

# Christian MONTHLY

DEDICATED TO THE PROCLAMATION  
OF THE WORD OF GOD



Psalm 119:105  
Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,  
and a light unto my path.

July 2024

## Happy Dependence Day

Pastor Jason Salmi  
Vancouver, Washington

**E**VERY YEAR IN JULY WE celebrate THE American holiday: Independence Day. Flags fly, parades roll down our streets, and the overwhelming mood of the day is freedom and pride. For those of us who are blessed to live in the good ol' U.S.A., we can't help but also feel gratitude that we live where we live and enjoy the freedoms that we do. And we take our national independence seriously. It is a good thing for us to be able to stand on our own, and be beholden to no other nation.



Interestingly enough, as Christians we also celebrate and are grateful for freedom, but not for independence. This may at first seem like it doesn't add up. To us, the two things simply go hand-in-hand. And it is doubtlessly true that we

have freedom. Paul, in his letter to the Galatians writes: *Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. (Galatians 5:1)* Though all of us were born into bondage through sin, Christ's death on the cross has freed us. And it is true freedom. Jesus Himself declared, *If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. (John 8:36)*

But that freedom does not come with independence, but rather dependence. As Christians living in true freedom, we live as those who are continually dependent on God for everything. In fact, the life of a Christian is marked by the growing realization of just how dependent we truly are. As we go through struggles and trials, and as we face temptations, it becomes ever more clear that we rely on God completely. And what a blessing this realization is. Instead of feeling as if we need to be able to stand on our own, we instead grow in the knowledge that it is God who works both in us and through us. So this summer, as Americans, let's wave our flags, eat red, white, and blue popsicles and light off fireworks to celebrate our independence. And as Christians, let's offer prayers of gratitude to God for our dependence on Him. May the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord. ~

*Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.*

*Philippians 4:4-9*

**W**HEN WE ARE IN CHRIST, we are citizens of heaven and our treasure is to be there. Because we belong to Him, we are to walk in Him. He is to be the Lord of our everyday lives. The way we behave and treat others reveals to others what we believe. Our attitude and behavior at home, at school, at work, and in the community is important. Our behavior can draw others to the Lord or it can become a stumbling block to them. When we have a new life in Christ it means death to our old self. We desire to live in His will.

*Elmer Yliniemi*

# The Prophet of God

Pastor Nicholas Kandoll  
New York Mills, Minnesota

Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me. But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.



But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken. Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep. So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not. And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah. Then said they unto him, Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil is upon us; What is thine occupation? and whence comest thou? what is thy country? and of what people art thou? And he said unto them, I am an Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land. Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them.

Then said they unto him, What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous. And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you. Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring it to the land; but they could not: for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them. Wherefore they cried unto the LORD, and said, We beseech thee, O LORD, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O LORD, hast done as it pleased thee. So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging. Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the LORD, and made vows.

Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

*Jonah 1:1-17*

**J**ONAH WAS A PROPHET OF God. Most people think of a prophet as someone who tells the future. In the Old Testament prophets do tell the future. But the idea of a prophet as a fortune teller is more pagan than biblical.

The office of Prophet in the Bible is not about **what** they say but it's all about **who** told them to say it. A prophet in the biblical sense is someone who God calls to give His Word to the people. Jonah's whole job was to say what God had given him to say to the people that God told him to say it to.

Now the Ninevites were terrible, brutal people. They were terrible in every sense of the word. Utter evil. And Jonah hated them for it. So when the Lord tells him to go deliver the message to the Ninevites, Jonah figures it is better for him to run away. This can be puzzling. Jonah would, more than likely, be pleased with the destruction of the Ninevites. So why does he run? The answer lies in the end of the book. Jonah runs because he knew deep down in his soul that God is merciful. And he knew that if the Ninevites repented, God would stay His wrath. He didn't want God to be merciful to the Ninevites, so he ran.

When you read the book of Jonah you find that pretty much everyone obeys God except His prophet Jonah. The sailors, the Ninevites, the great fish, even the plant. This account shows us that we ought to be obedient to the Lord even if we don't see the big picture. In our day and age we have a similar role to Jonah. God has entrusted us with His Word and commanded that we preach it. Jesus died for sinners; no one is beyond His grace. Even our disobedience is forgiven by Him. We have the perfect opportunity to proclaim the saving work of Jesus to a world that in some ways is no different than the Ninevites. The beautiful thing is that God is merciful and His Word works in even the hardest of hearts.

*Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift. (2 Corinthians 9:15)*

*God's peace.*



*The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.*

*Psalms 19:9-10*

*How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!*

*Psalms 119:103*

Do not think that you faint in praising Him. Your praise of Him is like food: the more you praise Him, the more you acquire strength, and He whom you praise becomes the sweeter.

*Augustine*

# Repentance and the Gospel

Smalcald Articles

**Article III—Of Repentance:** This office [of the Law] the New Testament retains and urges, as St. Paul, Romans 1:18 does, saying: *The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.* Again, Romans 3:19: *All the world is guilty before God. No man is righteous before Him.* And Christ says, John 16:8: *The Holy Ghost will reprove the world of sin.*

This, then, is the thunderbolt of God by which He strikes in a heap both manifest sinners and false saints, and suffers no one to be in the right, but drives them all together to terror and despair. This is the hammer, as Jeremiah 23:29 says: *Is not My Word like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?* This is not *activa contritio* or manufactured repentance, but *passiva contritio* [torture of conscience], true sorrow of heart, suffering and sensation of death.

This, then, is what it means to begin true repentance; and here man must hear such a sentence as this: You are all of no account, whether you be manifest sinners or saints, in your own opinion; you all must become different and do otherwise than you now are and are doing, no matter what sort of people you are, whether you are as great, wise, powerful, and holy as you may. Here no one is righteous, holy, godly, etc.

But to this office the New Testament immediately adds the consolatory promise of grace through the Gospel, which must be believed, as Christ declares, Mark 1:15: *Repent and believe the Gospel*, i.e., become different and do otherwise, and believe My promise. And John, preceding Him, is called a

preacher of repentance, however, for the remission of sins, i.e., John was to accuse all, and convict them of being sinners, that they might know what they were before God, and might acknowledge that they were lost men, and might thus be prepared for the Lord, to receive grace, and to expect and accept from Him the remission of sins. Thus also Christ Himself says, Luke 24:47: *Repentance and remission of sins must be preached in My name among all nations.*

But whenever the Law alone, without the Gospel being added exercises this its office there is nothing else than death and hell, and man must despair, like Saul and Judas; as St. Paul, Romans 7:10, says: "Through sin the Law killeth." On the other hand, the Gospel brings consolation and remission not only in one way, but through the word and

Sacraments, and the like, as we shall hear afterward in order that [thus] there is with the Lord plenteous redemption, as Psalm 130:7 says against the dreadful captivity of sin...

**Article IV—Of the Gospel:** We will now return to the Gospel, which not merely in one way gives us counsel and aid against sin; for God is superabundantly rich [and liberal] in His grace [and goodness]. First, through the spoken Word by which the forgiveness of sins is preached—He commands to be preached—in the whole world; which is the peculiar office of the Gospel. Secondly, through Baptism. Thirdly, through the holy Sacrament of the Altar. Fourthly, through the power of the keys, and also through the mutual conversation and consolation of brethren, Matt. 18:20: Where two or three are gathered together, etc. ~



## The Kingdom of Christ

*The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.*

*Isaiah 2:1-3*

**T**HE KINGDOM OF CHRIST HAS been put in progress because it is placed in public view with its powers and gifts. Here one sees truth, pure doctrine, safety, peace; the Gospel is heard, and nothing can give greater joy. For it promises an abundance of things and salvation both here and hereafter, and a man stands safe in this Word against everything that opposes him, even against the gates of hell (Matthew 16:18). Behold, these virtues should influence the nations to make them come. They are proclaimed through the Word, namely, that Christ is the King of mercy and of peace. Moses preaches the Law and is the minister of sin and death. Nobody runs to him. On the contrary, they are terrified. Christ, on the other hand, is the Minister of righteousness, of life, and of peace. Therefore the people flow to Him just as water flows by its own effort and needs no one to push it...

This is what will influence and draw the nations, so that they flow to Christ and learn, namely, the Word. From this place the scepter of Christ's kingdom was sent forth through the apostles without force in supreme peace, and the sweetness of this peace takes hold of the nations. But behold here the promise of a new word, a new law, namely, one that is different from that which was given from the cloud and on Sinai. Here a place different from Sinai is designated. Law, that is, proclamation. The prophecy stands that a proclamation shall flow from Jerusalem into all nations. This was done through the apostles. "Their voice has gone out to all the earth (Romans 10:18)." By the Word alone, therefore, the church is recognized, and in the glory of the Word the reign of Christ is described. The Word draws the people, makes them willing and joyful. Thus the church is exalted and triumphs against tyrants and heretics even in the midst of tribulation, in order that they may be forced to confess that this is true.

