

I'm reminded the call to "come out from among them" refers to questionable behavior not necessarily skill sets. And I can appreciate Solomon's observation that, "there is no one among us who knows how to cut timber like the Sidonians."

Psalm 102; Revelation 22:6-13; Matthew 18:10-20

Birthdays: Ed Lippisch, Lilly Freese, Chris Vaccaro

Friday's Calendar:

7:00 a.m. Hour of Power AA
9:30 a.m. Life Group
10:00 a.m. Bible Study
12:00 p.m. A Way Out
8:00 p.m. AA Friday Nite Young People

Today's Ministry: Hospitality Ministry

Saturday, November 25

Matthew 18:21-35 "...I do not say to you seven times but seventy times seven [you shall forgive]." (v.22)

American televangelist's prosperity gospel was in full steam in the early 80s and was, in part, why I left the Church—for nearly 20 years.

However, I have since learned not to throw every baby out with the bath water and am reluctant to join every "accuser of the brethren."

For one, preacher Joyce Meyer is someone who can fill a stadium, bankroll a staff of hundreds and, yes, board her private jet. But at her personal story of forgiveness, I took pause. Hers was a childhood of being raped "every Friday" by an alcoholic father. She and her mother lived in constant fear. "I never felt safe as a child," Meyer recalled. What's more, even her friends became victims. How on earth could anyone forgive this?

Fast forward to her caregiver years, Meyer, very reluctant at first, finally bought her parents a home as they were aging and in need of care. It was then one day her father finally broke down and apologized to her for all he'd done. He later asked to be baptized.

Isaiah 65:17-25; Psalm 107:33-43, 108; Revelation 22:14-21

Birthdays: Andrew Bultman

Anniversaries: Dave & Evey Bassion,
Fr Christian & Anastasia Anderson,
Rodney & Gloria Neibauer

Saturday's Calendar:

9:30 a.m. Step Sisters Meeting
10:00 a.m. Bible Study ONLINE
5:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II
8:30 p.m. Not Alone Group

Today's Ministry: Intercessory Prayer Group

by *William Bacon*

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"Growing into Jesus - Reaching out with Love"

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Sunday, November 19

Luke 16:1-13 ...*Use earthly wealth, however acquired, to make friends so that when it is gone, they will receive you and you will have everlasting habitation.* (v.9 Lamsa Bible)

Schitts Creek is a bawdy sit-com of a deposed wealthy family of four forced to live in a motel far from the wealth and splendor of their past. Not only were their riches stripped from them, their old friends left them high and dry as well.

The latter part of my career was spent on a large private estate in which I served as Gardens Director. As a certified Horticulturalist since the 70s, it was my dream job. The estate boasted 25 gardens with a grounds crew of 5 full-time Gardeners. What surprised me is that after I retired it wasn't the lavished gardens I really missed. It was the staff. I returned one evening strolling by myself. Hoping to see Todd around the corner. Or, Eric working by the pool. Or, hearing Lisa ring me on my cell.

I was certainly not left quite as high and dry as the characters of *Schitts Creek*, but I often wonder. As today's reading asks of me, did I *make friends* as successfully as I *managed* work?

1 Chronicles 14:1-17; Psalms 66, 67; Acts 28:14b-23

Birthdays: Scott Miller, Brendan Fisk

Sunday's Calendar :

7:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite I
9:00 a.m. United at 9
10:15 a.m. Spiritual Formation
11:00 a.m. Courtyard Reception Honoring Rev Patsy

No 10:30 a.m. Worship Service

Today's Ministry: Gardening Ministry

Monday, November 20

1 Chronicles 15:1-29 *Michal...saw David dancing and playing, and she despised him in her heart.* (v.29 NAS)

Today recovery programs encourage addicts to make lists of those harmed and then forge direct restitution. David and Michal would have benefited from such therapy. Having had to flee Saul, David could have, nevertheless, remained faithful to his first wife Michal while he was in exile. Instead, he is heavy laden with new wives and concubines by the time Michal is “returned” to him. David knew how to repent before the Lord but there’s no record he did so with Michal. And while Michal was not blameless herself, her resentment in today’s reading is understandable.

These are two worthy reminders. No matter how much I may succeed—or fail—in life, I hope to be careful to restore anyone I may have wronged before I “let the sun go down,” as Paul put it. Many argue that Michal’s self-righteousness was her sin and barrenness her penalty and that David was honorable in bringing alms before the Lord. But, as Christ taught, if I am at odds with someone, I need to make restitution with them first, then bring my alms.

Psalms 89:1-18; Revelation 20:7-15; Matthew 17:1-13

Birthdays: Beck Larkan, Libby Reynolds, Jim Hurlburt

Anniversaries: Mark & Paulette Bragel

Monday’s Calendar:

7:00 a.m. Hour of Power AA
10:00 a.m. Praying Hands (1st & 3rd Mondays)
3:00 p.m. Daughters of the King (2nd Mondays)
5:45 p.m. ACOA

Today’s Ministry: Global Missions

Tuesday, November 21

Psalms 99 *Thou wast a forgiving God to them, and yet an avenger of their evil deeds.* (v.8b)

Recently I was called to jury duty. The case was alleged child abuse. In 2020 at least four US prison murders were committed against convicted child molesters. My faith requires I forgive all sins. But if the evidence here proved overwhelming, how could I resolve my faith?

I had to settle one issue: *suffer the children*. Jesus not only insisted *children* are the greatest in his kingdom he said what’s more, anyone who... “causes [children] to stumble it is better for him that a heavy millstone be hung around his neck and he be drowned.” The Greek *stumble* translates “to offend, to snare.”

A convicted child molester once told me he could not leave the county which he currently resided in without court permission. When I asked how long that restriction would last, he said for the rest of his life.

Jesus did tell us all sins can be forgiven. But, like today’s reading, He also acknowledged consequences for crime. Ultimately, I was not chosen for this jury but that call helped me wrestle forgiveness and consequences.

1 Chronicles 16:7-36; Psalms 97, 100; Revelation 21:1-8; Matthew 17:14-21

Birthdays: Adelyn Korber, Chris Gumm

Anniversaries: Kathy & Gary Rogers

Tuesday’s Calendar:

7:00 a.m. Hour of Power AA
9:30 a.m. Women’s Bible Study
12:10 p.m. Healing Service

Today’s Ministry: Grief Support Group

Wednesday, November 22

Matthew 17:22-27 “...do kings of the earth collect taxes from their sons or from strangers?” (v.25b)

When Peter answered, “from strangers” Jesus replied, “so sons are exempt.”

The papal apartments in Rome where Popes normally reside is nearly 2 million square feet. To give a perspective, the estate I spent most of my career on was about 30,000 square feet which included a ballroom, 2 kitchens, 2 dining rooms, and 12 bedrooms. The papal apartments could fit over 60 of these!

When Pope Francis was first shown his new residence, he concluded that it was simply too big. “It could house 300 people!” he said. Instead, Francis chose a 2-room apartment in the nearby St. Martha’s House, where he remains today. As a Pope, Francis was fully entitled to not only the papal apartment but also a 135-acre papal summer retreat. He declined both, opening them to the public instead.

In today’s reading Jesus implies that as the *Son* of God He was entitled exemption from the temple tax, yet He paid it so as not to give offense. These men teach me that sometimes forfeiting what one is entitled to can be very convincing.

1 Chronicles 20:1-8; Psalms 101, 109; Revelation 21:9-21

Birthdays: Grady McKinney, Natalie Thurlow, Ethan Matos

Anniversaries: Chris & Gloria Fountain, Bob & Carolyn Wilsey

Wednesday’s Calendar:

6:30 a.m. Men’s Bible Study
7:00 a.m. Hour of Power AA
9:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II
10:00 a.m. Life Group
4:30 p.m. Mary’s Kitchen
6:00 p.m. NAMI

Today’s Ministry: Heritage Fund

Thursday, November 23

1 Chronicles 21:1-27 “...please let me fall into the hand of the LORD, for his mercies are very great. But do not let me fall into the hands of man.” (v.13)

In today’s reading David must choose between three punishments for his sin. A famine, a war of defeat, or pestilence. As one scholar noted, the first two would put him at the mercy of neighbors and enemies. The last at the mercy of God. His choice was profound.

The portrait of David as seen in half a dozen books of the Old Testament range from humility, passion, loyalty, to adultery, murder, treachery, to composition, self-doubt, and contrition. Much of his career was that of a soldier and so he knew all too well, the “hands of man”—especially driven military ones. And yet in his choice of punishment, he chooses the most powerful: God.

Despite all his flaws, David was also known for his willingness to repent and a heart that yearned for God. The God who lamented, “I was only angry a little but they (men) overdid the punishment...and, I am exceedingly jealous...and, return to me that I may return to you.”

I’m with David: please, let me fall into the hand of the Lord—not men!

Psalms 105:1-22; Revelation 21:22—22:5; Matthew 18:1-9

Birthdays: Nancy Clark, Chris Anderson

Thursday’s Calendar:

7:00 a.m. Hour of Power AA
9:30 a.m. Life Group ONLINE
10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II
1:30 p.m. Grief Support Group
3:00 p.m. Thanksgiving Potluck Dinner
4:30 p.m. Life Group, Smith Hall
7:00 p.m. Al-Anon—Stepping Stones

Today’s Ministry: Hospital Visitors

Friday, November 24

1 Chronicles 22:1-19 *...David gave orders to gather the foreigners who were in the land of Israel...to build the house of God.* (v.2)

The Christian university I attended in the early 80s denied a Catholic a warehouseman position because he was not an “evangelical.” The matter went to court. Another time a writing of mine on anxiety issues for a Christian blog was rejected because it, apparently, promoted therapy more than faith.

What does it say to me that when building, clearly, the holiest structure (Solomon’s temple), that God used “foreigners”? One would think only Levites or virgins would be chosen. Today’s reading reminds me that God does not discriminate against skill sets.

I never learned what qualifications that Catholic applicant had—ironically, it didn’t make the news. And although my Buddhist Cognitive Behavior Therapist never converted me to Buddhism, his therapy was an answer to years of wrenched struggles and prayer.