

All Saints Church Good News Daily

Devotional readings for each day, parish birthdays and anniversaries

June 22-28, 2025

Sunday, June 22

Matthew 19:23-30 *But many who are first will be last, and the last, first.* (v.30 NASB)

Years ago, PBS revisited the 1956 Australian National Championships. At the third lap of the 1500 meters final, Olympian John Landy was trailing fellow athlete Ron Clark who suddenly fell. Landy stumbled over Clark then did something unheard of. He stopped to help his fellow athlete get back up. Seeing Clarke was okay, Landy quickly resumed the race—now 35 yards behind the pack. I sat spellbound. What runner, in their right mind, would stop in the middle of a race that is measured in milliseconds to do such a thing? Could I do such a thing?!

Despite losing 7 seconds, Landy regained his stride. But he not only regained, he excelled. Landy began pulling farther and farther ahead of the pack to the point where he actually won the race. The second-place runner was a full 2 seconds behind.

When I hear what Jesus said, “he who will be last shall be first,” I often think of John Landy who, perhaps not surprisingly, went on to become Governor of Victoria as well.

1 Samuel 4:12-22; Psalms 66, 67; James 1:1-18

Birthdays: Jim Kragh, Scott Millson, Austin Ramos-Johnson, Ann Stevens

Anniversaries: Malcolm & Nancy Hawley, Jimmy & Andrea Rodriguez

Monday, June 23

Psalms 89:1-18 *Who among the sons of the mighty is like the LORD....* (v.6b)

As an English major in college, I had the opportunity to study literature of the ages. Such a variety of style, genres, history, romance, politics, culture, and religion. There were novelists, philosophers, playwrights, biographers, and theologians.

And as a Christian I have learned from Baptists, Pentecostals, Muslims, Rabbis, Episcopalians, Methodists, and others. All providing an amazing plethora of literature and teaching. And yet, still, I have found no one who *talks* like Christ. I have studied philosophies, theories, and religious doctrines, but I have yet to hear anyone quite able to condense an entire universe into a single phrase the way Christ did—repeatedly.

My conversion was lightning-bolt caliper at age 16 despite never having heard a single Bible story. I have an active imagination. I’ve been intoxicated. My dreams are vivid. But my epiphany was none of these.

I remain a believer because of that epiphany and by subsequently discovering Jesus’ string of universes: love thy neighbor...truth shall set you free...blessed are the poor in spirit...he who will lose his life shall find it....

1 Samuel 5:1-12; Acts 5:12-26; Luke 21:29-36

Birthdays: Valerie Conlan-Horvath, Katie Hunt, Floyd Mishoe, Shelby Roberts

Anniversaries: Mark & Valerie Gauthier, Skip & Beth Jewett

Tuesday, June 24

Acts 5:27-42 *...if this plan should be of men, it will be overthrown; but if it is of God you will not be able to overthrow [it]....* (vv.38-39)

Today’s reading reveals not all Pharisees of Jesus’ time were “whitewashed tombs” as he so bluntly put it. Apparently, there were a few reasonable thinkers like Gamaliel who put today’s proposition before a Jerusalem Council considering jailing apostles.

In my early years as a believer, I was taught to have great suspicion for organized religion. Our mentor, Watchman Nee, was quite dubious of anything but home-grown church gatherings. A church’s only distinction should be of location: The church of

Seattle. The church of Miami. The church of Chicago, etc. Clergy were frowned upon, and the Catholic Church itself was considered Babylon.

Needless to say, it was quite a surprise for me, decades later, to hear an Episcopal Bishop expound on grace, challenging a shaded image I had of the church and leaving me to wonder if I had been throwing the baby out with the bathwater?

After 2,000 years, the good news of Christ has yet to be overthrown. Whether I fully assimilate it is the real challenge—be it draped in robes or denim.

1 Samuel 6:1-16; Psalms 97, 99, 100; Luke 21:37—22:13

Birthdays: Barbie Boyd, John Mandigo, Maile McQuaid, Leona Smith

Anniversaries: Gene & Jan Godbold, Tom & Nell Hartley, Robert & Bonnie Larsen

Wednesday, June 25

Acts 6:1-15 *Then they secretly induced men to say, “We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God.”* (v.11)

As a caretaker to a private estate in my early 30s I worked tirelessly during one hot summer maintaining nine acres of gardens, a pool, tennis courts, two resident dogs, a fleet of vehicles, a 20,000 square foot mansion and coordinating tours. I was exhausted one day after weeks without a day off only to learn the house sitter, out of the blue, had called my vacationing employer with a list of nefarious lies about me. Even of me having my way with women in the upstairs bedrooms!

