



ST. TIMOTHY'S TIMES

DAILY DEVOTIONAL READING

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PO Box 380 Winter Park, Florida 32790

Prayer for St. Timothy's

*Most loving God, whose wisdom
has guided St. Timothy's
Anglican Church
since its beginning,
stir up your Spirit in our midst
and lead us forward in the work
we are called to do.*

*Enable this congregation to
continue in service to you and
in ministry within and
beyond our walls.*

*Cleanse us of petty rivalries,
sensitivities, vanities,
discourtesies – everything
which distracts us, thus freeing
us to rejoice in the good
performed by others.*

*Grant that we may be united in
a common purpose and share in
a single spirit...
your Spirit, Lord.*

*Bless our work together that we
may faithfully envision what you
are calling us to be and to do,
and bless our efforts to be
faithful to your calling.*

*Grant that your attractive
goodness may be seen in all our
faces, your warm accents of
love heard in all our words, and
in our lives may we show
something of you to
all the world.*

*Through Jesus Christ our Lord,
AMEN.*

Friday, March 1

Birthdays:

Prayers for: Guy & Sonji Williams; Danny & Debbie Winkler, Kaylyn, Jennifer, Kaydence; Anita Wolfe

Mark 4:35-41 He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" (v.40)

One of the most awe-inspiring, mind-boggling verses in the whole Bible for me is the first verse of Mark: "The beginning of the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." We know at the very beginning who Jesus is—the Messiah, the Anointed One. The disciples, however, didn't know. They kept on asking: "Who is this?" In today's passage, they are anxious and fearful. The tiny mustard seed of faith hasn't grown much yet. What about you and me here and now? Do we recognize Jesus when he comes to us in his Scriptures, his Church, his Sacraments, and his people? The reality is that he is here with us whether we recognize him or not, just as he was with his first disciples. We must watch for glimpses of his loving presence at all times, in all places, and in all people.

Genesis 43:1-15; Psalm 69; 1 Corinthians 7:1-9

Saturday, March 2

Birthdays: Elizabeth Salazar

Prayers for: John & Kathryn Zacharias, Matthew; John & Neale Ziebell; Ana Acosta; Edmundo & Carmelina Alvarez

Mark 5:1-20 They came to Jesus and saw the demoniac sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the legion; and they were afraid. (v.15)

When the Gerasenes heard that Jesus had caused the death of 2,000 pigs—their livelihood—they begged him to move on. They ignored completely the incredible miracle Jesus had performed for the demoniac, whom they could now see sitting near Jesus clothed and in his right mind. Our Gospel story today raises some very important questions for us. Do we believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, even when it costs us something? We have many ways of knowing that he is all that eyewitnesses claimed him to be. We have his Scriptures, the story of his love for us all. We have the transformed lives of believers, beginning with eleven fearful disciples who deserted him at the cross but who later became saints. We have our own personal experience of the joy that glimpses of his love and presence have given us. Let us pray that the Father will transform us all into what He would have us be and that He will "plant in every heart the love of him who is the Savior of the world, our Lord Jesus Christ" (BCP, page 213).

Genesis 43:16-34; Psalms 75, 76; 1 Corinthians 7:10-24

Sunday, March 3

Birthdays: David Flower

Prayers for: Pat Alvis; Alice Amos Nwanguma; Diamond & Rowland Amos Nwanguma, Clinton, Brandon; Stella Amos Nwankwo

Genesis 44:1-17 "What can we say to my lord?" Judah replied. "What can we say? How can we prove our innocence? God has uncovered your servants' guilt." (v.16 NIV)

We are into the third week of Lent. Have you kept your Lenten pledge to give up something? Have you felt tested, suddenly craving whatever it was you decided you didn't need in your life for 40 days? Lent is more than just giving up chocolate or TV. Giving up something reminds us that we humans are frail and often fail. We need the Lord's strength and mercy to make changes in our habits and attitudes. Just as Joseph tested his brothers' integrity, God can allow trials in our lives in order to test the strength of our faith. We that confess Jesus as our Lord, however, if we ask for mercy when we fail, He grades on a curve—the curve of Jesus' nail-scarred palms reaching out to help us try again.

Psalms 93, 96; Romans 8:1-10; John 5:25-29

Monday, March 4

Birthdays: Angilina Trevino

Prayers for: Shane & Jessica Anderson, Mical, Isaac, Daniell; Suzanne Arnold, Connor; Gwen Arora; Cody & Rachel Ault, Alex, Evelyn, Charlotte, Margaret

Psalm 80 Restore us, O God; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved. (v.3)

This phrase is repeated three times throughout this psalm. When things come in threes in Scripture, it is as if typing in a bold font. Pay attention, this is important. But it seems strange that David would say this when, in Old Testament times, people thought seeing God's face meant death. However, when Moses' face glowed after communing with God, it was so brightly reflected in his skin he had to wear a veil. Why did he not die? Because Moses was faithful, thus he could come before God. God wants the same for all His children. The Aaronic blessing states: "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace" (Numbers 6:23-26). To commune with God requires one thing—sinlessness. And Jesus provides that if we confess. So, in essence, the psalmist is asking God to forgive our sins so we can come into His presence. Only Jesus can restore us to a right relationship. And that is what this season is all about, isn't it?

