



Carstairs-Bancroft United Church
August 31, 2021
DAILY ENCOURAGEMENT
DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC
By Rev. Maria Szabone Berces



Source: Our Daily Bread

Beloved Carstairs Bancroft United Church Members,

Today's Inspiration in one sentence (or two 😊)

“Because of the Lord’s great love, we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”

(Lamentations 3:22-23)

Did You Know?

- The book of **2 Chronicles** is dated between 450 and 400 BC.
- **2 Chronicles** covers the period from the beginning of Solomon’s reign (970 BC) to the Babylonian exile (586 BC).
 - The author is unknown. Some scholars believe it’s Ezra, the Scribe; others think this book was compiled after the time of Ezra. (The NIV Study Bible)
 - “The author recognizes that, after the exile in Babylon and the prophetic and priestly efforts to rebuild the city, the people’s social, political, and religious dynamics have to be changed to serve the new reality. ... For the Chronicler, history is the concrete expression of the relationship between God and Israel, and that particular concept of history is set forth in a systematic and continuous manner. (Chalice Introduction to the Old Testament; page 130)

Personal Insight

During our holidays, we had a chance to visit the Royal Tyrrell Museum in Drumheller. This trip made me to realize and stand in awe about two things. First, even a land, which is ragged and called “Badlands” - because farming is impossible on its crispy soil - can be so beautiful and mesmerizing! We spotted wild flowers, cactus plants, and small rodents running around those layered mounds. Second, along the nicely set exhibition we could see the timeline of our planet Earth from Paleozoic to Cenozoic. It was shocking to ‘walk through’ the five extinction periods, when 60-95% of the Earth’s creatures didn’t make it to the next era. Still, life continued, even if in a different form.

During a pivotal time in our own history, when we have to find ways to cope with the changes and difficulties generated by the pandemic, it’s reassuring to hear about the mercy and grace of our Creator God. The Almighty, who **“is not the God of the dead but of the living.”** (Matthew 22:32) assures us life beyond the changes of history, and even beyond death.

To me, this is the greatest inspiration of today’s daily devotion; and in all the things and history we can see around us. In the changing of season, eras, political and social circumstances we have a God - the Creator of the heaven and earth – who promised to stand by us, to redeem us, and to usher us into life eternal through his Son, Jesus. We are encouraged to seek, and walk humbly with the Holy One! Thanks be to God!

Grace and Peace to You All,

Rev. Maria



Mercy and Grace

[Josiah] began to seek the God of his father David.

2 Chronicles 34:3

READ 2 Chronicles 34:1–8

A stately sunflower stood on its own in the center of a lonely stretch of national highway, just a few feet from the fast lane. As I drove past, I wondered how it had grown there with no other sunflowers visible for miles. Only God could create a plant so hardy it could thrive so close to the roadway in the gray gravel lining the median. There it was, thriving, swaying gently in the breeze and cheerfully greeting travelers as they hurried by.

The Old Testament tells the story of a faithful king of Judah who also showed up unexpectedly. His father and grandfather had enthusiastically served other gods; but after Josiah had been in power for eight years, “while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his father David” (2 Chronicles 34:3). He sent workmen to “repair the temple of the Lord” (v. 8), and as they did they discovered the Book of the Law (the first five books of the Old Testament; v. 14). God then inspired Josiah to lead the entire nation of Judah to return to the faith of their ancestors, and they served the Lord “as long as [Josiah] lived” (v. 33).

Our God is the master of unanticipated mercies. He’s able to cause great good to spring up unexpectedly out of the hard gravel of life’s most unfavorable circumstances. Watch Him closely. He may do it again today. – By **James Banks**

REFLECT & PRAY

Heavenly Father, I praise You for never changing. Your mercies are “new every morning!” (Lamentations 3:23). **Help me to look forward to what You have for me today. Amen.**

What mercies have you seen from God that you never anticipated? How does the thought that He’s able to bring about unexpected good give you hope today?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

Second Chronicles 34–35 build on the account given in 2 Kings 22–23; however, additional details are included in 2 Chronicles. For example, 2 Kings 22 shows Josiah’s actions as primarily taking place during the eighteenth year of his reign, but 2 Chronicles 34 details the breakdown of events between the eighth, twelfth, and eighteenth years. The varying details don’t indicate inaccuracies; rather, they present a more complete picture of the Bible with each book including a different emphasis: 2 Kings focuses on Josiah as a king whereas 2 Chronicles uses his story to present the importance of the Passover. – By **Julie Schwab**

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