



Carstairs-Bancroft United Church

October 22, 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

“... Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working.””

(John 5:17)

Did You Know?

- Regarding the **Gospel of John**, so far, we learned that scholars don't argue the authorship of apostle John, “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (13:23). They date this book between AD 50 and 85. They also find it proven that the author knew Jewish life well.

- John's gospel is rather different from the other three. Whether or not he knew them (or any one of them) continues to be debated. In any event, his witness to Jesus goes its own way, highlighting matters that in the other Gospels remain implicit and underdeveloped. The literary style of this witness of Jesus is also unique among the Gospels; here focus is on the “signs” of Jesus' identity and mission and on lengthy, theologically rich discourses. Some call chapters 1-11 the “*Book of Signs*”, and chapters 12-21 the “*Book of Glory*”.

- John begins with the profound announcement that Jesus is the divine “Word” of self-revelation - who existed with God from the beginning and through whom God created all things. Jesus the “Word” became embodied (incarnated) as a human being to be the light of life for the world. After this comes the proclamation that this Jesus is the Son of God sent from the Father to finish the Father's work in the world.

(The NIV Study Bible; John)

Personal Insight

This was the very first time that I came across with the phrase: “*Bible ‘beavers’*”. As a new Canadian, I actually like the expression, which includes one of Canada's symbols. It also reflects the resilience and determination that the beavers exhibit as they build their dams. The ‘infrastructure’ they build is used by other species as well. So, we can say that their work has an effect on other organisms in the ecosystem. This is why scientists consider beavers as a “keystone species”. (Wikipedia)

I believe that studying the Scriptures also makes us individuals who - by doing the steadfast activity of inquiring the Bible and getting closer to the One who is “**the light of the world**” - have an effect in their environment.

And as the meditation below highlights, you don't have to be a minister or a theologian to immerse in the wisdom and teachings available through the Bible. In our era it is accessible to any one of us, in our own mother tongue, in different forms (printed and online). With the Spirit's help, who is promised to us without favouritism, we can grow in the likeness of Jesus, and becoming the ‘lanterns’ that Christ intended us to be.

Grace and Peace to You All,

Rev. Maria



Studying the Scriptures

[Jesus said], "These are the very Scriptures that testify about me." John 5:39

John 5:39

READ [John 5:39–47](#)

J. I. Packer (1926–2020), in his classic work *Knowing God*, spoke of four well-known believers in Christ whom he called “beavers for the Bible.” Not all were trained scholars, but each one exercised great care to know God by gnawing into the Scripture, like a beaver digs in and gnaws away at a tree. Packer further noted that knowing God through Bible study is not just for scholars. “A simple Bible reader and sermon hearer who is full of the Holy Spirit will develop a far deeper acquaintance with his God and Savior than a more learned scholar who is content with being theologically correct.”

Unfortunately, not all who study the Bible do so with humble hearts with the goal of getting to know the Savior better and becoming more like Him. In Jesus’ day there were those who read the Old Testament Scriptures, yet they missed the very One they spoke of. “You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life” (John 5:39–40).

Do you sometimes find yourself stumped as you read the Bible? Or have you given up studying the Scriptures altogether? Bible “beavers” are more than Bible readers. They prayerfully and carefully gnaw away at Scripture in ways that open their eyes and hearts to see and love Jesus—the One revealed in it. – By **Arthur Jackson**

REFLECT & PRAY

Father, open my eyes to see Jesus in all of Scripture so that I might love, obey, and serve Him more. Amen.

What are some Old Testament Scripture passages that you recognize as “testifying” about Jesus? What better habits do you need to develop to become a better student of the Scriptures?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

In John 5:39, Jesus stresses the importance of studying Scripture because it points to Him. Both the Old and New Testaments declare Scripture’s impact. In 2 Timothy 3, Paul encourages Timothy to continue in the Scriptures, and he notes that “all Scripture is God-breathed” and trains and equips us for personal growth in holiness and to serve others (vv. 16–17). Before installing Joshua as the new Israelite leader, God urged him to “meditate on [the Law] day and night” so that he’d be obedient and successful (Joshua 1:8). In Psalm 19, David declares that the words of God refresh the soul, make wise the simple, and give joy to the heart and light to the eyes. By them we’re warned and find great reward (vv. 7–11). Through keeping and treasuring Scripture, we’re blessed, and God makes our way clear (Psalm 119:1–3, 105; Proverbs 2:1–5). – By **Alyson Kieda**

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