*Martin Luther*

# Pentecost

Gwen Wilson  
Ridgefield, Washington

Dear Children,

Hello to each of you. It has been several weeks since we celebrated Easter and read about Jesus' ascension. Now it is that time which Jesus spoke about to His disciples just before He returned to heaven, that time when He told them to wait for the power from on high.

Just shortly before Jesus went back to His Father, He had some instructions for His disciples. We'll look at some places in St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke. Lastly we'll look into Acts 2 when Pentecost happens.

**I**n *St. Matthew 28:18-20*, Jesus is telling His disciples that all power is given to Him in earth and heaven. He can use that power to help His disciples as He instructs them to go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the **Holy Ghost**. (They had not received the Holy Ghost yet and probably wondered what that meant.) Jesus wanted all people who heard the disciples speak, to observe all things that He commanded even His disciples, and He promised to be with them to the end of the world.

In *St. Mark 16:15-18*, we read about Jesus instructing His disciples before His ascension, saying, "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel." He then tells them that those who believe will be saved but those who don't shall be damned. He says that those that believe will have proof of their faith in that they will be able to heal the sick, cast out devils, and help those bitten by snakes to not die. This will be the power of the **Holy Spirit** living in them.

In *St. Luke 24:46-49*, just before Jesus' ascension, He is giving last instructions to the disciples. He tells them it was necessary for Him to suffer and rise from the dead. (The disciples had already clearly witnessed this.) Then Jesus tells them that repentance (turning away from sin) and remission (forgiveness) of sin should be preached in His name among the nations, but beginning at Jerusalem. He tells them they are witnesses of all they've seen and heard and are hearing. He adds that He will send the promise of His Father (the **Holy Spirit**) upon them, but they are to wait in Jerusalem until they receive the Spirit.

In *verses 50-53*, Jesus leads the disciples out as far as Bethany and He lifts up His hands and says a blessing over them. While He does this, He is lifted off the ground and a cloud hides Him from sight. He returns to God the Father, from where He came.

The disciples stand gazing in awe as their Savior friend is truly gone. He will not physically walk with them any more.

The disciples are sad but happy, and they worship Him, and with great joy return to Jerusalem and are continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.

In *Acts 2:1-21*, the disciples have been waiting as Jesus told them and preaching the Gospel as Jesus commanded them.

They were all gathered together in one place that Day of Pentecost, when the receiving of the **Holy Ghost** was about to happen. There they were together and all of a sudden there came a sound from heaven like a mighty, rushing wind (It was not wind but sounded so), and it filled the house.

One can imagine what that would've been like to hear that sound of wind and yet see nothing unusual, until there appeared unto them tongues of fire (not hot fire!) and each person had a flame on their heads. I'm sure there was much quiet in the room(s) as they sat looking at each other with this little flame resting on each head. THEN, they were all filled with the **Holy Ghost** and each began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit gave utterance.



Word quickly spread about this amazing thing of many hearing many languages spoken by disciples who were preaching the Gospel as they were instructed by

Jesus. Each one listening heard the same Gospel in their own language. All were amazed and marveled, because these disciples were not from this area but from Galilee, where they did not speak these languages.

Some laughed and mocked and said these men were drunk. That was not so as it was only 9:00 in the morning.

Peter stood up and told everyone that they were not drunk. He said this was happening because it was the fulfillment of a prophecy spoken by the prophet Joel (2:28-32): *And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.* (Acts 2:17-21)

Peter spoke directly to the men of Israel and told them to hear these words.

Jesus came to seek and to save, and His desire is that all Israel should be saved. He came to give His life for all mankind. Jesus spoke when He was on earth and told the people that when you believe in Him you will never die. Physical death here for a Christian is only a passing thing, and when Jesus comes again all those who died in faith will be raised to life again and will be received into heaven to live forever. We can hardly imagine this, but we must have faith knowing that Jesus will not go back on His promises.

Children, if you can freely speak with your mouth that you believe in God and Jesus, then know this, that the **Holy Spirit** has been poured out on you just as Jesus did at Pentecost. It is a mystery but we can praise God and thank Him for this and the great love He has for us.

