

Good News Daily

JUNE 1 – JULY 5, 2014

Volume XIV

June 1-7, 2014

Number 22

Sunday, June 1

Exodus 3:1-12 *But Moses said to God, “Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”* (v.11 NIV)

For his first 40 years, Moses thought he knew everything and was someone special. It took the next 40 years for Moses to find out he was just an ordinary man. Beginning with these words to God, Moses would find that he could do nothing without God and everything with God. It has taken my entire life for me to experience the same thing. How about you?

Psalms 66, 67; Hebrews 12:18-29; Luke 10:17-24

Monday, June 2

Joshua 1:1-9 *“No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I have been with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. Be strong and very courageous.”* (vv.5-6a)

I know these verses are for you—and me too. Through the indwelling power and grace of God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, we can be strong and very courageous each day, without regard for our immediate situation.

Psalms 89:1-18; Ephesians 3:1-13; Matthew 8:5-17

Tuesday, June 3

Ephesians 3:14-21 *I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.* (vv.16-17a)

Pray Paul’s prayer above daily and watch your life become filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

1 Samuel 16:1-13a; Psalms 97, 99, 100; Matthew 8:18-27

Wednesday, June 4

Ephesians 4:1-16 *As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.* (v.1)

We are all likely prisoners of something—in bondage to alcohol, drugs, food, work, sex, television, religion, codependence, etc. Or, has the

Spirit of God taken over your life, freed you from your worldly bondage, and made you a blessed prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Isaiah 4:2-6; Psalms 101, 109; Matthew 8:28-34

Thursday, June 5

Psalm 105:1-22 *Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always. Remember the wonders he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced.* (vv.4-5)

Build a history of faith with God. Commit to memory all He has done for you, and in you, over your lifetime. Your history with God will give you strength, faith, and trust when you find yourself in difficult times and situations.

Zechariah 4:1-14; Ephesians 4:17-32; Matthew 9:1-8

Friday, June 6

Matthew 9:9-17 *“Neither do men pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved.”* (v.17)

A person in bondage, any form of bondage, cannot be completely filled with the power of God until the bondage is removed. Healing of bondage or brokenness cannot be achieved without a person’s willingness, courage, hard work, and faith in a power greater than self.

Jeremiah 31:27-34; Psalm 102; Ephesians 5:1-20

Saturday, June 7

Psalm 108 *I will praise you, O LORD, among the nations; I will sing of you among the peoples. For great is your love, higher than the heavens; your faithfulness reaches the skies. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens, and let your glory be over all the earth.* (vv.3-5)

Lord, these verses really say what is in my heart today. I praise You and sing of You; let Your glory be over all the earth!

Ezekiel 36:22-27; Psalm 107:33-43; Ephesians 6:10-24; Matthew 9:18-26

by Michael O’Grody

Sunday, June 8

Acts 4:18-21, 23-33 *So they called them and ordered them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in God's sight to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge; for we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard."* (vv.18-20 NRSV)

On this day of Pentecost, we pray that God would "shed abroad this gift [of the Holy Spirit] throughout the world by the preaching of the Gospel, that it may reach to the ends of the earth" (Book of Common Prayer, p.227). When we read Acts 2 about the Holy Spirit's coming, the first thing that strikes us is the apostles' speaking in tongues; but the point of tongues is that the apostles proclaim the Good News of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection to the nations in their midst. The Holy Spirit comes to help us proclaim Jesus!

In the Acts reading today, Peter and John are ordered to no longer speak about Jesus. But they cannot keep silent! They saw and heard something spectacular and they must tell others about it, no matter the cost! Brothers and sisters, my prayer is that you have encountered the wonder of Jesus' death and resurrection *for you* in Easter; and that through the gift of the Holy Spirit this Pentecost, you will boldly speak about him, no matter the cost.

