

# 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.

November 2024

## How Deep Our Father's Love for Us

Tucker D. Henderson  
New York Mills, Minnesota

**I**F THERE'S ANYTHING I'VE LEARNED in the past few years it is that time keeps marching on, with or without you. Despite all of our best efforts to preserve our favorite parts of our lives, extend deadlines at school, work, and home, and tempt fate with all of our unfinished business, time will steamroll right over our best-laid plans regardless of our efforts.

Never more have I felt that until the past two months. Our family was surprised with both of my paternal grandparents passing away in the last few years at age 71 and 75. It was difficult for all of us, my mom and dad, my uncles, siblings, and the rest of the family to wrap our heads and our hearts around the fact that they were gone and wouldn't be there to help us along.

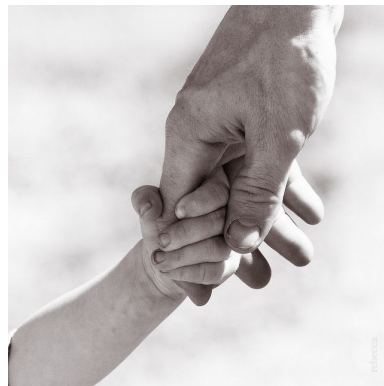
As a Christian, grieving for my grandparents was not a torturous process, though it had its difficulties. I believe that with God's promise of everlasting life and my grandparents' confessions of faith, I will see them again after I inevitably pass from this life one day. I find hope and comfort in that promise even.

This spring we were starting to figure things out and were getting close to working a lot of the details out with my grandparents' estate, keeping their property maintained, and making sure everyone was happy with the way things turned out. Everything seemed to be going so well until June 14 when my world flipped upside down.

In an even bigger surprise to us, my dad suddenly passed away from a heart attack on June 14. He was at an elevated risk for it and knew it might happen one day, but as our family has gotten to know a little too well these past few years, one day is always just around the corner. Our time on this earth is not promised and we all have a day when our number will be up.

Dad was only 53, so it's been a much harder death to grieve and to process. Unlike my grandparents, he didn't have the chance to see all of his kids graduate, be able to retire, or reach the age of a senior citizen. He was still working five days a week, preparing his home for winter, working through his parents' probate, and had only just met his brand new granddaughter less than three weeks prior. He had so much life that he was still looking forward to.

We all take life for granted. When we are kids, we are taken care of by our parents. When we're teenagers, our parents are constantly putting out the fires that we start. When we're young adults, they help us fix our mistakes and try to share their experience with us. Parents never stop loving us. This is certainly true for my dad. As a friend of his said at his celebration of life, "He would move heaven and earth to help somebody in need."



I remember as a teenager, my dad would often step far out of his way, leaving his own projects neglected, to help remediate situations my older siblings would get themselves into out in the world. These situations, I thought at the time, were so stupid to have gotten

themselves into in the first place. Well, when I graduated high school and then moved out of the house, I felt the benefit of my dad coming to save the day when I got myself into situations that were just as easily avoidable.

Just this past year, I was trying to keep my grandparents' house maintained and fought to keep up with the insatiable appetite of my grandpa's wood stove. I was not even remotely prepared for this past winter, despite the mild snow and cold, my wood pile looked like the dregs of my grandpa's previous wood piles. I continued to cut wood during the week and add the meager loads to my pile, just for it to be burned up in a few nights by the wood stove.

Unannounced, my dad and my younger brother showed up at my house many weekends last winter and dropped off large truckloads of heavy oak. Without any request from me, my dad, out of his love for his child, made sure that I would stay warm and not be without in those coming weeks. He had his own wood stove to feed at home and yet, there he was, emptying his truck of the best oak from his own wood pile onto mine.

My grandpa cut firewood all his life up until he died at age 75. His father and forefathers before him did the same. My dad cut wood his whole life, too, though he hoped for the days when he would be able to retire from it. I, too, have cut wood for one wood stove or another for practically all of my life, so I thought I knew the amount of planning, effort, and time it took to cut wood, load wood, unload wood, and burn wood. I did, after all, participate in most of the varying aspects of the process at different times of my life and was ever present when it came time to start the cycle up for the year and I was always glad to see it finished when the warmer weather of spring finally came. It's safe to say I was a little too confident in my own knowledge.

