

Good News Daily

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Sunday, April 25

Joshua 4:19-24, 5:1-9 *“What do these stones mean?”* (v.21 ESV)

In 1909, my great-grandfather, Willis Hoover, was a missionary in the South American nation of Chile. A revival broke out in his Valparaiso congregation that attracted attention around the world. New churches from that revival are thriving and are the predominant Christian movement there today. They are even sending missionaries to the USA!

In 1930, Dr. Hoover wrote a history of the first 20 years of the revival. My own father, who had emigrated to the USA during WWII, finally published an English translation of that book in 2000, receiving grateful thanks from church historians and scholars. Then, after he died, the book went out of print.

Last year, I prepared an e-book edition to keep great-grandfather’s personal account available. As I worked on it, I found myself thinking about the strange relation between our symbolic deeds and testimonies, and the realities of God’s presence in our lives. The book is not the revival. But sometimes, people can’t see God until we point out records of what He has already done. That’s when the rocks cry out.

Psalms 63, 98; 1 Peter 5:1-11; Matthew 7:15-29

Monday, April 26

Colossians 1:1-14 *We heard of your faith in Christ Jesus...* (v.4)

When my wife and I began attending a new church, I was happy at first to simply come for Sunday services and worship quietly on my own. After a while I began to be curious about the others I saw sitting all around me. I assumed they were there because they desired to be in God’s house. But I really knew nothing about them.

I decided I wanted to know the company I was keeping. I didn’t think I could learn if I really belonged with them by getting in their faces demanding anything.

So, I decided to attend a mid-week discussion class at the church. Listening to the folks kick around the spiritual topics each week, and interacting with them, I got to know their hearts. I learned the reality of the love they had for all the saints of the church, there and around the world. I got a glimpse of the hopes I shared with them. I heard about their faith in Jesus. It was just like with Paul, like always for all of us.

Joshua 10:16-27; Psalms 41, 52; Luke 6:1-11

Tuesday, April 27

Colossians 1:15-23 *...if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard....* (v.23)

Beginnings and first steps can seem so small and insignificant. We think our intentions are good. We may carelessly assume we know all we need to know to start a journey.

In one of the *Pink Panther* movies, Peter Sellers as Inspector Clouseau approaches a hotel desk clerk. A small dog is sitting on the countertop. "Does your dog bite?" Peter asks the clerk. The clerk amiably shakes his head. "No," he says. Clouseau reaches out to pet the dog. It snaps at him viciously. Irritated, Clouseau berates the clerk, "I thought you said your dog didn't bite!" The clerk looks up mildly and says, "That is not my dog."

A wrong first step predicts the last one. It foretells a wrong destination if we recognize it in time. On the other hand, beginning with the right first step guarantees nothing if it is not followed by another one. God looks for the same steadfastness and continuing attention *from* us that He shows *to* us every day.

Joshua 10:29-43; Psalm 45; Luke 6:12-26

Wednesday, April 28

Colossians 1:24—2:7 *Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church...* (v.24)

I remember being startled when I noticed the age of the lame man Peter and John met and healed at the Gate Beautiful of the temple (Acts 4:22). I realized Jesus must have passed right by the man many times over the years without ever stopping or healing him. And when Peter and John finally did so, in the days following Easter and Pentecost, they got a beating for their trouble, one that Jesus missed, one lacking from the many other sufferings of Good Friday.

But the man himself rejoiced gratefully in his healing that day. And the name of Jesus got proclaimed. Peter and John also rejoiced at the privilege of sharing such good news, no matter what it cost.

Lord, may I be as faithful and privileged today for opportunities You give me to make up anything still lacking in Your provisions for Your followers. Even for those who haven't yet heard You call them.

Joshua 11:1-23; Psalm 119:49-72; Luke 6:27-38

Thursday, April 29

Psalm 50 *Our God comes; he does not keep silence.* (v.3)

Bertrand Russell, the agnostic philosopher, was asked what he would say to God if he met him. Russell said he would ask, "Sir, why did you not give me better evidence?" Kurt Vonnegut, a humanist, said he

would candidly add, “All the same, Sir, I’m not persuaded that we did the best we could with the information we had.”

Communication has two parts. First, there’s the one who speaks. They must speak clearly and sufficiently. Then there is the one who must listen. They must listen without wandering attention or distraction. And the process is usually expected to play out in some kind of response that indicates the communication was successful and served its purpose.

It’s not that God doesn’t show up. It’s not that He mumbles. He keeps focused on His purpose and love for us. The question is always am I too busy or distracted to listen and respond to what He has said?

Joshua 13:1-13; Colossians 2:8-23; Luke 6:39-49

Friday, April 30

Colossians 3:1-11 *Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.* (v.2)

I looked through the car windshield and said to myself, “How did I get *here*?” I apparently drove safely, but my thoughts had wandered far away from the task of getting to my destination.

Sometimes the memory trails in my mind are still fresh enough that I can retrace them. I have been remembering Dad buying me a popsicle after swimming on Saturday mornings at the public pool in my hometown growing up. I thought about that because I went past my current church, where I had a popsicle a few years ago from an ice cream truck our children’s pastor called over to serve our parish youth group. I saw that old street curb because I drove past the church while heading to the hospital to visit parishioners. I was now in the hospital parking garage, wondering why I was thinking about my dad...

Our eyes glaze over. Our minds wander even in church, sometimes. I am in charge of those wandering thoughts. It is up to me to call them back to order.

Joshua 13:14-32; Psalms 40, 54; Luke 7:1-17

Saturday, May 1

Luke 7:18-35 *And he answered them, “Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them.* (v.22)

I enjoyed reading and listening to great Christian apologetic teachers. They would review the logical arguments for believing God exists, report archaeological evidence that confirmed the Bible’s accuracy, or examine the long practices and traditions of past generations of the church, to explain why we did things this way.

I enjoyed those lessons but never felt confident I could remember them all. I didn't want to embarrass myself—or Jesus—if I couldn't answer every question a skeptic might have. I relaxed once I understood what Jesus told John's disciples.

A teacher is right to spend time exploring all the *hows*. A *witness* only needs to say *what* they saw or experienced, even if they can't explain *how*. I may not be able to explain the Book of Revelation immediately after I give my heart to Jesus, but I can say I gave my heart and why I did. No one can argue with what I can say I've seen and heard.

Joshua 14:1-15; Psalm 55; Colossians 3:12-17

by Rick Hoover

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