Deuteronomy 16:9-12; Psalm 118; John 4:19-26

Monday, June 9

Psalm 57 *I lie down among lions that greedily devour human prey; their teeth are spears and arrows, their tongues sharp swords. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens. Let your glory be over all the earth.* (vv.4-5)

Last year, I became well acquainted with the sharp teeth of the lions. A situation had me wondering, "Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth?" (Galatians 4:16). As some assassinated my character and others pushed me into a corner that I did not like, I knew what it meant to lie down among lions looking to devour. I wanted to hide, run away, and withdraw. But Scripture says, "In the day of prosperity, be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider; God has made the one as well as the other..." (Ecclesiastes 7:14). In my season of adversity, I chose to trust God. The psalmist declares, "This I know, that God is for me...in God I trust; I am not afraid" (Psalm 56:10-11). When you find yourself surrounded by the lions of the world (and they are out there), what will you choose? Will you trust

that God is for you even in adversity? Will you pray, “Be exalted, O God, above the heavens. Let your glory be over all the earth”?

Ecclesiastes 7:1-14; Psalms 56, 58; Galatians 4:12-20; Matthew 15:21-28

Tuesday, June 10

Psalm 62 *Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts before him; God is a refuge for us.* (v.8)

Choosing to trust God in seasons of adversity does not mean that we need to “fake” rejoicing and hide how we are really feeling from God. In the height of my trial last year, one night I hit the wall. In the middle of the night, I received some information about how I was being viewed by others. I wanted to call a friend. But instead I curled up in a ball and sobbed out all my fears, pain, and questions to the Lord. In that moment, trust meant coming to the Lord with the mess and pouring it out to Him. Phoning a friend may have brought some comfort to me; but in crying it out with the Lord, I found Him to be a refuge and a safe place to hide. The next morning, I got out of bed less reluctant to face the day, knowing that “on God rests my deliverance and my honor; my mighty rock, my [place of] refuge” (v.7) is in Him.

Ecclesiastes 8:14—9:10; Psalm 61; Galatians 4:21-31; Matthew 15:29-39

Wednesday, June 11

Galatians 5:1-15 *For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. For through the Spirit, by faith, we eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness.* (vv.1, 5)

What is Christianity? Many believe it is a rule list to follow or a moral system by which to live. In this, “faith” is learning to live right, aka follow the “Christian rules.” You know—go to church, love people, don’t gossip or murder or get angry. The truth is, we like rules. Even when we consider ourselves rule-breakers, we want rules to be there. They provide boundaries and safety. We feel in control when we know the rules and can choose to either keep or disregard them.

But that is not Christianity.

Christianity is freedom! Freedom scares us. There is no control in freedom. There is only trust. We cannot earn our righteousness in this system, we can only trust in the hope of righteousness that comes through faith in Jesus. As Christians, we know that this righteousness came at great cost—the death of Jesus for *our* brokenness. We are no longer obligated to earn our acceptance; instead we live freely in relationship with God. Stand firm then, Christian, in the freedom Christ gave you.

Ecclesiastes 9:11-18; Psalm 72; Matthew 16:1-12

Thursday, June 12

Matthew 16:13-20 *He said to them, “Who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”* (vv.15-16)

If Christianity is freedom, what is required of us? Yesterday we saw that it is not our good works (our righteousness) but faith in Jesus Christ. After spending more than two years with the disciples healing the sick, casting out demons, and teaching about the kingdom of God, Jesus asks his disciples this critical question: “Who do you say that I am?” This is *the question*—the only one that matters. And Peter’s answer is *the answer*. “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” Jesus, the Messiah, came to make all things right, to bring salvation to the people, to change everything. Salvation cannot be earned, or bought, or found. It can only be received through this Messiah.

Years ago, Jesus asked me this same question, “Kim, who do *you* say that I am?” Having tried to accrue my own good deeds and finding that to be fruitless, I finally answered, “You are the Savior... *my* Savior.” That answer changed my life forever. How do you answer this question? Will you let Jesus ask you today?

Ecclesiastes 11:1-8; Psalms 70, 71; Galatians 5:16-24

Friday, June 13

Matthew 16:21-28 *Then Jesus told his disciples, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.”* (vv.24-25)

You said yes to Jesus; now what? How does believing in Jesus change everything? Isn’t it just an intellectual decision? Yes, and no. True belief is more than acknowledging a truth with our intellect; it is putting our entire trust in the truth of that statement. I can believe that a dining room chair will hold my weight, but is it *really* faith if I never sit in the chair?

