling; at least we are showing that, in our weakness, we are still acknowledging our dependence on God and we are opening an avenue of communication through which He can reach us and show us we are not forsaken.

Jeremiah 29:1, 4-13; Romans 11:13-24; John 11:1-27

Saturday, April 12

Psalm 144 *I will sing a new song to you, O God.* (v.9a)

I have another admission. I can't sing. I'm tone deaf, can't carry a tune, can't remember the words. Despite all these years of looking at music in the hymnal, I still can't figure out what those little golf clubs are all about. But, my voice carries; so, when I try to sing in church, which I do enthusiastically, I often get side glances from fellow worshipers.

Yet, I love to try to sing. Whatever song I hear on the way to work in the morning, I'll find myself humming, whistling, or even trying to sing. Hymns and religious songs especially warm my heart. God doesn't care that I can't sing. He likes joyful noises even when they are awful noises.

So, sing a new song to the Lord. He wants us to use all of our talents and all of ourselves to give Him praise and to reflect joy in our lives. If you know someone who is uptight, glum, quarrelsome, irritating, pray for God to put a new song in their heart. It will make God glad.

Jeremiah 31:27-34; Psalm 137; Romans 11:25-36; John 11:28-44

by J. East

Good News Daily

Volume XXV

April 13-19, 2025

Number 15

Sunday April 13

1 Timothy 6:12-16 *Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.* (v.12 NIV)

Paul tells Timothy to “keep this command without spot or blame.” When I read these lines as a new practicing Christian, I thought I should bravely take on the enemies of Christ who sinned daily—the devil, atheists, agnostics, and, especially, wayward Christians. Then I began to wonder: Have I kept the faith without spot or blame? Not always. Are my will and intellect strong enough to keep the faith in the future, or will I fall short from time to time? No doubt the latter, and most certainly the latter unless God helps me directly.

I remembered Walt Kelly’s famous cartoon where Pogo Possum proclaims: “We have met the enemy and he is us.” I realized I was part of the Christian “us.” What was I doing taking the fight to others when I faltered myself? It was not that I should overlook weakness or ignorance of the Truth in others; but wisdom insisted that I proceed with great care and humility and only after recognizing and confronting the enemy in myself. That’s the most important good fight.

Zechariah 9:9-12; Psalms 24, 29; Matthew 21:12-17

Monday, April 14

Philippians 3:1-14 *I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.* (v.14)

There is a breathless, all-in, all-hands-on-deck sense of urgency to this verse and the ones immediately prior to it. The goal is of massive consequence—no less than the opportunity to participate forever in the grand celebration of love in the Trinity through Jesus Christ. The goal and prize is heaven. Paul must have his heaven if he is to know the full joy for which he was created. I must know that joy as well.

Paul said he was not yet a prize winner and it’s certain that I am not, either. God wants all of me and I have yet to yield everything I am. But thanks be to God, I have had a taste of that great gift. It will take my all-in good faith effort and most especially God’s loving help beyond that to reach my potential in participation with Him in heaven. I can’t waste time in sin, nursing old grudges, or living in my past failures and successes. Instead, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, I must press on every day.

Jeremiah 12:1-16; Psalm 51; John 12:9-19

Tuesday, April 15

John 12:20-26 *“Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life.”* (v. 25)

Radical rejection of the blandishments of this world—material and spiritual—is what it takes to attain highest heaven. That and becoming an obedient servant of Christ. People may slip into the kingdom with less, but do I want to be least in that place given eternity and the infinite Good that God is? Absolutely not. Unworthy as I am, I still wish to be among the first in the kingdom. Being last makes no sense.

The challenge is in the difficulty of rejecting the blandishments that death to self requires. The promises of this life are so enticing: material things for my senses and power, prestige and privilege for my spirit. And Jesus’ way is so very hard at times. Frankly, these powers and the rough roads I must travel as Jesus’ disciple are too much for me. Praise God in Christ who lifts the weight of my sin and darkness onto his own shoulders and steadies me as I falter along the way.

Jeremiah 15:10-21; Psalms 6, 12; Philippians 3:15-21

Wednesday, April 16

Philippians 4:1-13 *And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.* (v.7)

What is this strange and wonderful state that suddenly enfolds me and immediately calms my fears and revives my courage? It first appeared in my life one evening years ago when I was deeply concerned about my future and the future of my family. A warm glow encompassed me and an intimate, intuitive voice clearly said: “Everything is going to be all right.” The voice commanded my trust, changed my perspective and immediately calmed me.