Genesis 44:18-34; 1 Corinthians 7:25-31; Mark 5:21-43

Tuesday, March 5

Birthdays: Clinton Amos Nwanguma, Ella Benson

Prayers for: Fehintolu & Kehinde Olasewo Babayemi, Bukunmi, Folawemi; Wayne Ballentine; Maria Del Carmen Bastard; Kyla Bayang, Vicki

1 Corinthians 7:32-40 I would like you to be free from concern. (v.32a)

To many people, Chapter 7 may appear antiquated and not relevant today. Marriage is an option now. Couples live together, buy houses together, and have kids together without ever visiting the courthouse. But we Christians are not to follow the standards of the world. And that is the point Paul is trying to make. If you scan your eyes up to verse 17, it states, "Nevertheless, each person should live as a believer in whatever situation the Lord has assigned to them, just as God has called them." Wherever God has you at the moment, be it single, married, or widowed, He has a purpose for your life. Each of us must seek first His righteousness. Each of us must strive to consider Him first and foremost in our thoughts and actions. Do others see you as serving Him first? Do you see yourself doing that? If not, then spend some time asking the Lord to give you the strength and faith to change—not your circumstance, but your attitude toward it.

Genesis 45:1-15; Psalm 78:1-39; Mark 6:1-13

Wednesday, March 6

Birthdays:

Prayers for: Steve & Nanette Benoit; Preston & Carolyn Benson, Ella; Sue Benson; Ken & Patti Bill; Anne Birkhead; Ed & Zonia Bock; Ruby Bosh, JB

Mark 6:13-29 ...Herod feared John and protected him, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man. When Herod heard John, he was greatly puzzled; yet he liked to listen to him. (v.20)

Oh, how sin can entangle us! Herod was definitely caught in a trap, and like a fly trying to struggle free from a spider's web, he became more and more bound by it. Non-Christians are just like him. There is something attractive about us Christians. We are more kindhearted, forgiving, and seem to possess a wisdom that they do not have. But they still struggle, unable to free themselves from the snares of this world. If we are honest, so do we. That is why it is important to confess our sins to God and to the person we have offended before things get out of hand. Otherwise, we spin our own trap and the longer we let the sin stick to us, the harder it will be to break free. Confession takes strength of character, and the Holy Spirit can assist us in that effort. No matter the consequences of our actions, God's mercy and grace will reign.

Genesis 45:16-28; Psalm 119:97-120; 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Thursday, March 7

Birthdays: Jonah Gerber

Prayers for: Jim & Dcn. Kathy Boggs, Chris; Bonnie Boyce; Carolyn Boyd; Frank Boyd; Nettie Briggs, Bob & Diann Brooke; Bruce Brough

Psalm 42 Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. (v.5)

Whoever said life as a Christian would be "blessed" by the world's definition had it wrong. In Hebrew, blessed (baruch) doesn't mean gifted with no worries, or endowed with riches and health. It means to be content in the presence of God. No guilt, no shame, no anger or hurt. Whenever I feel down or not quite right in my attitude, I turn to Scripture. I play praise music and sing. I recall the blessings God has bestowed on me and the times when I felt Him move in my life. Within minutes, my attitude shifts from my problems to His gracious mercy. From my plight to His magnificence and power, infinite wisdom, and love for me. And yes, no matter what is happening, I begin to feel baruch. And that always ends with me praising Him in humbled gratitude. Because deep down I know He remains faithful and His love for me is not dependent on my mood. How about you? Do you feel baruch?

Genesis 46:1-7, 28-34; Psalm 43; 1 Corinthians 9:1-15; Mark 6:30-46

Friday, March 8

Birthdays: Leocadio Gonzales

Prayers for: Erik & Mary Brown, Eli, Hayden, Jack; Kathy Buckner; David & Betsy Burns; Eric & Lauren Burns, Jameson, Jack; Nita Burrer, Jason

Genesis 47:1-26 ...and Joseph reduced the people to servitude, from one end of Egypt to the other. (v.21)

Did Joseph do his people and the rest of Egypt a favor? In his effort to save them from famine, he allowed the people to exchange their freedom for food. Thus began the 400 years of slavery from which God, through Moses, would eventually free them. The people asked for this to happen, thinking immediately of their needs and not the consequences of their actions. So, what lesson can we take from this? The adage, "be careful what you ask for" comes to mind. Instead of trusting God to provide, they turned to Joseph. 400 years later they would whine in the wilderness and ask Moses to provide. Then ask David as king to provide safety from their enemies. How often do we get to the end of our efforts and then seek God to provide during our "famine"? What if we trusted God to begin with and sought to do His will instead of our own, believing that He will not forsake us. And in times of plenty and safety, will we put Him back on the shelf until we need Him again? Will we ask Him to provide in the way we want or trust in His faithfulness?