Though I have been cutting firewood on my own for the past year, I feel like I only really stepped into my dad's shoes this summer as an opportunity to load as much heavy oak firewood as we could haul came up here in New York Mills, Minnesota. The City cut down a number of trees around Smith Park and the large block around the ball fields. The firewood was open to anyone who wanted it, provided they could cut it up and get it home themselves.

"Easy, no problem," I thought as soon as I got the green light to carry it all off. Sure, we used to cut and haul many loads of wood when I was a kid. It never seemed impossible then, how hard could it be, right? I think my dad and grandpa are still laughing from Heaven.

We cut and hauled about eight loads of wood between eight of us in four days during the last week of July and into August. All of it was heavy dead oak. Not too green to burn, but still wet enough to squat the tires of my dad's wood truck. After the first load with blisters and scrapes, aching muscles, and sweat pouring down my face, I wondered how on earth my dad did it all those years. This much work, just for this one load of wood! Dad cut hundreds of loads of wood just for us to keep warm each winter.

If you grew up cutting wood, or maybe you still do, you know how taxing the process can be on your body and how much energy is exerted for each load of firewood you collect. Though we may not look at it this way, it is a sacrifice we make in time, effort, and sometimes well-being to heat our homes for the winter season. I now realize it's not only a sacrifice, but an act of great love.

As a Christian, I love my dad, I love my family, but the most important One in our lives is God our Heavenly Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I also know that God's ways and the suffering and sacrifice of Jesus Christ cannot be equaled. Therefore, analogy can never match up to the reality of God. However, I also know Jesus taught with parables, so let this story about my father's love remind you of the deep love our Father in Heaven has for us and what Jesus sacrificed and suffered through for us.

*John 3:16 reads: 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.* This is by far the most famous Bible verse, but how many of us misunderstand the simple verse based on the way it's written and regarded?

God so loved the world... Does that mean that He loved the world so much that He did this? If God had loved the world just a little bit less, would He have not spared us from our sin? No. Oftentimes that's what we think it means when we read that verse, but in truth, it just means that God loved the world in this way. He loved the world in such a way that He would send His Son to the cross and through hell for us, His children.

My dad so loved me that he brought me truckloads of firewood to last the winter. He never dropped firewood off for my other siblings; does that mean he loved them less? Actually, now that I think about it, he did a lot of things differently for my older and younger siblings. Maybe it was me that was somehow lower on his list? No, he loved us in different ways, but it was equally so. He so loved me that he dropped off firewood last winter, but he so loved my sister that he fixed her temperamental lawnmower. Perhaps they were different ways of showing that love, but not in any way was that love less. Now, here is where the analogy may just fall apart, like I thought it might. God loves all of His children in this way that He sent His Son to die on the cross for each and every one of us.



Doesn't that make you feel special? To know that you, an individual who makes mistakes, sins against your neighbor, and knowingly commits evil deeds, have someone who loves you so intensely that He would sacrifice His only Son, to let Him endure the excruciating horrors of hell, to save and redeem you? I can't help but feel totally and completely unworthy of that love, knowing full well there is nothing I can do to deserve it or to pay back that debt that was paid in my stead and yet, I know that like my earthly father, our Heavenly Father never expected us to pay back that debt to Him.

He simply longed to see us prosper and to maintain a relationship with Him. No strings attached. Just as our earthly fathers care for us through their provision and their unfailing and unconditional love, we should take heart in the fact that the same can be said about our Heavenly Father by whom our dads were intelligently designed for us.

Since dad passed away on June 14, we missed him more than ever on Father's Day, June 16. It was like salt on the wound for it to be so close after he passed. Perhaps you were missing your dad on Father's Day this year too. Whether he's been gone for two months or two decades, it's hard to lose your dad, at any age. May you be comforted to know that we have Another Who is always with us and never forsakes us.

