

# 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.

October 2024

## Remember!

Pastor Dennis Hamu  
Wolf Lake, Minnesota

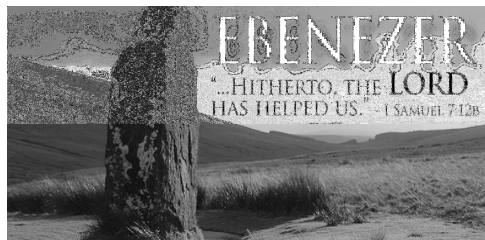
*And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines. And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the LORD: and Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD heard him. And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel. And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under Bethcar. Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us. So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Israel: and the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.*

1 Samuel 7:8-13

**W**E AS HUMAN BEINGS SEEM to have a propensity to forget things. We sometimes have a hard time remembering things that happened just a short while ago, and so we often keep notes or journals to remind ourselves of what we need to accomplish in a given day or what we have accomplished. Another thing we often do is when we are on a trip somewhere we will buy a souvenir to remind us of the sites we have seen or the enjoyment of that particular trip. Every time we see the souvenir it reminds us of that time we enjoyed so much.

Samuel raised the Ebenezer stone after the Lord had helped Israel defeat their enemies. He wanted to place something as a marker of sorts so that when the

people saw the stone, they would remember how the Lord had helped them on that day. They perhaps would have been tempted to think that they in their own strength had defeated their enemies. Perhaps their memory would tell



them that they had been successful in this battle on their own. The raising of the Ebenezer stone would remind them of the truth of that day in their history. They would walk by the stone and say something to the effect of: "O yes, I remember that day. It seemed all hope was lost and then the prophet Samuel prayed on our behalf and God defeated our enemies for us. What a powerful and loving God we serve. Samuel set up this stone as a memorial of that day."

I have often enjoyed singing the hymn written by Robert Robinson (1735-1790) called "Come, Thou Fount" for in this song he writes:

"Here I raise my Ebenezer,  
Hither by Thy help I'm come;  
And I hope by Thy good pleasure,  
Safely to arrive at home.  
Jesus sought me when a stranger,  
Wandering from the fold of God;  
He to rescue me from danger,  
Interposed His precious blood."

Our Ebenezer stone as Christians is the cross of Jesus Christ. The cross has a powerful message for the believer. Paul writes to the Corinthians and says: *For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.* (1 Corinthians 2:2) And to the Galatians in *Galatians 6:14: But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.*

Whenever we see a cross on our churches, or in various other places, it is a reminder to us of what our God has done for us through Jesus. We remember the Lamb of God laying His life down on this cruel instrument in order to take away the sins of this world. We remember that God so loved this world that He sent His only Son to save it. We remember that in His dying we have been rescued from death itself. We remember that in Jesus we have been given life and salvation. When you look at the cross at the front our church and on the roof as well, remember, remember that your sins are forgiven and that the glorious message of the cross falls like a shadow over you all the days of your life until that day when faith becomes sight and memory becomes reality.

God's peace.

# The Seed that Grew a Tree

Excerpts from Volume 1, History of the Reformation  
By J. H. Merle D'Aubigne, Printed in New York in 1880

**T**HERE IS IN CHRISTIANITY WHAT no other religious system possesses. It does not, like them, present certain general ideas mingled with tradition and fable, destined to fall sooner or later under the assault of reason: it contains a pure and undefiled truth, founded on facts capable of bearing the examination of every upright and enlightened mind.

Christianity does not propose merely to excite in man certain vague religious feelings, whose charm once lost can never be recovered: its object is to satisfy, and it does really satisfy, all the religious wants of human nature, whatever may be the degree of development which it has attained.

It is not the work of man, whose labors pass away and are forgotten; it is the work of God, who upholds what He has created; and it has the promise of its Divine Head as the pledge of its duration.

It is impossible for human nature ever to rise superior to Christianity. And if for a time man thought he could do without it, it soon appeared to him with fresh youth and a new life, as the only remedy for souls. The degenerate nations then returned with new ardor toward those ancient, simple, and powerful truths, which in the hour of their infatuation they had despised.