Psalm 88; 1 Corinthians 9:16-27; Mark 6:47-56

Saturday, March 9

Birthdays: Kay Daigle, Tom Donley

Prayers for: Brian & Gail Cahill; Brian Callahan; Bob & Mary Capps; Giselle Castillo; Jorge & Elizabeth Cavazos; Emile & Lynn Champion

Mark 7:1-23 And he continued, "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions!" (v.9)

"But we have always done things that way in this church."

A visiting bishop spoke at our Diocesan Altar Guild meeting about the things we do that fall under the category of a small "c", i.e. custom. We should not put more emphasis on the way we do things rather than why we do things. That is why it is good to study the times in which our Lord walked on earth to understand those idioms, customs, and ways to which he referred. Otherwise, we might unknowingly misinterpret Scripture. Many Bibles have commentaries and guides in them for this purpose. Tradition and rituals are very important, especially in our church services. They tie us to the apostolic succession and early church beginnings. They give us checks and balances to avoid heresies. But we need to be wary. When how we do things become more important than Whom we are doing them for, things can get muddled and priorities confused. It did for the Pharisees. It can for us in our worship and Christian walk as well.

Genesis 47:27—48:7; Psalms 87, 90; 1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Sunday, March 10

Birthdays:

Prayers for: Shelia Chandler; Jeff & Connie Chestnut; Maureen Clairday; Byron & April Clark, Clinton; Scott & Ashley Clarke, Chase, Trevor, Weston

Genesis 48:8-22 "Bless the boys." (v.16b NRSV)

Isn't it great when children have grandparents who take an interest in them! Here is one of them blessing two of his grandsons.

This man, Jacob, hadn't always been a good role model. In his youth he'd been a deceiver and a manipulator, and had to leave his home under a cloud. But God had worked on him and had brought him to repentance. Now, conscious of all that God has done in his life, he wants God to bless his children likewise. It's interesting that he repeats what had happened to himself. He, the younger son, had gotten the blessing reserved for his older brother (27:22). Now he does the same thing for the younger lad here. Why? Did he have a younger brother's sympathy for another younger brother? Did he want to show that there is no special hierarchy with God? Was the Lord specifically guiding him to do this? We don't know.

In any case, he blessed them both. And those young lads must have remembered that special, encouraging day for the rest of their lives.

Can we do the same for our grandchildren, and for other little ones around us?

Psalms 66, 67; Romans 8:11-25; John 6:27-40

Monday, March 11

Birthdays: Dcn. Jorge Cavazos, Javier Mayor, Arianna Nunez

Prayers for: Keith & Lisa Coe; Chris & Candace Collings; Trey & Sherri Cowan, Cade; Gary & Delores Coward; Allan & Sue Cox; Caroline & Robert Craze

Genesis 49:1-28 Then Jacob called his sons, and said: "Gather around, that I may tell you what will happen to you in days to come." (v.1)

After having blessed two of his grandsons (Genesis 48:16), Jacob now gathers together his sons. Though this passage may seem dry, it reveals four marks of a good father. He is fair. There is no favoritism here. Not one of his sons is neglected. Each gets his attention.

He is frank. He doesn't turn a blind eye to their dark sides, but confronts them with significant events in their past, and talks to them man to man.

He is far sighted. From their past he infers their future. As the saying goes, the child is father to the man. My own father was like that. When I did wrong, he'd say to me, "You'll be sorry!" And he was right. It wasn't that he was cruel. Rather, he was wise and loving enough to tell me the truth. I wish I'd listened to him and taken the appropriate corrective steps more often. He is faithful. Though they were grown men, he still maintained a relationship with them, and exercised his duty of having some responsibility to them. Let's pray for more fathers like that!

Psalm 89:1-18; 1 Corinthians 10:14—11:1; Mark 7:24-37

Tuesday, March 12

Birthdays: Phil Geaslen, Francesca Mba-Jonas

Prayers for: Mike & Kay Daigle, Paul, Peter, Kaylee; Bill & Caroline Davies, Mary Karen Davis; Shane & Kristina Dear, Jacob, Lauren; Cynthia Dennis

Genesis 49:24—50:14 “Bury me with my ancestors—in the cave in the field of Ephron the Hittite,...in the land of Canaan.” (vv.29-30)

Sadly, some people make no provision for their deaths. They leave no will and make no plans for their funeral. And their successors are left with the burden of what to do with their mortal remains and their estate. Jacob didn't do that. After blessing his family, he planned for his burial. It was to be in his old homeland of Canaan. Guided by this, his son Joseph organized the days of mourning and the large funeral procession. Jacob was to rest in the land God had given him and in the presence of his ancestors. We too have a homeland. It isn't really the U.S.A. or Canada or anywhere else on earth. It's in heaven. To that place God will bring us to rest with our loved ones who have gone before us. There we shall wait for the day of Resurrection when we shall meet our Lord. And the sorrow and sighing of death will flee away! Lord, keep us mindful of our heavenly home!