When I acknowledged Jesus as my Savior, everything had to change. Believing in Jesus is sort of like getting married. In saying yes to Jesus, I said no to everything else. I turned over to Jesus every dream, every fear, and every desire of my life. I thought I would become a doctor. Instead, I am a campus minister. I moved from the suburbs to the inner city. Essentially, I lost my life. Not every believer is called to make these same choices. But everyone is called to lose your life, trusting that in losing your life, you find *true life*. Will you lose your life to save it?

Ecclesiastes 11:9—12:14; Psalm 69; Galatians 5:25—6:10

Saturday, June 14

Matthew 17:1-13 *And he [Jesus] was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white.* (v.2)

For those who trust in Jesus, there awaits the revelation of the full glory of God. In the Old Testament, it was feared that those who saw God’s full glory would die. In their sinfulness, their physical bodies would not be able to handle God’s glory and they would be overtaken by death.

But, for us who trust in Jesus, our sinfulness is no longer a barrier between God and us. Some day, we will see, with our own eyes, the full glory of God and it will be awesome! Imagine being enveloped in pure light, pure good, and pure mercy! I have experienced glimpses of this in moments of worship, where I taste the glory of God; but I cannot wait for that future day when I will know it in fullness. Until that moment, we pray, “Come, Lord Jesus, and show us your glory!”

Numbers 3:1-13; Psalms 75, 76; Galatians 6:11-18

by Kim Koi

Volume XIV

June 15-21, 2014

Number 24

Sunday, June 15

Numbers 6:22-27 *“Whenever Aaron and his sons bless the people of Israel in my name, I myself will bless them.”* (v.27 NLT)

What a wonderful promise! Being blessed by God means we are highly favored by Him. We are under His protection and provision. He truly has the power to bless us because all things are in His hands. His blessings aren’t fickle, no matter how it looks to me in the ebb and flow of my life. For me, the greatest blessing to my life, after salvation, is His promise that He will be with me always. The consciousness of His presence changes my perspective on everything.

“O nations of the world recognize the LORD; recognize the LORD is glorious and strong” (Psalm 96:7).

Psalms 93, 96; Acts 13:1-12; Luke 12:41-48

Monday, June 16

Romans 1:1-15 *Let me say first that I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith in him is being talked about all over the world.* (v.8)

I am writing this a few after the bombings that took place at the Boston marathon. In our culture rather than being known for our faith we are more often known for our violence and sinful behavior. Jesus calls us to be a blessing, so our task is to focus on him and lift up his righteous name to bring help and healing to all involved. As I seek him, his thoughts are quietly and consistently mixing with mine. What does my faith in Jesus cause me to believe? I believe that he can use trials to draw us closer to him. I believe that he can work all things for our good.

“Show us your mighty power. Come to rescue us!” (Psalm 80:2b).
Numbers 9:15-23, 10:29-36; Psalm 80; Matthew 17:14-21

Tuesday, June 17

Number 11:1-23 *And the people of Israel also began to complain. “Oh, for some meat!” they exclaimed.* (v.4b)

Oh, oh! I could have a master’s degree in complaining. I have hours of practice logged in. The Romans 1 reading states that because they would not worship or thank God, “They began to think up foolish ideas about what God was like.” He’s stingy. He doesn’t give me what I need. He gave me this wretched situation.

So do I choose to put away my foolish ideas about God and embrace who he really is—the God of infinite mercy and kindness with blessings to 1000 generations? Oh, yes, I want to be counted among the faithful followers of the Most High God.

“Yet he was merciful and forgave their sins and did not destroy them all” (Psalm 78:38).

Psalm 78:1-39; Romans 1:16-25; Matthew 17:22-27

Wednesday, June 18

Roman 1:28—2:11 *Don’t you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can’t you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin?* (v.4)

As reported in the Numbers text, the Israelites gathered the quail that the Lord their God provided. Instead of this abundant blessing causing them to attach more securely with God, they bonded with the food (*Jesus in Mind*, J. Wilder). God is bonded securely with me but I also need to be bonded securely with Him (not what He can provide). The way I bonded (or didn’t) with my parents sets the stage for the manner in which I bond with God. I needed much healing in my relationship with my parents before I could understand and bond with God. In these recent years I am learning to build a relationship with God that requires my deep experiential understanding of His amazing, unlimited, unconditional love for me.

