

Good News Daily

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Sunday, May 17

Leviticus 25:1-17 *“Do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the grapes of your untended vines. The land is to have a year of rest.”* (v.5 NIV)

I'd had this African violet for years. Every spring, it would grow delicate flowers with tiny yellow centers. This year, no buds appeared. I didn't know why. A wise friend asked when was the last time I gave the soil nutrients? Oh. Um, never? The poor plant was starving for the things it needed to bloom. It had the light of the sun and water. But the soil had been overworked.

Are we not the same way? Not only our physical bodies but our souls as well. As Christians, we have the Light of the Son shining in us. We receive the Living Water through the Word when we feel parched by this world. But we need more in order to bloom so people will notice that we are not just thriving but truly living.

We need to rest now and then to replenish our “soil.” We need a sabbatical to relax, to sleep, and to take time to be quiet so we can commune with our Lord in a deeper, more consistent way.

Otherwise, how can we reap a fruitful life in a depleted soil?

Psalm 93, 99; James 1:2-8, 16-18; Luke 12:13-21

Monday, May 18

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

Recall the last sunny, warm day after a long period of gloomy clouds or rain? If you are like me, you stopped for a minute, turned your face upward, and closed your eyes. As the sun warmed your cheeks you took in a few deep breaths. The rays soaked into your skin. Ah, the tension melted and slipped off your shoulders.

I've experienced stormy days, and a few years! I've also experienced mini reprieves during those dark, dreary times. A small break in the clouds where glorious rays shone down straight from heaven. Perhaps it was the sweet visit from a friend who prayed with me. A hymn whose lyrics clenched my heart. A Bible verse I'd never truly noticed before that I could swear was written just for my situation.

God brings wonderful little serendipities just when we need them. Right at that point when we are not sure we can endure on a moment longer, He provides a ray of His warm love.

Leviticus 2:35-55; Colossians 1:9-14; Matthew 13:1-16

Tuesday, May 19

1 Timothy 2:1-6 *This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.* (vv.3-4)

One of the sweetest times in my life was when my sister-in-law died. She had always admired my faith but could never take the step to accept Jesus Christ as her personal Savior. Though a caring and giving woman, she suffered bouts of deep depression.

The night she passed, I'd prayed for her to finally receive Him. After she died, God whispered into my heart, "She knew darkness for so long, that when she saw my Light she fell into my arms. She is here with me now."

In that nanosecond between our last breath on earth and eternity, who could not fall into His arms despite what they refused to accept on earth? I truly believe God wants all to be saved. He loves His creatures so very much that He wants us all to become children of His kingdom. It's why He died for us.

Never give up praying for a loved one to come to the Lord.

Leviticus 26:1-20; Psalm 78:1-39; Matthew 13:18-23

Happy Birthday Jim Baldwin!

Wednesday, May 20

Matthew 22:41-46 *"What do you think about the Messiah? Whose son is he?"* (v.42)

Who is Jesus? People have asked this question since 30 AD. Volumes across the millennia have been written on the subject. Hours of speeches recorded. Does God exist? Was Jesus just a great teacher? Has the Messiah come or is he still coming?

This is the most important question we will ever be asked, and how we answer will determine our future more than anything else. Search your heart. Really think on it. Don't be haste in your response.

When it comes right down to it, every human being must answer it sometime in their lives. The sheep must be separated from the goats. The wheat from the weeds. We cannot accept our parents', our priest's, or a renowned theologian's answer as our own. Christ requires a more personal response.

And do not press anyone else in how to respond either. Guide them, live by example, respond to their concerns. But allow them to make up their minds on their own, no matter their age.

Leviticus 26:27-42; Psalm 119:97-120; Ephesians 1:1-10

Happy Anniversary Bud & Connie Burbuckler!

Happy Birthday Dave Mays!

Thursday, May 21

Daniel 7:9-14 *He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.* (v.14)

When I read this verse, I sighed. I hope it really can come true one day. Viewing our society with its me-centered, entitlement philosophy, I shudder at how far we've slipped from God's ways. A recent poll of 100 people for the TV show *Family Feud* asked how much money they gave to charity each year. The number one answer was: Zero!

But this verse also brings me hope. This world is not all there is. And this is not my home. Where I am headed is oh, so much better.

I am passing through, but not just me. We all are. As we pass through, let's make sure we grab an opportunity to tell others about this prophecy and bring a ray of hope to them as well. Then, let's show them how to follow our Leader who one day all nations and people will worship. That *is* the Great Commission we are called to complete (Matthew 28:16-20).

Psalms 8, 47; Hebrews 2:5-18; Matthew 28:16-20

Friday, May 22

Matthew 7:22-27 *"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock."* (v.24)

My ancestral home in the Texas Hill Country was wisely built on a rocky bluff high above the river. And though it makes it more difficult to get to the riverbank, it is well worth it to be above the water level during flood season!

Nineteenth century educator Horace Mann said, "Doing nothing for others is the undoing of ourselves." The first part of today's reading talks of the foolishness of not caring for each other. The last part talks of a firm foundation. I think Matthew put these together for a reason. If Christ is our foundation, then building relationships with our fellow earth-walkers should be a natural outcome. The love he instills in us, and the prompting of the Holy Spirit, should take our eyes off ourselves. The talents he bestows are meant to be used in the service of others.

Stand solid in the faith, high above the shifting ground and raging waters, but don't forget to reach down to others, grab their hands, and bring them to the Rock.

1 Samuel 2:1-10; Psalms 85, 86; Ephesians 2:1-10

Happy Birthday Jacquie Longacre!

Saturday, May 23

Ephesians 2:11-22 *For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility... (v.14)*

It's a hostile world we live in today. People are so very easily offended. Even innocent posts on Facebook can generate nasty, snippy comments. We can no longer "agree to disagree" because to disagree often becomes a personal offense, and worst, is interpreted as an act of hatred.

How opposite is the way of the Lord! The church in Ephesus definitely faced opposition and ridicule, but Paul warned them to not feed into that attitude. He encouraged them to construct a bridge instead of a wall.

If we truly, deep down in our souls, believe that the Prince of Peace rules, then we must acknowledge he is the source of true peace that passes all understanding. It is the key to destroying barriers.

Jesus will help us become bridge-builders. All we need to do is ask for his peace and he will give us the tools.

Numbers 11:16-17, 24-29; Psalms 87, 90; Matthew 7:28—8:4

Happy Birthday Stan & Wendy Dippel!

by Julie B Cosgrove

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