Psalms 97, 99 100; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34; Mark 8:1-10

Wednesday, March 13

Birthdays: Bonnie Hartwell, Alan Rendl

Prayers for: Fisoje & Solape Delano; Deborah Denoble; Lisa DiBiasio, Emma; Mike & Carolyn Digel; Fr. Larry & Brenda DiSano; Tom Donley

Genesis 50:15-26 “Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today.” (v.20)

If bad things have happened to us—like abuse by our family when we were children at home, kicks in the face by our employer at work, or neglect by our friends—we normally feel like hitting back, or blaming our surroundings, or at the least feeling sorry for ourselves. But that wasn't how Joseph responded. Though he had been sold off as a slave by his brothers, had his reputation smeared by his employer's wife, and been forgotten by his companion in jail, he didn't seek revenge. Though his brothers thought they were banishing him from their life, he realized they were actually pushing him into their future. He saw God's hand in it all. Years later, the apostle Paul recognized the same fact when he wrote, “all things work together for good for those who love God” (Romans 8:28). With a grateful heart for what God had done, Joseph forgave these people who had hurt him, and he blessed them (v.21)! Can we do the same?

Psalms 101, 109; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; Mark 8:11-26

Thursday, March 14

Birthdays: Cynthia Dennis, Ethan Muskiet, Linden Settles

Prayers for: Mark & Jennifer Doremus; Pat Doremus; Richard & Betty Dove; Mike Downs; Kathleen Ellis; Artis & Ayele Enders-Preston, Ayele, Allahyea

Exodus 1:6-22 The Egyptians became ruthless in imposing tasks on the Israelites, and made their lives bitter. (vv.13-14)

After the death of Joseph, a new Pharaoh hammered the Israelites into slavery, and then tried to eradicate them by killing off their male babies. Today, physical slavery is still tolerated on some continents! Other forms of slavery are rampant in our own country. They aren't caused by chains of iron but by habits of the will: slavery to alcohol and nicotine and other drugs; bondage to sex and gambling and money and power; addiction to sports and fashion and public opinion. These control many people, and they exercise as much influence on them as Pharaoh did on the Israelites. I have a painting of a missionary handing over money to a leering slave dealer with a whip in his hand. Cowering down at the missionary's feet and kissing his robe is a man in shackles shortly to be released. Through the centuries the Blood of Jesus has released millions of individuals. It “breaks the power of canceled sin, and sets the prisoner free” (Charles Wesley). Does it need to be applied afresh to “slaves” in our own country?

Psalms 69; 1 Corinthians 12:12-26; Mark 8:27—9:1

Friday, March 15

Birthdays:

Prayers for: Grace England; Wade & Valerie Fennel; Kevin & Dena Fennell, Darcy, Kelsey, Rory, Danielle; Barry & Sharon Firestone, Silvia Flores

Exodus 2:1-22 She named him Moses, “because,” she said, “I drew him out of the water.” (v.10b)

Isn't it wonderful how our names can be significant? Here is a baby who is drawn out of the water, and who later draws his own people out of Egypt! His future was foretold in his past. He who had known the miraculous power of God in saving him as an infant later experienced the miraculous power of God in saving his whole nation. Drawing out was his theme. And it was given to him by God. Sometimes we need to go through an experience before we can help others in that same experience. Not only can we understand and sympathize with them, we can offer them hope that God can help them. What about yourself? Have you survived threatening “waters” of suffering, addiction, loneliness, poverty, or fear? If so, like Moses, can you help others to come out of their troubles too? Lord, thank You that today You still draw us out of “mighty waters” (Psalm 18:16), and set us on solid ground again!

Psalms 102; 1 Corinthians 12:27—13:3; Mark 9:2-13

Saturday, March 16

Birthdays: Sue Benson, Sherri Cowan, Bill Heeter

Prayers for: Linda & Pat Flavin, Erin, Kaitlyn; Benjamin & Tey Flores; David & Linda Flower; Joyce Fontaine; John & Cecelia Gabrielson; David Gandin

Exodus 2:23—3:15 “Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” (v.5)

In these days of cushioned pews and cozy hymns, I have to be careful when I go to church not to become too familiar with God. I’ve got to watch that I don’t treat Him as just a Chum, and think He should be delighted I dropped in. God is not a Big Buddy. He is a holy God. Before Him even the angels veil their faces. And He demands my respect. Therefore, I should shed my “shoes” of pride, selfishness, complacency, criticism (and whatever else they are made of) and come into His courts with reverence and fear. I must prepare myself, because He may want to speak to me as He did to Moses, and call me out to serve Him in some special way. I don’t know if I’m talking just to myself when I write this way. But I sense that some other people have the same thoughts. Holy Lord, draw us humbly and expectantly into Your courts.