“LORD, sustain me as you promised that I may live! Do not let my hope be crushed. Sustain me and I will be rescued; that I will meditate continually on your decrees” (Psalm 119:116-117).

Numbers 11:24-35; Psalm 119:97-120; Matthew 18:1-9

Thursday, June 19

Numbers 12:1-16 *So Moses cried out to the LORD, “O God, I beg you, please heal her!”* (v.13)

Has anyone ever sinned against you? It is often difficult for me even to move toward forgiveness, let alone to cry out for the offending person’s healing. The Word says, “Moses was more humble than any other person on the earth.” It is certainly human to sin against one another but it takes God’s grace to forgive and pray for that offending person’s healing.

Lord Jesus, you are full of mercy toward me. Give me a humble heart like yours to have mercy on all who sin against me and all for your glory and your fame. Amen.

Psalm 83; Romans 2:12-24; Matthew 18:10-20

Friday, June 20

Numbers 13:1-3, 21-30 *“Let’s go at once to take the land,” he said. “We can certainly conquer it!”* (v.30b)

The Lord God had already promised the Israelites the rich land as their inheritance, but many of them chose instead to look at the opposition to possessing that promise. The Lord has promised me the rich land of peace and joy when I focus on Him and His kingdom, but recently the Holy Spirit helped me notice that I spend more time focusing on what I don’t have than what I do have. As I repent of this sin, He creates in me a thankful heart for all He has done. He gives me the gift of salvation and the grace to communicate with Him intimately and receive guidance for my life.

Lord Jesus, thank you for the rich land of your kingdom that you have brought me into. Please give me the desire of my heart—you! Amen.

Psalm 88; Romans 2:25—3:8; Matthew 18:21-35

Saturday, June 21

Psalm 90 *Teach us to realize the brevity of life, so that we may grow in wisdom. Satisfy us each morning with your unfailing love, so we may sing for joy to the end of our lives.* (vv.12, 14)

There have been entire seasons of my life when I have been unaware of God’s unfailing love. In this season of my life, 65 to the end, I long to live in constant awareness of His love. I now know that joy can be found and that joy comes from experiencing that God and others are glad to

be with me. When I receive this joy I can pass it on to others. When we are filled with joy we can mature and be all that God has planned for us to be (*Joy Starts Here*, E. James Wilder). The fruit of the Spirit can flow through my life even in the most challenging circumstances.

Lord Jesus, I sing for joy because of your great love for me. Thank you for dying for me and bringing me into your kingdom to live with you forever. I surrender my life to your plans and purposes. Let it be so.

Numbers 13:31—14:25; Psalms 87; Romans 3:9-20; Matthew 19:1-12

by Charlene Laird

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Sunday, June 22

Psalm 66 *He would not have listened if I had not confessed my sins.* (v.18 NASV)

We can negotiate with ourselves, minimize and rationalize our transgressions against the Lord. But the all-knowing Lord wants truth, purity of heart, and wholeness for the believer.

As a young man I ran with a group of individuals that were of a rebellious tendency, but on Sundays I would slide into the back row at church and take in the sermon and sing a few hymns. The result of my hypocritical weekly visit to church was temporarily comforting, yet fruitless. My prayers were shallow and yielded little. One Sunday Jesus drew me toward himself and a deeper life in him. I turned away from the rebellion and toward him. Once my relationship with Christ was renewed, my prayers were filled with life again.

As prophet Jeremiah in verse 29:12 proclaimed, “Then you will call upon me, and come and pray to me and I will listen to you.” When we come before Jesus, yielded to the cross, He reaches out as our savior.

Numbers 14:26-45; Psalm 67; Acts 15:1-12; Luke 12:49-56

Monday, June 23

Romans 3:21-31 *Then what can we boast about doing to earn our salvation? Nothing at all. Why? Because our acquittal is not based on our good deeds; it is based on what Christ has done and our faith in him.* (v.27 LBT)

If I had anything to praise the Lord for most, it would be my understanding that the merits of my efforts and good deeds are not the deciding factor for my eternal relationship with Christ. His love and

substitution for me by his willful death on the cross saved me from my dilemma.

