

## Daily Walk for the week of May 20, 2019

### “The Great Mystery of Faith: Inclusion”

Written by Kerri Lawton

#### Monday, May 20, 2019

John 13:34 “ I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.” This act, this commandment by Jesus is an important part of the roles the early Christians played and continues today. As he loved those in his inner circle, so too will love spread after he is gone and love will spread, in his name. (Thus the spread of Christianity based simply on loving one another). Jesus is trying to prepare his disciples for the day, as it approaches, when he will no longer be with them. He addresses them as “children “knowing they will feel abandoned once he’s gone. They should remember his commandment and feel his presence through loving one another. It is a simple commandment but not always so simple. We each have difficulty sharing the “love” with those we view as unworthy. Through generations we learned of separation, discrimination, exclusion and division. Attitudes and beliefs are bred into us through the influence of others. We must face the truth of inclusive love and preserve these truths, by remembering Jesus’s commandment, “love one another”, with no exceptions. Prayer: Dear God, how simple your commandment, through your son’s glorification on earth. We must love one another, as the disciples were instructed. Give us the courage to share your words of love and, by this, everyone will know we are disciples as well. Amen

#### Tuesday, May 21, 2019

Acts 11:16 “And I remembered the words of the Lord, how he said, ‘John baptized with water but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit’.” As we dwell a bit deeper into “inclusive” love, we must first understand the meaning. One dictionary meaning: “Containing (a specific element) as part of a whole. To not exclude.” Inclusive love for all, as a whole people. As Christians, there are normally moments or instances that we can remember the feeling of the Holy Spirit upon us. Mine came the day of my confirmation and my ac-

ceptance as a member of my home church/family. I truly never felt more attached and loved by God, after working so hard for a better understanding. Sharing communion, as each came to His table, is a moment of inclusive love. All are welcome to share in his love and appreciate his sacrifice and glorification. No matter our circumstances, we must remember we have been baptized by water and by the Holy Spirit; and we should be grateful to have this inclusive love always. May it continue to touch our hearts and heal our wounds. May we strive each day, to share with all, the power of his love and inclusiveness. Prayer: Heavenly Father, help each of us with our own struggles and imperfections. We must strive to continue your commandments to love one another. Help us understand how each person has their own difficulties in life, but how everyone feels the need to be loved and included in your mercy and grace. We must love to be loved. Amen

### “The Great Mystery of Faith: Direction”

Written by Robbie Schwartz

#### Wednesday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>

In the movie “Blue Brothers,” two misfit brothers find themselves on a self-proclaimed mission from God. Through many pitfalls and detours, they are able to accomplish the task set before them. But this mission from God came about as a result of a vision, though much like the vision that Paul received in Acts 16:9-15, it wasn’t quite so clear cut. It is easy to think that perhaps a vision from God would offer a clear-cut journey and final destination, but as Paul learned, there is context and interpretation the one taking the journey must subject himself to when finding the will of God. Because like Paul, each of us must find the path that God sets before us. We must find where the Holy Spirit is trying to guide us toward with the understanding that while the vision we see is right in front of us, and we fervently follow that call to action, the final result may not be something that we are meant to see right away. Rather, we are left to trust that God’s final desired outcome will be revealed to us at the proper time and place.

**Thursday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>**

I find it a perfect setting in Acts 16:9-15 that when those who joined Paul on the journey to Macedonia that they sought a place to pray and did so near a river. I have always found that the sound of a babbling brook, roaring river or even the waves crashing in the ocean to offer the most calming effect and allow for self-meditation (though I have never found the artificially produced sounds to have the same effect). But in reading about Lydia's conversion in Philippi, I found irony in the fact that these followers of Christ did not find themselves closer to God in any church but rather on the outskirts of the city with those who followed God but were not necessarily identified as Jews. The context of the baptism and what led up to it serves as proof that God's word through Christ can transcend any cultural boundaries, deal with any ethnic challenges and allow us to come to the realization that God's work can not only be found but also performed in the most unlikely or unexpected places.

**Friday, May 24<sup>th</sup>**

Psalms 67 is one of blessings, calling Christians to praise God for the many blessings He has bestowed upon us His followers. Reflective of the time, the psalmist calls for blessings upon the harvest and its yields. But today, as we have more and more diverted from our agrarian roots, perhaps we need to offer the realization that the harvest is not just in the fields plowed by farmers but everywhere around us. We are blessed with a wonderful earth for which to live our lives on – one filled with such serene scenery that it could only be by the grace of God we are able to enjoy it. His blessings and for what we are meant to be so thankful for lie with the friends and family that we have in our lives. There are so many unexpected gifts from God that it is easy for us to forget that they are all the result of God's blessings in our lives and the Psalm serves as a reminder for us not to take it for granted.

**Saturday, May 25<sup>th</sup>**

When I read Revelation 21:10, 22 – 22:5, I am often left conflicted. It is not because of any falter-

ing in faith or resignation that life must end with a form of death. Rather, it is because much like the rest of humanity, I have always held some idea of what Heaven would be and what life would be after the second coming of Christ. Unfortunately, it always seems to differ from depictions offered in the Bible. Of course, like this text, the descriptions of life after death and upon the return of Jesus Christ offer physical descriptions that are vague enough not to truly impede on the dream of what is to come – the beauty and peace that lies ahead. But much like when you read a book before seeing it as a movie, your ideas are often different than what you see as the final product on the big screen. But unlike your favorite book when it was turned into a movie, our depictions of what is to come will fall short of reality as it is impossible for us to truly know what beauty and peace lie ahead through the blessings of God.

**Sunday, May 26<sup>th</sup>**

Unfortunately it is easy for some to look at the text of Revelation 21:10, 22-22:5 and use it as a means to say why should we take care of what we have when God is just going to re-build it? Thankfully more people realize the text is more geared toward the realization that through our faith we are destined to reach our intended goals and upon the completion of life dwell in God's presence. Because it is through our faith that humanity will overcome our long history of sin, rebellion and suffering. It is through our faith that one day we will walk in a reality that is filled with God's presence, one where there are no bars on windows or locked doors, there will be no more "curses" to create voids in our lives (although I will miss the night, as it is often one of the most peaceful times and easy, when staring up at the dark abyss littered with stars, to find yourself closest to God). No matter how it is depicted in words or in our own imaginations, the future for the righteous – where entry is guaranteed only by the grace of God – is a goal surely worthy of striving for if only to dwell in God's presence.