Psalms 107:33-43, 108; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; Mark 9:14-29

Sunday, March 17

Birthdays: Nita Burrer, Ada Nwankwo

Prayers for: Fr. Oscar & Alejandra Gallego, Anthony, Santiago; Leobardo & Janeth Gallegos, L. Daniel, Jennifer; Manny Garcia; Phil & Susie Geaslen

Psalms 118 This is the day the LORD has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it. (v.24 NLT)

Have you ever met those Christians that are happy absolutely all the time? They used to annoy me to no end. Especially as a new Christian when my circumstances still totally controlled my feelings. I finally realized that I could keep my bad attitude, or I could discover their secret to being joyful. That is when I found the Scripture above. It began to sink in that I could choose to rejoice and be glad in each day. The choice was up to me. I began to pray this Scripture daily to remind myself to rejoice and be glad in each day. Do I still get a bad attitude sometimes because of my circumstances? Yes, I do. But then I ask the Lord to help me find something in the midst of the troubles to rejoice in. He always shows me something. Sometimes, it is as simple as a beautiful butterfly flying by my window. Today, I encourage you to join me in rejoicing and being glad in this day that the Lord has made.

Exodus 3:16—4:12; Romans 12:1-21; John 8:46-59

Monday, March 18

Birthdays:

Prayers for: Clay & Natasha Gardner; Brandon & Candy Geer, Cathy; Jim Geer; Nicholas & Hillary Gerber, Elijah, Adalee, Jonah, Noah, Eden

Mark 9:30-41 After they arrived at Capernaum and settled in a house, Jesus asked his disciples, “What were you discussing out on the road?”

But they didn’t answer, because they had been arguing about which of them was the greatest. (vv.33-34)

Do you find it humorous that the people in the Bible are so human? I mean these are the men who spent day in and day out with Jesus. The disciples! And what are they arguing about on the road? Who was the “greatest” out of all of them. And then they were too ashamed to tell Jesus what they had been discussing. I find great comfort in knowing that even the disciples weren’t perfect. It means that there is hope for me in my walk with the Lord. In the next Scripture verse, Jesus makes a teaching moment out of their human behavior. He calls the disciples over to him telling them that the whoever wants to be first must actually be last to serve everyone else. I don’t know about you, but it is reassuring to see that when my humanness rears its ugly head that Jesus is not surprised by my behavior. And in fact, if I listen to his voice, he will turn it into a teachable moment where I can grow in my faith.

Exodus 4:10-31; Psalm 31; 1 Corinthians 14:1-19

Tuesday, March 19

Birthdays:

Prayers for: Fr. Stan & Mary Gerber; Mar Giah; Nathaniel & Nicole Giles, Bailey, Gabriel; Juan & Alma Gonzales, Gabriela, Yanelly; Bill & Cindy Griffin

Psalms 121 He will not let you stumble; the one who watches over you will not slumber. Indeed, he who watches over Israel never slumbers or sleeps. (vv.3-4)

In the New Living Translation (NLT) of Psalm 121, the phrase “watches over” is used five times. It lets us know, without a doubt, that God is watching over us. And the Scripture verses above tell us that He never sleeps, not ever, as He’s watching over us. I lived in some pretty sketchy places when I was a cocaine addict. Places where I shouldn’t have been. Places where it wasn’t safe for me to be. However, I somehow managed to survive that time in my life. For years, I never understood how. It made no sense to me. I now know and believe I am alive because God never slept or slumbered while He was watching over me. And He will do the same for you. If you’re going through hard times, please know that our God is watching over you. He doesn’t fall asleep on the job. You might not be able to see Him or feel Him right now, but one day you will know that He was watching over you.

Exodus 5:1—6:1; Psalms 120, 122, 123; 1 Corinthians 14:20-40; Mark 9:42-50

Wednesday, March 20

Birthdays: Martha Ann Matkin, Sonji Williams

Prayers for: Leocadio & Ophelia Gonzales, Keith & Annamaria Hager, Skylar, Slade, Sophia; Paul & Pat Hancock; Mark & Mary Hargis

2 Corinthians 2:14—3:6 Your very lives are a letter that anyone can read by just looking at you. Christ himself wrote it—not with ink, but with God's living Spirit; not chiseled into stone, but carved into human lives—and we publish it. (v.3 MSG)

Have you ever thought that your life is a letter that people can read just by looking at you? When I read this Scripture the first question that popped into my head was, "What letter am I writing?" I will be the first to admit that they probably see a bit too much of me. But I know in my heart, I truly want to be writing letters with my life that show people what Jesus has done in me. He has truly transformed my life from a deep dark pit of depression and addictions to a life filled with joy and freedom. I want my life to be a letter that reads about that transformation; so, that when people see me, they know that Jesus is the most important person in my life. Today I invite you to join me in asking the Lord to help us write His letters to everyone in our circle of interaction. May our letters always lift people up, not tear them down. And may Jesus love others through us.