It is very interesting that in various Sunday services, Bible studies, and spiritually based meetings, my fellow members and I have concurred that it could be minutes or a few hours after we have experienced a spiritual high that we have quickly descended down the mountain with bad attitudes, relational conflict, or out-right sin. Like the Greek mythological figure Sisyphus the Greek, we are daily pushing the boulder of deeds and good works up the mountain only to see the boulder roll back down to the base of the mountain. Salvation by our works is an uphill battle that cannot be won. When we live in gratitude toward Christ and acknowledge him as our savior and sole deliverer we realize our freedom from works and deeds.

Numbers 16:1-19; Psalm 89:1-18; Matthew 19:13-22

Tuesday, June 24

Psalm 100 *For the LORD is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting. And His faithfulness to all generations.* (v.5 NASV)

The Friday at 4:50 p.m. certified letter, the Monday at 7:30 a.m. urgent voice mail, the urgent “We need to meet today” comment from a boss or client. There have been many personal experiences where I commented in frustration to the Lord, “Are you kidding me?” Many of those days where I imagined it could not get any worse, it did. Many of those days I was the author of the circumstance. The Lord, in His providence, time and time again would redeem the problem.

I am always reminded of this at our church’s healing service with the minister’s salutation, “The Lord is good!” and the congregation’s answer, “All the time!” I agree—the Lord is good! Now, many times when trouble comes, instead of questioning the Lord, I stop gather my thoughts, pray, and almost smile knowing the Lord is good and in charge.

Numbers 16:20-35; Psalms 97, 99; Romans 4:1-12; Matthew 19:23-30

Wednesday, June 25

Numbers 16:36-50 *And the Lord said to Moses, Tell Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest to pull those censors from the fire; So Eleazar the priest took the 250 bronze censors and beat them out into a sheet of metal to cover the alter to be a reminder to the people of Israel.* (vv.36, 39 The Way)

God was very specific with Moses of His intentions for this melted bronze and its symbolic meaning for the Israelites. I am so very grateful for the thousands of paintings, sculptures, carvings, etchings, and stained glass windows that have been created through such passionate inspiration—from Leonardo da Vince to Michelangelo to local artists. I am in awe every

worship service at my own church when I gaze at the colored stories of Christ's life that are depicted in the beautiful windows.

I was at the Albin Polasek Museum recently where six fantastic bronze medallions were on display. They were strategically layered on a dark green wall of ivy depicting the Stations of the Cross. Such emblematic works of art signify Christ's crucifixion and through their own immortality will inspire future generations who are blessed to view them. Thank You, Lord!

Psalms 101, 109; Romans 4:13-25; Matthew 20:1-16

Thursday, June 26

Psalms 105:1-22 *Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always.* (v.4 NIV)

Once we truly understand why God uses the analogy of the shepherd and his sheep, we comprehend our true weakness without Him. The times that I seek the Lord first, before my husband, my girlfriends, my parents or even my kids, I am at a much better place to receive the right course for His will. We are simply *not* equipped to deal with life in our own strength, because we have none.

Christ wants us to come to the knowledge of his truth and all that he has to offer, which begins by asking. When we approach him humbly, and preferably on our knees, and ask for his strength he will provide every single time!

Numbers 17:1-11; Romans 5:1-11; Matthew 20:17-28

Friday, June 27

Numbers 20:1-13 *So Moses did as instructed. He took the rod from the place where it was kept before the Lord.* (v.9 The Way)

God will use His own way of connecting with us; the key is to have the established relationship and trust in His ways enough to listen and obey. One afternoon I was driving in my neighborhood and saw an elderly woman walking on the side of the road. I felt pressed to turn around and I ask her if she would like a ride. When I did, she started crying and said she could not find her home and was disoriented. We found her home after some time and she knew it was the Lord's doing. Another time, my sons and I were in a parking lot getting in our car when we saw three boys sitting on the side of the road near the bus stop. The last city bus had left, and they had no way of getting home. They had phoned their grandmother, but she had no way of getting them. When I called her to say that we could help, she began to cry and said she had been praying for help. In both the instances the Lord wanted the ladies to know He was there and all would be well. They

probably will not remember me, but they will remember God’s grace and perfect timing, as will I. What I remember most though, is to act when God calls on me and see the blessing as he acts in my life and in others.

