

Good News Daily

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Sunday, August 11

Romans 15:1-13 *Those of us who have a robust conscious must accept as our own burden the tender scruples of weaker men, and not consider ourselves. Each of us must consider his neighbor and think what is for his good and will build up the common life.* (vv.1-2 NEB)

Community is a group of people through which God works. Communities give us the opportunity to live supported by the individualistic nature of Jesus' love and forgiveness. How we treat other people—in our community, large or small, in this world of diversity—can be seen as mirroring the way we treat Jesus. When I ask myself how I'm doing in helping the poor, the sick, those alone, prisoners, the rich, the mentally ill, etc., I'm afraid my score needs improvement.

One memorable person, who became an employee, went through a change where he was very attentive to the good of the groups he worked with. He grew quickly in his job. With more responsibility came the need for him to speak at staff meetings. Panic! Fear! With God's grace, and his faith, he did a fantastic job. Confidence began to grow. We practice servant leadership, which he embraced. He gained much practice in looking out for the needs of the group as well as the individuals. Sermons and speaking in front of large groups are now a part of his life.

2 Samuel 13:1-22; Psalms 66, 67; John 3:22-36

Monday, August 12

Mark 9:42-50 *“For everyone will be salted with fire. Salt is a good thing; but if the salt loses its saltness, what will you season it with? Have salt in yourselves; and be at peace with one another.”* (vv.49-50)

I have lost some of my saltness and I am looking for salt rejuvenation. Without the excitement, zest, and flavor which salt brings, life can be flat. I believe my level of saltness is directly related to my spiritual discipline. If I don't take the time to listen to God and communicate, there's no possibility that I can restock my salt supplies.

The external and internal rewards I received for hard work are well ingrained. I cannot access happiness and peace through completion of tasks and projects like I thought I could. The external reward system that existed in my family, and that I adopted as my own, was quite helpful in being successful in the world, but was an impediment to hearing God. This reward system has been evolving since I was a little girl. I learned that my saltness was not defined by my working and completing projects. Saltness comes through the difficult times of life where I have been faced with significant

challenges coming from all directions, involving personal health issues and family and friends' problems. After adapting, changing, growing with each new issue, these fires helped promote my saltiness.

2 Samuel 13:23-39; Psalm 89:1-18; Acts 20:17-38

Tuesday, August 13

Mark 10:1-16 *“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother, and be made one with his wife and the two shall become one flesh. It follows that they are no longer two individuals: they are one flesh. What God has joined together, man must not separate.”* (vv.7-9)

What does it mean for two people to be one flesh? It points to a married couple that depends on each other for life itself. If one person is hurt, the other one is too. The better integrated the two people are, the more willing they are to adapt to change and the more flexible they can be. The confidence that this can instill in the couple helps during the difficult times. Each person has their specific gifts that, together with their partner, work as one with synergy that makes the whole greater than just adding the sum of the parts.

Marriage ebbs and flows with beautiful mountain top experiences, precarious yet magnificent waterfalls, and dangerous crevices. With God as the glue that holds us together, we have been able to weather storms and experiences in life that were challenging. We also learned that, for the health of the marriage, it was important to take preventive measures to maximize our healthiness. Attending Marriage Encounter was one step that I especially found helpful. We also had date nights, even when the kids were young. Growth groups made up of couples were encouraging and inspiring.

2 Samuel 14:1-20; Psalms 97, 99, 100; Acts 21:1-14

Wednesday, August 14

Mark 10:17-31 *“But Master,” he replied, “I have kept all of these since I was a boy.” Jesus looked straight at him; his heart warmed to him and he said, “One thing you lack: go sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have riches in heaven; and come follow me.” At these words his face fell and he went away with a heavy heart; for he was a man of great wealth.* (vv.20-22)

This is a big issue which requires openness and a genuine desire to answer the question. How does God want me to maximize the gifts, the experience, the time, the financial resources he has entrusted to me? I have seen that the more we give of what God has given us, the more we are blessed and entrusted with additional resources. How I allocate these God-given gifts/resources is in part how I worship God; how I feed the hungry; the ways in which I utilize my time; how I take care of myself and my family; and how I share my talents. This is how I follow Jesus and accept his calling.