Exodus 7:8-24; Psalm 119:145-176; Mark 10:1-16

Thursday, March 21

Birthdays: Ken Bill, Lauren Dear

Prayers for: Mary Ellen Harrington; David & Mary Hartshorn; Bonnie Hartwell, Nicholas & Billie Hearn, Boden; Bill & Kris Heeter; Cody Hicks

Exodus 7:25—8:19 Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and begged, "Plead with the LORD to take the frogs away from me and my people. I will let your people go, so they can offer sacrifices to the LORD." "You set the time!" Moses replied. "Tell me when you want me to pray for you, your officials, and your people. Then you and your houses will be rid of the frogs. They will remain only in the Nile River." "Do it tomorrow," Pharaoh said. (vv.8-10 NLT)

Prior to these verses Moses describes how the frogs were going to overflow from the Nile to be everywhere filling their homes, their beds, their ovens, their bowls, and they would even be jumping on all the people. Now, I don't have an issue with frogs, but I definitely don't want them in my bed, oven, or bowls! When I read Pharaoh's response to Moses' question, I was shocked. What? Why would he wait until tomorrow for the Lord to get rid of all those frogs? I would've been like, "Now, right this second, please!" But then I started wondering, "How many times have I waited to ask God to help me or heal me?" Maybe, I've been more like the Pharaoh than I'd like to admit. I think we sometimes think something going wrong in our lives might be too small to ask God for help. However, God wants to be involved in every area of our lives. The mundane, the small, and the big. Next time we need help, let's ask Jesus immediately instead of waiting until "tomorrow."

Psalms 131, 132, 133; 2 Corinthians 3:7-18; Mark 10:17-31

Friday, March 22

Birthdays: Kathryn Zacharias

Prayers for: Francisco & Laura Hernandez, Yamilé, Heidy, Matias, Aiden; Leonard & Jean Hight, Beth, Chip, Sarah; Patrick & Susan Howard

2 Corinthians 4:1-12 You see, we don't go around preaching about ourselves. We preach that Jesus Christ is Lord, and we ourselves are your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let there be light in the darkness," has made this light shine in our hearts so we could know the glory of God that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ. We now have this light shining in our hearts, but we ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure. This makes it clear that our great power is from God, not from ourselves. (vv.5-7)

Please forgive me as I have an 80's flashback, but I promise I will bring it back around to Jesus. This Scripture always reminds me of the movie ET when the little alien's heart would light up. Which then reminds me of the lyrics to the Neil Diamond song, Heartlight. The song tells us to turn on our heart lights, let them shine wherever we go, make it a happy glow, and let the whole world see. The Scripture above tells us that we are "fragile clay jars containing this great treasure." When, I read that I always think to myself, "I am a bit of cracked pot that God has put back together." But here is the thing, when God puts His heartlight into a cracked pot that light shines out of those cracks to light up the world around us. And we carry His light with us wherever we go bringing the glow of His love to others. You, my friend, carry God's heartlight within you, where are you going to shine it today?

Exodus 9:13-35; Psalm 22; Mark 10:32-45

Saturday, March 23

Birthdays:

Prayers for: Ted & Shelly Huckaby, Kyra; Roberto & Julie Huerta, Knox, Schuyler; Ify Ibekwe; Donald & Marilyn Ishler; Harry & Pamela Jankowiak

Psalms 144 I wonder why you care, GOD— why do you bother with us at all? All we are is a puff of air; we're like shadows in a campfire. (vv.3-4 MSG)

I used to think that God must have made a mistake when He made me. Why on earth would He have ever created me knowing all the awful things I was going to do? And all the ways I was going to let Him and others down? Then one day, Canon Jim Holbeck told me, "Kirsten, before the Lord created the earth, He already loved you. Canon Jim then suggested that I read Ephesians 1:4, "Long before He laid down earth's foundations, He had us in mind, had settled on us as the focus of His love, to be made whole and holy by His love." Reading this now still makes tears well up in my eyes and a warmth fill my heart to overflowing. Someone out there needs to hear this: You are not a mistake. The Lord chose to create you knowing everything you will do in your lifetime. Because above all else, He wants to be in relationship with you. You are the focus of His love. You are His chosen family.