Psalm 102; Romans 5:12-21; Matthew 20:29-34

Saturday, June 28

Romans 6:1-11 *For if we have been buried with Him through baptism unto death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the father, so we too might walk in newness of life.* (v.4 NASV)

As a businessperson, I like to get to the bottom line and move forward with swift action. Sometimes the bulldozer with jet engines approach can leave the analytical or more thoughtful team members feeling very frustrated.

I have at times brought the same getting to the bottom line and take immediate action approach to my family life as well. What I have learned in family and business life is to die to self. Slow down, pray, and think about others and their needs first. Your wife, children, and others deserve being able to voice their thoughts with the honor of being heard. Once I grasp dying to self, I understand that the Lord wants my actions to radiate his love toward my family, friends, and business associates.

The prayers and petitions to walk in Christ bring love, humility, honor toward others, and connection where there was little or none before. Life actually flows out of dying to self; that is where the newness of life works best.

Numbers 20:14-29; Psalms 107:33-43, 108; Matthew 21:1-11

by Charlie and Lisa Clayton

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June 29-July 5, 2014

Number 26

Sunday, June 29

Psalm 118 *Give thanks to the LORD for He is good; for His lovingkindness is everlasting.* (v.1 NASB)

Every time I open my Bible to this psalm I get excited. There is a handwritten note in there from my Nana. Almost twenty years ago, I was living in Charleston, South Carolina and she and my dad came down to visit. During the visit, I had to work one day and Nana stayed home to rest. She opened my Bible, which was on the coffee table in our tiny apartment, and wrote this: “My dear, this is my favorite psalm. Took the dog for a walk on this beautiful rainy morning.”

Nana is 101 now and has dementia and a hearing problem. On her good days she still reads her Bible and prays with her caregivers. Someone who didn't know Nana, but knew of her, asked if she had ever prayed the Prayer of Salvation. I responded that she knew the Lord and the Lord knows her.

I give thanks to the Lord for He is good. He blessed my life with a grandmother like Nana and for the memories I will have of her love for the Lord.

Numbers 21:4-9, 21-35; Acts 17:12-34; Luke 13:10-17

Monday, June 30

Psalm 106:1-18 *Remember me, O LORD, in Your favor toward Your people; visit me with Your salvation that I may see the prosperity of Your chosen ones, that I may rejoice in the gladness of Your nation, that I may glory with Your inheritance.* (vv.4-5)

My friend Kim (not her real name), a 44-year-old wife and mother of 3, was afflicted with cancer in her sinuses. After an arduous battle, the cancer was still winning. This is a statement from her family about her receiving hospice care—the fight was ending. This was her heart:

“We are still standing and believing in total healing. Kim, like Apostle Paul, knows that to be with the Lord is wonderful, but to be here for her family and those out there who are God’s assignments for her, is also good. Until the Lord says so, we are standing with her in hope and continuing to pray for healing. Nothing is impossible with God! The battle rages but its God’s! We trust Kim to Him. Kim is doing her part and we know that God will do his part. Wherever He leads, we will follow.”

I spent time with Kim at the end. She was still focusing on those who God had put around her, not her situation. But when the time came, I imagined her praying these words from Psalm 106:4-5.

Numbers 22:1-21; Romans 6:12-23; Matthew 21:12-22

Tuesday, July 1

Psalm 121 *The LORD will guard your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forever.* (v.8)

It’s nearing graduation season as I write this and I am thinking about students and parents. Graduation is a bittersweet time, full of excitement and anxiety, endings and beginnings, roots and wings. This psalm has words that everyone should learn and is especially comforting to parents and students. As a former student minister, I want students to have these words engraved on their hearts:

My help, when I am troubled, comes from the Lord, who created this earth.

God watches over us and doesn't sleep or take a break.