People with a lot of resources must be diligent to prevent making their wealth their God. It is more difficult if one has not had the experience of relying on God for the large and small problems in life.

2 Samuel 14:21-33; Psalms 101, 109; Acts 21:15-26

Thursday, August 15

Psalm 105:1-22 *Give the LORD thanks and invoke him by name, make his deeds known in the world around. Pay him honour with song and psalm think upon all his wonders. Exult in his hallowed name; let those who seek the LORD be joyful in heart.* (vv.1-3).

My parents love God and share a joyful, loving image of how we can live by the truths Christ taught us through parables and example. They have demonstrated, by the way they live, the power of God and how He can empower us and others with the compassion and forgiveness necessary to address the problem we are called to help solve. My parents have shown me how to respond when the Lord asks “Whom shall I send?” with an “It is I, Lord.”

The way I present my parents is idyllic. They both have had their real struggles and have had to work very hard to be a “Wounded Healer”. God uses me to share my stories and help others to feel the Holy Spirit working in them. My mom is reviewing her life at 90 years old and her main focus is how amazing God has been with healings and bringing the right people to her at key times in her life. She is filled with gratitude for the demonstration of God’s all-consuming love in her life. It is natural for her to share these many events with others who might need the good news.

2 Samuel 15:1-18; Acts 21:27-36; Mark 10:32-45

Friday, August 16

Mark 10:46-52 *“What do you want me to do for you?” “Master’ the blind man answered,” I want my sight back.” Jesus said to him, “Go; your faith has cured you.” And at once he recovered his sight and followed him on the road.* (vv.51-52)

Healings have always intrigued me. I’ve read the Bible and other religious books as well as secular ones. There seems to be many levels of healing, from a full physical healing to no obvious improvement.

My brother died when he was 27 of colon cancer that had already spread to his liver. I could not believe it. We came together as a family and church family. We cleansed ourselves of unhealed memories and did confessions so we wouldn’t block any healing light. We ate a macrobiotic diet; he married; his wife was baptized.

I want a simple recipe that cooks the same way every time—so I know what to do and what I can expect. There have been many healings—movement towards wholeness—in our family. I was blessed immensely on

several occasions when I tried to go into preterm labor. A friend who counseled people said to me on the morning of my brother’s death, “There are a few questions I want to ask God when I arrive at the pearly gates, and one is, ‘Why this one?’”

2 Samuel 15:19-37; Psalm 102; Acts 21:37—22:16

Saturday, August 17

Acts 22:17-29 “Make haste”, he said, “and leave Jerusalem without delay, for they will not accept your testimony about me.” “Lord,” I said, “they know that I imprisoned those who believe in thee and flogged them in every synagogue; and when the blood of Stephen thy witness was shed I stood by, approving, and I looked after the clothes of those who killed him.” But he said to me “Go, for I am sending you far away to the Gentiles.” (vv.18-21)

I find that for many reasons I will shut down and be closed-minded in a situation to what is actually happening. This is true about many of the atrocities that occur today throughout the world. I wonder what it would be like to pull my head out of the sand and think about one issue and how God’s profound grace and his infinite love can help us move toward the solutions. I’m not always open to listening to other people and I can dismiss their point of view without really thinking or praying about it.

During the times when I am closed off, I stick my head in the sand and try to ignore how much hate there is in the world, in our country, and even in our small towns. It often means I have placed other priorities ahead of my relationship with Jesus. My spiritual journey has been up and down, with a deep, strong core forming my ultimate faith. I find for myself it is critical to be disciplined, with activity that enhances my relationship to God.

2 Samuel 16:1-23; Psalm 107:33-43, 108; Mark 11:1-11

by Jean Hess

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