

# *Good News Daily*

Oct 7-Nov 3

Volume XVIII

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## **Sunday, October 7**

1 Corinthians 2:6-16 *However, as it is written: “No eye had seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him.”* (v.9 NIV)

I was talking with a friend who is having severe marital struggles. There is a lot of emotional pain and the idea of hanging on to work on the marriage is almost daunting. Being apart doesn't hurt as much as being together. Yes, they are seeking counseling.

Ultimately issues in our relationships with people reflect our relationship with God. The emotional struggles these two precious people have stem from hurts that only God can heal. And I believe He can heal them.

Throughout our conversation, the above verse kept running through my head, so I shared the words the Holy Spirit gave me. Don't make any big moves but wait on the Lord and submit to Him. I know you don't have the strength or courage or resolve right now. You are in pain and the idea of more pain is overwhelming. So, by the Lords' strength do the hard work, and let Him heal both of you. You can't imagine the plans God has for your marriage if you trust Him.

Hosea 13:4-14; Psalm 118; Matthew 14:1-12

## **Monday, October 8**

Luke 6:39-49 *“But the one who has heard, and not acted accordingly, is like a man who built a house on the ground without any foundation; and the torrent burst against it and immediately it collapsed, and the ruin of that house was great.”* (v.49 NASB)

In the last couple of weeks (as I am writing this), the Americas have experienced 3 hurricanes and 2 earthquakes. The destruction has been unimaginable—homes leveled, lives taken, epic flooding, and so much despair. Furthermore, in some places power may not be restored for months and rescue workers can't get to these areas to distribute badly needed supplies like food and medicine. The wake of the destruction is great. My heart breaks for those people who have lost everything and there isn't a way forward yet.

This Scripture (while in no way referring to those suffering as a result of the natural disasters) is a powerful visualization about building your life and relationships on a solid foundation with the Lord. I've seen the natural disasters of life attack many people and those who have the strong deep foundation of their faith survive them. How is your flood insurance?

Hosea 14:1-9; Psalm 106:1-18; Acts 22:30—23:11

## **Tuesday, October 9**

Psalm 122 *I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD."* (v.1)

I like going to church. I feel at peace there and it's one of the places the Lord speaks to me. Also, the group worship can be so powerful. If I have missed a week, I start to thirst for it.

My teenagers don't always feel the same. It's not necessarily for a particular reason. They would just rather do other things like sleep. I am sure there are those reading this who can relate. I am aware of the argument that it's my house and my children need to adhere to my rules. I don't like the idea that going to church is a rule though.

This arose recently on a Sunday morning, and we did attend church as family. My prayer that day was that my son would feel God's love for him while he was there. I want my children to not feel that church is something they have to do. I want them to feel connected to the Lord there. I want them to worship and learn there. I want them to eventually thirst for it.

Micah 1:1-9; Psalms 120, 121, 123; Acts 23:12-24; Luke 7:1-17

## **Wednesday, October 10**

Psalm 119:145-176 *Let my cry come before You, O LORD; give me understanding according to Your word. Let my supplication come before You; Deliver me according to Your word.* (vv.169-170)

Mary was a prayer warrior for whom I will be forever grateful. When our lives intersected, she worked as my father's assistant.

My dad's life sort of imploded as he made a series of poor decisions that tore my family to shreds and whittled the business down to almost nothing. For a decade he fought to prove he was justified in his actions instead of seeking forgiveness and reconciliation. His decisions led to many trusted employees leaving and business to fall away.

As a sister in Christ I asked her how she handled this spiritual warfare she was in the middle of. She knew she was supposed to be there. Her job was to pray; to storm the throne of God on behalf of my father and our family. She said when meetings would occur that she knew would cause

more chaos and strife, she would sit at her desk and pray for the Lord to prevail over evil. I can just picture it.

She did know that her prayers were answered. God is in control. Healing has occurred between family members that I never thought would happen and we are still open for business.

Micah 2:1-13; Acts 23:23-35; Luke 7:18-35

### **Thursday, October 11**

Acts 24:1-23 *Felix shilly-shallied. He knew far more about the Way than he let on, and could have settled this case then and there. But, uncertain of his best move politically, he played for time. "When Captain Lysias comes down, I'll decide your case."* (v.22 The Message)

Felix knew more about Paul's case and Christianity than he revealed. He spent time in Paul's presence. Having Paul close by in prison afforded Felix access to Paul whenever he wanted. Felix didn't have to outwardly support him by being seen in public listening to him. Inwardly, he may have thought Paul innocent of any crime, but Felix didn't want to just let him go for fear that it might negatively affect his political career. So he chose to do nothing and keep Paul serving sort of a "white collar criminal sentence" by allowing lots of visitors and freedom to roam.