With the wind knocked out of me I barely made it to the phone. Then I unleashed. She was sent packing within 24 hours. We later learned of her bouts with mental illness.

There is something about unadulterated mendacity that is very hard to fully heal from. Even now, some 40 years later, that out-of-the blue sucker punch is still felt. Scholars define blasphemy as the attempt to ruin someone’s reputation with scurrilous language. I learned it also comes with a wicked shelf life.

1 Samuel 7:2-17; Psalms 101, 109; Luke 22:14-23

Birthdays: Langford Bereza, Amelia Bowles, Andrew Chule, Eric Parkerson

Anniversaries: Alex & Cindy Mackinnon, Ted & Kathy Smith

Thursday, June 26

Luke 22:24-30 *For who is greater, he who sits down, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits? But I am among you as one who serves.* (v.27 Lamsa)

I often wonder what people think when they call the US a Christian nation? Does today’s reading come to mind? Ubiquitous servitude? A vast population mimicking the role of Christ? Oh my, my, my. Perhaps if you are on drugs. Today’s reading is, nevertheless, one I yearn to see. Wouldn’t it be wonderful, even to imagine such a thing? Hmm...I must settle for glimpses.

And Peter Farrelly’s 2018 *Green Book* might just serve as such a glimpse. With tables turned, this film, based on the true story of classical pianist Don Shirley, portrays a prominent black musician who is chauffeured through the American South on tour by Italian American driver and bodyguard, Tony Vallelonga. How would such an entourage navigate the South one might ask? As expected is the answer. It is a magnificent tale of the servant being the greater in so many ways. Shirley’s talent to the *sitting* audience. Sometimes the driver’s candor challenging his employer, the lonely musician. An endearing story of an unlikely duo that—in their service—come to cherish one another.

1 Samuel 8:1-22; Psalms 105:1-22; Acts 6:15—7:16

Birthdays: Grady Kimsey, Ashley Magill, Ginger Smith, John West, Julia Williams

Anniversaries: Don & Lisa Tillery

Friday, June 27

Luke 22:31-38 *...let him who has no sword sell his robe and buy one.* (v.36 NAS)

At first glance I was puzzled by today’s reading. Jesus taught to turn the other cheek, that he who lives by the sword dies by the sword. So, why does he now say sell stuff and buy weapons? Doesn’t make sense.

But after researching, I discovered the consensus among scholars is that, in the spirit of being wise as a serpent and gentle as a dove, Christ took to smoke and mirrors to create an *appearance* of shade in order to help fulfill him being *classed among criminals*. The ultimate playwright—knowing just how to stage the furniture.

What’s unusual is that illusions are usually employed for personal gain such as the high stakes gambling farce in George Hill’s *The Sting*. Or, Cillian Murphy’s cunning enticements in *The Peaky Blinders*. Or, my own life in which I go at lengths to save. I may repeatedly fail to lose my life in order to find it, but that doesn’t stop me from wishing and hoping I could, like the One who so selflessly and cunningly did.

1 Samuel 9:1-14; Psalms 102; Acts 7:17-29

Birthdays: Sarah Chule, Stacy Deibler, Dick Ford, Mary Gideon, Melissa Mishoe,

Debi Poppell, Sean Smith

Saturday, June 28

1 Samuel 9:15—10:1 *...Am I not...of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family the least of all families....* (v.21)

Although Saul was described as unusually handsome he is, nevertheless, surprised that the great Seer Samuel would consider talking to someone of his low caliber—that is, one of “the least of all families and from the smallest of all tribes.”

God choosing the underdog is a common thread in Scripture. Gideon, Saul, Esther, Moses, David, Daniel, Mary. Everyone loves a winner, especially when they are “losers.” Jesus seemed certain that God takes great note of what the smallest grain of mustard seed can do. But underdogs eventually are tested just as everyone else. No one gets carte blanche even if you were the underdog Israel as the Book of Kings chronicles.

As a gay man the hatred I feel from the bigots of the world is real and painful and endless. It has always made me feel *least of all*. But I also grow weary of whining. There comes a time for bucking up, soldiering on, and concentrating on how to fulfill that all important commandment to *love thy neighbor*—especially the nasty ones.

Psalms 107:33-43, 108; Acts 7:30-43; Luke 22:39-51

Birthdays: Robert Boswell, Debbie Stockton

Anniversaries: Lawrence & June Adams, Walt & Kristin Conlan, Lou & Dottie Magill

by William Bacon

Used with permission from the BIBLE READING FELLOWSHIP

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

www.biblereading.org