When I recall that experience, I am reminded of Jesus telling his disciples: “Be not afraid.” And instantly, they were no longer fearful. I think of Julian of Norwich who wrote in her *Revelations of Divine Love*: “All shall be well and all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well.” I believe this peace to be a supernatural gift of God, transcendent, independent

of me and freely given by the One who loves me and will guard me. And, as I look back over a long life, there were trials, but everything did turn out all right.

Jeremiah 17:5-10, 14-17; Psalm 55; John 12:27-36

Thursday, April 17

John 17:1-26 *"I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."* (v.23)

This verse, in fact the whole of Chapter 17, is awe-inspiring to me. The verse makes clear that Jesus' mission was not to lead the children of Israel to an earthly kingdom. Rather, he was to lead the children of God into the kingdom of heaven existing within each of us, where the God of love dwells in infinite triune majesty.

I have come to believe that this unity involves something vastly more than an intellectual assertion of belief or an emotional outpouring of affection, although both may be present. To dwell with God in the union of love means a merger of wills, or desires—to want the same things, desire the same outcomes, work toward the same goals. In complete unity, God's will becomes my will, always. Such perfection is not possible in this life because my sins and imperfections separate me from God. But the good news is that Jesus, by his perfection and sacrifice, overcame sin and opened for me the way to partial union in this life and complete union in the next.

Jeremiah 20:7-11; Psalm 102; 1 Corinthians 10-14-17, 11:27-32

Friday, April 18

Psalm 22 *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?* (v.1a)

I believe that Jesus, always the teacher and ever mindful of his flock, used his own distress as a teaching opportunity. Just prior to his death he directed his followers to Psalm 22, in his case a parable he was actually living that instructs us all in what the righteous person does with personal disaster.

I learned that in the midst of travail I should:

1. Trust that God will not despise or scorn my suffering. In Jesus, God understands from experience.
2. Remember that God will listen to my cry for help, even if it does not appear to be the case at the time. My suffering, no matter how harsh, will not last forever. God will bring it to an end that will benefit me in one way or another.
3. Always fulfill my vows.
4. Praise Him (for dominion belongs to Him and doing so will take my mind off my own troubles).
5. Have faith that, finally, "All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord..." (Psalm 22:27). Ultimate victory is His, and by extension, mine.

Genesis 22:1-14; 1 Peter 1:10-20; John 13:36-38

Saturday, April 19

Hebrews 4:1-16 *For anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works just as God did from his.* (v.10)

At times I sense God's invitation to enter a rest in Him which I understand to be infused contemplation. Signs announce it: First, I cannot meditate using words as I usually do. Nor do I wish to. Second, my imagination will either be quiet or wander freely, not fixed on anything in particular. Finally, I will want to be by myself, quiet, at peace, away from distractions so I can just be aware of God, resting with a general, nonspecific comprehension of Him.

In this state, I am not inactive. Rather, I am remaining alert and receptive to God's infused word which is alive and active, penetrating and transforming me through gifts of knowledge, understanding and wisdom. I and others can measure results roughly by the degree to which my desires and actions correspond more to God's desires, my love for God and others grows, and by my increase in humility before God and detachment from the things of this world.

Lord, may I always understand and joyfully respond to Your invitations and give You the glory and honor.

Job 19:21-27a; Psalm 88

by Herbert Kierulff

Used with permission from the BIBLE READING FELLOWSHIP
PO Box 380, Winter Park, FL 32790
www.biblereading.org

Easter Sunday, April 20

Luke 24:13-35 *Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight.* (v.31 NRSV)

Today's reading, though not in the lectionary for today, is an ideal one for Easter Sunday as it tells of the experience of the risen Christ by two followers heading home from Jerusalem along the road to Emmaus. As we move through Easter Week with this passage and ones from the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles, we will be looking at the stages of the Christian life. Today we have... The Awakening.

For each of us there has been some moment of awakening to the reality of Christ in our lives. It may have been a dramatic experience such as Paul had on the road to Damascus. It may have been as it was with these two people, the recognition of Jesus in the breaking of the bread. It may have been being raised in a Christian home where the knowledge and love of Christ permeated our life. But, at some point a light turned on within us that changed our life forever. "Our eyes were opened, and we recognized Jesus."

It is not wrong for us to want to hold onto that moment. We are like these two who say, "Stay with us." It would not be unexpected if there has been or will be the need for re-awakening when, for some reason or other, we may have fallen away from the "first love" we experienced when Christ became real in our lives. Perhaps we might be able to picture ourselves on a "road to Emmaus" with a Christian friend. It is in sharing our own experiences of faith that, in such instances, Jesus is suddenly there with us, and a new awakening can take place.