The breakdown is Felix chose his political career over his relationship with God. Or maybe he didn't have a belief in God because he knew it would be detrimental to climbing the corporate ladder. It's something to ponder. Have we ever put aside our beliefs to get ahead in our careers? It doesn't have to be a big issue like Felix had. It could be small, like not standing up when we disagree with something or not loving others as God commanded.

Micah 3:1-8; Psalms 131, 132, 133; Luke 7:36-50

### **Friday, October 12**

Psalm 140 *Rescue me, LORD, from evildoers; protect me from the violent, who devise evil plans in their hearts and stir up war every day.* (vv.1-2 NIV)

The terrorist attack on Las Ramblas, a tourist street in Barcelona, Spain recently occurred. A van sped down the middle of the pedestrian street with the purpose of killing many. Mission accomplished. An American couple was there on a vacation. Just before the incident, they had separated so he could go find a restroom. She stayed put waiting for him to return. He didn't return. And now life will never be the same for the wife. In a few seconds, life is forever changed by evil men devising violent plans.

Everything about that day and all these random attacks is heartbreaking and invokes deep fear, but this story really got to me. My

husband and I have strolled Las Ramblas, enjoyed the sights of the bustling city, and stopped at the cafés. It could easily have been us doing the same thing that day.

Father, I pray You would comfort this recent widow and give her strength to go on living. Wherever we travel, Lord, protect us from evil men—men who devise evil plans in their hearts to stir up war.

Micah 3:9—4:5; Psalm 142; Acts 24:24—25:12; Luke 8:1-15

### **Saturday, October 13**

Acts 25:13-27 *“For it seems to me silly to send a prisoner all that way for a trial and not be able to document what he did wrong.”* (v.27 The Message)

Paul goes wherever the Holy Spirit leads him, including places where he isn’t well received. He teaches, he prays, he works, and he tithes. Yet, he is controversial. In Caesarea he is jailed, the Jews and high priests demanding his execution. Festus, governor of Caesarea, and King Agrippa are confused. They can’t figure out what Paul did to deserve a trial and punishment. They find no charges against him to be valid. They don’t know what to do with him. They are intrigued by Paul and want to know more.

I think the world is confused by Christians at times and doesn’t know what to do with them. I am talking about believers who radiate peace and kindness and stand up for what they believe, but aren’t loud or judgmental toward others about their faith. It’s not just charisma. It is something deeper than that. The world finds these people intriguing because the world wants to know what they have that is different. I believe that is the Holy Spirit working through believers, drawing others to him. Are you allowing the Holy Spirit to reach out to others through you?

Micah 5:1-4, 10-15; Psalms 137, 144; Luke 8:16-25

*by Mara McClain*

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### **Sunday, October 14**

1 Corinthians 4:9-16 *I appeal to you, then, be imitators of me.* (v.16 NRSV)

Jesus taught and demonstrated the standards and values that we are to follow. He taught by example, showing us how he treats people from various sections of society—politicians, the temple hierarchy, criminals, the mentally ill, the poor, others who were on the fringes of society—as well as people in general. His use of parables as a teaching tool is advantageous. I find there is often a basic meaning to the parables and then, with further

research, a fuller knowledge becomes accessible. This helps me better understand how to apply the parable in my life.

Jesus presented us with the clear standards he lived by, that we can imitate until they become part of us. He sets a precise path for us to follow that has some flexibility built in, based on the individual and their unique relationship with God. I have chosen this path and still get lost or start going the wrong way. As long as I am open and strive to be close to Jesus, I can find my way back on the path.

Micah 6:1-8; Psalms 146, 147; Matthew 15:21-28

### **Monday, October 15**

Luke 8:26-39 *“Return to your home and declare how much God has done for you.”* (v.39a)

When bad things happen, I can be quick to complain: “How will I get through this; it’s not fair.” I find this venting ineffective in helping me with my physical, emotional, or spiritual life.

