

Good News Daily

Volume XXI

September 26-October 2, 2021

Number 39

Sunday, September 26

Psalm 67 *May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine upon us, that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations.* (vv.1-2 NIV)

To mark the beginning of each new year, we have parties! But the basis for our celebration should not be a new calendar milestone. The call to celebrate should consist in the person whose life, death, and resurrection set our calendar in motion some 2,000 years ago.

The Incarnation was the Creator's calculated act of grace by which the entire world would come to know His loving purpose. That's the message of Psalm 67. The graciousness of God is not an end in itself, but a means to a greater end: that each of us and the world might know His salvation. Our lives are not made up of random experiences. We are all connected by the love of God for us. We can take comfort in knowing that God has a plan for each of our lives and all the world.

Next Sunday is World Communion Sunday. As we gather for worship, we'll celebrate the universality of the gospel and ponder the mystery that God maintains ultimate control of a world that seems to be spinning out of control.

2 Kings 17:1-18; Psalm 66; Acts 9:36-43; Luke 5:1-11

Monday, September 27

Psalm 89:1-18 *You rule over the surging sea; when its waves mount up, you still them.* (v.9)

When we sing "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands," what we really mean is "He's Got the Entire Cosmos in His Clutches." Our Creator God is the Lord not just of our little planet, but of the universe. Galaxies uncountable are the subjects of His reign. Yet planet Earth does claim a special place in His heart. As far as we know, ours is the only sphere populated by human life or visited by His tangible presence.

Our world is uniquely wonderful. Some 50 years ago Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin stood on the lunar surface and glimpsed a singular view of our world that awed them with wonder. The blue marble hanging in space was incredibly beautiful. They sensed the power of God. It is that power the psalmist alludes to when he writes about God ruling over the seas. The one who oversees our individual lives is the same one who sustains the rhythms of nature and the cycles of life, the movement of planets and the dance of galaxies.

Can we not trust such a God, who choreographs creation in accordance with His divine script, to rule over our "little worlds" and calm our inner stress?

2 Kings 17:24-41; 1 Corinthians 7:25-31; Matthew 6:25-34

Tuesday, September 28

Psalm 97 *The heavens proclaim his righteousness, and all the peoples see his glory.* (v.6)

If I were to ask you what the most well-known verse in the Bible was, you would most likely answer John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." In those twenty-six words we have a lens through which we can look into the heart of God. The God we worship desires that all peoples of all nations follow Him.

In His wisdom, God has also provided us with the means of seeing His power. Look through a telescope (or a microscope). In the sky above and in the beauty of nature around us, we see what theologians call "natural revelation." This means that the people of the world, the very people who God longs to love and have a relationship with, can clearly see evidence of His existence in His creation. The world He made silently calls us to commune with Him.

Take a walk in a park. Smell the roses. Try to count the stars. Photograph a sunset. We have the truth to which all creation points right in front of us. Let the world God made call you to worship. Let His

word teach you and sustain you. Seek His will, ask Him for guidance. The God of all creation is *your* God.

2 Chronicles 29:1-3, 30:1-27; Psalms 99, 100; 1 Corinthians 7:32-40; Matthew 7:1-12

Wednesday, September 29

1 Corinthians 8:1-13 *Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live.... But not everyone knows this.* (vv.6-7a)

You are part of a family. That's no surprise. No matter how well you get along with them, they are a gift to you. Your family roots you in history and provides you with an identity. There is a strong sense of continuity in knowing our ancestors—those who have gone before.

Your church is also a family. Jesus even went so far as to say that the family of God is of more significance than our biological heritage. In the community of faith, we have eternal relationships and the baptism of unconditional love, acceptance and forgiveness and these relationships have been united under Jesus Christ ever since he paid for our sins.

But don't forget the family of man. Yes, all people are God's children. He is the Father of all humankind. Even those who are spiritually apathetic, blind, or belligerent are the offspring of the Creator and our siblings. The fact that so many with whom we live or work do not esteem Jesus as Lord (or God as Father) should not be an excuse to ignore them, but to nurture friendship with them. Because we are related to those God dearly loves, let's ask Him to help us act lovingly and listen intently to them.

2 Kings 18:9-25; Psalms 101, 109; Matthew 7:13-21

Thursday, September 30

Psalms 105:1-22 *He is the LORD our God; his judgments are in all the earth.* (v.7)

It's a world gone mad: drive-by shootings; schoolyard killings; lawlessness; child abuse; war. Ours is a corrupted planet. The consequences of sin have made it a shattered globe filled with broken people. The world God has gone on record to say He loves and is committed to saving, is a far cry from the one He created. We certainly can't blame God for our sinfulness. We have made the world what it is all by ourselves.

According to this psalm, God is still involved in our fallen world. He is at work in imperfect lives like ours and "his judgments are in all the earth." That means God knows what He is about even when the evidence is clear we don't. There is nowhere in all the earth that God's dictates and desires will not ultimately be obeyed or accomplished. There is no place on earth where the tough love of His righteous grace will not address the mess we've made of things. Nothing can separate us from the love of God.

Our world can be frightening if we fail to look in the face of the one who holds it in His hands. But if we keep our gaze fixed on an all-powerful and trustworthy God, we don't need 20/20 foresight to rest assured.

2 Kings 18:28-37; 1 Corinthians 9:1-15; Matthew 7:22-29

Friday, October 1

Matthew 8:1-17 *"I say to you that many will come from the east and the west and will take their places at the feast of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven."* (v.11)

These days the global village we call humanity seems smaller than ever. Satellite communications and fiber optic technology have compressed the miles and spanned the seas. World Communion Sunday won't be a symbolic concept celebrated in isolation.

What seemed unfeasible centuries ago is now quite logical. Those from the east and west and north and south can share the same reality simultaneously. Interactive corporate worship is not a futuristic dream. A worldwide expression of Christianity is being lived out before our very eyes.

As was true in Jesus' day, not everyone has surrendered to his Lordship. Although we are challenged to think globally and reach out to the world God loves, as long as those within our sphere of influence balk at the claims of Jesus Christ, we must maintain our focus on the people around us and witness for Jesus to one person at a time.

2 Kings 19:1-20; Psalm 102; 1 Corinthians 9:16-27

Saturday, October 2

1 Corinthians 10:1-13 *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man.* (v.13)

All of us are traveling through space and time on a journey we call life. We are fellow passengers on a global spaceship we call Earth. There is much that separates us from our cabin mates: income; experiences; culture; language; politics; faith. But there is far more that unites us. We are all tempted by the same kinds of desires. We all share a common need of the Savior. We all bear the divine tattoo.

In today's lesson, the apostle Paul talks plainly to the Corinthians. He does not want them to approach the Lord's Supper in a cavalier manner. But, as he challenges them to learn from Israel's disobedience and irreverence, he also celebrates God's common grace for those who are vulnerable to temptation. With that, he directs them to the sacramental table.

As you join with Christians all around the world tomorrow, hold the bread fragment aware of your own brokenness. Hold the common cup grateful you are not alone. Praise God that the community of faith spans a globe that is secure in His hands.

2 Kings 19:21-36; Psalms 107:33-43, 108; Matthew 8:18-27

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