

Saturday, June 11

Matthew 17:1-13 *While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!”* (v.5)

This heavenly voice speaks while Peter is offering to put up shelters for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. Peter is always ready to do whatever he can for Jesus, but God seems to say to just be quiet and listen to Jesus! This voice absolutely scared the wits out of Peter, James, and John and they went face down on the ground. Then Jesus came over, touched them, and told them to get up and to not be afraid.

I love that Jesus is always telling us to “fear not.” There are so many reasons not to be afraid of what life brings us but, for me, the best reason is that Jesus is always with us and has promised he will never leave us. If Jesus is with me, there really is nothing to fear. He has the power to take fear out of my heart, and he will if I just ask him to.

Thank You, Lord, for Your amazing Son. Teach me to be quiet and listen to him. Thank You for forgiving me when I don’t. I love you, Jesus.

Numbers 3:1-13; Psalms 75, 76; Galatians 6:11-18

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Sunday, June 5

Psalm 118 *Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.* (v.1 NIV)

The psalmist repeats this verse again at the end of the psalm (v.29), and to me that indicates that this is an important directive and a description of why we should give thanks to the Lord. (1) He is good, (2) his love endures forever. As is often said among believers, “The Lord is good... All the time!” I certainly can’t say that about myself or anyone else I know. Maybe now that I’m older, I am “good” more often than when I was younger, but it still isn’t all the time because I am a sinner.

And as for His love enduring forever, there is much to ponder about this statement. Forever implies eternity and, from a human perspective, that is a very long time indeed! It is hard for me to wrap my head around the idea of something that lasts for an eternity. I have loved my husband for more than fifty years, but that will end when I die. God has loved me since I was in my mother’s womb, and he has never, nor will he ever, stop loving me.

Thank You, Lord, for Your goodness and Your never-ending love.

Deuteronomy 16:9-12; Acts 4:18-21, 23-33; John 4:19-26

Monday, June 6

Matthew 15:21-28 *Then Jesus answered, “Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.” And her daughter was healed from that very hour.* (v.28)

The woman in this passage had a daughter who was suffering greatly, and even though Jesus at first doesn’t answer her plea for help, she keeps on asking. The disciples urged Jesus to send her away, possibly because she was not a Jew and also because they themselves lacked the compassion that Jesus shows this woman.

I am continually amazed by Jesus. He not only always shows compassion on those who cry out to him for help, but he always sees beneath the surface and straight into one’s heart. If that’s not a characteristic of God, I don’t know what is. He discerns her faith and heals her daughter right then and there, even though the woman’s daughter isn’t present. Now that is an awesome thing, isn’t it?

There has never been anyone on this earth like Jesus, and there never will be. He is truly unique, and I sometimes wonder if I had lived back then and met or heard about him, would I be like the disciples in this situation, or would I be like the persistent, believing woman?

Thank You, Lord, that I have the benefit of living in today’s world where I have the Bible and the gift of your Holy Spirit to guide me into truth.

Ecclesiastes 7:1-14; Psalms 56, 57, 58; Galatians 4:12-20

Tuesday, June 7

Psalms 62 *Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.* (v.8)

The nice thing about pouring my heart out to God is that he's always available, always listens without judging me, and I know that, regardless of what issues from my heart, he still loves me. And, in addition, he will always comfort me and help me through my rough or dark times. Do you have an earthly friend that is all these things? Maybe you have someone you can talk to, but you're not always certain that they aren't going to judge you. Or maybe they are not always trustworthy, or perhaps you aren't sure they won't share your secrets with someone else. And they are not always available right when you need to talk.

It's pretty obvious that there is no one like our God. Verse 8 says, "Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him." Yet another reason to pour out my heart to him; he is the only one in whom we can find true rest and who is able to supply us with real hope. He is, indeed, our refuge where we find healing, forgiveness, and everlasting love.

Thank You, Father, for being all these things to me and for the privilege of being Your child.

Ecclesiastes 8:14—9:10; Psalm 61; Galatians 4:21-31; Matthew 15:29-39

Wednesday, June 8

Galatians 5:1-15 *You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.* (v.13)

The word "freedom" means different things to different people, and certainly what it means at one time in your life is not necessarily what it means in a later time. The first verse of this passage says, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery." I think this means that Jesus has set us free from sin, but also Paul is reminding the Galatians that circumcision is no longer required and that they cannot be justified by the law, but only through faith in Jesus.

Being free does not mean we can do anything we want, thereby committing sin. We have been set free in order to love and serve others. As verse 6a says, "The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love." Jesus showed us how much he loved us by giving his very life for us. Shouldn't we return his love by loving others? He has put his love in our hearts and freed us to love even those we may have thought of as unlovable.

Thank you, Jesus, for your unfathomable love. Help me to love and serve others in the freedom of that love.

Ecclesiastes 9:11-18; Psalm 72; Matthew 16:1-12

Thursday, June 9

Galatians 5:16-24 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.* (v.22)

I love this verse! It tells us all the things that the Holy Spirit can bring to fruition in a believer's life. As I ponder these attributes, I am well aware that I never possess all of them on any given day. Maybe some, but not all.

One year, I decided that instead of giving up something for Lent, I could pray instead for the fruit of the Spirit. It was so long ago that I truly do not remember which fruit began to appear, but what did happen is that I memorized the list, and have found that it is a beautiful list of attributes that are only manifested in my life through the working of the Holy Spirit. Also, it is good to meditate and ponder each of these individually. When I do this, I am made aware that I do not always exhibit a particular one. One day it could be a lack of self-control (i.e., anger at another person), or the next it could be a lack of love or joy or peace or patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, or gentleness!

Thank You, Lord, that You forgive me when I fail to show one or more of the fruits. Thank You that I have the hope that when I see You face to face in heaven, all these fruits will be apparent.

Ecclesiastes 11:1-8; Psalms 70, 71; Matthew 16:13-20

Friday, June 10

Matthew 16:21-28 *From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day raised to life. Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!"* (vv.21-22)

I love the impetuosity of Peter. He is adamant that Jesus must not be killed and taken away... especially, I think, at such a young age. Peter probably loved Jesus so much that he could not bear the thought of his having to suffer.

This same impetuous Peter later, at the Last Supper, vows to Jesus that even if all the others "fall away" from following Jesus, he never will. But as always, Jesus knows better and tells Peter, "this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times" (Matthew 26:34). And this is exactly what happens. Peter is passionate about the Lord, but he is still human and ends up denying Jesus in order to save himself. And don't we all sometimes take our eyes off Jesus and focus on ourselves, putting ourselves and our needs ahead of the Lord's? The really good news is that Jesus forgives us when we realize and confess this sin of putting ourselves on the throne.

Thank You, Lord, for teaching me about myself and about Your love and forgiveness through the example of Peter's life, a life I can identify with.