I have seen God turn many terrible events into instruments of His love, which increases my faith. When I give thanks for this experience and pray to be open to how God will use me and what I can learn about living a fuller life, my perspective begins the shift. My negative view of the problem begins to change because I’m seeing this time of life with a different pair of glasses. This, in turn, impacts my state of well-being and my “attitude of gratitude” becomes stronger.

Sharing my thanksgiving for what God has done for me makes me grateful for the life I have been given. I find that if I start the day recalling 5 things for which I am grateful, I feel more equipped to be a servant of God and to be a reflection of God’s love to others.

Micah 7:1-7; Psalms 1, 2, 3; Acts 26:1-23

### **Tuesday, October 16**

Jonah 1:1-17a *But Jonah set out to flee to Tarshis from the presence of the LORD.* (v.3a)

There have been times when I have run from or ignored the Lord, once for several years. I knew I needed some help sorting through my issues, which included things I had and had not done. I made a commitment to reunite with my Savior. With some concentrated help from a priest, and later a prayer counselor, I stopped running and found God’s forgiveness and love.

I was overwhelmed with the experience of my love for others. The freedom I felt was glorious. I truly was seeing with different eyes. I am quite near sighted, but for the next couple of days my vision was so crisp. There

was a family member who I found difficult to love. My whole attitude changed and I felt comfortable being with him as my brother in Christ.

I am more consistently grounded now, but when I get my priorities confused and don't put my relationship with God as my top priority, I can feel a dis-ease and know the actions I must take.

Psalms 5, 6; Acts 26:24—27:8; Luke 8:40-56

### **Wednesday, October 17**

Luke 9:1-17 *And all ate and were filled. What was left over was gathered up, twelve baskets of broken pieces.* (v.17)

In our family we have discussions about money and the appropriate use of it that go beyond tithing. We have the Scarcity and the Abundance views; the parable of the feeding of the 5,000 describes the Abundance view. Current resources are shared with gratitude for what God has given us. These resources expand. The more you share your resources with others, the more you are given to share.

I have experienced and observed many situations where this is true. I had always wanted to have a baby, and when we finally did my love for this child was so powerful I didn't think I could possibly have that much love left to give another baby. I discovered I did have ample love...for each of our children. And there was more and more love I found within myself that I could share. The more I was willing to share, the more I would have. My baskets of bread pieces continue to grow.

Jonah 1:17—2:10; Psalm 119:1-24; Acts 27:9-26

### **Thursday, October 18**

Psalm 18:1-20 *He brought me out into a broad place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me.* (v.19)

I am reminded of a card I received years ago that included "The Lord danced the day you were born." Within me these words create a joyful image—the heavenly host dancing and celebrating. God was dancing in joy because He was deeply satisfied that his work—me—was very good.

His unconditional love is for all of us. Yes, even those who have done horrible things. I learned through a wise prayer counselor that I must even pray for the person who has seriously hurt me or my child. I don't know how this is helpful or how people do it, but I trust that God does. To me it is part of the mystery of the Trinity. Most of us have not realized or experienced this profound love. I have seen it through my interactions with others and, at times, during prayer.

I love being in a worship service which includes liturgical dancers and others experiencing God's powerful love.

## Friday, October 19

Song of Solomon 1:2-8 *My mother's sons were angry with me; they made me keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard I have not kept!* (v.6b)

The woman who bemoaned that she had not been able to take care of her own vineyard, but her mother's sons wanted her to be keeper of other vineyards too, brought to mind the book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. Based on universal values, Stephen Covey offers ways to become more effective in accomplishing goals and working interdependently with others.

One of his most profound principals is to "Sharpen the Saw." To me, he was saying don't forget to take care of yourself and grow or you won't be able to do your best in other areas of your life. When I ran for exercise, at times, I would not feel like going. I had many wonderful excuses that I could devise. So I developed a ritual that I would get my shoes on first, then decide. Once I went to the trouble of getting my shoes on, half my battle was won. Running was one way that helped me take care of my vineyard and "Sharpen the Saw."

Psalms 16, 17; Acts 28:1-16; Luke 9:28-36

## Saturday, October 20

Acts 28:17-31 *"Go to this people and say, You will indeed listen, but never understand, and you will indeed look, but never perceive. For this people's heart has grown dull, and their ears are hard of hearing and they have shut their eyes; so that they might not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and understand with their heart and turn—and I would heal them."* (vv.26-27)

In my life I find that for many reasons, known and unknown, I will be closed-minded to a situation and what is happening. During these times, I've lost the energy to embrace opportunities for expanding my understanding of God's profound grace and his infinite love. I can understand only part of the issue. 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. My thoughts and I grow dull, hard of hearing, and I shut my eyes or stick my head in the sand. 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 which enhances my relationship to God.

