

## All Saints Church Good News Daily

*Devotional readings for each day, parish birthdays and anniversaries*

January 19-25, 2025

### Sunday, January 19

Isaiah 43:14—44:5 *“Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old.”* (v.18 NRSV)

Samuel Johnson wisely observed that we don’t need to be instructed so much as we need to be reminded. How true.

As a Christian, do you really need to be taught what is right or wrong, virtue or vice, moral or immoral? Isn’t it rather a question of applying what we know and living what we believe? Who doesn’t identify with Paul’s lament that he knows what he ought to do, but he just doesn’t do it.

In other words, remembering can be good. A primary source of faith lies in remembering God’s blessings, mercies, and His mighty works of creation and salvation. It may also be helpful in learning from past sins (and to avoid judging others) by remembering them.

But what God is telling His children held captive in Babylon, and His children today in bondage and oppressed by sin, is that He is the God of Salvation. Just as He delivered His people from captivity as He had done before in Egypt, He has delivered us from the slavery of sin through the death of His Son on the cross. For every generation in the past 2000 years, the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus is God’s “new thing.” Nothing like it has ever happened, and that is worth remembering.

Psalms 148, 149, 150; Hebrews 6:17—7:10; John 4:27-42

**Birthdays:** Lauren Bergquist, Barb Iannone

**Anniversaries:** Tom & Pamela Griffin, Rob & Blalock Koehn

### Monday, January 20

Psalms 25 *Do not remember the sins of my youth...* (v.7)

If David, who by most standards had an exemplary boyhood in service to his family, his country, and God, can beg God to forgive the sins of his youth, then what about us? While most of us avoided the juvenile delinquent label, aren’t there sins of your youth which, if conjured up, can bring on an immediate sensation of nausea? When haunted by these memories, I’ve noticed that I most regret having hurt others by things I’ve done or failed to do. I then wonder if these people I’ve hurt still remember the pain they felt, or am I the only one who remembers?

Thinking on these matters, and considering the magnitude of my sins, can either lead to a morose self-loathing or a reluctance to judge those who hurt me and a desire that God accord them the grace we all need. I know which response is the better, but it’s only through the aid and comfort of the Holy Spirit that I can pray for grace and mercy for others as fervently as I beg it for myself. May God let your cup runneth over.

Isaiah 44:6-8, 21-23; Ephesians 4:1-16; Mark 3:7-19a

**Birthdays:** Ethan Ambs, Katherine Cooper, Rae Delfosse, Gavin Feeny, Paul Pilgrim

**Anniversaries:** Mark & Langford Bereza

### Tuesday, January 21

Mark 3:19b-35 *“And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand.”* (v.25)

In the anxious days before the even darker days of our Civil War, Abraham Lincoln quoted this verse as support for maintaining the Union in its confrontation with States Rights. The divided house image was likened to our nation but it is also effective in describing the marital estate. Truly, a marriage divided on issues of money, sex, and children will probably fail.

And yet a marriage built, not on the sands of self-interest, but on the rock of Jesus Christ, can withstand the loss of physical or emotional attraction, financial ruin, and troublesome children—to name just three of the many reasons couples divorce. That’s

not to say that Christian marriages do not fail—they do, and in approximately the same percentages as non-Christians. And in some cases of abuse and neglect, divorce may be the only choice.

But most failing marriages can be saved when the grace of God is received and allowed to grow. To those whom God has joined together, or who let God work after the fact, let no one put asunder.

Isaiah 44:9-20; Psalms 26, 28; Ephesians 4:17-32

**Birthdays:** Edith Fawsett, E.J. Jones, John Kann, Betsey West

### Wednesday, January 22

Ephesians 5:1-14 *Entirely out of place is obscene, silly and vulgar talk; but instead, let there be thanksgiving.* (v.4)

It seems that with each passing year words, acts, pictures, etc., that were once not tolerated in public have become commonplace and even accepted in the theater, on television, and in public discourse in general. As Christians, the challenge to keep our hearts and minds focused on Christ has never been greater.

And yet, to speak of these concerns draws immediate accusations of “censorship,” “prudery,” the inevitable question: “whose values?” and, in Christian circles, the term “legalism” arises. It would seem that intolerance of another’s pursuit of freedom, no matter how obscene, is our only remaining taboo.

