

Community of Grace

DAILY WALK WEEK OF MAY 30, 2022

The Promise Given: Through Baptism

Written By Wanda Mulkey

May 30, 2022 **John 1: 14-18**

My mother's favorite song, by far, was "In the Garden." She wasn't much of a music person but when she was cleaning the house, she would sing this song. Every time. Now maybe that's just the way I want to remember it because I truly cannot recall ever hearing her sing anything else at home. She sang out at church, all the old hymns, but never at home except for "In the Garden." Since I work at a funeral home, I hear this every time I work as background music. That and all the other oldies but goodies. It takes me back to my childhood. A time of innocence for me and my sisters. It was comforting, especially for me, because I could relate to the words. You see, Jesus has always been a part of my life. I could easily visualize him walking with me everywhere I went. As a child, Jesus was my friend. He kept me safe. He listened to me when I was in trouble and went to my room with me when I was punished. Sometimes, I would stay away from the garden path and not talk to him as much but he was always there to listen when I decided to walk with him again. And as adults we have to keep that in mind. Even when we stray, when we feel we have sinned so much that no cares anymore, Jesus is still with us. Still walking the path. Still listening for us to just ask for help. There have been many times in my life when I needed to humble myself, fall on my knees and talk with my Lord. Sometimes, the answer he gives back is not always what I want to hear, but it is always what I need. I understand in my heart that he knows what's best for me. I just have to listen. Today's lesson: And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory; the glory of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, "This is he of whom I said, He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.") From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's Heart, who has made him known. Today's prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, Thank you for the gift of your Son. Help us to walk with him through our lives, always listening to his voice. That voice that will show us the path to you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

May 31, 2022 **Luke 1:39-57**

My grandmother died when my mom was 9 months old. Mom was then raised with her older brother and sister by my grandfather. Because her home life was not ideal, she eloped and was married at 15 years old.

By the time she turned 16, she was the mother of my sister, Jackie. After a divorce, remarriage and being told by her doctor that she could not have more children, I was born 15 years after Jackie. My younger sister, Judy joined the family 4 years after my birth. And in all those years, my mother's God given job was to raise three "good girls." To say she was strict was an understatement. Now Jackie, the oldest, breezed through her years at home with no problem. She was just plain good or either she was just plain sneaky. Whichever it was, she came out the best child my parents had. Judy on the other hand, as the baby, got by with more than she should have. I could write a book about Judy! But my parents were older and didn't keep up with her like they did Jackie or me. Now if mom and dad were still alive, they would probably tell you that I was the worst one. I was one of those children that questioned everything that was happening in the world and my parents' only concern was raising the girls to be perfect ladies. They did not have the patience to listen to my new ideas and I was persistent in trying to change them to be part of the modern world. I am sure that I was exhausting. But when it came to whether I would win or my mother would win, she always won. Like the fact that my curfew was set at 11:30 and I couldn't date during the work week the entire time I lived at home. It was the dark ages. Her last win was when I was 19 years old and engaged to be married to David. We had rented an apartment two weeks before the wedding. Furniture had been delivered that first weekend and David had moved into the apartment. My family and I brought over all the shower gifts to be put away. Of course, per my mother, I didn't see him during that next week, so the weekend before my wedding, my mother and I brought over my clothes, shoes and other items that I would not need until after the wedding. I had talked to David that day and we decided, since it was a Friday "date" night, that I would stay at the apartment for a few hours after my mother left, eat take out and watch TV. When we had put all my things away, mother said, "Let's go." And casually, I explained that David would bring me home later; we had plans to stay at the apartment and watch TV. My mother's eyes squinted, her mouth drew up, her hands clenched and her breathing stopped. You would have thought I had told her that I was going to be an exotic dancer. "Oh, no, you're not staying here without me. What would people think? I can't believe you. Your father and I would never knowingly let you stay in a man's apartment for any length of time. Let's go." "But I'm going to marry him in a week!" "And in a week, you can stay here. You'll be a married woman. Until then, let's go." We left without me giving David