The Song of Solomon 1:9—2.7; Psalms 20, 21; Luke 9:37-50

by Jean Hess

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**Sunday, October 21**

Matthew 16:13-20 *He asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God."* (vv.13-16 NRSV)

Who is Jesus? We must all answer that question. Is he a good moral teacher, a prophet, a liar? That is what some people who saw and heard Jesus thought. They didn't know what to make of him. A few months ago, I was talking with a friend who is struggling with this very question. I shared with her that, sure, Jesus is a great teacher. Sure, he is a good person who lived well and is an example to us. But I can't get past the crucifixion and resurrection. That makes Jesus different. He is like me, but he isn't like me. He is the Messiah.

Her response: If this is true, then it changes everything! If this is true, it is the greatest news of all time and we should tell everyone all the time! She doesn't yet believe it, but she is right. If we believe Jesus is the Son of the Living God, that belief changes everything. So, let me ask you, who do you say that Jesus is?

Song of Solomon 2:8-17; Psalms 148, 149, 150; 1 Corinthians 10:1-13

**Monday, October 22**

Luke 9:51-62 *As they were going along the road, someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."* (vv.57-58)

If Jesus is the Messiah, everything changes. In our Gospel passage today, it mentions that Jesus had "set his face to go to Jerusalem" (v.51). This act defines who he is as Messiah—one who would die for the world he came to save. Most Jewish people at this time expected the Messiah to come as a conquering warrior or a majestic king, not as a wandering teacher who taught death as the way to life. But that is who Jesus is.

Some will not receive him. To follow Jesus is not a "Jesus and..." proposition. There is only one way to follow Jesus—with your whole life. This is hard—not popular and not comfortable. When I really started to follow Jesus, he began to ask for different aspects of my life. Some of those

things were small—movies and TV shows that I liked but weren't good for my soul. Some of those things were big—my career choices and what neighborhood I lived in. Some of those things were harder to surrender to him than others; but each time, I discovered that Jesus is worth it. Following Jesus is not easy, but it is good.

Song of Solomon 4:1—5:1; Psalm 25; Revelation 7:1-8

## **Tuesday, October 23**

Luke 10:1-16 *He said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves."* (vv. 2-3)

For those of us who follow Jesus, we have a mission. Our mission, should we choose to accept it, is declaring that "The kingdom of God has come near" (vv.9, 11). In this passage, we see two responses to this message (and to the person of Jesus, as we saw yesterday). Some respond with joy while others respond with disdain or apathy. However, regardless of response, we are to proclaim the message.

Recently I was meeting with friends on a community college campus. We were studying the Bible together when a student walked up to invite us to a club party. We talked with her for a few moments, and then said that we were Christians and asked if we could pray for her in any way. Immediately, she opened up and told us about a very difficult situation in her life. As we prayed, she wept. Afterward she said that she believed God had led her to talk to us that day. Some will respond with joy.

Song of Solomon 5:2—6:3; Psalms 26, 28; Revelation 7:9-17

## **Wednesday, October 24**

Luke 10:17-24 *The seventy returned with joy...At that same hour Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will."* (vv.17, 21)

When we bring the message of the kingdom to the world, we experience joy and Jesus experiences joy! Every time a conversation turns to spiritual things, especially Jesus, I get nervous. My stomach churns, my words get muddled, and I wish that someone else who knew more or could say it better was there instead of me. When I was talking with my friend (see Sunday), I felt like I was saying all the wrong things. It was awkward. I was awkward. Thank goodness for Jesus' words in our reading today—the

gospel is not just for the wise or intelligent. God reveals it to all, even to infants!

By the end of our conversation, my friend thanked me, saying she had a lot to think about! Later that night, I prayed with joy, rejoicing that she saw Jesus in a new way through our conversation. And I sensed God’s joy that I had not wiggled out of the conversation, but stayed engaged, even in my inadequacy and insecurity. Who might God be calling you to speak to this week about Jesus and his message? How might you find joy in the midst of awkwardness?