*God's peace.*

**G**OD'S PRECEPTS, AND GOD'S TRUE SERVICE, are hidden when people hear that only monks are in a state of perfection. True Christian perfection is to fear God from the heart, to have great faith, and to trust that for Christ's sake we have a God who has been reconciled [2 Corinthians 5:18-19]. It means to ask for and expect from God His help in all things with confident assurance that we are to live according to our calling in life, being diligent in outward good works, serving in our calling. This is where true perfection and true service of God is to be found.

*Augsburg Confession*

# Less Speculation, More Thanksgiving

Pastor Jay Weidner  
Laurium, Michigan

*Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, Whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace (prosperity), and create evil (adversity): I the LORD do all these things.*

Isaiah 45:1-7



**W**E COME ONCE AGAIN TO this wonderful season in which we thank God for all the bounty which He so kindly supplies. The above passage reminds us why we do so; it is God who grants us all things. Years before Cyrus the Great would be born in Media, before the Southern Kingdom was carried off into exile in Babylon, God had already provided a leader who would return them to their

homeland. God prophetically delivered this message through Isaiah so that His people would know that He would never forsake them. He would deliver them from exile and through the tribe of Judah, deliver them forever in Jesus the Christ, His incarnate Son. All of this was spoken about 200 years before that return would come. It was done through a man, Cyrus, who wasn't part of the children of Israel. A man who didn't even know who God was. A man whom God would hold by the right hand of power and to whom He would deliver fame, riches, and kingdoms. People would think that Cyrus made himself great, but it was God who made him great for the sake of Jacob and of Israel.

The irony in all of this is incredible. God used a Gentile who didn't even know who God was, born in the country now known as Iran to deliver His people from captivity. God knows what He is doing always and at this time when we have so much uncertainty with what is going on in Israel and our world as a whole we need to realize that God is taking care of all things even as He constantly reminds us. God is continually at work fulfilling His purpose, He never slumbers. Even though we might not understand and even the people involved may not understand, God still reigns.

What we need now is much less speculation about what He's doing and more thanksgiving for what He has done. He has provided the solution for all things in the work of Jesus whose blood cleanses us from all unrighteousness. We need only keep our eyes upon Jesus with thankful hearts full of prayer and praise. God will see to everything else. Glory to His Name!

God's peace.

## All Saints and Thanksgiving

As we continue to gather together the Lord impresses upon us to worship Him with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.*

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

We are to worship Him with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength in spite of what our current circumstances are.

On November 1<sup>st</sup>, we will observe All Saints Day. So many have passed on into the very real presence of Jesus as we honor their memories and miss them each so much! Why does it have to be this way? The Devil uses death to instill doubt in the hearts of those still living through fear and even anger—are our loved ones really safe in Jesus' presence? Why is God so mean that they died before living a longer life? Will I really see them again?

Jesus conquered death (and the Devil) as He rose from the dead and He lives today, promising us that He is the God of Abraham, even today, and that He has prepared a place for all who believe and trust in Him.

This month we also designate a day for Thanksgiving, although one should be thankful each day, so blessings to all of you.

*Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's. (Psalm 103:1-5)*

Shalom2u  
Pastor Joel Baker  
Plymouth, Minnesota

# Thanksgiving

Gwen Wilson  
Ridgefield, Washington

Dear Children far and near,

Hello to each of you, and I pray that God will bless you today and in the days ahead.

It is that time of year again when we in America set aside a special day to focus our thoughts on giving thanks to God for all He has given us.

**I**N THE FALL OF THE year 1621, the first of thanksgivings was celebrated, and it was established as a national holiday by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863. He declared that it should be celebrated the last Thursday of November and thus it was until 1941 when Congress set it as the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday and it has remained this way. It is a well liked holiday by many.

The first Thanksgiving in America took place in Plymouth, Massachusetts, USA. The Pilgrims who celebrated it had come from England, a country far across the water. They were leaving their homeland in search of the freedom to worship and pray as they wanted to. The first winter was very hard on them and many of them died from cold and hunger, but they did not give up.

The following spring brought hope and they were able to plant gardens, build better homes and start getting more settled. In the fall they brought in their harvests, hunted for meat and were so thankful for all their blessings that they decided to celebrate with a feast. The thing they were most thankful for was that they could worship God, freely.

