

Community of Grace

Daily Walk for the week of March 9, 2020

The Goodness of God...New Life

Written by Kerri Lawton

Monday, March 9th

John 3:1-4 "Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.' Jesus answered him, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.'" Nicodemus was curious of the man he knew was from God because of miracles performed. Nicodemus greeted him as a teacher but Jesus jumped right into the entrance requirements for the kingdom of God, speaking to the man who came to see him in the cover of night. Nicodemus was confused to begin with. He associated rebirth as if from the womb but Jesus was saying that we need to be sired again by the Heavenly Father. Jesus continues to explain rebirth through water and spirit. Water represents baptismal rebirth, cleansing your soul and washing away doubt and fears; accepting the Holy Spirit to further cleanse us spiritually. Someone born of the spirit can take His presence with them, as the wind can blow in any direction. Nicodemus had spent his life adhering to the Torah law. He probably felt his entrance into the kingdom of God was assured, so why would he need to be reborn? He feels he is in control and this change would relinquish his control into God's hands. This he could not understand. For those accepting Christ as the Son of God, we rejoice at the opportunity. Being reborn into new life through Christ, laying down our burdens and look to the heavens for salvation. Prayer: Lord, as we spend our days, perhaps among those who misunderstand the power of the spirit, give us the support to set a positive example of how the spirit can move us. Amen

Tuesday, March 10th

John 3:14-17 "And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed God did not send the Son into the world to condemn

the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." Still speaking to Nicodemus, Jesus is explaining "heavenly things." Jesus sees that he relies on what he knows and the things that have been testified to. For him to understand Jesus's testimony he would have to be open to believing in Jesus as the son of God. To help him understand, Jesus made the reference to Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness. Nicodemus believes in the miracles of heaven, many are foundations of our faith. Jesus is reminding him of this, using the "Lifting up" analogy to the lifting up of the cross. Imagine Nicodemus being reminded of Christ's words as he actually witnessed the lifting up of Christ on the cross, then to learn of the witnessed sightings of Jesus afterwards. He had to know the truth of Christ's words. Christ had been resurrected for the world's salvation. Belief in Him brings eternal life. We think of eternal life as life without end, and it does have that sense. However, it also refers to a quality of life lived in the presence of God. The kingdom of God has come to the whole world. At the time of Christ resurrection, we are raised to new life. Prayer: Dear Lord, remind us daily of the celebration of new life. Believing in the miracles of heaven as they still are present with us today. Guide us as we make changes to improve our quality of life in your presence, celebrating New Life. Amen

The Goodness of God...To Know and Love

Written by Vernon Mukhlall

Wed March 11

Forgiveness Not Condemnation

"So when they continued asking him, he lifted himself up, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they who heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing before him. When Jesus had lifted himself up, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those your accusers? has no man condemned you? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn you: go, and sin no more." John 8: 7 – 11. The way we speak, the words we use, the emphasis

that we place on certain words, the way we dress, the way we conduct ourselves, the company we keep, may cause others to make certain judgment about us. In today's story, the Scribes and Pharisees wanted to test Jesus, so they brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. They passed judgment by quoting the Law which says that the woman should be stoned to death. They disregarded the law by not bringing the man. They wanted Jesus to make His judgement hoping to trap Him into saying something that was contrary to the Law. But Jesus knowing their intention, said that the one without sin should cast the first stone. Jesus loves the sinner but not the sin. His mission is to forgive those who repent of their sins and turned to Him for forgiveness and Salvation. (All have sinned and come short of the glory of God). When He saw that no one could throw the first stone, Jesus showed compassion and forgiveness by telling the woman, "neither do I condemn you, go and send no more". Jesus did not condemn her, but neither ignore nor condone her sin. Jesus stands ready to show us compassion and to forgive our sins when we repent and turn to Him. Prayer: Compassionate God, your life on earth was marked by the love you showed for the vulnerable and outcast. Forgive my sins and help me to follow your example of selfless service to people scorned by others. Amen.