God bless each of you today and I pray that you will always seek to know your Saviour more and more. He loves you with an everlasting love.

God's peace.

# Beware of Leaven

Pastor Ryan Kandoll  
Plymouth, Minnesota

**M**Y WIFE CARMEN HAS GONE the way of many other millennial suburban moms and taken to making sourdough bread as a hobby. It's an archaic method and the process is interesting. The leaven for sourdough is made by allowing the dough to sit and collect bacteria and yeast that is naturally in the air. Eventually, it will collect enough to ferment and become a starter. A small amount of this starter can be added to new dough and it will spread through the whole lump causing the bread to rise by the same process of fermentation.

Our Lord Jesus used leaven to teach an important lesson that Christians need today as much as we ever have before.

*Matthew 16:5-12: And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread. Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.*

The Pharisees and Sadducees were two sects within Judaism at Jesus' time. The Sadducees (sometimes called Herodians) were the elite, rich, political class. They had wealth and status because they had sold out to the Roman occupiers in the beginning. They were rich, they were liberal in morality, and they were skeptical of the mysteries of God. They didn't believe in an afterlife, angels, or miracles. They were much like today's liberals.

The Pharisees were men who saw a lot of immorality in their culture and had a desire to follow God's Word. In reaction to that they sought to be set apart. They were common men in their economic status. The problem is they were legalistic and made a show of their formal religion. They were much like today's legalists.

In Jesus' day, the liberals denied that the miracles happened. The legalistic hypocrites denied their source. Both denied God's Word. The legalist did it by adding to it, and the liberal by taking away from it.

Jesus instructs us to beware of their leaven. Both sects had the same leaven that caused them to deny God and reject Jesus. Legalism and liberalism are not two opposite ends of one spectrum. They are both in the same camp and working against God just like the Pharisees and Sadducees tried to at the time of Christ.

The timing of Jesus' teaching this lesson is fascinating. Jesus had just multiplied 7 loaves and a few small fish to feed 4,000 people. Immediately after, the Pharisees and Sadducees demanded a sign and Jesus said none would be given except the sign of Jonah.

The feeding of the multitudes is one that liberal scholars try to explain away by saying that Jesus didn't actually multiply the loaves and fish but instead got people to open their packs and share their lunch so that everyone including those less prepared could be fed before going home. If that's the case then how did He manage to collect so many baskets from a crowd only recently convinced away from their stinginess? Also, why does our Lord use it in this lesson? This lesson follows soon after to show the liberal that they are wrong. Jesus Himself confirms that He performed the miracle. The liberals make Jesus into a liar or a lunatic while calling Him a prophet and teacher.



The religious hypocrite or legalist doesn't like the narrow way of Christ being the only way and tries to somehow work their own righteousness and require others to do the same. They reject the imputed

righteousness that is given to us in Christ and try to present their good works to God.

A thing that the Pharisees and Sadducees have in common is a desire to "move beyond the cross and talk about deeper things." They say it is for maturity and growth but in reality, it is a desire to move away from it all together. It's a move away from our justification, which is the central doctrine of the Christian faith. The legalistic hypocrite wants to act like they are smarter than the apostles who focused on the cross and resurrection like Paul in Philippians 3:2-16.

When legalists point the finger to make a person struggling with same-sex attraction feel like an outcast and unwanted by God they show a distrust for the work of Christ. When liberals want to bless same-sex unions they are showing their distrust for the Word of God. Both are wrong. The Bible is clear that homosexuality is wrong just like sex outside of marriage is wrong. The Bible is also clear that Christ died for the sins of the whole world. We need to beware of both. I can go on, but this is not an exhaustive study.

This leaven as Jesus calls it is the perfect name for it. The Jews were used to working with leaven. You add a very small amount (like the cup of sourdough starter Carmen uses) to a lump of dough and it spreads and ferments the whole lump. To this day every year before Passover devout Jewish families get together and clean out all of the leaven from their house in preparation for the Passover. They throw away their sourdough starter, and all of their bread, and search in every nook and cranny of their whole house to clean out every last breadcrumb. They understood how a tiny bit of leaven could spread.

Both the legalist and the liberal deny the Word of God. They misinterpret it to their own hurt. But did they wake up one day and say, "I don't want to believe what God says

anymore, I think I know better.”? These things start small. False ideas creep into the heart. If not checked they grow and ferment. We fight against these ideas that creep into our own mind by reading the Word of God often, praying, and living according to the Word of God even if it goes against our evil desires.