We should be thankful every day for all we have and receive. God is always so good to us that we should give Him more thanks.

The Bible talks about thankfulness in many places. The many verses do talk about different reasons why thanks are being given. Here are some verses that speak of thankfulness or giving thanks:

*Psalm 92:1: It is a good thing to **give thanks** unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High.*

*1 Timothy 4:4-5: For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received **with thanksgiving**: (We can use all creatures for food.) For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.*

*1 Chronicles 16:34-36: O **give thanks** unto the LORD; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever. And say ye, Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather us together, and deliver us from the heathen, that we may **give thanks** to thy holy name, and glory in thy praise.*

*Blessed be the LORD God of Israel for ever and ever.*

Look up and read these verses on thanksgiving: Psalm 95:1-3, Psalm 100:1-5, Psalm 106:1, Psalm 107:1.

We have much to thank God for and I personally have



much to thank Him for. He has been so good to me and my family every day.

Remember to take time each day to thank God for all He has given you and not just on special days, for each day is a gift to you from God.

I want to encourage all to begin each day with prayer and even ending the day the same. God works in wonderful ways. A day that begins and ends in prayer and praise goes much better. *Psalm 92:1-2: It is a good thing to **give thanks** unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High: To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night.*

He is truly a GREAT God, and does all things well. Praise His name and **Give Thanks!** God bless you all this Thanksgiving.

God's peace.

## Joyful Noise!

**Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands.**

**Serve the LORD with gladness:**

**come before his presence with singing.**

**Know ye that the LORD he is God:**

**it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves;  
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.**

**Enter into his gates with thanksgiving,  
and into his courts with praise:**

**be thankful unto him, and bless his name.**

**For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting;  
and his truth endureth to all generations.**

**Psalm 100**

# Amazed at Miracles

Pastor Nicholas Kandoll  
New York Mills, Minnesota

*And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. And they departed into a desert place by ship privately. And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him. And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things. And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed: Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat. He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat? He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes. And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass. And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties. And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all. And they did all eat, and were filled. And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes. And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men.*

Mark 6:30-44

**I** REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME I drove a car. My dad and I were in an empty parking lot. My dad had showed me what I needed to know and was sitting in the passenger seat. When I stepped on the gas, I pressed way too hard and the car shot forward. I remember panicking and hitting the brakes. To me shooting forward like that was a miracle, even though I ridden in a car a thousand times. It was incredible to drive.

Now when I get behind the wheel I don't even think about it. It's something I've done a thousand times and is no longer that exciting. The old adage "familiarity breeds contempt" comes to mind.



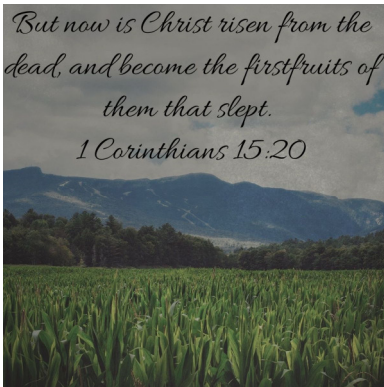
I feel like this phenomenon happens with the miracles of Jesus. When we first hear them they are incredible, but after hearing of them a thousand times the shine tends to wear off. We're tempted to not be amazed at the

awesome power of God. Jesus fed 5000 men, and probably more as there were most likely women and children present. He fed them all from five loaves of bread and two fishes. There's also something incredibly powerful in the way He does it. There's no fanfare; He simply tells the disciples what to do. He hands them food and they pass it out. Here Jesus shows them how their ministry is going to continue, how it continues today even. As Jesus performed the miracle of the feeding of the 5000, He gives the disciples His miraculous life-giving Word. The same Word He has entrusted to us. As He has them pass out the bread, He has all of us pass out His Word. This is how the Sacraments function, too. Jesus does the work; we simply pass out the food. The miracles of Jesus give evidence that He is the son of God. I pray that as we live out our lives that God will help us continue to be amazed at the reality of what it means to belong to the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

God's peace.

