

# *Good News Daily*

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## **Sunday, September 6**

Psalm 63 *O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.* (v.1 NRSV)

As I read these lines, I am struck by the passion of the person writing them and am compelled to reflect on my own relationship with God. Do I seek God passionately? Does my soul thirst for him as someone in a desert thirsts for water after days without? Is my desire for God such that my breath catches in my throat and I become faint?

The Bible is alive with people who exhibit a passionate relationship with God: Hannah is so passionate in prayer that Eli mistakes her state as that of someone whose inhibitions have been removed by an excess of alcohol. David is so overwhelmed by joy at the return of the Ark that he dances ecstatically in the streets of Jerusalem and is undaunted by the approbation of his wife. And it is said of him that he is a man after God's own heart.

Catherine of Siena described God as being "pazzo d'amore"—crazed with love for us. The psalmist challenges you and I to respond to that love with the same passion.

Job 25:1-6, 27:1-6; Psalm 98; Revelation 14:1-7, 13; Matthew 5:13-20

## **Monday, September 7**

John 10:19-30 *"If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly."* (v.24b)

Jesus replies that he has done just that but that they have not believed, and then he tells them again: "The Father and I are one." After nearly two millennia of Christian writings, we can read this and ask ourselves, "Were they completely blind?" And yet, if I am honest, how many times have I asked in prayer, "Tell me plainly; what would you have me do, where would you have me go?"

It is the "plainly" that got the Jews in trouble, and it is the "plainly" that gets me in trouble. They had certain expectations of a Messiah, but they were not God's design for Messiahship. Maybe I have certain expectations too, certain parameters for "plain" responses that blind me to a movement of God. I am looking for a response in one direction, but the response comes from the opposite direction—not at all what I was expecting.

I am called to suspend my expectations and just trust God's heart.

Job 32:1-10, 19—33:1, 19-28; Psalms 41, 52; Acts 13:44-52

## **Tuesday, September 8**

Psalm 45 *Gird your sword on your thigh, O mighty one, in your glory and majesty.* (v.3)

As a little girl I loved the fairy tales about princes and princesses. I would imagine that I was Rapunzel, or Sleeping Beauty, or Snow White, or Cinderella. The ending of course was always the same: I was a princess who was rescued by a dashing prince on a white horse who would stop at nothing to sweep me up out of the evil situation I found myself in.

Little did I know as a young girl that such a prince actually existed—not just a prince but a king! “Then I saw heaven opened, and there was a white horse! Its rider is called Faithful and True...the armies of heaven, wearing fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses...On his robe and on his thigh he has a name inscribed, “King of Kings and Lord of Lords.” Our King is poised at the head of his army ready to sweep us into his arms out of the clutches of the Enemy.

Job 29:1-20; Acts 14:1-18; John 10:31-42

## **Wednesday, September 9**

Psalm 119:49-72 *At midnight I rise to praise you, because of your righteous ordinances.* (v.62)

Law and love don't seem to go together in our modern mindset. Maybe it is Madison Avenue's dictum of “Just do it,” or Frank Sinatra's “I did it my way,” or maybe it is a fear of becoming legalistic like the Pharisees that makes us associate the law with a hellfire and brimstone message. Certainly, praising God in prayer in the middle of the night because of His law has not been my experience. And yet it is the experience of the psalmist, so much so that the longest of all the psalms is a eulogy on the law.

Jesus clearly states that he has not come to abolish, but to fulfill the law (Matthew 5:17). And it is perhaps in those Sermon on the Mount passages that we can better understand why the law is so dear to the psalmist's heart. God's law—not the Pharisees' interpretation nor their implementation of it, but the true intent—is to provide security, safety, and wholeness for His people. God's law reveals God's character; it reveals His heart and His care for His people.

Job 29:1, 30:1-2, 16-31; Acts 14:19-28; John 11:1-16

## **Thursday, September 10**

John 11:17-29 *She said to him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.”* (v.27)

I love this passage for Martha, and for all of us who are more compelled at times to do rather than to sit and listen. I think Martha tends to remain in our minds as the busy one whom Jesus rebukes for her busyness as her sister Mary sits at the Master's feet. And yet here she is—the first one to come

out of the house to greet Jesus after the death of her brother Lazarus, proclaiming her faith in Jesus' ability to heal.

But it is her response to Jesus' revelation: "I am the Resurrection and the Life," that sets her apart. Earlier in John's Gospel, Peter makes a confession of faith on behalf of all the disciples: "We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God." But it is Martha, amongst all of Jesus' followers, who makes the most complete confession of faith. Despite her tendency to busyness, she had nonetheless taken the time to listen to and understand the Master's words, and she is redeemed by his revelation and her response.

Job 29:1, 31:1-23; Psalm 50; Acts 15:1-11

### **Friday, September 11**

John 11:30-44 *When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."* (vv.43-44 NIV)

This story jumps into such vivid relief. The emotional scene is set: the grieving sisters surrounded by grieving friends, and Jesus who weeps, perhaps both for their grief and for Lazarus. The sense of smell is evoked with Martha's words about the length of time the body has been in the tomb. The sense of hearing: Jesus is not quiet in his command but loud. Even though we know the outcome there is still a sense of anticipation—and then Lazarus appears. But this is the first time that I noticed that the text does not say "Lazarus came out" but "the dead man came out." A dead man walking!

Are we not all dead "men" walking except for Christ's sacrifice for us? In the NRSV, Jesus' command is "unbind him." The enemy's constraints that keep us dead are released. The grave clothes are removed by grace through faith. Not only are the grave clothes removed, but we are given Christ's raiment to wear. Thanks be to God!

Job 29:1, 31:24-40; Psalms 40, 54; Acts 15:12-21

### **Saturday, September 12**

Psalm 55 *Give ear to my prayer, O God; do not hide yourself from my supplication... I am troubled in my complaint... But I will trust in you.* (vv.1, 2, 23 NRSV)

Even though the psalmist finds himself in a dark place and would seem to have a sense of God's distance as he pleads for Him to hear and not hide, he nonetheless places his complete trust in God. It is to such a trust that we are called.

Brennan Manning writes this about trust: "The splendor of a human heart which trusts that it is loved gives God more pleasure than Westminster Cathedral, the Sistine Chapel, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Van Gogh's

*Sunflowers*, the sight of ten thousand butterflies in flight, or the scent of a million orchids in bloom...When the shadow of Jesus' cross falls across our lives in the form of failure, rejection...depression, the loss of a loved one; when we are deaf to everything but the shriek of our own pain...It requires heroic courage to trust in the love of God no matter what happens to us...Trust is our gift back to God, and he finds it so enchanting that Jesus died for love of it." [*Ruthless Trust*]

Job 38:1-17; Acts 15:22-35; John 11:45-54

*by Sarah Bronos*

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