False teaching can creep into a church in the same way when these false ideas spread from person to person. We must stay vigilant to study and hold onto the Word of God.

The disciples in the boat with Jesus didn't get what Jesus was talking about at first. Sometimes we don't get it either and that's scary. If we treat false teaching as if it's no big deal the whole church could be led astray. Most of the Bible has been written in response to false teaching. It is not a new

problem and it is not a crisis, but it is something to beware of. When false teaching occurs in the church, we fight it with the simple yet powerful acts of confessing the Word of God, prayer, living out what the Bible teaches with meekness—not for show, and church discipline if needed.

We need to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees or the Liberals and the Legalists. We cannot take away from God's Word or add to it. We may not always understand it but need to be careful that we love, trust, and guard the Word of God. His ways are not our ways, nor are His thoughts our thoughts. We have minds that have been corrupted by the fall. The Word of God is eternal. It was in the beginning with God (John 1:1) and it will never pass away (Matthew 24:35). ~



## Trust in the Lord

Pastor Dennis Hannu  
Wolf Lake, Minnesota

*Praise ye the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul. While I live will I praise the LORD: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being. Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish. Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God: Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is: which keepeth truth for ever: Which executeth judgment for the oppressed: which giveth food to the hungry. The LORD looseth the prisoners: The LORD openeth the eyes of the blind: the LORD raiseth them that are bowed down: the LORD loveth the righteous: The LORD preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down. The LORD shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the LORD.*

**Psalm 146:1-10**

**T**RUST IS VERY IMPORTANT TO US as we live out our lives here in this world. It affects our relationships and how we converse and live with one another. We can be really comfortable with someone we trust, but if that trust is shattered it is one of the hardest things to rebuild. When we lose confidence in someone or something, inevitably we no longer trust them. When you don't have trust, then it is impossible to have any confidence in what they say or do.

We are instructed in this psalm to not put our trust in princes or politicians; neither should we place our trust in human institutions. There are a lot of good institutions established by men, but if that is where we place our trust we will be sorely disappointed. Humans by their very nature will shatter our trust. We have seen that in the news time and time again as people take advantage of others in order to gratify their own desires. Ultimately, there is no lasting help to be found in our politicians. We are to respect them and the offices they hold but not place our trust in them. We as citizens of the United States should exercise our right to vote, but if things don't go as we would like them to go, we ought not lose heart because our trust is in God. In God we trust.

We trust in the Lord who brings us lasting joy and happiness. We trust in the Lord who gives us peace that is lasting and eternal. The psalmist says, *Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God.* Our Creator is always trustworthy, His Word is the Truth and its promises are to be trusted. The Lord had indeed fulfilled all His promises laid out in this psalm in the life and ministry of Jesus. He embodies the Word and comes to bring justice to a world that needs it. He gives food to the hungry, looses the prisoners, opens the eyes of the blind, raises those who are bowed down, and not only loves the righteous but gives them their righteousness. One of my favorite verses in the Bible is *2 Corinthians 5:21: For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* There is no greater gift that can be given to man than the righteousness of God and by being joined to Jesus Christ we possess this righteousness. No government or politician can give you that. This can only be given by the One who has made us, redeemed us, and reigns over all.

Another one of my favorite passages in the Bible is *Proverbs 3:5-6: Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.* Even when our government and politicians fail us we do not faint or lose heart because we have not placed our trust in them. I would encourage you to pray for our president and political leaders in this nation, but understand in the end they are just men and women like you and me. Trust in the Lord! He is still reigning and will always reign! Praise the Lord!

*God's peace.*

# Running After Who We Love

Lois Matson  
Yacolt, Washington

**D**O YOU HAVE LOVED ONES who do not believe the Gospel? Some may have heard and do not believe, while others may have never truly heard the truth from the Scripture but only have heard of a man-made, false religion. The following song titled, “Go” by The Gray Havens, speaks of running with the Gospel after those we love.

