

Good News Daily

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Sunday, September 20

Psalm 34 *The LORD is near to the brokenhearted, and saves the crushed in spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD rescues them from them all.* (vv.18-19 NRSV)

Are you crushed in spirit? “Crushed,” in Hebrew is *dakka*, which means bruised, humbled, discouraged, broken in spirit, cast down, contrite.

I have three children. When they get hurt, they want a kiss on their “boo-boos” and a band-aid to make it better. Sometimes our hurts are on the inside where only God can see. There just doesn’t seem to be a big enough band-aid to make it better. Perhaps you have lost a loved one or have been through the pain of a divorce. Maybe you are experiencing trouble with your children or a job loss. Life just isn’t going the way you thought it would.

Allow God to comfort you through the psalms: “The LORD is near to the brokenhearted.” Psalm 37:23-24 says, “Our steps are made firm by the LORD, when he delights in our way; though we stumble, we shall not fall headlong, for the LORD holds us by the hand.”

Yes, He holds our hand, too. His love “kisses” our hurts. His salvation makes us better.

Esther 3:1—4:3; Psalms 93, 96; James 1:19-27; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

Monday, September 21

Luke 1:1-4, 3:1-14 *In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.”* (v.11)

In America, we live in the midst of such abundance. Sometimes in the haste of everyday living, we may find it easy to forget Jesus’ commandment to “love one another.” Yet, I have had the awesome experience of being on the receiving end of God’s love through His people. Last year, Christmas was drawing near. As a newly single Mom on a very small budget, I felt anxious and afraid about spending money on gifts for my children. I did not tell others of my feelings, but God knew my heart.

Near Christmas Eve, two families who were complete strangers showed up at my parents’ home. They unloaded so many gifts from their vehicles that the living room and one bedroom were filled with presents for my children and me. These special messengers of God’s love had followed God’s commandment, giving anonymously and freely in Jesus’ name. Oh, how this built up my faith, amazed my children, and witnessed Christ to my grandfather.

What a challenge this gives us to share and also to trust God for our needs. Who knows how God might touch others’ lives through you!

Esther 4:4-17; Psalm 80; Acts 18:1-11

Tuesday, September 22

Psalm 78:1-39 *Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth. We will not hide them from their children; we will tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might, and the wonders that he has done.* (vv.1, 4)

Since she was an infant, my daughter has loved to look at family photos. My parents had a little gallery of photos on a hallway wall. Before she could speak, Kayla would want someone to lift her each day to look at them. Now older, she and her brothers find continual delight in hearing stories told again and again about themselves and their family. I believe that God gives people a love for stories as a gift, which develops bonding and a sense of belonging, place, and purpose.

We have a rich source from which to include stories of our Heavenly Father—His love, plan, and purpose for us. As you repeat Bible stories, they will become beloved to your children. Share with them the things God has done for you. Their faith will grow. God’s word will be planted, nourished, and reaped in salvation as you lead your children to faith in Jesus Christ. They are never too young to learn about God.

Esther 5:1-14; Acts 18:12-28; Luke 3:15-22

Wednesday, September 23

Psalm 119:97-120 *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.* (v.105)

When I get up in the morning for work it is dark outside. I climb out of bed and go straight to my coffee maker. I turn it on, stumbling into the living room to wake up. Sure enough, almost every time, I step on a small toy. Ouch! I remind myself again to buy a night-light.

Sometimes the path which we follow in life is dark. Often, when we least expect it, we may be hurt along the way. Sometimes we don't understand why we are experiencing hardship and pain. In today's psalm, the psalmist prays, "I am severely afflicted; give me life, O Lord, according to your word" (v.107).

Let God's word be the light on your dark paths. Let Him show you the path He wants you to take. You can pray this psalm for yourself, asking God to revive you with His own life. His promise: "to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine" (Ephesians 3:20).

Esther 6:1-14; Acts 19:1-10; Luke 4:1-13

Thursday, September 24

Esther 7:1-10 *On the second day, as they were drinking wine, the king again said to Esther, "What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled."* (v.2)

Esther, a young Hebrew, became queen to a foreign king in a foreign land. Unaware of his bride's nationality, he had unwittingly marked her people for death. Esther's uncle Mordecai asked Esther to risk her life by speaking to the king about their plight. Mordecai admonishes her in verse 4:14, "if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father's family will perish. Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this."

She could risk her life or be silent. She wisely chose to trust God. The king granted her favor. The Hebrews were spared. God had indeed put Esther into an influential position "for such a time as this."

God strategically places His people to accomplish His work. You may find yourself in "such a time as this." Pray for guidance. God's promises include Isaiah 41:10: "do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand."

Psalms 146, 147; Acts 19:11-20; Luke 4:14-30

Friday, September 25

Psalm 91 *You who live in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty, will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust."* (vv.1-2)

I remember when I walked alongside my parents when I was a little girl. In the sunshine, their shadows were so huge compared to my own! As a child, it was comforting to know that however big they or their shadows were, I was dearly loved by them.

What a comfort for me to know now, as a Christian, I dwell in the shadow of the Most High, yes, in the shadow of the Almighty. That is one *big* shadow! His shade provides relief and shelter from the day's "heat"—all the difficulties that come my way. When His shadow falls upon me, although I may not see Him face to face, I am certain His presence is with me.

In the same psalm, His comfort continues, for His angels do His bidding, guarding me and watching over me wherever I am (v.11). This is your promise, too, beloved child of God.

Esther 8:1-8; 15-17; Psalm 88; Acts 19:21-41; Luke 4:31-37

Saturday, September 26

Luke 4:38-44 *As the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various kinds of diseases brought them to him; and he laid his hands on each of them and cured them.* (v.40)

What a beautiful picture of Jesus is shown in this verse! The Son of God laid his hands on the sick, healing them. What about today? Does God still desire to heal us? The Bible is clear: “Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven” (James 5: 13-15).

Do you know people who are sick and hurting? Follow Jesus. This is his commandment from the Father, who dwelt in Jesus to do the work. Today, Christ dwells in us. The Church is the Body of Christ. Should the hand or foot refuse to do the will of the “head”? Beloved, we have the mind of Christ. Is the mind separate from the body?

Perhaps your church has a healing ministry where the Body of Christ administers God’s work of healing. I encourage you to participate in this demonstration of His love.

Hosea 1:1—2:1; Psalms 87, 90; Acts 20:1-16

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