

# Community of Grace

## Daily Walk for the week of August 17, 2020

### Psalm 85:10...Welcome

Written by Mary Anderson

#### Monday, August 17<sup>th</sup> A Strong Faith

"Just then a Canaanite woman from that region [Tyre and Sidon] came out and started shouting, 'Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon'...He answered [his disciples] 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' But she came and knelt before him saying, 'Lord, help me.' He answered, 'It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.' She said, 'Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table.' Then Jesus answered her, 'Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.' And her daughter was healed instantly." Matthew 15:22, 24-28.

This woman of Canaan was a gentile and not an Israelite whose lost Jesus felt he had come to save. I believe after he saw this woman's faith, he healed her daughter and his vision of his mission expanded from just the Israelites who were lost to include all gentiles who needed him. It took great faith for this woman to keep coming back to Jesus begging for healing for her daughter despite the rejection and insults he hurled at her. Our children too have faith in us that we will love and protect them. When my children were young, they would ask for something or to do something over and over even when I said no, hoping they could break down my resolve. Sometimes it worked; other times I would explain why I couldn't grant their desire and remind them I was doing it out of my love for them. Jesus said we need to have faith like a mustard seed that grows into a large plant, knowing he cares for us and has our best interests in mind always. He came

to save us all from our sins and knows our needs. May we always have faith that he loves us and welcomes us all into his heavenly kingdom. **Prayer:** God of all peoples, your arms reach out to embrace all those who call upon you. Teach us as disciples of your Son to love the world with compassion and constancy, that your name may be known throughout the earth, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

#### Tuesday, August 18<sup>th</sup> God's People

"I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew...for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable." Romans 11:1-2a, 29. Though God was not happy with the Jewish people who were not loving their neighbors and had rejected his Son, Jesus Christ as the Messiah, Paul explains that he, too, is a Jew and was not rejected but called by God, nor are the rest of God's people rejected if they follow him. God's gifts cannot be taken back nor removed from us. We are asked to share God's greatest gift, his Son, Jesus, who died on the cross for all of our sins as well as the gifts God has given to each of us. We need to welcome all people no matter their backgrounds and share Christ's love with them. God loves us so much and only asks that we put him first in our lives, loving him and our neighbor, all others we meet, as we would ourselves. **Prayer:** God of both the lowly and the haughty, be ever near to us. Keep us from looking down on others as you remind us that we, too, are in need of your deliverance. In Christ's name we pray. Amen

**Psalm 85:10...Gifts****Written by Pastor Matt Henning****Wednesday August 19<sup>th</sup> Gift of Faith**

"The Centurion answered, 'Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only speak the word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come' and he comes, and to my slave, do this, and the slave does it.' When Jesus heard him, he was amazed and said to those who followed him, 'Truly I tell you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith.'" Matthew 8: 8-10. The Centurion is asking Jesus to heal his servant who is at his home paralyzed and in distress. Jesus offers to come to his house, but the Centurion requests that Jesus simply "speak the word" of healing and he believes that his servant will have relief. The Centurion recognizes the power of God at Work in the Word of Jesus as he teaches, heals, and proclaims the kingdom of God. He trusts in the work of God in the very words of Jesus. Jesus recognizes and lifts up the gift of faith the Centurion demonstrates in his request. By simply trusting in the power of Jesus' words the Centurion reveals his trust in the presence of God found in him. By equating the power Jesus has over all creation with the power he has over the soldiers and slaves in his command he is proclaiming the power of God found in Jesus. Jesus is calling us to grow into this same level of faith. Trust in the power of God as work in the words of Jesus. Prayer: "Empower me, O Lord, to live into the gift of faith that you have given me this day. Amen."

**Thursday August 20<sup>th</sup> Gift of Protection**

"Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve me against the wrath of my ene-

mies; you stretch out your hand, and your right hand delivers me. The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your hands." Psalm 138: 7-8. I think it is safe to say that we could describe the year of 2020 as a time of "trouble" for all of us in one form or another. There are many unknowns in our lives that are simply scary when we think on them for too long. The Psalmist is reminding us that even in times of "trouble" we will have the "steadfast love" of God that will work for good in our lives. We have been given a gift of protection through the presence of God in the midst of the real experiences of stress, loss, or the unknown. We have the protection of God's grace that will endure with us through trouble in this life, no matter what form it takes. The Psalm is reminding us that we have been given protection even when we are experiencing something dark or broken in our life. Prayer: "Give me trust, O God, in the protection of your Spirit this day."

**Friday August 21<sup>th</sup> Gift of God's grace**

"Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord," For it is not those who commend themselves that are approved, but those whom the Lord commends." 2 Corinthians 10: 17-18. St. Paul is calling the church in Corinth to place all of their trust in the grace of God found in Christ Jesus. This is to run so deep that it becomes part of their identity with the world around them, so that when they see themselves they see their identity with God first. What they accomplish is what God is accomplishing through them for the sake of the world they are in and not for themselves. For Paul this begins with grace freely given from God though Christ, it is lives in the hearts of be-

lievers, and seen in the life that the community celebrates together. So, we can “boast in the Lord” through grace with faith all given in the work of God in our lives. Paul is asking us to think about our lives in what God will accomplish through this loving activity and to celebrate that. Prayer: “Gracious God, give me a heart that boast in Your work in and around me this day. Amen.”

**Saturday August 22<sup>nd</sup> Gift of Restoration**

“The land that was desolate shall be tilled, instead of being the desolation that it was in the sight of all who passed by. And they will say, ‘This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined towns are now in habited and fortified.’ Ezekiel 36: 34-35. Eden was something that only God could create, it was given to people for life and possibility. The prophet is teaching us that restoration is like Eden, in that, it is something that can truly be accomplished and given to us from God. We are called to participate in this restoration knowing that God is at work both in and around us. We are called to use our gifts for God’s kingdom work knowing that even the smallest of actions will make a difference because of the greatness of God. Prayer: “Creator God, restore in our world the places that are broken, use us as instruments of this great work.”

**Sunday August 23<sup>rd</sup>**

**“Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other.” Psalm 85:10. Gifts**

“For as in one body we have many members, and not all members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to

the grace given to us:” Romans 12: 4-6a. St. Paul is encouraging the Romans not to conform to the world around them but to look at the unique gifts God has given each of them. This is a free gift of the Holy Spirit that grows out of the steadfast love and faithfulness God has for all people. The gifts are also a reflection of the diversity of people with in creation itself. Each member of the Body is part of God’s great work with their individual gifts. It is the differences among the members that give the body strength to do God’s kingdom work in the world. Without diversity of gifts the body of Christ in this world would not be complete. Prayer: “Loving God, help me to use my gifts in the body this day, that I may be part of Christ’s work in this world. Amen.”