

Throughout the Word of God, I've read do not fear, do not be afraid. Yet, I'm fearful when the emergency room transported me to the hospital. Except for a couple days for outpatient surgeries, I'd never stayed in the hospital for any length of time without knowing why I was there. This was different. It had already been a long couple of days without a diagnosis. Concern showed on my son's face. My daughter phoned each day. My window was lined with flowers to cheer me from her and two friends, Margaret and Jennifer.

I was told, "You can't be a Christian and be afraid." Then God appeared in two nurses sent to care for me. Their names—Margaret and Jennifer. Our connection was immediate and when they commented about my flowers I told them my friends, Margaret and Jennifer sent them. A coincidence? Of course not.

God tells us not to fear, but when we do He sends an angel—or perhaps two—to remind us to fear not. God is with us always.

Psalm 25; Ephesians 4:1-16; Mark 3:7-19a

Birthdays: Shirley Hogan, Barry Stocker, Darrell Lester, Peter Pignataro, Amy Drtina, John Baribault

Anniversary: Peggy Wood & Michael Abruzzo

Monday's Calendar

7:00 a.m. AA "Hour of Power"
5:00 p.m. Daughter's of the King Meeting
5:30 p.m. ACA Meeting (Adult Children of Alcoholics)
6:00 p.m. Life Group
6:30 p.m. Life Group

Today's Ministry: Mary's Kitchen

Tuesday, January 17

Ephesians 4:17-32 *...and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another.* (vv.23-25)

The apostle Paul tells us to put away lying, among other things, and clothe ourselves with the righteousness of God. Proverbs 6:16-19 gives us six things the Lord abhors; *a lying tongue* is one of them. I wonder about lies by omission or lies to protect yourself or others? They're called *white lies*. I've told such lies in the past to protect myself and children and, on occasion, I've told lies of omission.

As a five-year-old, a friend coerced me into doing something I knew was wrong. When a note from her mother was delivered by her little brother, I couldn't read it so I tossed it into the fire. Although it burnt away my wrong, a great guilt replaced it. I continued to ask God's forgiveness for many years. Lies by omission may not hurt the intended recipient but it hurts the one who withholds the confession.

White lies are not intended to harm, but to protect. Can they really be a lie God hates? My God is a loving God incapable of hate.

Isaiah 44:9-20; Psalms 26, 28; Mark 3:19b-35

Anniversaries: Wayne & Barbara Cole, Charlie & Eva Lippincott

Tuesday's Calendar

7:00 a.m. AA "Hour of Power"
10:00 a.m. Tuesday Bible Study
12:10 p.m. Holy Eucharist and Healing
1:00 p.m. Bridge Club
4:00 p.m. C-Ed AA Step Study
5:30 p.m. Vestry Meeting with Dinner
7:30 p.m. NarcAnon "Just for Today"

Today's Ministry: Mary's Library Book Group

Wednesday, January 18

Mark 4:1-20 *And He said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?"* (v.13)

Just as the disciples didn't at first understand the parables Jesus told, I, too, have not understood. Even though I've read different interpretations of the parable of the sower, as a writer, I prefer a picturesque meaning. I imagine God as the sower (just as He shall be the harvester). He breathes life into each of us and scatters us across the world. But where did I land—on a smooth pathway, hidden in large rocks, a field of weeds, or rich soil? What I accomplish in my life depends on how well I listen and obey.

Or the more likely meaning of the parable is the seed as the Word of God. Yet, I must be somewhere in this definition or how would the Word spread? How would I grow and bear fruit?

Spiritual truths are difficult to understand. So what can I do? Pray for the Holy Spirit to open my mind to the understanding of God's Word—recognize God's call, follow it, and experience the profound transformation.

Isaiah 44:24—45:7; Psalm 38; Ephesians 5:1-14

Birthday: Kelley Haddox

Anniversary: Jim & Maria Yeagley

Wednesday's Calendar

6:30 a.m. Men's Bible Study
7:00 a.m. AA "Hour of Power"
8:45 a.m. Reunion Group
9:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist
11:00 a.m. Tischbin Funeral & Reception
1:00 p.m. Waters Edge Recovery
4:45 p.m. Mary's Kitchen
5:30 p.m. AA "Daily Reflections"
7:00 p.m. Life Group
8:30 p.m. NarcAnon "Klean and Krazy"

Today's Ministry: Men's Cursillo

Thursday, January 19

Mark 4:21-34 *"It is like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth; but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade."*

(vv.31-32)

Anyone can purchase a small necklace or other items with a barely visible seed inside. The Parable of the Mustard Seed comes with it. Tucked away in the pocket of the cover of one of my Bibles I found a plastic bag containing a tiny mustard seed. I remember placing it there as a reminder of the beginning of my quest for more of the Holy Spirit. On the first day of the Women's Retreat we were each given the gift as a reminder of our new faith journey.

In Jesus' parable of the mustard seed, He uses it as a symbol of how the kingdom of God is growing. I love growing plants and flowers and I'm sometimes tempted to plant the seed. I've read they can grow to a height of ten to twelve feet. How impressive it would be. However, I return the seed to the safety of my Bible where it will continue as a reminder of my humble beginning as I grow and await the return of Jesus and his reaping of the fields.

Isaiah 45:5-17; Palm 37:1-18; Ephesians 5:15-33

Birthday: Paul Daury

Thursday's Calendar

7:00 a.m. AA "Hour of Power"
10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist - Rite II
10:30 a.m. Staff Meeting
12:30 p.m. Overeaters' Anonymous Meeting
6:30 p.m. Life Group
7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal
7:00 p.m. AIAnon "Stepping Stones"

Today's Ministry: Mission 345

Friday, January 20

Mark 4:35-41 *But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?" And they feared exceedingly and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!"* (vv.40-41)

The wind whispers through the oak trees and grows to a roar. Leaves race to the ground. Acorns roll across the roof in a hurry to get to the other side. Branches swing back and forth. Now silence. The cycle begins once more, increasing to a rumble. Then all is quiet. Now the wind softly sways the branches and I wonder where the birds and squirrels go when the wind blows the branches holding their nests. The windstorm rises above the sea and stirs up great waves. Only the whitecaps are visible in the black night and I wonder if the sea creatures escape to the depth of the ocean floor.

In Genesis 1:20, it tells how God created birds to fly above the earth and every living thing which abounds in the waters. Doesn't it stand to reason the God of all creation will protect what He created?

As we face the storms of our lives we should feel no fear. We can take comfort in the knowledge the Great Creator of all things is in control.

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

Birthdays: Jackie Burkey, Michele Ucelo
Anniversaries: Bill & Coral Tischbin, Hugo & Carmen Ucelo