addressing in terms of our pride, greed, lust, doubt, or any other area of temptation to which we are vulnerable.

But having a mirror is not enough. James reminds his contemporaries (and us) that the truth of God's word is only effective in our lives when we act on what we read.

As you read God's word today, ask the Lord to strengthen your desire to conform to His ways.

Joel 2:28—3:8; Psalm 88; Luke 16:1-9

Saturday, November 14

Luke 16:10-18 *"You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight."* (v.15)

The Master

The Master said I'd best not wed the goddess of this world.

That would not be a marriage made in heaven.

After all, at that altar of promised love irreconcilable differences only appear to kiss.

To vow to give my heart to the mistress of money would cause me to miss God's best.

Ms. Mammon would pay me well, but steal me blind.

She'd rob my soul. She's just that kind.

I think you'd find when the question's asked "If anyone knows any reason why these two should not be joined together, let him speak now or forever hold his peace" the Master would cry "Treason!"

He's meek, but not mute. My God, He's astute.

He'd shout "Call it off!" And I would.

Rather than pleasing those who think I chose the best mate money can buy,

I want to please the One who gave His Son and won my heart with His love.

Joel 3:9-17; Psalms 87, 90; James 2:1-13

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Good News Daily

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Sunday, November 8

1 Corinthians 14:1-12 *Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying?* (v.9 NIV)

Understanding is a prerequisite to appreciating what goes on in the world around us. I can safely assume that your enjoyment of this week's Sunday worship is in direct proportion to your ability to understand what is going on in the sanctuary.

In his letter to a conflicted church in Corinth, Paul bends over backwards to be understood. It doesn't matter how artistic or beautiful or eloquent the worship may be, if the congregation is clueless about what is going on, the leaders of worship are to provide some clues.

If ever there was a time to take this passage seriously, it's today. Unless we can interpret the mystery of the gospel and the music of praise into the vocabulary of a younger generation, we stand to lose them. The debates over traditional hymns versus contemporary praise music and pipe organ versus keyboard and drums might be less heated if we saw in the conflict the souls of our children and grandchildren. Ask the Lord to help you be an advocate for understanding in your church.

Ezekiel 14:1-14; Psalms 93, 96; Matthew 20:1-16

Monday, November 9

Psalm 80 *You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it. You cleared the ground for it, and it took root and filled the land.* (vv.8, 9)

This is the season of harvest in much of North America. Crops have been gathered and barns filled. Fruit warehouses and packing plants are running around the clock. What began as seeds (or stark empty branches) a few months ago have matured into fully developed specimen of life-giving bounty. (Go ahead and munch on a crisp Washington State apple after you read today's devotional).

The passage for today recalls the humble beginnings of the nation of Israel. The psalmist compares them to a fragile grapevine. Like many of us, they lacked confidence. They were spiritually impoverished and insignificant. Against a backdrop of the surrounding culture they were unimpressive.

But the rest of Psalm 80 celebrates the talent of the Master Gardener with a master plan who took the tender vine and transplanted it according to His loving purpose. The identity and viability of the ancient people of God was not based upon their abilities or sense of worth, but upon the power and character of the One they worshiped.

As you fill your horn of plenty and display it on the dining room table, take heart that what begins small reaches maturity. Our feelings of insecurity will not thwart God's purpose for our lives. Now that's cause for praise. Hallelujah!

Joel 1:1-13; Revelation 18:15-24; Luke 14:12-24

Tuesday, November 10

Psalm 78:1-39 *He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our forefathers to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children.* (vv.5-6)

There's something about a family Thanksgiving table as Norman Rockwell painted it that represents the soul of our nation. We have all lived it. Around the festive table grandparents and parents pass more than the mashed potatoes to the younger ones. They pass along stories of a shared history and a common faith. The sumptuous food we devour is nourishing to our bodies to be sure, but the heritage of a common ancestry is even more nourishing to our collective soul, be it a family or a nation.

Ever since God raised up a people that He claimed as His own, He charged them with the significance of kindling faith in the hearts of succeeding generations. Unless children are told the stories of what God has done in their parents' and grandparents' lives, their vision of the family God is blurred. Unless they hear how God answered prayer and intervened in an impossible situation, the seeds of gratitude will not develop into full grown thanksgiving. As you prepare for your family Thanksgiving meal, include older family members whose stories of God's faithfulness are as sweet and inviting as your famous pumpkin pie.

Joel 1:15—2:11; Revelation 19:1-10; Luke 14:25-35

Wednesday, November 11

Revelation 19:11-21 *The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean.* (v.14)

Today is the traditional observance of Veterans' Day. It is a day in which we remember those women and men who served in the armed forces in defense of the democratic form of government we embrace. Some never returned from their tour of duty but instead rest in peace in consecrated foreign soil. Some returned in a coffin, others with gratitude to be home. Aware of the risks, but unaware of their destiny, they followed their commanding officers bravely and willingly.

In today's reading the apostle John is given a vision of a battlefield where the troops of heaven will follow the commander known as Faithful and True into conflict against the demonic forces of darkness. This cavalry of Christians uniformed in white linen gallop on white horses. As they charge the enemy they notice their commanders robe billowing in the wind. They see the monogram. The one they follow is none other than the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. It is Jesus himself! And because he is their leader, they continue on in confidence. They are sure of victory in the coming fight.

As veterans of the faith, victory is our confidence, too, as we face the daily skirmishes of life's routines. Jesus leads the way every day of the believer's life. The reality of the scene John saw in his vision of the future is a present hope for us today.

Joel 2:12-19; Psalm 119:97-120; Luke 15:1-10

Thursday, November 12

Psalm 23 *Even though I walk through the darkest valley I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.* (v.4)

There is no doubt someone you know who is walking through the dark shadows of death's valley this week. Maybe they are approaching this season of family gatherings with heaviness in their heart. Perhaps they are dealing with the reality of a doctor's diagnosis of serious disease. Possibly they are attempting to cope with an empty chair where a year ago sat someone deeply loved.

The psalmist knew the agony of sorrow firsthand. He felt abandoned and lonely, estranged from the Lord. Grief charges that kind of interest. The writer of these words would have longed to have someone come alongside and walk with him. Even if the itinerary can't be altered, a journey in a dark place is less traumatic when there are fellow travelers.

What kind of companion do you think the Lord would have you be to that family member, friend, or colleague who is feeling like the darkness is the only friend they have? Remember the old Swedish proverb, "A shared sorrow is half a sorrow!"

Joel 2:21-27; Psalm 27; James 1:1-15; Luke 15:1-2, 11-32

Friday, November 13

James 1:16-27 *Anyone who listens to the word, but does not do what it says, is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and after looking at himself goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.* (vv.23-24)

Can you believe how much damage is done to our appearance in only eight hours of sleep? As I look into the bathroom mirror first thing in the morning, I am amazed at what I see. But quickly I go to work restoring what I can with washcloth, shaver, hairbrush, and toothbrush. Aren't mirrors wonderful? I can't imagine life without one. Without a "looking glass" we wouldn't know how bad we look.

That's what James is getting at in the passage for today. He contrasts the word of God to a mirror. The Bible shows us just how unkempt we are much of the time. If we are willing to look, we can easily see what needs