*But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.*

1 Corinthians 15:20



**But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.**

1 Corinthians 15:20-25

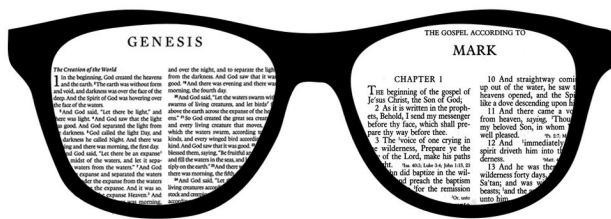
**S**t. Paul is still speaking only about those who are Christians. These he wants to instruct and console with this article. For although also the non-Christians must all arise, this will not be to their comfort and joy, since they will arise for judgment and not for life... I will say nothing of that great vulgar throng which seeks its pleasure and consolation only here, which despises God's Word and cares not a mite for God and His kingdom. It is not surprising that such people are annoyed to hear of the blessed resurrection; for us, however, it is pure joy, because we hear that our greatest Treasure, over which we rejoice, is already in heaven above, and that only the most insignificant part remains behind; and that He will awaken this, too, and draw it after Him as easily as a person awakens from sleep.

Martin Luther

# Christian Worldview

Pastor Dennis Hannu  
Wolf Lake, Minnesota

**E**VERYONE HAS A WORLDVIEW; it is the framework through which we view all life and reality. It is how we make sense of our life and the world. Our worldview is shaped by our education, our upbringing, the culture we live in, the books we read, the things we watch, etc. A Christian worldview, also called a Biblical worldview is based on the Word of God. When you believe the Bible is entirely true and is in fact the message that comes from God, it then becomes the basis of your worldview. It shapes the way you live your life and the way you treat others in this world. In other words you become not just hearers of the Word but doers as well. *James 1:22: But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*



claim over every area of our life. Jesus says, “I am the Way, the Truth, the Life.” We now live with or in this reality as Christians in this world. Dietrich Bonhoeffer said it well when he said, “There are not two realities, but one reality, and that is the reality of God, which has become manifest in Christ in the reality of the world.”

I would encourage you, dear reader, to live in this reality all your life. You are the offspring of God, His child, which gives you a proper view of the world because you are shaped by Him and His Word. When the Apostle Paul writes to the Romans, he says not to be conformed to this world: *Romans 12:1-2: I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.* Form your opinions of the world based on the word of God and a renewed mind. God loved this world and demonstrated His love by sending His Son into the world to save it. Let us go forth into our world with the proper perspective, the right world view, shining the light of the Gospel into it in order that the people of this world may be brought to repentance and faith and see themselves from the proper perspective.

*2 Corinthians 5:16-19: Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.*

*God's peace.*

It is God by His grace that allows us to view the world in a proper way. It is by His Word that we believe He exists, as *Hebrews 11:6 states: But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is (exists), and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* It is by Him that we exist: *Acts 17:28: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.* So, a comprehensive Biblical worldview is one that includes and fundamentally understands God's truth

***Zephaniah 1:7-8: Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord GOD: for the day of the LORD is at hand: for the LORD hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests. And it shall come to pass in the day of the LORD'S sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, and the king's children, and all such as are clothed with strange apparel.***

**T**here are many parallels in this text, and in Matthew 22 where the king made a marriage for his son, and called the guests, and said, “Behold, my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come unto the marriage.” Yes, the Lord hath prepared a sacrifice, and hath bid His guests. If we could only see the beautiful love portrayed here. He prepared the sacrifice for us, to die in our stead, and it was His only Son. He has also bidden His guests, He calls men to come, for all things are ready.

He wants us to come to the marriage of His Son, but we have to come prepared, yes, prepared to be the bride for Jesus. And the preparations are His own doing. But one important matter is that we must come clothed upon and covered with that which is acceptable to God. This is the wedding garment that the man did not have on when he came into the wedding. He was left speechless. Listen to what our text tells us, *And it shall come to pass in the day of the LORD'S sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, and the king's children, and all such as are clothed with strange apparel.* These were not the children of God. They had on strange apparel; it was not the garment of the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ. It did not cover them, but their shame and sin was evident. And they were punished, cast out into outer darkness.

