

(For Monday, May 8, 2017) **Do you understand the blessing in living beyond Golgotha?**

“For God created us for incorruption, and made us in the image of his own eternity.” (Wis.1:23, NRSV)

This verse was probably written some 80 years before the Resurrection by a sage steeped in Jewish theology. Yet his focus is clearly on an eternal life lived in “incorruption.” Christians often forget the Old Testament Saints who laid the groundwork for the coming of Messiah. And part of this preparatory work was recognizing the soul’s yearning to dwell with God, along with the understanding that an all-loving God would never leave his people alone forever. The Saints of the Old Testament knew the God they worshiped would one day bring his people home to him. They just couldn’t view the Cross of Calvary and the empty tomb of Easter with the historical perspective they had. But you and I live on the other side of that green hill far-away, and are richly blessed to know exactly how God has saved us.

You might say we’re the luckiest of people. Except, luck had absolutely nothing to do with it! .

(For Tuesday, May 9, 2017) **Is there really any other side to choose?**

“By the east wind you shattered the ships of Tarshish.” (Ps.48:7, ESV)

The verse is rich with symbolism and metaphor. Tarshish, the far western region of Spain was considered the ends of the known world. It was probably to Tarshish that Paul longed to bring the Gospel, as he declared to the church in Rome. (See Rom.15:20) It was to Tarshish that Jonah initially fled in order to escape the will of God. (See Jonah 1:3) But God is beyond even the imagined limits of mankind. The east wind in the Mediterranean, often called *Levant*, or *Levante* is still feared by sailors today. It can transform the normally placid waters of that sea into a boiling cauldron of deadly swells. When God acts, he often arrives from an unimaginable quarter to bring to bear on a situation such power and means that defy human understanding. Nothing can stand before him, nor will anything impede his design.

So Paul was right. If God is for us, who indeed can stand against us? (Rom.8:31)

(For Wednesday, May 10, 2017) **Have you considered what’s involved in thanksgiving?**

“Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.” (Col.2:6-7, ESV)

There is something about thanksgiving that is critically important to God. The thank offering was established by God’s commands in Leviticus. (See Lev.7:11-16) This critical place for the sacrifice of thanksgiving continues in the New Testament. (See Eph.5:20; 1Thes.5:18) In fact, this activity of offering a sacrifice of thanksgiving will also be important in the New Jerusalem. (See Rev.11:16-17) If you stop and think about it for even half-a-minute, you’ll come to realize that there’s a lot tied up in a sincere “Thank you.” There is the understood admission that we have received something that we have done nothing to merit – otherwise, there would be no heart-felt gratitude involved in our offering of thanks.

When was the last time you offered a genuine, heart-felt “Thank you!” to The Lord?

(For Thursday, May 11, 2017) **Are you walking and talking as God would have you?**

“The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.” (Lk.6:45, ESV)

I have met very few evil people. I’ve known many broken, angry, resentful, and bitter people. But the truly evil people of this world are relatively few. Having said that, we all have some evil in us. If not, there would be no need for Jesus! There are times when we make judgmental, even hurtful statements. It is so critical during those moments to be brave enough to examine our motives. For righteous motives simply cannot be accompanied by unrighteous speech. It’s really not so much a question of “walking the walk, not just talking the talk.” Instead, the Christian witness is often making sure our walking and our talking confirm each other, and affirm our pedigree of righteousness that comes from a life lived in sanctification.

Do your words match your witness?

(For Friday, May 12, 2017) **Is God placing you in adversity so He can raise the fever in your faith?**

“And the Lord said, ‘If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, “Be uprooted and planted in the sea,” and it would obey you.’” (Lk.17:6)

We are used to thinking of the world quantitatively. A full tank of gas let’s you drive farther than a half-empty one, a 6-figure salary is better than one with 5, and a higher draft pick means a bigger pay-day. But evidently, faith doesn’t work that way. Faith isn’t quantitative, it’s contagious. The thing about a contagion is that it doesn’t take a lot of the disease for it to multiply. You just need the right conditions, and then even a few cases can become a pandemic. Apparently, faith is like that too. Real faith, the kind that changes the world only needs the right conditions in order to become mighty. And those conditions normally involve people who are rescued from adversity by God’s grace, proving to them exactly what is possible when Christian men and women have the courage to really believe.

What about you? Has your faith reached the contagion point?