

St. Francis in-the-Field Episcopal Church

Good News Daily

Volume X

July 25-31, 2010

Number 30

Sunday, July 25

Joshua 24:1-15 *“But they cried to the Lord for help, and he put darkness between you and the Egyptians; he brought the sea over them and covered them. You saw with your own eyes what I did to the Egyptians. Then you lived in the desert for a long time.”* (v.7 NIV)

Joshua is getting ready to die and is reminding the tribes of Israel about their heritage with God and His mighty deliverances along the way—whether it was the Red Sea, the battles God help them win, or sustaining them all the years in the desert.

Each of us has our own personal heritage with God as well—how He has intervened, delivered, blessed, challenged, and molded us throughout our lives—both in the valleys and on the mountain tops. Like the Israelites, we have seen what He has done with our own eyes—in our lives and with those we love. May we with gratitude take a moment to look back and remember what He has already done. And, knowing that God is and has always been faithful, may we not lose hope in the midst of our current difficulties. I am challenged and encouraged by Hebrews 10:23 *“Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promises is faithful.”*

Psalms 24, 29; Acts 28:23-31; Mark 2:23-28

Monday, July 26

Joshua 24:16-33 *Then Joshua said, “You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen to serve the Lord.”* (v.22)

Joshua challenged the people to think carefully about who they chose to serve because God is a holy and jealous God. The Israelites responded strongly that they would serve God. Joshua’s statement about being witnesses against themselves is powerful and one that invites us to reflect upon what kind of witness our lives are for the Living God. Are people around us seeing a life being transformed—one that is “being conformed into the likeness of His Son” (Romans 8:29)? Or does our life mirror those who are influenced and conformed by the definition of success of this world? What is the clear difference between how we live our lives and those who do not know the Lord? There’s the challenging question that asks if we were on trial for our faith, would there be enough evidence to prove we were Christian? My prayer is that our lives would reflect the clear evidence of our eternal hope with a personal Savior so that others would be compelled to know him more.

Psalms 56, 57, 58; Romans 16:1-16; Matthew 27:24-31

Tuesday, July 27

Psalms 62 *Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken. My salvation and my honor depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge. Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.* (vv.5-8)

These verses are yet another beautiful assurance that God is our rest, our rock, our salvation, and our fortress. We are encouraged to hope in Him, trust in Him, and pour our hearts to Him. On the days when my mind is anxious and my heart is heavy, I need to make sure that I am reading, speaking, and standing firm on His assuring words. On the wall behind my computer, I have posted Scripture verses to remind and encourage me throughout my day. Even as Christians, some days can be hard for us just to put one foot in front of the other—it seems like some days I skip and some days I slog through life. My “feelings” can sometimes overwhelm my “knowledge” of God, and I need to “read, mark and inwardly digest” His promises, particularly on the darker heart-heavy days. I am deeply thankful that He is my rock, my hope, and my refuge and that He invites us to pour our hearts out to Him.

Judges 2:1-5, 11-23; Psalms 61; Romans 16:17-27; Matthew 27:32-44

Wednesday, July 28

Acts 1:1-14 *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”* (v.8)

These were Jesus’ last words before he was taken up to heaven after appearing to the apostles. His words encouraged them that power would come with the Holy Spirit and he challenged them (and us) that they would be his witnesses. Recently I was in a jury selection process and, because the trial was for a crime committed several years ago, the defense attorney introduced the fact (thus planting the seed of doubt) that with the passage of time, the witnesses’ memory might be not as sharp as they remembered the crime details. It is true that the level of detail we remember about yesterday is different than what we might remember from years ago. If our witness is to be strong and convincing to others, it must be with power and insight from the Holy Spirit and with knowledge that is as current and fresh as our last encounter with the Lord this morning. What is Jesus doing in your life this very day that you, like the apostles, can be his witness?

Judges 3:12-30; Psalms 72; Matthew 27:45-54

Thursday, July 29

Judges 4:4-23 *Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was leading Israel at that time.* (v.4)

Based on the low level of esteem and position women held in the Bible, this is an amazing story of a woman who was the leader of Israel and led them into battle. The verse says she was married and I can image that perhaps there were also children so this was one busy lady! As a working woman my entire adult life and raising two children, I have felt the criticism of Christians who felt I should stay at home. But I have always believed that God’s purpose is for each of us individually and our calling may be different from others. He created us with unique skills and abilities and our holy response is to seek His face and to be whatever He has called us to be—not what others say we should be doing. I am sure there were some who doubted Deborah’s calling to lead Israel; but she stepped into her role courageously and the Lord brought her success! Let us seek God for His unique plan for our lives, trust Him to show us, and then move forward with confidence.

Psalms 70, 71; Acts 1:15-26; Matthew 27:55-66

Friday, July 30

Matthew 28:1-10 *So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”* (vv. 8, 10)

In today’s complete reading in Matthew, verses 1-10, the word “afraid” is included four times: “The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men” (v.4), “The angel said to the women, ‘Do not be afraid’” (v.5), and the two references above in verses 8 and 10. Webster defines the word “afraid” as hesitant, anxious, apprehensive, disturbed, frightened, fearful, nervous, and uneasy.

How many of these might describe your walk with the Lord? It is amazing that in this Resurrection story, the unbelieving guards and the believing women both felt deeply afraid and the words that are emphasized both by the angel and Jesus himself are “Do not be afraid.” He knows us—how afraid we can be of today’s challenges and tomorrows unknowns—but He would say to each of us: “Do not be afraid for I love you,” and like he said to the women, “Go forth and you will see me.”

Judges 5:1-18; Psalms 69; Acts 2:1-21

Saturday, July 31

Acts 2:22-36 *This man was handed over to you by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge.* (v.23a)

Peter on the day of Pentecost, powerfully addresses the crowd stating God’s purpose and foreknowledge and that it was no accident that Jesus was crucified. God knew everything that would happen to Jesus according to His ultimate purpose. We can be encouraged to know there is a plan and purpose for each of our lives as well. Romans 8:28 has always been a favorite verse of mine: “And we know that in all things God works for the

good of those who love him who have been called according to his purpose.” But recently He has revealed the “why” in verse 29: “For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.” The difficult times work together for good to help me become more like Jesus. God foreknew every detail of Jesus’ life and He foreknew every detail about our lives. Psalm 139:10 says, “All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.” May we trust in His perfect plan for us and, daily, may we become more conformed to the likeness of Christ.

Judges 5:19-31; Psalms 75, 76; Matthew 28:11-20

by Mary Tomlinson

Used with permission from the BIBLE READING FELLOWSHIP

PO Box 380, Winter Park, FL 32790

www.biblereading.org