Exodus 10:21—11:8; Psalm 137; 2 Corinthians 4:13-18; Mark 10:46-52

Sunday, March 24

Birthdays: Elijah Gerber

Prayers for: Fr. Aaron & Amy Jeffrey; Beth Johnson; Leigh Johnson, Emma, Sam, Grayson; Cathy Johnson; Jim & Vicki Jones; Judith Jordan; Judy Kirk
1 Timothy 6:12-16 But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. (vv.6-7 NIV)

My daughter worked with disabled adults in an outdoor program in Colorado. One man, paralyzed from the neck down from a car accident in his early teens, made a particular impression on her as he shared about his struggle with contentment. His deepest pain was that he could no longer serve others the way he wanted to; he couldn't even touch others on his own. He couldn't put his arm around a hurting friend, he couldn't stroke the fur of a passing dog. But this man talked about God teaching him the true secret of contentment. Contentment is a gift from God. It is not given through circumstance; it is not obtained from what we have or don't have. Rather it is given through knowing God in a personal way. God's blessings are what ultimately fill the voids in our life. Contentment with God is great gain and that is something that we can take out of this world to heaven, even though God is not face-to-face with us at present. God uses His inspired words to touch us. "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace" (John 16:33).

Zechariah 9:9-12; Psalms 24, 29; Luke 19:41-48

Monday, March 25

Birthdays: Caroline Masterson

Prayers for: Joe & Penelope Kenney, Joshua, Aiden, Grace; Kenneth & Connie Klutts; Michael & Toni Knapp, Roger & Paula Koehler; Patsy Kotlan, Jay
Psalms 51 Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb; you taught me wisdom in that secret place. (v.6).

One day God and I had a Pow Wow. I am not ashamed to tell this personal story. In fact, I tell it often when it is told in the right place with my fellow Christians. Years ago my husband and I found ourselves in a difficult situation, one which caused us to stand almost alone for our faith. I was very angry with God in that circumstance. My anger was bottled up inside with all the injustices of the situation. One day in my time with God, I began pouring it out to Him. It was as if this voice inside of me said, "I am big dear one, I already know what's inside of you. Be honest, so just tell me." I sat there laying it out, fussing, and pouring my anger out to Him. What followed was a sweet communion with Him. It was an amazing time as He poured His loving presence on me like no other time before. I will always point back to that time when I was completely honest with God. It feels good to be completely honest. When we are open, He can teach us His truth, comfort us, and bring insight and wisdom into our most puzzling circumstances.

Lamentations 1:1-2, 6-12; 2 Corinthians 1:1-7; Mark 11:12-25

Tuesday, March 26

Birthdays:

Prayers for: Nathan & Bonnie Kyser, Olivia, Elizabeth; Susan & Richard Williamson; Tommy & Kathryn Lamb; Pat Landgren; Caye & Paul Lankford
2 Corinthians 1:8-22 He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit on our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. (vv.21b-22).

I cannot think of a better example of people who can understand God's desire to embrace us as His children than adoptive parents. I am thinking of dear friends who adopted their first child. With much heartache they were not able to fill their deep longing to have children on their own. They hunted, they spent countless hours poring over paperwork, waiting to bring their new daughter home. I cannot exaggerate the joy felt the day these parents received their child. Through adoption they had chosen (anointed) their child, bestowed their family name (seal) on their child, and promised to care for their child. God's plan doesn't end with forgiveness. He takes ownership and responsibility for us as His children. He gives us His name, anoints us, sets His heart within our heart. We can then "know" him. It is good to think about the price paid by our Lord for our adoption. After all, He found you, paid for you, and brought you home. What a great price He gave for us, His adopted children. One day He will come and take us to live with Him forever.

Lamentations 1:17-22; Psalms 6, 12; Mark 11:27-33

Wednesday, March 27

Birthdays: Rowland Amos Nwanguma

Prayers for: Risher & Sherilyn Lewis; David & Laura Liggett, Linda Llewellyn; Chris & Diane Lolley, Lauren; Bp. Clark & Tricia Lowenfield
2 Corinthians 1:23—2:11 I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes. (vv.10c-11).

As a child I remember going to the local fruit stand. My mother would pull out a small paper bag from the stack and allow me to pick out my very own apples. I would study each apple from stem to bottom, carefully looking for those disgusting little wormholes. Only perfect apples were allowed in my bag. But a determined worm has his way! When biting into my delicious apple how irritating it was to find that one had schemed his way through, ruining the whole thing. Satan is the most seasoned schemer of all. His great intention is to bore his way into our relationships wreaking conflict. This conflict often tempts us to take our eyes off God's commandments to love others. Satan's greatest desire is to catch us off guard, to stir us, anger us, depress us and, most importantly, to ruin God's plans for us. Ahh...God will have his day with you, Master Schemer. Make no mistake. Satan has a plan, always. Let us keep our eyes open for his "little wormholes" and, with determination, repeat this bold proclamation from the Apostle Paul: "We are not unaware of your schemes!"

