

# *Good News Daily*

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## **Sunday, November 15**

Philippians 3:13—4:1 *I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.* (v.14 NIV)

The apostle Paul says the Christian faith is like a race. In life we run toward the finish line, a place where all of God's desired goals for us are accomplished, a place where we can rest with Jesus at the right hand of God for eternity. Christ "takes hold of us" through the gift of salvation and snatches us from living a life without him. He sets us on the runner's path and equips us with what we need to finish the race.

Paul tells us we must be active in "taking hold" as we press on in our relationship with Christ. As for myself, I can easily recognize that I run off course at times. My feet start to stumble when I look back or if I am distracted by something interesting at the sidelines. I run best when I keep my eyes looking ahead. How are you doing in your race? If you are discouraged, if you are stumbling, then take hold again! Keep the pace. Set your eyes on the finish line. Christ thought we were worth it when he "took hold of us" and brought us back to him. As for the prize at the end, it will be far more wonderful than we can ever imagine.

Habakkuk 1:1—2:1; Psalms 66, 67; Matthew 23:13-24

**Happy Birthday Jim Morton and Sue Flynn!**

## **Monday, November 16**

James 2:14-26 *What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds.* (v.14)

I remember feeling a nudge to take a small bouquet of store-bought flowers to an elderly woman in my neighborhood. Little did I know this woman was lonely. Little did I know she was discouraged in her faith, waiting for someone to invite her back to church. She had not been to church for over twenty years. The cost of my visit was \$5.99. The effect of my visit, immeasurable. She returned to church and became active again.

Certainly, it is our faith in Jesus that saves us; however, good works come naturally out of a true faith. When we look upon the life of Jesus, we see the ultimate example of one whose faith was expressed through his actions for others. When we offer ourselves to do the right deeds for the right reasons, God blesses them. Even our seemingly small actions can be used to sow seeds for those hungry in faith and God takes note of them all. No matter how big or small, all our deeds will be remembered in eternity.

Habakkuk 2:1-4, 9-20; Psalm 89:1-18; Luke 16:19-31

**Happy Birthday Kelli Gladding!**

## **Tuesday, November 17**

James 3:1-12 *Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? (vv.10-11)*

The book of James is one of the more instructive writings of the New Testament. Here, he speaks about the “tongue” and how much weight it carries in our life. It is fitting for James to use the analogy of water coming from the spring since Palestine is a place where both sweet and salty springs are found. Remember the bitter waters of Marah?

The power of the tongue can produce both death and life. A few thoughtful words are enough to bring healing and encouragement to the deepest of wounds. Yet a few thoughtless words can be irritating like salt, bringing suffering and bitterness for a lifetime. Consider how easily children can be crushed by harsh words hurled at them by their parents. Reflect back on the many times insensitive words have been like fiery darts that pierced your own soul. With our tongues we have the power to bless or to curse.

I am encouraged to choose wisely the words that I speak. God has wise counsel for us to honor everyone as His creation just as He honors us. God loves us all...these are good, sweet, and refreshing to words to pass on.

Habakkuk 3:1-18; Psalms 97, 99, 100; Luke 17:1-10

### **Happy Birthday Skip Cole!**

## **Wednesday, November 18**

Luke 17:11-19 *One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan. (v.15)*

Jesus noticed the humility of this Samaritan man. We should take notice of him too. All ten lepers encountered the Christ from a distance, received the same healing and the same grace. The others were healed but this man alone received the spiritual blessing.

Certainly, this man, crying and shouting out his thanks, crumpled himself at the feet of Jesus, turned heads and drew quite an attention in that day. But the man did not care, for there was no doubt this Samaritan outcast knew whose presence he was in that day. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, saw the man's heart and sent him away whole.

**Charles Spurgeon writes this, “You must grow downwards, that you may grow upwards; for the sweetest fellowship in heaven is to be had by humble souls, and by them alone.” Humility prepares our hearts before God and makes us ready to be blessed and to be used by Him. I would love to see what happened to that Samaritan man down the road, certainly his life was changed.**

Malachi 1:1, 6-14; Psalms 101, 109; James 3:13—4:12

**Happy Anniversary John & Karen Sauer!**

**Happy Birthday Missy Schweizer and Chip Witt!**

## **Thursday, November 19**

Luke 17:20-37 *“For the Son of Man in his day will be like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other.”* (v.24)

On the weekend my husband works as a Chaplain in the local trauma center.

Frequently critical patients come in and have a pressing, urgent need for someone with whom to talk to and in whom to confide. They often share their regrets and their fears but are mostly looking for comfort and hope.

Why the urgency? In a flash the unexpected happens. Suddenly only one thing matters. Are we ready for eternity?

Jesus has told us that he is coming back. These words to us are straightforward. They are both a reminder and a warning from the loving, just heart of Christ. Let us understand the urgency and stay prepared. Our Heavenly Father does love us so. Jesus has prepared a place for us in his Father’s house for all eternity (John 14:2). I can only imagine how much he wants to give us our due reward someday. May we be so prepared that he is pleasantly surprised to see us ready when he comes. “Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven” (Luke 6:23).

**Malachi 2:1-16; Psalm 105:1-22; James 4:13—5:6**

**Happy Birthday Claire Odell, John Strong and Bill Withers!**

## **Friday, November 20**

Luke 18:1-8 *“Yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won’t eventually wear me out with her coming!”* (v.5)

Jesus himself tells and interprets this parable. The two characters in this parable are important. One is a persevering widow who has a great need for justice to be carried out. The other is an unjust judge who is indifferent to her needs. I don’t know about you, but I have an image of this stubborn old widow. There is determination written on her face. Her fist is balled, she is worn and tired, but she walks right up to this judge’s door. She has been there before, and she is not giving up! She prevails.

This is a parable of contrast. Unlike the woman who had to gird up her heart and determination to face an indifferent judge and force him to give her justice, we have a Father who beckons us with open arms. He knows all our needs before we even call. He is ready to pour out his blessings on all who seek Him in earnest. Jesus said, “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you shall find; knock and the door will be opened to you” (Luke 11:9).

God is waiting for us to come.

**Malachi 3:1-12; Psalm 102; James 5:7-12**

**Happy Birthday Larry Elsey and John Lander!**

## **Saturday, November 21**

Psalm 108 *I will praise you, LORD, among the nations; I will sing of you among the peoples.* (v.3)

I can almost envision the liturgy of praise as the leader reads to the people of Israel and as the people respond in verse, recounting the testimony of God's protection over them time and time again. He was their only defense as they faced countless numbers of enemies; enemies from both without and within. In the psalms they were reminded over and again that Israel had no one to lean on "but" the Lord God. They perceived the earth to be fully under God's control. If they were willing to trust Him, all would be well within the land.

I often rest in that very thought. Threats of wars may rumble the earth, but the living God knows every plan of the deceitful heart. The psalms assure us that no matter what we think or feel right now, no matter if we are in sorrow, despair, fear or even in joy and confidence, all is well because our God reigns. Let the psalms draw us to Him. Recite these verses to yourself. They will bring comfort and assurance to your heart.

Malachi 3:13—4:6; Psalm 107:33-43; James 5:13-20; Luke 18:9-14

**Happy Birthday Mary Gerlach!**

*by Robin Jagoe*

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