Beloved, it is of utmost importance that we all come to repentance for our sin, and seek His grace, and be covered, not with strange apparel, but with the precious blood of Christ. Only with these crimson garments will we be acceptable in His sight. We pray that God would take away all the strange garments, and clothe us with that one perfect, red, righteous garment of Jesus!

*Paul Coponen; Chassell, Michigan*

*Submitted by Ralph and Barbara Somero; New Ipswich, New Hampshire*

# Bummer Lambs and Tender Shepherds

Lois Matson  
Yacolt, Washington

**I**N RECENT DAYS, I WAS PRAYING the children's song, "Jesus, Tender Shepherd Hear Me," and I was reminded of a beautiful, meaningful story I'd like to share with you.

In the spring, it's endearing to watch the fluffy, white lambs in a bright spring-green field. They bounce and leap alongside their more sedate mothers, rejoicing in their Creator and His creation. The ewes care for their lambs, cleaning and feeding it.

But sometimes, due to complications, a ewe does not survive the lambing, and the orphan lamb is left on its own. Or mama doesn't have enough milk to provide for her baby, especially if she delivered twins or triplets, and they cannot survive without the life-giving sustenance of their mother. Other times, due to a birth defect or size, or weakness, the ewe will reject its offspring, resulting in the same fate for the little lamb. It is prey for every wild beast, subject to harsh weather and the world's unfriendly conditions. The lamb shows its despair by hanging its head low. It does not leap and cavort about with the rest of the flock.

These baby sheep are called "bummer lambs" and without intervention they will die. What is a shepherd to do? Besides being a valuable asset to his flock, the shepherd often has tender feelings for the poor, rejected lamb. Something must be done!

The good shepherd carries the tiny lamb from the pasture, bringing it into his home, cleansing it from the filth of birth and field. He dries and warms it. He takes milk from another ewe to feed the little bummer lamb. He holds it near his chest, so the lamb can hear his heartbeat. He cares for it until it is big enough to join the rest of the flock. Then he continues to lead it in the same manner as his other sheep.

During this process, the lamb comes to know its shepherd intimately. It knows the voice of the shepherd well, better than the others in the greater flock. It will come to him and follow him, staying close to its protector. It will love the shepherd with a deeper love than the others do.

Are we bummer lambs? In this world, we are rejected, orphaned, starved. We are dirtied from the filth of original sin. We are prey to the devil's wiles. We may have physical manifestations of despair and depression. We do not have joy or the peace that passes understanding.

Being His own creation, our Good Shepherd has deep feelings of love for His for poor, rejected lamb. This sad

creature will die eternally without His intervention. Something must be done!

Our Good Shepherd gathers us by His Holy Spirit, washes us in the waters of Holy Baptism, feeds us with His body and blood, and makes us holy as He is holy. We know His voice, and we follow Him. We love Him because He first loved us.

The prophet Isaiah wrote of our Lord God as a strong, yet tender, shepherd:

*O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young. (Isaiah 40:9-11).*

And the psalmist David wrote of our Good Shepherd:

*The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever. (Psalm 23)*

Mary Lundie Duncan wrote hymns for her children, and these are her lyrics to the prayer I referenced above:

Jesus, tender Shepherd, hear me,  
Bless Thy little lamb to-night;  
Through the darkness be Thou near me,  
Keep me safe till morning light.  
All this day Thy hand has led me,  
And I thank Thee for Thy care,  
Thou hast clothed me, warmed and fed me,  
Listen to my evening prayer.  
May my sins be all forgiven,  
Bless the friends I love so well,  
Take us all at last to heaven,  
Happy there with Thee to dwell.

Praise Jesus our Tender Shepherd that He saves us bummer lambs who would die eternally without His intervention. Praise Him for His constant faithful care for us!

