

Prayer and Study Guide

Daily Scripture Readings – 7/7/19

Monday – Psalm 41:1-3 and Mark 5:21-24, 35-43. **Anna Bartlett Warner.** In 1860, Susan Warner asked her sister Anna Bartlett Warner to write a poem to be used in her book *Say and Seal*. In the novel, a little boy named Johnny Fax is dying. Nothing could be done to ease his pain or give him a second chance at life. As his ultimate fate grew nearer, the novel's focal character, Mr. Linden, who was Johnny's Sunday school teacher, attempted to comfort the small boy. Looking into the child's eyes, he slowly recited a poem that began, "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so." These simple lines also moved thousands of readers to tears. Hauntingly beautiful, composed straight from Anna's faithful heart, "Jesus Loves Me" quickly sprang out of her book's pages and became one of the most beloved poems of the era. Jesus has the power to heal us and to lift us up to eternal life. Spend some time praying for children who are struggling with sickness.

Tuesday – Read Ephesians 6:10-17. **Sunday School at West Point.** Anna Bartlett Warner was well aware of the coming of the war between the states. She lived with her father and sister on Constitution Island. Their home was practically next door to the United States Military Academy at West Point, and from her front porch she constantly heard the rumors of war. Yet even in the face of uncertain times, every Sunday Anna taught Bible classes to the cadets. She realized that if the southern states made good on their threat to withdraw from the Union many of the boys she knew could be killed or wounded in the war that would follow. While it broke her heart to consider the dismal fate for those too young to have experienced the many blessings of life, she also fully comprehended the importance of leading each of them to Jesus now. With an urgency brought about by a nation on the brink of dividing, sharing Christ's love became her mission in life. Ask Jesus to help you share the Good News of Jesus with the people in your life.

Wednesday – Read I John 4:7-12. **The Bible Tells Me So.** By the beginning of the Civil War, William Bradbury, a voice and organ teacher, had built his own music company to publish and distribute his works. When he read "Jesus Loves Me" he decided to add a melody to Anna Warner's poem. William Bradbury also wrote the music for "Sweet Hour of Prayer," "He Leadeth Me," "My Hope Is Built," and "Just As I Am, Without One Plea." A lover of children's voices, as well as a proponent of music education in both school and church, Bradbury allowed the child in his own heart to spring forth when writing the simple musical notes for "Jesus Loves Me." Then, to fully complete the work, he added the following chorus: *Yes, Jesus loves me, Yes, Jesus loves me, Yes, Jesus loves me, The Bible tells me so.* How do I know that Jesus loves me? Over and over again, the Bible tells me so. As you pray, thank Jesus for the way he loves you.

Thursday – Read Mark 10:13-16. **Let the Children Come to Me.** David Rutherford McGuire was an Anglican priest who wrote the second and third verses in our hymnal.

2. *Jesus loves me! This I know, as he loved so long ago, taking children on his knee, saying, "Let them come to me."* In a time when many adults viewed children as the lowest of the low, Jesus elevated children to a place of importance in the kingdom of God. Jesus welcomed children and demonstrated God's love to them. Tony Campolo recalled working at a Christian junior high camp. One of the campers, a boy with spastic paralysis, was the object of heartless ridicule. One night his cabin group chose this boy to lead the devotion before the entire camp. Unashamedly the spastic boy stood up, and in his strained, slurred manner – each word coming with enormous effort – he said simply, "Jesus loves me, and I love Jesus!" That was all. Conviction fell upon those junior-high campers. Many began to cry. Revival gripped the camp. Pray for children to know that Jesus loves them.

Friday – Read Romans 5:3-8 and I Corinthians 1:18-31. **Karl Barth.** Karl Barth delivered one of the closing lectures of his life at the University of Chicago Divinity School. At the end of the lecture, the president of the seminary asked him, "Of all the theological insights you have ever had, which do you consider to be the greatest of them all?" The students sat with pads and pencils ready. Karl Barth closed his eyes and thought for a while. Then he smiled, opened his eyes, and said to the young seminarians, "The greatest theological insight that I have ever had is this: Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so!"

Saturday – Read John 3:16-17. **China.** "Jesus Loves Me" is one of the first hymns taught to people in the mission field and was titled "China" in some hymnals of the 19th century because it was the favorite hymn of China. The Chinese church endured oppression when Mao Tse Sung tried to crush the church. After years of languish in the early 1970s, a cryptic note was sent to Christians outside the country that said, "The this I know people are well." Pray for Christians who suffer oppression. Pray for the church in China.

Lectionary Readings: II Kings 5:1-14; Psalm 30; Galatians 6:1, 16; Luke 10:1-20.

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