Song of Solomon 8:5-14; Psalm 38; Revelation 8:1-13

### **Thursday, October 25**

Luke 10:25-37 *“And who is my neighbor?”* (v.29b)

Imagine Jesus’ story this way: A man on his way to church passed through an inner-city neighborhood. He was mugged, beaten, and left unconscious on the curb. A pastor driving by saw the man but drove on, afraid it was a scam. Similarly, a Bible study leader saw the man but did not stop as he was running late for Bible study. Lastly, a local drug dealer rode by, saw the man, and stopped. He picked the man up, bandaged his wounds and took him to the Vacation Lodge, paid for two days and told the manager he would be back in a couple days to pay whatever else was needed. Who was the neighbor?

Does this story sound outrageous? When Jesus told it, it was equally outrageous to his hearers. God’s kingdom is an upside-down kingdom. So, who is your neighbor? *“Go and do likewise”* (v.37).

Esther 1:1-4, 9-12, 16-22; Psalm 37:1-18; Revelation 9:1-12

### **Friday, October 26**

Luke 10:38-42 *“Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.”* (vv.41b-42)

We often read this passage as a condemnation of Martha. But Martha was doing what she should have been doing. She was playing the part of a woman in that society. Mary is the one who was breaking all cultural norms! In this time, the only ones who sat at the feet of Jesus listening to him teach were the disciples—the men. Yet, that is exactly where we find Mary. When Martha rightly tries to return Mary to her proper place, Jesus affirms Mary’s choice, and even goes beyond affirmation to declare that Mary’s choice of discipleship is the only thing that is needed!

The kingdom of God is an upside-down kingdom. It is a kingdom where women are disciples; where there is no need to work to earn our

place. The only thing needed is to place ourselves at his feet as disciples. So, take a seat. Jesus welcomes you there.

Esther 2:1-11; Psalm 31; Revelation 9:13-21

### **Saturday, October 27**

Luke 11:1-13 *“For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened...If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”* (vv.10, 13)

Jesus came announcing God’s kingdom, and it was not what the people expected. God’s heart was always one of forgiveness (just read the Psalms for today). God’s heart was always to be present with His people. But over time, we tend to make it less about being with God and more about following rules. Growing up in church, I knew God. I tried to live a life that I thought would honor God. But most of the time, I thought a godly life was about me and how well I followed the rules.

Then, my freshman year of college, I remember walking down a hallway and asking God to lead me. I would not have described it this way, but I asked for the Holy Spirit that day. And I know that God was pleased to give that good gift! Following Jesus is not about rules. It is about admitting our inability to earn our way into God’s favor, and asking, searching, knocking. When we do, we receive, we find, and the door is opened. So, friend, quit your striving today. Ask... search... knock. Your Father is waiting to give you the good gift of His kingdom!

Esther 2:12-23; Psalms 30, 32; Revelation 10:1-11

*by Kim Koi*

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### **Sunday, October 28**

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)

At our favorite vacation spot, we frequently travel a winding mountain road. It’s fairly busy and rather narrow. The driver has to keep both eyes on the road. One day, we noticed a car parked on a bit of shoulder. Curious, we stopped there on our next trip. A pipe dripped pure water ready to be drunk or stored in jugs. It was for the use of anyone who came by.

Most travelers never notice the water source. They are not seeking for it. How true this is in our fast-moving lives. We faint for lack of the Living Water, our Lord and Savior, and he's there ready to be known all the time. Slow down. Be curious. Pay attention: "everyone who searches finds" (Matthew 7:7).

Esther 3:1-15; Psalm 98; 1 Corinthians 10:15-24; Matthew 18:15-20

### **Monday, October 29**

Esther 4:1-17 *"For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father's family will perish. Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this."* (v.14)

Esther had been chosen to be queen. No doubt she expected to live in this role without significant change for the rest of her life. The actions of Haman cast her into a new way of seeing her life and the lives of her people. She had to move from denial, down through fear and refusal. Esther had to go deeply into her own soul for courage to act. Finally, her choice was to change or die.

The actions of other people affect us. We are also subject to the weather, nature, death, illness, and that small voice within us. But change is often unexpected. We are programmed to stay in a place we are accustomed to. We need courage, too. Maybe our choice is not "change or die," but it may be "change or cease to grow."

O Constant One, may we rest in You, not rest as an escape from the changes and cares of life, but a rest in your constancy and peace.

