

Stretching Toward Sunday

Thoughts, readings and reflections
based on this week's lectionary readings

June 22, 2014

Proper 7A/Ordinary 12A/Pentecost +2

The readings this week:

- Genesis 21:8-21
- Psalm 86:1-10
- Romans 1:6b-11
- Matthew 10:24-39



[Click here to read this week's Scriptures](#)

"And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink."

- Genesis 21:19

About forty years ago, a lady in our church was widowed when her three children were young. In time, taxes were due on her house and her car transmission needed repair, and she did not have enough money for either one. One morning as she left her house to catch a bus to work, she noticed an envelope on the ground just outside her front door. She hurriedly picked it up and, seeing that it was addressed to her, put it into her purse. Then, realizing that the children had probably dropped it when they brought in the mail the previous evening, she pulled the envelope back out and opened it as she walked. Inside were seven \$50 bills! She was so astonished that she almost dropped it. The money had been folded inside a small note card that said simply, "Jesus loves you, and we do too!" That money was enough to finish paying the taxes and get the transmission repaired.

God was watching out for His child, and He is ever mindful of His own. In today's text, Hagar and Ishmael had been sent away from Abraham's home with bread and water, and they went into the desert. When their provisions were gone, it seemed that death was imminent, but God heard the

boy's cry. Deliverance came — as the focus verse says, Hagar saw a well and they were sustained.

When we face life's difficulties and it seems there is no solution, we can look to God. Our circumstances have not escaped His notice. He cares about each one of us just as He cared about this widow, and Hagar and Ishmael. The answer will probably not come for us in the same way it did for them, but God will come through. We will find Him to be a very present help. As we serve Him day by day, He will sustain us and be our comfort and strength. We can cry out to Him with any need, and trust Him to answer our prayers. [Daybreak Devotional](#)



Friend of sparrows
and life's minnows
who feels the fall
and rise of all
overlooked things;

God of the lights
of worlds sublime
that precede time
ever to you
all praise is due!

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Spirit who brings
life into dust
and beneath rust
sees the true face
saved by love;

Child of the dawn
who dares to scorn
religious signs
yet redefines
our hopes and rites;



[Study of a Flying Sparrow](#)
Udine, Giovanni da, 1487-1564



Reflecting on the Word

___ 1st Reading: [Genesis 21:8-21](#)

What have you struggled with recently? Tell Christ about it and let him take it from you as you come near to him in Scripture. What problem does Abraham face in 21:8-14, and how is it resolved? How does God help and encourage Hagar in her hour of crisis? Think of a difficult situation in which fear or unbelief led you to a course of action that didn't honor God. What were the consequences and lessons you learned? How can Sarah and Abraham's experience encourage us to be more patient and faithful in waiting for unanswered prayer?

[Quiet Time Bible Study, InterVarsity Press](#)

___ Psalm Reading: [Psalm 86:1-10](#)

Think of a time when you needed to rely on someone for emotional or physical support. What feelings did you have about depending on them for help? What is the overall sense you get about the nature of the psalmist's relationship with God? The psalmist sees God as loving, powerful and actively involved in caring for him. What are some of the specific statements he makes about God? What impact would this view of God have on a person's ability to depend on God? What reactions do you have to this kind of dependency on God? In what areas of your life do you need to acknowledge your dependence on God? [Quiet Time Bible Study, InterVarsity Press](#)



[My Cheerful Heart](#)

For you are great and
do wondrous things;
you alone are God.

- Psalm 86:10

Praying Toward Sunday

My God, please go easy on me,
I need you every minute of the day.
Cheer me up as I serve you,
lift my spirits as I focus on you.

I know you have always been forgiving,
always there for us when we call out.
So please hear me now when I pray;
beneath my chatter are deep needs.

When I'm in big trouble I call out,
and you never let me down.
Other religions may talk big
but none do the things you do.

I reckon that one day everyone will come
and give you their best love and praise.
They will find out how wonderful you are
and that nothing's worth more than you.

Holy Friend, you are patient and generous,
not easily upset but loving without reserve.
Right now, turn and hug me with your love,
give me more faith and determination.

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___ 3rd Reading: [Romans 6:1b-11](#)

When you became a Christian, was the change in your life dramatic, gradual or imperceptible? Explain. Whether it has taken place slowly or quickly, praise God for the change he has worked in your life. In what sense was our baptism both a funeral and a resurrection? Our "old self" refers to everything we were as non-Christians. When our old self was crucified with Christ, in what sense was sin rendered powerless? What does it mean to "count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God?" What sins are you particularly struggling to free yourself of? What assurance and encouragement is Paul giving us in your struggle against sin? [Quiet Time Bible Study, InterVarsity Press](#)

___ 4th Reading: [Matthew 10:24-39](#)

Have you ever known someone who seemed to like you only for what you could give them? What did it feel like? Jesus warns the disciples that their compassionate ministry will not be warmly received. What will they experience? Jesus prepares his present and future disciples for opposition. Why shouldn't we be afraid of those who oppose us? In what ways have you found rest in your life by coming to Jesus? [Quiet Time Bible Study,](#)