God protects us.

As a mother, I want parents who are about to send their precious children off to college or the military to stand on the words of Psalm 121:8 (see above), to believe in them, meditate on them, find strength and peace in them, and pray them over their children.

Numbers 22:21-38; Psalms 120, 122, 123; Romans 7:1-12; Matthew 21:23-32

Wednesday, July 2

Numbers 22:41—23:12 *He answered, "Must I not be careful to speak what the Lord puts in my mouth?"* (v.12)

As a student minister, years ago I sought career advice from older believer in the same field who I considered to be very wise. Unfortunately, I left our meeting feeling like he had given me a direction for my career that fit into his plans for his ministry, not mine or God's. I had scheduled the meeting in advance. This wasn't an impromptu conversation so he had time to prepare if he wanted to. I didn't feel like he prepared himself for the meeting or that his direction was coming from the Lord. I felt like they were his own words used to advance his own plan.

It made me realize that while we are all human, we have to be careful as we guide people and offer advice. I learned then to prepare my heart before the Lord and humbly offer myself as a vessel. I ask Him to speak through me using only His words, not mine, in those situations.

Psalm 119:145-176; Romans 7:13-25; Matthew 21:33-46

Thursday, July 3

Romans 8:1-11 *To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.* (v.6)

"I got my mind set on you. I got my mind set on you," sings George Harrison in a song from his post-Beatles career. It's one of those songs that echo in your brain long after you've heard it. It reminds me that daily I have a choice on where to set my mind.

I can set it on my problems, meeting my needs, and pleasing myself with the wants of this world. I may get a few things that I want, but will probably still feel empty and unsettled inside. Not to mention, it's not going to get me anywhere I want to be after I die.

Or, I can set my mind on the Lord and feel full of life and peace because the Holy Spirit fills me up. I will be pleasing the Lord and He will

guide me in dealing with my problems. Fixing my mind on the Lord also brings me eternal life, which is *always* better.

I got my mind set on you Lord; I got my mind set on you.

Numbers 23:11-26; Psalms 131, 132, 133; Matthew 22:1-14

Friday, July 4

Romans 8:12-17 *God's spirit beckons. There are things to do and places to go!* (v.14 The Message)

Dr. Seuss has a book called, *Oh, The Places You'll Go*. It's often given as a graduation gift. It encourages people to be brave and step out in to the world.

There will be challenges: "I'm sorry to say so but, sadly, it's true that Bang-ups and Hang-ups can happen to you." But in the end it will all be ok: "You're off to Great Places! Today is your day! Your mountain is waiting, so... get on your way!"

This Scripture passage talks about giving up your old life and getting on with your new Christ- centered life. It is exhilarating, an adventure! There will be difficult times when you just want to give up but also mind blowing excitement that you could never imagine. God has a plan for each of us: with people to meet, places to go, things to do, and ways to glorify Him. We just have to ask Him to show us. With no disrespect to Dr. Seuss, I will take the Lord's version of *Oh, the Places You'll Go* that includes the Holy Spirit guiding me.

Numbers 24:1-13; Psalms 140, 142; Matthew 22:15-22

Saturday, July 5

Matthew 22:23-40 *Jesus said, "Love the Lord with all your passion and prayer and intelligence"* (v.37 The Message)

Most versions of the Scripture say, "Love the Lord with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind." The Message version offers a new dimension to ponder.

Love the Lord with all your passion: Do I love the Lord as much as I love my children or my husband? Do I love the Lord as much as the hobbies that I am so crazy about? If I do love the Lord with that much passion, does it show in my actions or how I spend my time?

Love the Lord with all your prayers: Do I include praise and adoration of the Lord in my prayers? Do I share my life in my prayers and allow the Lord to speak into it? I am supposed to love my neighbor. Do my prayers reflect a love of others?

Love the Lord with all your intelligence: Do I use my intelligence to glorify God? In my work? My words? My beliefs? Do I ask the Lord for wisdom?

Lord, thank You for the passion, prayer life, and intelligence You have given me. Show me any area where I need to love You more.

Numbers 24:12-25; Psalms 137, 144; Romans 8:18-25

by Mara McClain

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