Thu March 12

God Loves Humble And Sincere Worship

" O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our Salvation. O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker. For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand." Psalm 95: 1, 6 – 7. The Psalmist is extending an invitation to the people to bow down and kneel in their worship of God. This describes a physical posture of humility before our God. Do you find it necessary and convenient to bow down before God in worship and to kneel before Him in prayer? These verses give us three motives for worshipping God. (1) He is our God, the Rock of our Salvation. (2) He is the creator of heaven and earth and all things therein. He has created us in His image to be His people and now He is shaping us into the image of Christ. (3) His tender guardianship, "He is our God and we are the

people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand". This indicates an intimate relationship with our God who is our provider and protector. Our God has given us the capacity to worship Him and Him alone, "The Rock of our Salvation"(V 1). In humility, let us come before our God to worship Him in spirit and in truth. Prayer: Almighty God, you have created me anew to be your child. Help me to come before you in humility to worship you sincerely in spirit and in truth. Amen.

Fri March 13 God's Love For Humanity

"Therefore remember, that you being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off are made near by the blood of Christ." Ephesians 2: 11 – 13. When was the last time did you remember your Salvation experience, or better yet, remember your former state of utter depravity and desperation outside of Christ? Perhaps now is a good time to pause and recall to memory your, "so great a Salvation" (Heb 2:3). Nothing inspires us more in gratitude to look back at what we were, "sinners condemned to death ", and what we are now , " new creation alive in Christ" through the gift of Salvation. Remembering should drive us to an attitude of gratitude as well as an attitude of humility as we look back to what we were and what we are now. Paul is reminding the Ephesian church what they were and what they are now in Christ Jesus . Previously, they were without Christ, strangers from the promised covenant , no hope and without God . God had not reached out to have a covenant relationship with them. This can be classified as a very desperate situation not only for the church but to all gentiles. However, because of His love for all humanity, God has made a way for them to have a relationship with Him through the blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who cleanse us from all unrighteousness and justifies us before our Heavenly Father. Let us not only look back at what we were and what we are now, but also what God continues to do in our lives - shaping us into the image of Christ. Prayer: Merciful

ful God, your love for all humanity has made a way for me to have a good relationship with you. I humbly ask that you continue to work in my life shaping me into the image of my Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sat March 14 Feed On The Living Bread

“Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain portion every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or not. And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.” Exodus 16: 4 – 5. There are times when we do not recognize God's goodness and other times when we take it for granted. God brought the Israelites out of slavery and made them into a free nation with the promise of a new land of their own. On their journey they should have recognized God's goodness and rejoiced but instead they complained, accusing Moses of bringing them into the wilderness to kill them with hunger. The Lord's response to the people's complain was the promise of bread from heaven (V 4) which they would have to gather sufficient for the day, and twice the amount on the sixth days, so that they could have sufficient for the Sabbath (V 29). They were to live one day at a time and trust that God who has an abundance of resources which they knew nothing about, would cater for their daily needs. Jesus made reference to this incident to say that, “ I am the living bread which came down from heaven,” and those who have faith in Him will live forever(John 6: 51). As the people gathered sufficient manner for the day, so we must feed on Christ daily in living faith. We must gather afresh and let the Holy Spirit minister to our hearts. Prayer: Gracious Father, you have sent your Son, the Bread from Heaven, so that we may feed on Him daily in living faith. Help me to gather afresh each day and let your Spirit minister to my heart. Amen.

Sun March 15 To Know And Love

“Then said the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that you, being a Jew, ask drink of me, who am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said unto her, If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that said to you, Give me to drink; you would have asked of him, and he would have given you living water.”

John 4: 9 – 10. The shortest route from Judea in the South to Galilee in the North is through Samaria. The Jews considered the Samaritans a mixed race and so they avoided using that short route because of their hatred for the Samaritans. However, Jesus used that route and encountered a Samaritan woman at the well of Sychar. She was known to be living in sin. No Jewish man would speak to such a person even in public place. But Jesus did. In their discussion Jesus opened the book of her sinful life and offered her “living water”. The woman knew about the coming of the Messiah. Here Jesus identified Himself as the Messiah who is offering her Salvation (v 25 , 26) . The goodness of God comes through Jesus Christ who expresses God's love and Salvation not only to the Jews but to the Samaritans and even to every person, whatever his or her race, social position or past sins. God knows us, loves us, and wants us to have a good relationship with Him because we are made in His image and are precious to Him. We are also called to worship him according to the truth of his Word and by the power of the Holy Spirit, (v 23,24).

Prayer: Merciful God, you knew me even before I was born. In my sinfulness, you have showered me with your love by bringing me to the fountain of living water to drink and live through your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.