Psalms 41, 52; Revelation 11:1-14; Luke 11:14-26

### **Tuesday, October 30**

Luke 11:27-36 *"If then your whole body is full of light, with no part of it in darkness, it will be full of light as when a lamp gives you light with its rays."* (v.36)

I love the way God acts with individuals, not just as "a group of people." At the coming of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:3, we read: "Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them." Each waiting person, each body, had a tongue, as of fire, resting on him or her. Perhaps Jesus was looking ahead to Pentecost when he speaks of a whole body being full of light.

In our own strength, we cannot generate light, but a clean vessel can allow the light of the Holy Spirit to give light to all those around us. When we refuse to allow our lives to be used for God's purposes, darkness dims our effectiveness.

Evelyn Underhill says it well: “Ye are the light of the world—but only because you are enkindled, made radiant by the one Light of the world. And being enkindled, we have got to get on with it, be useful.”

Esther 5:1-14; Psalm 45; Revelation 11:14-19

### **Wednesday, October 31**

Psalm 119:49-72 *Your statutes have been my songs wherever I make my home.* (v.54)

A nursing home facility is often the last place some people make their “home.” I was a chaplain for several years among men and women who were in their last home. Some were not able to express or acknowledge their faith, as illness and age-related problems had robbed them of their “songs.” But others still sang. One woman used her long times of bed rest to pray for her family, her pastor, and her church. She said it gave her a reason for living. One hymn-singing woman sat in a little rocking chair. I called it her “Jesus take me home” chair. There was peace in that room.

I led a Monday morning group. One day we blessed “old memories.” They spoke with warmth about long-ago neighbors and family members. There was joy in that room. That home, for a different season of life, was a place where I learned about the steadfastness of a faith that can see you through the pilgrimage of life. I was blessed.

Esther 6:1-13; Revelation 12:1-6; Luke 11:37-52

### **Thursday, November 1**

Luke 11:53—12:12 *“But even the hairs of your head are all counted. Do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.”* (v.7)

When our daughter was a teenager, she baby-sat for a family who had three boys. They were close in age, and she sometimes called one by the wrong name. The boys were annoyed, and one said, “I don’t know why you get us mixed up. Our daddy never does.” And truly our Heavenly Father doesn’t get us mixed up. Each of us is of great value to Him.

Recently, I made an inventory of the ways that God’s Church and individual Christian people have been used to teach and guide me through the seasons of my life. I started with my parents and grandmother. It is humbling to realize how God has been caring for me for so long. You might try this kind of listing yourself. It led me to a time of praise and thanksgiving. “Great is His Faithfulness.”

Esther 6:14—7:10; Psalm 50; Revelation 12:7-17

## **Friday, November 2**

Psalm 40 *I have not hidden your saving help within my heart, I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation.* (v.10a)

One day, in my quiet time, I felt God speaking and I wrote in my journal, “Let your silence be in my presence and not used as an excuse when I choose for you to speak out. I’ll extrovert you when I want to.” Another person might receive this message: “I may introvert you for a while, so that in the silence you may have more hidden in your heart, out of which you shall speak.”

Maybe God is opening doors for you to speak to groups, or maybe you are telling your story one-to-one. Or perhaps you feel a need to spend time on retreat, in a listening mode. The psalmist speaks of his inward journey and his outward journey. Open yourself to both.

Esther 8:1-17; Psalm 54; Revelation 13:1-10; Luke 12:13-31

## **Saturday, November 3**

Ezekiel 20:1-17 *Moreover I gave them my sabbaths, as a sign between me and them, so that they might know that I the LORD sanctify them.* (v.12)

The Sabbath was a “sign.” It was a weekly reminder of the connection between the people of Israel and God. It was a reminder that He had chosen them. Their keeping the Sabbath as a day of rest and remembrance proved that they were choosing to be faithful.

As Christians, we have inherited the sign of setting apart one day of the week to honor and remember the Lord and all His blessings. Sunday is our connection, and we feel it as we worship. Jesus also gave us other signs. Each time we celebrate the Eucharist or Lord’s Supper “in remembrance of him,” it gives us another opportunity to make a spiritual connection with God.

And then, there is the constant sign which we have been given. We can know God intimately, minute by minute, by the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Psalm 55; Revelation 13:11-18; Luke 12:32-48

*by Carolyn Byrd*

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