Exodus 12:1-14; Psalms 148, 149, 150; John 1:1-18

Monday, April 21

Acts 2:14, 22-32 *"This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses."* (v.32)

Having reflected yesterday on the awakening that occurs in the life of the Christian, today we look at... The Witness.

Once Jesus has become real ("God has raised him up") in our lives, the Lord wants us to be witnesses to that fact. Peter does that by preaching in our lesson today, but few of us will have that opportunity. We witness to Jesus in many different ways by the life we live and the things we say.

Some Christians contend that their life is their witness, and they don't need to talk about what Jesus means to them. But, if a person never mentions his or her faith in Christ, the other person may just think that that person's godly life is the result of good upbringing or a naturally cheery disposition. That is not a witness to Christ.

Other Christians are more open to sharing what Jesus means in their lives, but it is important for them to have a lifestyle that matches their message. In other words, we have two stories: the one our words tell and the one our life tells. If we are to be true witnesses for Christ, those two "stories" need to be consistent with one another, and they need to glorify God.

Jonah 2:1-9; Psalms 93, 98; John 14:1-14

Tuesday, April 22

Acts 2:26-47 *Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized..."* (v.38)

Following the awakening of Christ into our lives, and understanding that we are to be his witnesses in the world, we today consider... The Repentance.

In his sermon, Peter was calling people who had not accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior to do so. As a step in this process, he tells them to repent. In that sense, repentance was a complete turning away from one way of life toward an entirely new one. It is the sort of thing that undoubtedly occurred to us once we were awakened to the reality of Jesus in our lives. It is part of work of the Holy Spirit (i.e., convicting us of sin). Once we have accepted Jesus and allowed the Holy Spirit to begin to work within us, we become conscious of our sins and our need to repent.

But, for the Christian, repentance isn't a one-time event. For every sin we commit, we need to repent. God is the great Forgiver (even "Forgetter") of our sins once we confess them, but the confession of them and the feeling of repentance for them is our part.

Thus, another important part of the Christian life is staying "repented up." The end of each day is an ideal time to reflect on what we have done we shouldn't have done or not done that we should have. Repentance for such sure makes sleeping easier!

Isaiah 30:18-21; Psalm 103; John 14:15-31

Wednesday, April 23

Acts 3:1-10 *But Peter said, "I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk."* (v.6)

As we continue looking at the stages of the Christian life this week, our passage today leads us to... The Courage.

Jesus had promised that power would come upon the disciples once he was no longer with them, and that had happened at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-13). Now Peter has an opportunity to demonstrate that power, but to do so took a great deal of courage. What if he had told the man to stand up and walk and the man either hadn't or, worse still, couldn't?

The situations we Christians face today seldom call for that level of courage. Yet, if our faith means what it should to us, we will encounter challenges that will test our courage. There will be times when our faith is being ridiculed or our fellow Christians are being held in contempt. There will be instances in which the Holy Spirit prompts us to stand up for an unpopular cause, or to “go out on a limb” on behalf of someone else. There will be temptations to “go along with the crowd” concerning something that we know is morally wrong.

At times like that, these words from Chuck Swindoll might inspire us: “Criticism challenges it— adventure arouses it— danger incites it— threats quicken it. Courage—another word for inner strength, presence of mind against odds, determination to hang in there to venture, persevere, withstand hardship.”

Micah 7:7-15; Psalms 97, 99; John 15:1-11

Thursday, April 24

Acts 3:11-26 *While the man held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon's Colonnade.* (v.11 NIV)

If we are willing, as Christians, to show courage in the situations we face in life, we then have... The Opportunity.

As a result of the courage shown by Peter in telling the crippled beggar to stand up and walk, the people flock to him and John. What an opportunity to tell them what had happened and of the Jesus who made it possible!

Again, although in less dramatic ways, we can have the same kind of opportunity. Here is something each of us can do. Begin to pray for your neighbors who are not Christians. Become friendly with them. Establish a relationship that lets them know that you care about them. Let them know, to the extent appropriate, that you pray for them. When a crisis occurs in their lives (which is fairly inevitable if they are your neighbors for very long), it is to you they will come for comfort, guidance, and prayers. The miracle that then happens in their lives may not be as spectacular as what happened to the crippled beggar, but they will sense that your prayers had something to do with it.

