

All Saints Church Good News Daily

Devotional readings for each day, parish birthdays and anniversaries

October 13-19, 2024

Sunday, October 13

Psalm 147 *He tells the number of the stars; he calls them all by their names.* (v.4 KJV)

Today's reading reminds me of a white-tailed eagle I wrote of. In 2015 this eagle set a world record for the highest recorded bird flight. Released from Dubai's Burj Khalifa tower (the tallest man-made structure on earth) the eagle began a half-mile descent with an attached camera capturing the territory below.

At ground level trainer and eagle conservationist Jacques-Oliver Travers stood waving his hand in what seemed a crazy attempt to capture the eagle's attention. After 5 minutes of soaring the video then records the eagle's jarring discovery with a sudden torpedo-like descent—amazingly—straight into the beckoning arms of his trainer.

I recalled that sometimes I feel I am nothing in a sea of humanity. Yet today's reading insists God not only counts the heavens but calls each star by name. If a mere bird can single out someone a half mile away amidst a vast landscape and thousands of people, how much more can the omniscient Holy Spirit pierce my own inner most thoughts, struggles, and prayers?

Micah 6:1-8; Psalm 146; 1 Corinthians 4:9-16; Matthew 15:21-28

Birthdays: Herb Hill, Roy Clement, Alex Locke, Anniee Rang

Monday, October 14

Micah 7:1-7 *...All lie in wait to commit crimes...* (v.2b JSB)

The Jewish Study Bible describes today's reading as a "response to social disintegration." What happens when an entire society goes sour, not just a few bad apples. It reminds me of the Hebrew word *z'aaq*, or *outcry* that is associated with social injustice found in Ester, Jeremiah, and Proverbs.

That social injustice was also found in the story of Sodom, a *cry* that reached the heart of God. As in today's reading, in Sodom, virtually *all* were indited since God vowed not to act if but *ten righteous* were found. The real extent of Sodom's disintegration surprised me. While today Sodom evokes sexual overtones, the ancient Talmud documents far more extensive issues. Of the eleven graphic stories of Sodom found in Sanhedrin 109a, four are of murder, three of theft, two exploiting the poor, and two of judicial corruption with accomplices found in all. Curiously, none of these Talmud stories involve sexual crime—of any sort. Rather, the common denominator was of a wealthy society immersed in ubiquitous selfish disregard and wicked hatred for visitors.

Psalms 1, 2, 3; Acts 26:1-23; Luke 8:26-39

Birthdays: Sofia Senft, Callie Wurtzel, Jeanie Wurtzel

Tuesday, October 15

Psalm 6 *Save me because of thy lovingkindness.* (v.4 NAS)

Theft, I imagine, is something everyone has experienced. I have had replaced stolen equipment, stolen again. Hard earned savings emptied. And once a computer full of cherished photos and a manuscript—forever gone. Like most, I felt shock, helplessness, grief, anger, and then revenge. Revenge that one time virtually stole my own soul as well.

Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables* is a poignant play that begins with a common thief who after graciously being taken in by a priest later departs weighed down with Parish silverware. Although quickly caught red-handed his punishment is unusual. Rather than confirming the crime, the priest's response both pardons and enriches the thief. He hands the thief candle stands explaining

to the police that this visitor had forgotten those and thanking the police for finding him. The unfolding tale is remarkable.

The revenge I experienced wreaked my soul because in recalling what Christ did on the cross, I realized I could not going on "living" if I could not, likewise, forgive the one who took from me.

Jonah 1:1-17a; Psalm 5; Acts 26:24—27:8; Luke 8:40-56

Birthdays: Charles Ahl, Kate Allport, Denise Mackinnon, Sofia Ravndal, Kathy Smith, Eric Snyder, Francesca Hagood

Wednesday, October 16

Luke 9:1-17 *Take nothing for your journey, neither staff, nor a bag, nor bread, nor money...* (v.3)

Today's reading challenges disciples to venture into ministry with virtually nothing but the Holy Spirit. The closest I witnessed this happening was as a teenager. My conversion took place at a private home in an upscale neighborhood of the San Francisco Bay Area. Three men led the meetings. Laymen elders who all had day jobs. They were not paid for their ministry. No stipends. No salary. Money was never asked for or collected. There was no Board. No committees. No liturgy. No program. Yet scores flocked—Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sunday nights. It was one of the richest spiritual times of my life. Teaching, hymns, prayers, communion, and fellowship. The meetings were full to the brim with young people each night. Conversions occurred daily followed by baptisms in pools, lakes, and beaches. A true outpouring.