Lamentations 2:1-9; Psalm 55; Mark 12:1-11

Thursday, March 28

Birthdays: Lisa Wanner

Prayers for: Dorothy Lowrie; Garret & Leslie Maddox, Cruz, Michael, Gabriel; Andrew & Sandra Mann, Marian, Maggie; Galen & Jody Mansee

Mark 14:12-25 “Say to the owner of the house he enters, ‘The Teacher asks: Where is my guestroom, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ He will show you a large upper room, furnished and ready, Make preparations for us there.” (vv.14-15).

The Lord is in his last hours. I can almost see him as the director of a play at this point carrying out the divine script in this moment. Everything he says and does in the next few hours will be one of the last things that his disciples remember in his time on earth. So, Jesus takes one last time to be intimate with those who have walked with him day by day. In this one meal he sums up all he came to be and do. He is the King, the one in charge; he is the Servant, who came to serve; he is the Promise, who came to fulfill. He is the Christ, who came to die. When I come to the Lord’s table, I am reminded that there is only one thing that is required of me. Just as it was for the disciples in the upper room that night, I am only required to come and “receive.” That is the way the script was written. Christ breaks the bread, his body broken for us. Christ offers wine, his blood poured out for us. As you “receive” all that he has done for you in this Holy Communion, remember the disciples, the saints throughout the ages, and all the company of heaven join with us in this sacred moment.

Lamentations 2:10-18; Psalm 102; 1 Corinthians 10:14-17, 11:27-32

Friday, March 29

Birthdays:

Prayers for: Elena Manzano, Dylan; Karina Martinez, Xavien; Rodolfo & Irma Martinez, Edgar, Benjamin; Fr. Nazir & Agnes Masih, Samia

John 13:36-38 Then Jesus answered, “Will you really lay down your life for me? I tell you the truth, before the cock crows, you will disown me three times!” (v.38).

I still remember the words, of my once ten-year-old, as he asked to go to a rather, seemingly, dangerous place alone. “Just trust me,” he would say. You want nothing more than to believe your children but, with all you have inside yourself, as a parent you know the temptations, and the pitfalls. And you know your children better than they know themselves. Out of love, as parents, we must help them face the truth about themselves. During Holy Week, today’s reading, Peter’s denial, strikes a chord in me. Maybe it’s because I am well aware there are times when I have been false in my relationship with the Lord. When my pride puffs up, Jesus has a way with me. When I am heading down the wrong path basking in my own sufficiency, with one word, one Scripture, he can bring the truth back to me. Jesus knows us well when he asks, “Will you really lay down your life for me?” O Lord Jesus, grant us strength to never be ashamed of you and deny you the place in our hearts that is rightfully yours.

Lamentations 3:1-9; Psalm 22; 1 Peter 1:10-20

Saturday, March 30

Birthdays: Valerie Shepherd

Prayers for: Mike & Penny Mason; Frankie & Stephanie Masterson, Franklin, Caroline, Amelia; Martha Ann Matkin; Chip & Felicia Matthews

Hebrew 4:1-16 For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. (v.12).

If you have ever undergone surgery, then you will know what it means to trust a steady hand. Isn’t it true that the one unsaid comment that goes through your mind before anesthesia is, “I sure hope this surgeon knows what he is doing”? God is like a surgeon and He is worthy of our trust because of His great love for us. He gave His word to help cut away, separate, untangle, build up, and preserve our spiritual health. When he sets His word to work with us, it is powerful, penetrating the inner workings of our heart. Our part is to have the courage to go to Him and read His word daily. No, it may not always “feel” good to undergo His “knife,” but reading the word is critical to our health. God’s hand is steady and sure. We must let the Great Surgeon have his way. “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 139:23-24).

Lamentations 3:37-58; Psalm 88

Sunday, March 31

Birthdays:

Prayers for: Barbara Garney; Javier & Janeth Mayor; Francesca Mba-Jonas, Jacqlyne, Rollins; Sharon McAllister; Carol McBee; Bob & Nerisa McConnell

John 1:1-18 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him.... (vv.1-3a NRSV)

I was raised in the Church but didn’t come to know Christ as my personal Lord and Savior until I was 33. Even so, I wasn’t 100 percent certain he was God. At that time, I lived on the 23rd floor of a Manhattan apartment building and my kitchen window went almost to the ceiling, offering a stunning view of the sky. One night, I stood in that darkened space looking up at the starry heavens. A quiet voice suddenly said to me: “I was there when they were made.” I knew it was Jesus! I ran to my Bible and flipped it open to John 1. Then I fell on my face and worshipped the One through whom all things were made—Jesus Christ who lives forever, and whose glorious resurrection we celebrate today! I love Easter for so many reasons—spiritual and theological, aesthetic and cultural. Growing up Greek Orthodox and now an Anglican, I get to celebrate it twice every year. “Easter! Easter!” (So much better than “Pizza! Pizza!”) Christ is risen! The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Exodus 12:1-14; Psalms 148, 149, 150