I hope you go  
I hope I see you  
Golden shores  
With lights more radiant  
Than the sun  
You say you won't  
You won't believe it  
Still I can try  
With the breath inside me  
To say again

It's gonna go  
In the blink of an eye  
And I just wanna know  
You'll be there by my side  
And it can feel so cold  
But I'm holding on to hope  
That one day your heart  
Will make it home

When it comes, we'll be running, running after  
When it comes, we'll be running, running after  
Who we love, who we love, running after  
Who we love, who we love, further up

And I, when we go, when we go  
I, when we go, I wanna go with you  
And I, when we go, when we go  
I, when we go, I wanna go with you  
With you

It's gonna go  
In the blink of an eye  
And I just wanna know  
You'll be there by my side  
It's gonna go  
In the blink of an eye  
And I just wanna know  
You'll be there by my side  
And it can feel so cold

But I'm holding on to hope  
That one day your heart  
Will make it home

I've come to realize something in this whole brain tumor experience. I've been quiet—too quiet—about the things that matter more than anything else in the world. I've tiptoed around religious discussions with loved ones. I haven't been forthright enough to preach Law and Gospel clearly and plainly, the stern Law that kills us and the sweet Gospel that brings us to life.



There are only two places to spend eternity, my friends... in the presence of God or away from His presence. In His presence is fullness of joy, at His right hand are pleasures forevermore (Psalm 16:11). To be away from His presence is bad, bad, bad.

John wrote the simplest Gospel: *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.* (John 3:16-21)

You're a sinner. I know that because the Scripture says that everyone is a sinner (Romans 3). John wrote that whoever believes is not condemned, and whoever does not believe is condemned already. That's the stark reality.

Did you know that faith (belief) is not an act of will that a person can perform, work up, or bring about on their own? Your faith comes from hearing, hearing the Word about Christ! So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Romans 10:17) And it's the same for each person who believes. That's why the proclamation of the truth from the Scripture is so important. If people do not hear, they will not believe, and they will not be saved.

We must run with the Word of God—the stern Law and the sweet Gospel—after our loved ones today, in the time of grace. When the eastern sky opens and Christ returns in glory, it will be much too late. ~

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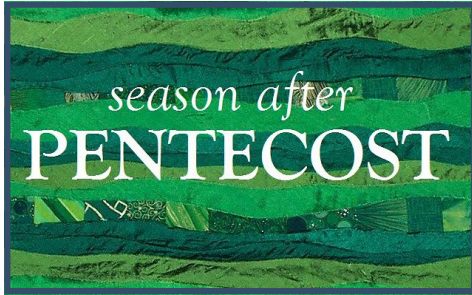
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## Our God Is Not Ordinary

Pastor Chuck Bylkas  
South Range, Michigan

*And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither? Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed. Then said they unto him, What shall we*

*do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.*

*John 6:25-35*

**T**HE TIME PERIOD ON THE church calendar between the Day of Pentecost and Advent is often referred to as “ordinary time”, because there are only a few major festivals (Holy Trinity Sunday and Christ the King Sunday). Ordinary is an unfortunate name, because it may tempt us to take the blessings of God for granted.

In the appointed Gospel readings during the season of Pentecost, we hear Jesus give sight to the blind, give hearing to the deaf, heal the lame, cast out demons and even raise the dead. In the sixth chapter of his Gospel, John records Jesus’ feeding of the five thousand. As the crowds follow after Him, Jesus reveals their true concern: *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.* Even when Jesus encourages the people to believe in Him, they ask ...*What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?* Even though Jesus had just fed the five thousand, the people saw this as ordinary. We often do the same. Sometimes we even take the cross for granted. Our God is anything but ordinary. In fact, He does the extra-ordinary, by sending His Son Jesus to cleanse us from sin with His precious blood. Through the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, we have new life in this world, a life that lasts unto eternity. Thanks be to God that He has blessed us and continues to bless us. His mercies are new every morning.

Thank you for your prayerful support during the past school year. We certainly could not do this work without your help. Please remember us in prayer during the summer months as well. Although there are no classes in the summer, there is much work to be done in preparing for the coming school year. We appreciate your fellowship in the Gospel, as we continue to serve our gracious and extra-ordinary God.

*I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ... (Philippians 1:3-6)*

*Yours in Christ.*

*Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.*

*Psalm 110:3*

**T**HE DAY OF POWER IS the day of Christ. Christ came in the fullness of time to redeem man who all his life is subject to bondage under the old covenant promise—do or die. In the new covenant Jesus as true man fulfilled all the demands of the law, went willingly to the cross taking our justly deserved condemnation, made atonement for our sins in His blood, reconciling us to the Father. As new creatures in Christ, motivated by love we desire to obey God. Praise be to God for the covenant of grace!

Pastor Mark Matson  
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