In fact, Christianity manifested in the sixteenth century the same regenerative power that it had exercised at first. After fifteen centuries the same truths produced the same effects. In the day of the Reformation, as in the time of Peter and Paul, the Gospel overthrew mighty obstacles with irresistible force. Its sovereign power displayed its efficacy from north to south among nations the most dissimilar in manners, character, and intellectual development. Then as in the times of Stephen and James, it kindled the fire of enthusiasm and devotedness in the lifeless nations, and elevated them to the height of martyrdom.

How was this revival of the Church accomplished? We observe here two laws by which God governs the Church in all times.

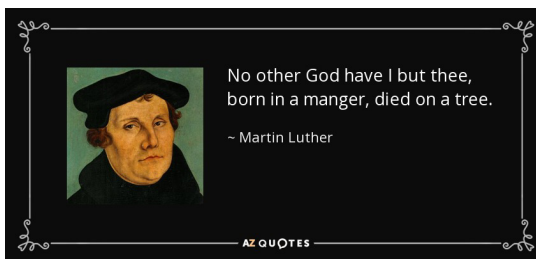
First He prepares slowly and from afar that which He designs to accomplish. He has ages in which to work.

Then, when the time is come, He effects the greatest results by the smallest means. It is thus He acts in nature and in history. When He wishes to produce a majestic tree, He deposits a small seed in the bosom of the earth; when He wishes to renovate His Church, He employs the lowliest instruments to accomplish what emperors and learned and distinguished men in the Church could not effect. We shall soon go in search of, and we shall discover, that small seed which a Divine hand placed in the earth in the days of the Reformation...

## The Word, the Seed and Luther the Tool

Luther was sensible of his entire dependence upon God — a simple and powerful conviction, which is at once the cause of deep humility and of great actions! He fervently invoked the divine blessing upon his labors. Every morning he began the day with prayer; he then went to church, and afterwards applied to his studies, losing not a moment in the whole

course of the day. "To pray well," he was in the habit of saying, "is the better half of study." The young student passed in the university library all the time he could snatch from his academical pursuits. Books were as yet rare, and it was a great privilege for him to profit by the treasures brought together in this vast collection. One day — he had then been two years at Erfurth, and was twenty years old — he opens many books in the library one after another, to learn their writers' names. One volume that he comes to attracts his attention. He has never until this hour seen its like. He reads the title — it is a Bible! a rare book, unknown in those times. His interest is greatly excited: he is filled with astonishment at finding other matters than those fragments of the gospels and epistles that the Church has selected to be read to the people during public worship every Sunday throughout the year. Until this day he had imagined that they composed the whole Word of God. And now he sees so many pages, so many chapters, so many books of which he had had no idea! His heart beats, as he holds the divinely inspired volume in his hand. With eagerness and with indescribable emotion he turns over these leaves from God.



The first page on which he fixes his attention narrates the story of Hannah and of the young Samuel. He reads — and his soul can hardly contain the joy it feels. This child, whom his parents lend to the Lord as long as he liveth; the song

of Hannah, in which she declares that Jehovah "raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes;" this child who grew up in the temple in the presence of the Lord; those sacrificers, the sons of Eli, who are wicked men, who live in debauchery, and "make the Lord's people to transgress;" — all this history, all this revelation that he has just discovered, excites feelings till then unknown. He returns home with a full heart. "Oh! that God would give me such a book for myself," thought he.

Luther was as yet ignorant both of Greek and Hebrew. It is scarcely probable that he had studied these languages during the first two or three years of his residence at the university. The Bible that had filled him with such transports was in Latin. He soon returned to the library to pore over his treasure. He read it again and again, and then, in his astonishment and joy, he returned to read it once more. The first glimmerings of a new truth were then beginning to dawn upon his mind.

Thus had God led him to the discovery of His Word — of that book of which he was one day to give his fellow countrymen that admirable translation in which Germany has for three centuries perused the oracles of God. Perhaps for the first time his precious volume has now been taken down from the place it occupied in the library of Erfurth. This book, deposited upon the unknown shelves of a gloomy hall, is about to become the book of life to a whole nation. In that Bible the Reformation lay hid. ~

# What the Law Can and Can't Do

Martin Luther

**G**OD'S DESIGN IN THE LAW is to enable man to know himself; to perceive the false and unjustified state of his heart; to discover how far he is from God and to disdain his own goodness.