When that happens, you have your opportunity to tell them about Jesus and to take them to church.

Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalms 146, 147; John 15:12-27

Friday, April 25

Acts 4:1-12 *“Salvation is found in no one else for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”* (v.12)

Having had the courage to take the steps that lead to the opportunities we have as Christians, today we look at...The Conviction.

Nothing builds up the faith like putting it into practice. It is as we see God come to our aid (or our rescue!) that our faith grows. Sam Shoemaker once said, “Faith is like a bicycle; it only stands upright when it is in motion—the minute it stops moving, it flops on its side.”

With the growth of faith that results from keeping it in motion, comes the deep conviction that “salvation is found in no one other than Jesus.” We believe it because we have seen the truth of it in our own life and the lives of our fellow Christians.

David E. Roberts put it this way: “Once I heard a man say, ‘I spent twenty years trying to come to terms with my doubts. Then one day it dawned on me that I had better come to terms with my faith. Now I have passed from the agony of questions I cannot answer into the agony of answers I cannot escape. And it’s a great relief.’”

Daniel 12:1-4, 13; Psalm 136; John 16:1-15

Saturday, April 26

Acts 4:13-31 *“What are we going to do with these men?” they asked.* (v.16)

So now we reach the “final” stage of Christian growth we will look at this week. The increase of faith that leads to conviction then produces...The Fruit.

The fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) result from the deep conviction that Jesus is the Lord and Savior of our lives and the living out of that conviction in our day-by-day existence.

Here is how Keith Miller stated it: “Things began to change more rapidly in my inner life. It wasn’t that I got rid of all my problems, but I simply began getting a new set of problems. I came to realize that God wasn’t going to take things out of my life. Instead, he brought in a great many positive new things. Since my life and my time were already filled to overflowing, some things had to go, but he made me choose what they would be. And it was a great day when I found my whole set of values and honest secret desires were changing.

“In a life of faith, I discovered, ‘renunciation is not sacrifice.’ I began to want to be Christ’s person enough to pray that he would reveal to me those thoughts and habits which were standing between him and me and doing his will. I prayed that he would then give me the desire and the power to change.”

Isaiah 25:1-9; Psalm 145; John 16:16-33

by Hugh Montgomery

Used with permission from the BIBLE READING FELLOWSHIP

PO Box 380, Winter Park, FL 32790

www.biblereading.org

Good News Daily

Volume XXV

April 27-May 3, 2025

Number 17

Sunday, April 27

John 14:1-7 *“Do not let your hearts be troubled... I am the way.”* (vv.1a, 6a NRSV)

I am the way. My way is the way of sacrificial love. It is the way of willing acceptance of suffering whenever necessary for the sake of all those whom I have created and love. Put your hands into my wounded hands, and trust Me. Don't be afraid...

Christ's way is the way that will lead ultimately to fullness of life and love and joy for all those of us who believe, and trust, and follow him. A living, loving relationship with him must surely be the greatest treasure on earth that we could ever possibly have.

God's way is the way of love— love for Him and love for one another.

Through all the centuries we humans made in His image have believed that our I-know-better-than-God way is preferable. We have always turned against God and against one another. All the violence, the wars, the poverty, and the starvation that our world is so full of today are caused by our continuing to believe in our I-know-better-than-God way instead of responding to His call to follow Him in His way of sacrificial love.

Lord Christ, grant that we all may learn to “know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly.”

Isaiah 43:8-13; Psalms 146, 147; 1 Peter 2:2-10

Monday, April 28

John 17:1-11 *“This is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”* (v.3)

John tells us at the end of his Gospel (20:31) that his purpose in writing it was “so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.” And in this prayer Jesus prays that we may know his Father, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom the Father has sent, which tells us in his own words, that he is the Son of God and the long-awaited Messiah.

To come to believe that our Lord Christ is the Son of God and the long-awaited Messiah demands much more from us than just saying so in words. If our belief is real, it will challenge us to try to surrender to Christ as the center of our lives and to struggle to obey his two great commandments of love— love for God and love for one another. Nothing could ever bring us greater suffering or more indestructible joy. We shall be fulfilling the purpose for which God gave us His precious gift of life— that we might learn to love Him and one another and that we might have eternal life.