Community of Grace

DAILY WALK WEEK OF MARCH 14, 2022

a goodbye kiss. I had to save that for next weekend. I had to be a “good girl” for my mother until then. Today’s lesson: It must have been an exceptional experience for Elizabeth to receive a visit from Mary. They were both with child and as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, her child leapt in her womb and she was filled with the Holy Spirit. She immediately knew that Mary was carrying the Lord and she exclaimed, “Blessed are you among women and blessed is the child you will bear!” Elizabeth felt favored that Mary would visit her. She told her at the sound of Mary’s greeting her baby in her womb leaped for joy. She knew Mary was blessed. The next 9 verses are Mary’s Song, “My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me – holy is his name. His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with his arm, he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as he promised our ancestors.” Mary then stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home. Today’s prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, Thank you for giving us people in our lives to help guide us in your ways. We may not understand your plan for us so we need the help of others to take the right path. We are so blessed with parents, teachers, pastors and friends that have our best interests at heart. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen

Day of Pentecost

Written by Pastor Matt Henning

Wednesday June 1st God’s Powerful Voice

“The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the Lord, over mighty waters. The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars; the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon.” Psalm 29 3-5. The psalmist is remembering the power of God’s voice to move within creation through the very things of this world. A wind over the sea, thunder, waves, or trees shaken by the wind are all outward signs of the power of God in,

with, and under all things. This same power is at work in our hearts through the gift of the Holy Spirit and that is what the season of Pentecost is all about. It is about the Holy Spirit that is given to us in baptism, draws us together as the Body of Christ, and calls us out into the world to serve. Pentecost is a season that calls us to reflect on the power of God at work all around us and in us. The voice of God in that Spirit creates, redeems, and moves us to be the living body of God in this world. Prayer: “Let your voice move into our hearts, O Holy Spirit, that we may live out our calling as part of your living body in the world. Amen.”

Thursday June 2nd The Greatness of God in Creation

“Yonder is the sea, great and wide, creeping things innumerable are there, living things both small and great. There go the ships, and Leviathan that you formed to sport in it. These all look to you to give them their food in due season; when you give to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.” Psalm 104: 25-28. We see the greatness of God reflected in the provision of God in creation itself. We live in a world where seasons come and go supporting a life cycle, environment, and bounty that provides for us and all creatures. When we observe nature we are look at the intention of God for both life and abundance. This is reflected in both large and small places we are simply called to look in wonder and see our own self as being a small part of it all. Take some time today to see the very work of God all around you. Find a still place and take a deep breath in knowing that the plants of this world have given you oxygen the air you need for life. When you exhale you are giving air back to the plants that they need for life. Even in our own breathing is the greatness of God. Prayer: “Gide me into the wonder of your creative power this day, Creator God,

Community of Grace

DAILY WALK WEEK OF MARCH 14, 2022

that I may see life abundant all around. Amen.”

Friday June 3rd Spirit and Life

“If you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit. So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up. So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith.” Galatians 6: 8b-10. Paul is reminding the Galatians that the Holy Spirit is the strength behind all good works in this world. When we act in love for God and neighbor, we will be drawn into the life God brings into this world. In this way Spirit and life are intertwined in all things. We will not grow weary because we have this gift of the Spirit. This work of God in our hearts drawing us into community moving us from me to we. Spirit and life go and grow together as we worship, learn, and serve in Community. Prayer: “Lead me with your Spirit into life today, that I may be your instrument of grace and life for my neighbor. Amen.”

Saturday June 4th Rivers of Living Water

“Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, ‘Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.’ Now he said this about the Spirit which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was not Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” John 7: 37b-39. Jesus is comparing the Holy Spirit to a flowing river with living water. In the world of Jesus, a river would mean life and hope for people who would otherwise live in a dry land. In many places if there was no river life would simply not be possible. The same is true for the Holy Spirit and the church. Simply put, there would be no church without the life giving flow of the Holy Spirit in with and under all that we do and experience together. When we were baptized in water the living

water of the Spirit comes and stays with us throughout this life. Prayer: “River of life flow in and through me this day that I may grow and thrive in God’s love. Amen.”

Sunday June 5th Pentecost

“When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.” Acts 2: 1-4. On that first Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came everything changed for the people upon whom the Spirit rested. Each had a tongue resting on them, each filled with the Spirit, and they spoke in a language other than their own. It is almost a reversal of the Tower of Babel story found in the Hebrew Scriptures (see Genesis 11: 1-11). Instead of confusion we found in the Genesis story on Pentecost with the different languages thru the Holy Spirit there was understanding. This teaches us one of the primary roles of the church is to bring this diverse world together with love and understanding. The Spirit moves us to listen with the goal of understanding and being together in one place. We see in the birthday of the church a model for being church in the world.