**But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.**

**Galatians 3:23-27**

The youth under a tutor follows not his own will; but, from fear of the rod, his master's will. While under control of his master, his real character cannot be detected. Were he free, his true self would be apparent, for he would manifest his natural disposition and his works would be his own. The works he performs under restraint and coercion are not really his own, but those of the tutor who forces them. Were he not under control of the tutor, he would do none of them, but rather things quite the reverse.

Paul presents at once the province of the Law and the limitation of free will, or human nature, with a clearness not to be surpassed. It plainly teaches the meaning, operation and end of the Law, and the extent of human nature's power. We note that constraint has a twofold effect upon the youth:

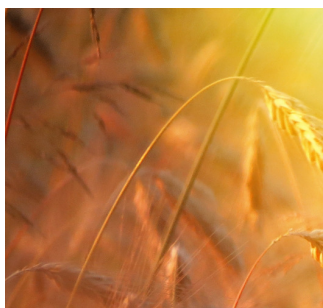
First, fear of his tutor preserves him from many evils into which he would otherwise fall; he is withheld from indulging in a wicked, licentious life, in becoming utterly dissolute.

Second, his heart is filled with hatred toward the tutor who curbs his will.

This is the situation with him: the greater his external restraint from evil, the greater his inward hatred of him who restrains. His character is in the scales; when one side goes up, the other goes down. While outward sin decreases, inward sin increases. We know from experience that those youths most strictly reared are, when given liberty, more wicked than young men less rigidly brought up. So impossible is it to improve human nature with commandments and punishments; something else is necessary.

Likewise, so long as man is in his natural state and destitute of grace, he does not what he would, but what his

tutor the Law obliges him to do. It must be confessed by all that were it not for hell and the Law's penalties, no one would do good. Now, man's works being not wrought of free will, they are not his own; they are the works of the coercive and restraining Law. Well may the apostle declare them not our works, but the "works of the Law," because what we do against our will is not our achievement, but that of the constraining power.



GALATIANS 3:27 KJV

*For as many of you  
as have been  
baptized into Christ  
have put on Christ.*



God's Law impels us, through fear of death and hell, to forsake many evils. Like a tutor, it holds us to an honorable outward life. But by the Law no one becomes righteous before God. The heart remains an enemy to its tutor, hates his chastisements and would prefer freedom. God's design in the Law is to enable man to know himself; to perceive the false and unjustified state of his heart; to discover how far he is from God and how utterly impotent his own nature is; to disdain his own goodness and to recognize it as nothing in comparison to what is

necessary to the fulfillment of the Law; to be humbled in consequence of such knowledge and come to the cross, yearning for Christ, longing for his grace, despairing of himself and placing all his hope in Christ.

We read in the Epistle to the Hebrews, how Christ made atonement that He "might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." (Hebrews 2:15). These words make it evident enough that we must have no fear of death, and that they who live in fear of it are servants, nor will they be saved. Now, neither our own nature nor the Law can liberate us from that fear. Indeed, they but increase it. Christ alone has freed us from it. If we believe in Him, He will give us that free, undaunted spirit which fears neither death nor hell, but which voluntarily and joyfully serves God. ~

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I certify that all information above is true and complete.

Anders Sundqvist, Business Manager

# Praise the Lord

Gwen Wilson  
Ridgefield, Washington

Dear Children,

Hello to each of you, and God's peace be on you.

It is a lovely end of summer day here where we live. We have much to be thankful for and to praise God for. I am guilty of not praising Him as I should.

I want to share a praise chapter with you today, Psalm 146.

**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**



This Psalm just covers it all. It is full of encouragement, instruction and truth.

I pray that we will take time to praise the Lord as long as we live and put our whole trust in God and His Son in whom is our salvation, not in any man. In Him only will that be found; He is our hope, and it is Him who gives us faith.

The Lord is the one who sends help when we are in need.

Our God is powerful and almighty. He created EVERYTHING. Take a moment on your next time outside, and look around you at all God has made. You will see so much that man is incapable of doing.

He IS the one who lifts us up when we are down and our hearts hurt or we are undecided on something.

He hears our prayers even though sometimes we feel doubtful that He is listening. Oh, He listens to every prayer or sigh that you let out. There will be times He seems to not answer as we wished but His plan is always best. We must learn to be patient.

God sent Jesus to die for us, to save us and, yes, it is only Him who can set free those who are trapped in sin. When He frees us from Satan's grip, whatever that may be, we are free indeed.