Daniel 1:1-21; Psalms 1, 2, 3; 1 John 1:1-10

Tuesday, April 29

John 17:12-19 *“Sanctify them in the truth; thy word is truth.”* (v.17)

The psalmist tells us (119:160) that the heart of God's word is truth, and here Jesus prays that his disciples be blessed, hallowed, made holy in the truth, the truth which billions of subsequent believers have dedicated their lives to proclaiming by word and deed. And what is this truth? It's all that Jesus taught and lived and died to reveal of the Father's love and of His daily call to us to become more truly what we already are—human beings made in the image of God by love, in love, and for love.

The world that God made is so awesomely beautiful at any time of year! Picture the mountains, hills, valleys, rivers, lakes, and the oceans which He created. And then think of His most wondrous creation of all—we human beings created that we might learn to know and love Him and one another.

Lord Christ, grant that we all may learn to “know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly.”

Daniel 2:1-16; Psalms 5, 6; 1 John 2:1-11

Wednesday, April 30

John 17:20-26 *“That they all may be one.”* (v.21a)

“I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they all may be one.” Jesus prays here for all the billions of believers like us throughout the ages who have tried for love of him to give themselves wholeheartedly in thought, word, and deed to proclaiming that he is the Christ, the Son of the living God. He prays that all these billions of believers and the first disciples all may be one. Our unity with these first disciples comes from the incredible blessing that we share—our living, loving relationship with Christ and from the wondrous joy of knowing that the Holy Spirit dwells within us.

A spiritual director of mine once told me that she thinks each one of us is God's promise to His universe that He continues to love and care for it. What an awesome responsibility! To represent Christ by words and deeds to everyone whose path crosses ours. Someone once wrote that Christ has no hands, or feet, or voice on earth today except ours.

Daniel 2:17-30; Psalm 119:1-24; 1 John 2:12-17

Thursday, May 1

Luke 3:1-14 *And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?"* (v.10)

When I first read our Gospel reading from Luke for today, I could find little or no connection between it and what we have been reading so far this week from John. But the more I thought about it, the more I found it really does have a lot to do with the unity Christ prayed for among all of us billions of believers and his early disciples. John the Baptist and his God-given wisdom are indeed still relevant for us today.

When the crowds followed John into the wilderness and heard him preaching about repentance and forgiveness, they asked him, "What then should we do?" He told them very plainly what he thought they should do. If they had more clothing than they needed or more food than they could eat, they should share both food and clothing with those who had none. And none of them should ever exploit, use, or bully others.

Luke tells us in his book of Acts that the first Christians "who believed were of one heart and soul... and there was not a needy person among them" (Acts 5:32 and 34). As believers in our own day, we might ask ourselves: "What then should we do?"

Daniel 2:31-49; Psalm 18:1-20; 1 John 2:18-29

Friday, May 2

Luke 3:15-22 *"You are my Son, the Beloved."* (v.22)

In our Gospel reading for today, we hear the Father telling Jesus, "You are my Son, the Beloved." In the story of the Transfiguration (Luke 9:28-36), the Father tells us, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" Mary tells us in the story of the Wedding at Cana (John 2:1-11) to "do whatever he tells you." They give us the very best answer we could possibly have to yesterday's question: "What then should we do?"

We are listening to the Beloved Son when we read the Scriptures, share in his life, death, and resurrection at the Lord's Supper, and when we grow in love and compassion toward one another. We listen when we pray, for real prayer is always dialogue—talking and listening.

We listen so that we can learn to "do whatever he tells us." We long to surrender to Christ as the center of our lives.

Our heart's desire is to follow him, trust him, give ourselves to him, and respond to his great love for us with love for him and love for one another.

Daniel 3:1-18; Psalms 16, 17; 1 John 3:1-10

Saturday, May 3

Luke 4:1-13 *"If you are the Son of God."* (v.3)

Our Gospel reading for today is the story of Jesus' temptation, and it is the story of our temptation, too. As we have said before (Sunday), we humans made in God's image have always believed that our I-know-better-than-God way of living is preferable to His way of love. We have always turned against God and against one another.

Jesus was tempted first to satisfy his own physical needs before all else. He was tempted to self-glorification rather than the doing of what he believed to be God's will. And he was tempted to compromise with evil. Temptations you and I have faced all our life long.

Jesus resisted every temptation because of his relationship with his Father. You and I are strengthened, guided, empowered by the Holy Spirit to do the same. Our living, loving relationship with our Lord Christ is the reason for our blessed hope and for our greatest joy.

Daniel 3:19-30; Psalms 20, 21; 1 John 3:11-18

by Sister Mary Michael

Used with permission from the BIBLE READING FELLOWSHIP
PO Box 380, Winter Park, FL 32790
www.biblereading.org