Not surprisingly, as C. S. Lewis observed in *The Screwtape Letters*, what Satan attempts to accomplish in every age is to make us least concerned about our greatest dangers, and vice versa. Are we threatened more by those who believe in the inerrancy of the Scriptures, or by those who don’t read the Bible at all? Paul’s admonition to the Ephesians reminds me of the prophetic words of Hilaire Belloc: “We sit by and watch the Barbarian, we tolerate him; in the long stretches of peace we are not afraid. We are tickled by his irreverence, his comic inversions of our old certitudes and our fixed creeds refreshes us: we laugh. But as we laugh we are watched by large and awful faces from beyond; and on these faces there is no smile.”

Isaiah 44:24—45:7; Psalm 38; Mark 4:1-20

**Birthdays:** Ansley Holt, Colgin Miller

**Anniversaries:** James & Valerie Reynolds

### Thursday, January 23

Ephesians 5:15-33 *And the two will become one flesh. This is a great mystery.* (vv.31b-32a)

Can we all agree that mysteries abound in the marital state? Anyone who fears that getting married will take the “mystery” out of their relationship has some surprises awaiting them. For me, marriage was the beginning of my discovering just how little I know about the opposite sex in general, and specifically about my beloved.

But isn’t that the way it’s supposed to be? Isn’t what makes life worth living those things we cannot explain, e.g., the birth of a child, the beauty of God’s creation, our hearts’ longing for God? How dull and tiresome life would be if we had God all figured out, or if love could be fully explained by science.

As Agatha Christie might have observed, it’s life mysteries—not the puzzles we may one day solve—but the mysteries which (by definition) are unsolvable that make life interesting. When was the last time you thanked God for His mysteries?

Isaiah 45:5-17; Psalm 37:1-18; Mark 4:21-34

**Birthdays:** Elaine Bell, Elizabeth Evans, Ingrid Feeny, Debbie Leider,

Ryan Locke, Marah Tayloe

### Friday, January 24

Mark 4:35-41 *And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”* (v.41)

The disciples had known great fear. Even the experienced fisherman among them, who had undoubtedly endured storms on the Sea of Galilee before, had been

terrified for their lives while Jesus slept peacefully in the stern. And then in a moment, all was calm and stillness prevailed. The Word by which all creation had sprung into existence had asserted His divine authority over the natural elements.

Peace was everywhere, except in the hearts of the disciples. They were “filled with great awe”, and they questioned each other as to who and what Jesus was. This man whom they knew intimately as their master and friend, now seemed alien and other-worldly. I believe the disciples were in greater fear of Jesus at this moment than they had previously been of the storm. Anyone who has been in the presence of Divine Holiness would understand why. In such moments one encounters, too clearly for comfort, the holiness of God as contrasted with one’s own unholiness. It can be a fearful, life-altering experience, as demonstrated in today’s reading and in the lives of Jacob, Moses, Isaiah, Paul, etc. Terrifying, and yet somehow reassuring, that the divine power that controls the savage elements can love each of us beyond our understanding.

Isaiah 45:18-25; Psalm 31; Ephesians 6:1-9

**Birthdays:** Carolyn Auerbach, Janet Gillett, Megan Iannone, Caleb Millson, Michael Williams

**Anniversaries:** Austin & Mary Beth Musice, Lee & Judy Van Valkenburgh

### Saturday, January 25

Ephesians 6:10-24 *Grace be with all who have an undying love for our Lord Jesus Christ.* (v.24)

Paul loved to begin and end his letters on the subject of grace, which is entirely fitting, considering that it is God’s grace that saves us, sustains us, and in the end, brings us with all the saints into the joy of God’s eternal kingdom.

As needful as we all are of grace, we can never deserve it. God in His mercy bestows grace according to need, not merit. Getting what one deserves is called “payment,” and as a wise man once observed, if we all got what we deserved, then who would escape a whipping?

Even so, the temptation for many Christians is to ask for (or expect) mercy for themselves, while hoping others get justice. When we do this, we imitate, not Christ (who begged forgiveness for those who killed him), but the Prodigal Son’s elder brother and the grumbling workers in the vineyard. It’s hard, in this world of law and order, to pray for God’s grace to fall on those who have hurt us. But is their need for grace any less than our own, or greater? The question is not whether the Holy Spirit will help you pray for those who persecute you. Rather, will you accept his help?

Isaiah 46:1-13; Psalms 30, 32; Mark 5:1-20

**Birthdays:** Jeni Carraway, Ruth Harris, Ali Kern, Sadie Miller, Sam Shelby

*by John Jacobs*

Used with permission from the BIBLE READING FELLOWSHIP

P. O. Box 380, Winter Park, FL 32790

[www.biblereading.org](http://www.biblereading.org)