He gives our hearts sight that was clouded before. We gain better sight when we stay in God's Word and talk and study about Him. I strongly encourage all to study on who God IS and what He desires of us. It's not enough to just say that we believe in God the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. We must KNOW him.

That last verse says He watches over us, and holds up the widows and the fatherless. Yes, He does.

He also will bring the wicked to ruin. Without Jesus one really does not have life, and those without Him will perish forever.

Believers will live forever.

The Lord WILL reign forever. He is all powerful, unstoppable, and everlasting.

Our Psalm began and ended with PRAISE THE LORD!

There are exclamation marks (!) in some translations. I like that as it gives extra emphasis on the joy we can have in praising the Lord. The Lord deserves praise.

God bless you all today and I pray you keep pressing on in faith and learning more about your God and how much He loves and cares for you and all those who believe in Him.

*God's peace.*



**Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.**

**Romans 6:4**

Imagine there was a doctor somewhere who understood the art of saving people from death or, even though they died, could restore them quickly to life so that they would afterward live forever. Oh, how the world would pour in money like snow and rain. No one could find access to him because of the throng of the rich! But here in Baptism there is freely brought to everyone's door such a treasure and medicine that it utterly destroys death and preserves all people alive.

*Martin Luther*

# Exhortation

W. A. Karvonen

Excerpts Oct & Nov 1947 CM

**Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day; Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also. Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.**



## 2 Timothy 1:1-14

**P**AUL WROTE THIS EPISTLE IN prison, waiting for his execution. One would expect a prisoner awaiting his execution to be dejected and thinking of death. Not so with Paul. Not so with those who are hid in Christ. Paul speaks of *the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus*. This is the Christian hope. The Christian's hope is in the Lord Jesus Christ. When we have Christ, we have life and happiness. Christ is our life. In Christ the believing soul has found all that it has longed for. It has found forgiveness of sins. It has found righteousness—the righteousness of faith—that is acceptable before God. It has found joy—a joy the world cannot give. It has found peace—a peace with God—the peace of a good conscience. It has found an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven. It has found safety from the floods of the waters of temporal and eternal death. It has found a hiding place. *Thou art my hiding place.* (Psalm 119:114) Christ is the Christian's happiness and hope in life. It is the Christian's joy

to live unto Christ, to live for Christ, to confess Christ, that Christ's name and word and will and kingdom may be magnified. And when the time of departure comes, the Christian receives the end of his faith, even the salvation of the soul. Death opens up to him the full enjoyment of life eternal.

It was in anticipation of this eternal life that the apostle could speak of life in the face of bodily death. This undaunted courage and confidence of the apostle can be understood only by those who have the same hope of eternal life. By those who have the love of God *shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.* (Romans 5:5)

My friend, do you have this hope of eternal life? Are you looking with faith upon Him who said, *I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live* (John 11:25)?

There is no other way to eternal life and happiness. Jesus has said, *I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.* (John 14:6) *Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God.* (Psalm 146:5)

The aged apostle would comfort Timothy, whom he loved as a son. Timothy was a young Christian for whom Paul prayed unceasingly day and night and longed for him greatly.

His heart was comforted also in seeing Timothy's unfeigned faith. Timothy had had a Christian mother and grandmother. Paul had met him on one of his missionary journeys and, observing the gift of God in him, had asked him to partake in the great apostle's work. So Timothy who had been called to salvation was also called to preach the Gospel. Of this calling the apostle writes in this manner: *Who (God) hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*

Let us pause for a moment to consider what was necessary for Timothy in his great calling so that we might also be mindful of what we need in our Christian walk today. The first thing that we observe is unfeigned faith. By unfeigned faith is meant a sincere faith. To be a follower of Christ one must walk in earnest. Christianity is not a mere practice. Christianity is something that we live. As the apostle expresses it in these words, *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.* (Galatians 2:20) When one sincerely seeks to find the way, God in his grace will lead that soul to the kingdom of God's children where the true Gospel is preached. Paul sincerely desired to know the truth that should make him free. He received sincere faith as a gift from God.

The second thing that is necessary is courage. Those who would be followers of the Lord find themselves pilgrims with no continuing city, but seek one to come by faith in Jesus.