**Christian Monthly** Vol. LXXX—No. 11

Subscription Rate: 1 Year

US: \$12 (South Dakota residents add your local sales tax)

Canada: \$18 (US money order only) Foreign: \$25

Send articles for publication to:  
Lois Matson, Editor  
Email: cm@apostoliclutheran.org  
Phone: (360) 904-6951  
Postal Mail to:  
**CHRISTIAN MONTHLY**  
20211 NE Yacolt Mountain Road  
Yacolt, WA 98675

Address subscriptions, payments,  
and Book Concern orders to:  
Anders & Clara Sundqvist, Managers  
Email: books@apostoliclutheran.org  
NEW Phone: 360-601-5117  
THE BOOK CONCERN  
PO Box 104  
Hayti, SD 57241

**Apostolic Lutheran Church of America**

www.apostoliclutheran.org

Western Mission: western@apostoliclutheran.org

Eastern Mission: eastern@apostoliclutheran.org

Foreign Mission: foreign@apostoliclutheran.org

The *Christian Monthly* (ISSN 0009-5494) is published monthly for \$12 per year by the Apostolic Lutheran Book Concern, 45036 SD Hwy 22, Hayti, South Dakota 57241. Periodicals postage paid at Hayti, South Dakota.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: **Christian Monthly**, PO Box 104, Hayti, SD 57241.

**General Disclaimer:** The material in the *Christian Monthly* is reviewed for scriptural soundness and to ensure that it does not conflict with the teachings of the ALCA. Publication does not imply that other material by included authors has been so approved.



**HAVE YOU MOVED?** Please notify the Book Concern of address changes. We must pay return postage on undelivered mail.

## The Spiritual Rock

Pastor Chuck Bylkas  
South Range, Michigan

*Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.*

*1 Corinthians 10:1-4*

**D**URING MY TRAVELS YEARS AGO, I met up with an old friend that I had not seen in quite some time. He and his wife had moved to Wyoming where they resided for several years. My friend was excited to share the story behind Independence Rock, a famous landmark in Wyoming.



Independence Rock received its name from a fur trader who had a great celebration on July 4th, 1830. Many of the settlers traveling west on the Oregon Trail have their names engraved on Independence Rock, signifying their historic journey. The importance of this place was highly significant for the early settlers. They needed to reach Independence Rock by July 4th in order to avoid the deadly snowstorms that they would encounter as they traveled through the mountain passes.

As my friend told me this story, my thoughts moved to similar places of remembrance in the Scriptures. Jacob set up a stone as a pillar in remembrance of his vision of the ladder reaching up into heaven. *Surely the Lord is in this place. (Genesis 28:16)* As the people of Israel crossed the Jordan River into the Promised Land, God instructed Joshua to carry twelve stones from the river to establish a place of remembrance. *And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your*

*children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones? Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. For the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over: That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the Lord your God for ever. (Joshua 4:21-24)*

In his letter to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul speaks about a different kind of rock, a spiritual rock. As God led His people out of bondage in Egypt, they were united unto Moses, nourished by manna and quail for food, and with water that came forth from the rock at Massah and Meribah. Paul teaches us that God is always present with us, nourishing us and uniting us as His people. He has done so because of the spiritual Rock from which we drink, which was and is Christ.

It is this Gospel to which the entirety of the Scriptures testify. This is why the Apostle Paul says: *For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. (1 Corinthians 2:2)* Over and over again, God tells us in His Word that He alone is the giver of life. Everything in the Holy Scriptures points to Christ and His redeeming work at Calvary's cross. God loves, forgives, comforts and sustains us. Our hope is in Him alone. As the hymn-writer Edward Mote has said: "On Christ the solid Rock I stand, All other ground is sinking sand."

May the Lord strengthen us in faith as we continue to stand upon that life-giving Rock, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

*Yours in Christ.*

**T**HERE IS AND REMAINS IN Christ only one divine omnipotence, power, majesty, and glory, which is peculiar to the divine nature alone. But it shines, manifests, and exercises itself fully—yet voluntarily—in, with, and through the received, exalted human nature in Christ. In glowing iron there are not two kinds of power to shine and burn. But the power to shine and to burn is a property of the fire. Since the fire is united with the iron, it manifests and exercises this power to shine and to burn in, with, and through the glowing iron. From this union also the glowing iron has the power to shine and to burn without changing the essence and the natural properties of fire and iron. This guides how we understand the testimonies of Scripture that speak of the majesty to which the human nature in Christ is exalted.

*Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration*