

Saturday, May 18

Psalm 108 *I will awaken the dawn. I will praise you, O LORD, among the nations; I will sing of you among the peoples.* (vv.2b-3)

Years ago, I attended a Cursillo retreat that changed my life. Since then, I often awaken in the middle of the night singing praises to the Lord. It's as if my spirit has been awake singing to God while the rest of me sleeps. What a glorious gift! This has been one of many "showers of blessing" (Ezekiel 34:26) that I've received since knowing Jesus.

Praise has transforming power. I'm not talking about insincere flattery. I'm talking about honoring, applauding, paying tribute to our Creator for who He is and what He has done. Praise is full of life. It regenerates, renews; it waters the garden of our soul as it magnifies the Lord.

I love the imagery in today's verse. I visualize our praises ascending to heaven as incense. As they join those of the choir of angels that forever sing "Holy, holy, holy," God's light pierces the darkness as if to say: "Remember you have already been conquered." The praises of humans and angels alike join mysteriously to awaken the dawn by praising the Maker of the dawn. And, yes, our praise can also awaken the dawn within our weary souls, bringing light out of darkness.

Praise the Lord, oh, my soul; praise the Lord!
Ezekiel 36:22-27; Psalm 107:33-43; Ephesians 6:10-24; Matthew 9:18-26

Anniversaries: Conrad & Valerie Cody, Charles & Cindy Smithson

Birthdays: Mary Lou Owen, Bryce Cooper, Bonnie Moser, Elaine Minga, Sandy Walker

Saturday's Calendar:

7:00 am	Hour of Power AA
9:30 am	Step Sisters Meeting
10:00 am	Bible Study ONLINE
8:30 pm	Not Alone Group
5:00 pm	Holy Eucharist Rite II

Today's Ministry: Stewardship Committee

Reflections by Amaryllis Sanchez Wohlever

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Sunday, May 12

Exodus 3:1-12 *The Lord said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering."* (v.7 NIV)

Our Lord is deeply concerned about our suffering. He doesn't just feel sorry for us. God took our suffering so seriously that he "came down to rescue us" (v.8), becoming one of us, suffering *like* us and *with* us.

You may be thinking, "So what? God may be compassionate, but I'm still in a pit. My stomach is still in knots. My child is still sick. My mother is still dead."

These are all valid questions, and Jesus answers them. He says, "I love you so much that I suffered and died for you. I am fully acquainted with suffering. Learn from me how to suffer, and you will taste its fruit" (see Romans 5:3).

While suffering under house arrest, the apostle Paul wrote, "I want to know Christ...and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings..." (Philippians 3:10). It is clear throughout his letters that Paul did experience a fellowship with God that made him rejoice as he suffered. Paul learned to suffer *like* Christ and *with* Christ, and that made all the difference.

Psalms 66, 67; Hebrews 12:18-29; Luke 10:17-24

Birthdays: Peter Ellison

Sunday's Calendar:

7:30 am	Holy Eucharist Rite I
9:00 am	Contemporary Family Worship
10:30 am	Holy Eucharist Rite II
2:00 pm	Overeaters Anonymous

Today's Ministry: Praying Hands

"Growing into Jesus - Reaching out with Love"

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Monday, May 13

Ephesians 3:1-13 *I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace...* (v.7)

On April 29, 2000, I attended a silent retreat at a monastery in Alabama. During a service, I was asked to read the above passage from Paul's letter to the Ephesians. I got up and started reading, "For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles..." (v.1). Suddenly, something very strange happened. Paul's words became my own, and I sensed God saying to me, "You are like Paul. You share in his calling. Go share Me with the world."

Through tears, I finished the reading, sat down, and literally sobbed. God commissioned me right there in front of strangers, rather unexpectedly, during a simple reading. I was overcome with a sense of his presence, his anointing, and the "unsearchable riches of Christ" (v.8).

As God continues to reveal "the mystery of Christ," I feel chosen and loved. And, as Joshua, I know we must be courageous, knowing ourselves to be children of the promise, committed to obeying God, standing firmly on the knowledge that we are never alone.

God's grace abounds; praise the Lord!

Joshua 1:1-9; Psalm 89:1-18; Matthew 8:5-17

Birthdays: Kathryn Ralicki

Monday's Calendar:

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

Today's Ministry: Sacred Ground

Tuesday, May 14

Ephesians 3:14-21 *Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us...* (v.20)

Today's readings are tied together by the theme of power. When Samuel anointed David, we are told that "from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power" (1 Samuel 16:13). In Matthew, we see a display of Christ's power, at whose rebuke even the winds and the waves were stilled. The psalms paint a picture of a sovereign God who is Lord over heaven and earth. Our "King is mighty" (Psalm 99:4) indeed!

In Ephesians, Paul points out that the love of Christ is so astounding that we need power to grasp it! Jesus totally redefined the concept of power, showing us that God's mighty power is fueled by His outrageous love. We cannot separate God's power from His love.

Christ's most powerful act was his triumph over evil and death on the cross, an act of self-emptying love. To the world, this message is foolishness, "but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1:18). May we grasp this truth and receive it personally today, that our hearts may be set free to love.

1 Samuel 16:1-13a; Psalms 97, 99, 100; Matthew 8:18-27

Anniversaries: Doug & Tenna Wiles

Birthdays: Joe Schneider

Tuesday's Calendar:

7:00 am	Hour of Power AA
9:30 am	Women's Bible Study
12:10 pm	Healing Service

Today's Ministry: Shepherd Group

Wednesday, May 15

Psalm 101 *The deeds of faithless men I hate; they will not cling to me... I will have nothing to do with evil.* (vv.3b, 4b)

Abraham Lincoln once said, "I remember my mother's prayers, and they have always followed me. They have clung to me my whole life." I have something in common with Lincoln's mother, as so many of us parents do! I, too, want my prayers to cling to my children like a garment, protecting and embracing them.

My oldest son's birthday is coming up in a few weeks. Please join me as I pray for him with the words of Paul from Ephesians 4:

Lord, I pray that my David will "live a life worthy of the calling" he has received. May he grow to be "completely humble and gentle, bearing with others in love." May he, in all things, "grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ."

I pray with the psalmist that "he whose walk is blameless will minister" to all my children (Psalm 101:6b). May they have nothing to do with evil. And, Lord, create over them "a cloud of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night" (Isaiah 4:5). May they remain under the shadow of your wings.

Isaiah 4:2-6; Psalm 109; Ephesians 4:1-16; Matthew 8:28-34

Birthdays: Ava Norris, Bob Sauerberg, Frank Smith, Danielle Keith, Matt Spohr

Wednesday's Calendar:

7:00 am	Hour of Power AA
9:30 am	School of Prayer
10:00 am	Life Group
4:30 pm	Mary's Kitchen
5:30 pm	Daily Reflections AA

Today's Ministry: Short-term Mission

Thursday, May 16

Psalm 105:1-22 *Let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.* (v.3b)

I can recall going on a memorable nature hunt with my son, Joshua, when he was very young. We found pinecones, leaves, acorns, rocks, and listened for animal sounds. We saw squirrels, birds, butterflies, bees, and a peculiar crawling insect I had never seen. With each new discovery, we were both so excited! Although we couldn't find the family of four deer that had recently visited our front yard, the search was so enriching.

Today's psalm speaks of rejoicing as we seek the Lord, even before we find him. As Joshua and I walked in attentive expectation, all our senses were heightened. We paid attention to every sound and every smell. Things that normally might have been taken for granted became a

source of delight, especially as we shared our discoveries.

Our faith walk is so much like this nature hunt. Our God is incomprehensible. But as we seek Him earnestly, we get glimpses of His goodness and His love. As we seek our Lord, we find Him—sometimes in unexpected ways. And as we share our journey with others we rejoice, realizing that He is the treasure we seek.

Zechariah 4:1-14; Ephesians 4:17-32; Matthew 9:1-8

Anniversaries: Duane & Lynn Sonneborn

Birthdays: Clint Larkan, Robert Morris, Cece Scofield

Thursday's Calendar:

7:00 am	Hour of Power AA
7:30 am	Men's Bible Study
9:30 am	Life Group (Zoom)
10:00 am	Holy Eucharist Rite II
5:00 pm	Life Group
5:30 pm	AA California Group
5:45 pm	ACOA
7:00 pm	Al-Anon- Stepping Stones

Today's Ministry: St. Mary's Bookstore

Friday, May 17

Psalm 102 *But you, O LORD, sit enthroned forever; your renown endures through all generations.* (v.12)

How blessed is the psalmist, who was able to focus on God in the midst of his affliction. A crucial transition takes place between verses 11 and 12. The word "but" brings hope out of utter despair. It's amazing how quickly negativity can consume us, if we allow it. This often starts with one seemingly innocent thought that is not submitted in obedience to Christ (see 2 Corinthians 10:5). If we're blessed to recognize the downward spiral being built thought by thought, an act of the will can stop the construction process. When we choose to focus on God's sovereignty rather than our fears, everything changes.

We are told in Romans 12:2 to be "transformed by the renewing of (our) minds". One great way to do this is by memorizing Scripture; another is praise. Paul exhorts us to "Sing and make music in (our) heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything..." (Ephesians 5:19-20) This is a simple yet often elusive key to contentment, joy, and peace. Praise is a powerful balm unto our souls, as it keeps us in communion with God and joined to the host of angels who forever praise him.

Let us praise the Lord who sits enthroned forever, and let us build him a throne in our hearts.

Jeremiah 31:27-34; Ephesians 5:1-20; Matthew 9:9-17

Birthdays: David Keith

Friday's Calendar:

7:00 am	Hour of Power AA
9:30 am	Life Group
8:00 pm	AA Friday Nite Young People

Today's Ministry: Stephen Ministry