After a few years the elders felt it was time to disband. Let the fledglings fly. It is a unique memory. A memory of what can happen when relying on nothing but prayer is something those elders taught me through indelible example.

Jonah 1:17—2:10; Psalm 119:1-24; Acts 27:9-26

Birthdays: Gabe De Jesus, Dave Holland, Heather Junod, Amy Meyer

Anniversaries: Bob & Sandy Mellen

Thursday, October 17

Jonah 3:1—4:11 *...You had compassion...should I not have compassion...?* (vv.4:10-11)

Today's reading is the fourth time I have learned that God can rebuke those who condemn. In Zachariah He was "only angry a little but they [men] overdid punishment." In the prodigal son the father-figure cues the obedient son's resentment: "you have always been with me but your brother was dead and now alive." In Gethsemane when Peter struck a soldier trying to arrest Jesus, Christ rebuked Peter by healing the soldier!

Recently I grew exhausted and wanted to fire a crew at work. But when my employer stepped in, he, after much consideration, decided to work to help the workers improve while I remained skeptical.

Jonah was told to get Nineveh to repent—or else. When he finally got around to completing that mission he was then, ironically, upset when it worked. He sulked after God relented once the people changed course. Although the jury is still out on my crew's skills, I do admire my employer's compassion, reminding me how restoration can be a greater end than judgment.

Psalm 18:1-20; Acts 27:27-44; Luke 9:18-27

Birthdays: Nikki Conrad, Trevor Taylor, Clint Thompson

Friday, October 18

Acts 28:1-16 *...and the natives showed us extraordinary kindness...* (v.2)

In the newly released film *Home2Home*, 24-year-old German, Dennis Kailing, circumnavigates the earth traveling 27,000 miles—on a mere bicycle. A two-year journey. As one who struggles with the fear of travel I was absolutely

mesmerized. Not only was Kailing skinny and scrawny but his bicycle looked like it came out of his grandfather's garage. To top it off, this was his first bike trip!

The adventure captures all one might imagine. Majestic landscapes. Waterfalls. Mountain tops. But also illness, equipment failure and, at one point, a two-week stretch of utter loneliness. And yet he just kept pushing on—through 41 countries and 6 continents. On a bike!

When he reached the border of Iran he took pause. Most Westerners would skip this, he knew. But with childlike faith he pressed on. Politics aside he discovered that in the Muslim culture a visitor is actually considered a gift from God. Hospitality is sacrosanct. The natives took him in. Fed him, clothed him, and bathed him—like a gift from God.

Song of Solomon 1:2-8; Psalms 16, 17; Luke 9:28-36

Birthdays: Winston Clayton, Harl Graham, Preston Rupert,

Daniel Van Valkenburgh

Anniversaries: Ted & Angela Estes, Rod James & Elizabeth Montgomery,

Steve & Sally Simmons, Larry & Connie Standish, David & Barbara Yergey

Saturday, October 19

Luke 9:37-50 *...be that is least among you, the same shall be great.* (v.48 KJV)

These were Christ's words as he held a child while his disciples argued among themselves who would be greatest in his kingdom.

Norman Jewison's 1966 comedy *The Russians are Coming* brilliantly paints how the least can capture the great. Off the New England coast during the Cold War a Russian submarine inadvertently goes aground. How to delicately free themselves turns into a walking-on-eggshells comedy of errors culminating in an entire sleepy town hysterically jumping to wild conclusions. When the Russian captain atop his vessel finally meets face to face a misguided, frightened, and angry American mob with tanks and rifles square off with apocalyptic tension. The deafening silence breaks when a child climbing a church steeple to view slips and is caught dangling 40 feet. His screams and waving hands turn both Americans and Russians to rush to save him by a human pyramid.

Love for the least among them averted the unthinkable. In today's reading, Christ continued that whoever does not receive the kingdom of God "like a child" shall not enter it at all.

Song of Solomon 1:9—2:7; Psalms 20, 21; Acts 28:17-31

Birthdays: Anna Cash, Cory Kroeger

by William Bacon

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