Their conversation is in heaven, from where also they look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. They declare that, *if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.* (1 John 1:7) The Christians do not seek after that city as uncertain adventurers but as exiles. Their hope is in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to take them home. They are not ashamed of the testimony of our Lord but are willing partakers of the afflictions of the Gospel according to the power of God. The secret of their courage is that *I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*

And finally we note in our text that Timothy was exhorted to *Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good*

*thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.* Likewise may we be exhorted to be steadfast and unmovable. May we be strong and courageous in the profession of Christ until He cometh again. Timothy was charged to *Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.* (2 Timothy 4:2)

In conclusion therefore may I repeat the exhortation of the writer to the Hebrews: *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* (Hebrews 12:1-2) Amen!

## Charity

Pastor Jay Weidner  
Laurium, Michigan

***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.***

***Philippians 4:4-8***

**I**T SEEMS EVERY TIME I hear or read the news my mind goes back to these verses penned by Paul almost 2,000 years ago. Our world apparently revels in the distasteful, the wicked, and the impure. Likely it was no different in the time of Paul's Rome, so he wrote to the Philippians instructions that would insulate them from the despicable things that would steal their security away and cause them to worry thus robbing them of their peace.

It is significant then that he begins by telling them to be glad. As the children of God this is our right, we have the right to be glad. The world always wants to cause us to be troubled by focusing on its evils and so become discouraged. God wants us to focus on the finished work of His Son Jesus and be glad.

This gladness leads directly to the next verse where the KJV uses the term moderation to translate a Greek word that means yielding, gentle, kind which in turn is derived from another Greek word meaning clemency, gentleness, graciousness. Paul says let your gentleness, your graciousness be known to all people. The joy that we have in this world will be found by showing the grace of God which we all have received in abundance to one another and to all people. Don Henley, an American songwriter once wrote: "We all need a little tenderness, how can love survive in such a graceless age?" Little did he know that Paul had already anticipated the question many years beforehand and provided the only solution;

by the people of God manifesting the grace of God to all God's offspring.

This is how true love is shown, when it is selfless and full of grace, so the KJV often employs the term "charity" to render the idea of love as opposed to a selfish or romantic desire. We are to do this because the Lord is near, indwelling us by His Spirit and directing us by His grace to live graciously. Knowing the grace of God allows us then to live without worry, we pray and know with assurance that God will provide all that we need when we ask in the name of Jesus (as representatives of His Son) and by God's grace He gives us His peace which establishes us in heart and mind in Jesus the Christ. Therefore, we are to direct our thoughts to those things that keep us focused rightly: the pure and the lovely.

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds  
In a believer's ear!  
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,  
And drives away his fear."

– John Newton

Thank you for your continued support and the grace you show us always.

God's peace.



# Permanent Glory

Lois Matson  
Yacolt, Washington

But if the **ministration of death**, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: How shall not the **ministration of the spirit** be rather glorious? For if the **ministration of condemnation** be glory, much more doth the **ministration of righteousness** exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.

Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. **But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.**

2 Corinthians 3:7-18

When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the Ten Commandments on two Stone Tablets, his face shone with glory from being in the presence of God. This glory was only temporary, though, because Moses was a sinner. Once he was away from the nearer presence of the Lord, the glory shining from his face began to fade and disappear. Moses had no divine glory of his own.

According to Romans 7, the Law written on the Stone Tablets given to Moses is holy, just, and good. In the first ministry (service) of the Spirit, the glory of that holy and good Law shines on us and exposes our sin. But according to the verses above, the Law of Moses is a glorious ministry of death. The glorious Stone Tablets will show us that we are sinners, but they can never save us.

This ministry of the Law is temporary, as well. The Law is not passing away, but it was fulfilled—every jot and tittle—in the person of Christ. He followed the Law for us, because we could not.

The second ministry of the Spirit is calling and gathering, delivering faith through the

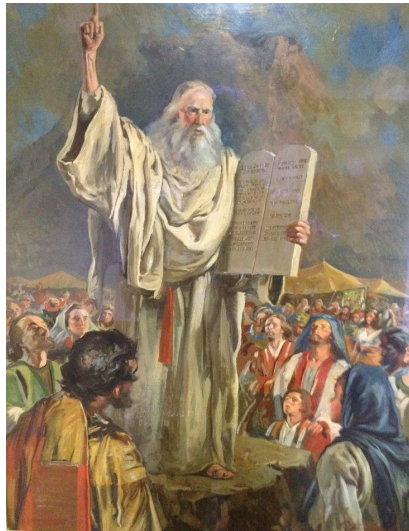
preached Word. The Formula of Concord (XI 29) states:

“And this call of God, which is made through the preaching of the Word, we should not regard as jugglery, but know that thereby God reveals His will, that in those whom He thus calls He will work through the Word, that they may be enlightened, converted, and saved. For the Word, whereby we are called, is a ministration of the Spirit, that gives the Spirit, or whereby the Spirit is given, 2 Cor. 3:8, and a power of God unto salvation, Rom. 1:16. And since the Holy Ghost wishes to be efficacious through the Word, and to strengthen and give power and ability, it is God’s will that we should receive the Word, believe and obey it.”

When the Spirit of the Lord brings liberty, we are changed from the ministry and service of death to the ministry and service of life. We behold His glory, and our faces shine with it temporarily, when at times the Spirit ministers life and peace to us in a deeper, fuller way.

The glorious ministry of the Spirit will sanctify and keep us in faith to the end. He intercedes for us. He groans with us in prayer. He points us always to Jesus. He takes our sin and gives us the righteousness of Christ.

Here, we are not yet in the nearer presence of the Lord and we do not yet fully shine with His glory, but we see as in a mirror darkly. When Jesus returns and takes us to His nearer presence we will shine with His permanent glory. We will be changed for we will see Him as He is.



**Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.**

1 John 3:1-3

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## Growing Up and Down

Pastor Jason Salmi  
Vancouver, Washington

**Y**OU CAN SEE IT IN the face of the little girl who wants so badly to help her mom in the kitchen. As her mom patiently allows her to do things like pour in milk and stir the batter, when it comes time to put the pan into a hot oven, Mom says, “I have to do this part...you’ll be able to when you’re a little older.”

It’s the same look on the small boy’s face as he helps Dad on a project. Hauling (small) boards and trying to pound in nails is what little boys are good at. But when it comes time to cut some wood on the table saw, Dad has him stand safely off to the side. “Tell you what, Buddy, I have to do this part myself. I’ll teach you how to do it when you’re just a little bigger.”

Both kids, so proud to be helping, have a resigned look of, “I wish I was older now,” and “How long until I’m big enough?”

All kids are in a hurry to grow up. They like to have things done for them to a certain point, but there is a desire and a drive to be self-sufficient. Jesus’ disciples, twelve grown, self-sufficient men, came to Him one day with a question. “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” (Matthew 18:1) I’m pretty sure they looked sideways at one another as Jesus proceeded to set a small boy before them and said, “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” Surely He wasn’t serious! After all, as they looked at that boy, what would have stood out as glaringly obvious to them was not what the child could do, but what he couldn’t. They saw before them someone who was completely dependent on others around him. And that was the point...that was the lesson.

Jesus teaches us that, as good as it is to achieve independence and self-sufficiency, in the kingdom of heaven everyone must know that they rely completely on someone else. Namely Jesus. One of Jesus’ disciples, John, seems to have learned this lesson well, and later in his life would incorporate it seamlessly in teaching other Christians. In the letter that we call First John, he addresses his readers time and again, regardless of who they may be or what age they had obtained, as “little children.” It’s a not-so-subtle reminder that, even as we grow up, we are God’s little children who continually come to a more clear understanding that we rely on Jesus for our life, for our salvation, for everything. ~

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## Heaping Up Glory to God

Pastor Nicholas Kandoll  
New York Mills, Minnesota

*Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly. And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. (Matthew 6:1-7)*

Some may be confused by these words of Jesus. Earlier in the Sermon on the Mount, He says, *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)* On the one hand Jesus says to do our works to be seen by others, and on the other, He says if we do these things out in the open we have our reward.

The difference lies in our motivation. Jesus doesn’t want us to practice righteousness in order to heap up glory for ourselves “...that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.” Rather, he calls us to give God all the glory. This is an important reminder to us. There are plenty of pious practices that are good and glorify God, but if we do them in the wrong spirit we end up doing the opposite. But how are we supposed to control our motivations? Wouldn’t God be just as pleased with us doing something good even if we ourselves have sinful intentions? Paul says in *Romans 3:20: Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

We can’t control every thought that we have and in our desire to do good works we will have sinful motives and intentions. The good works that we do flow from our faith; they are not for salvation. When in our attempt to serve our neighbor we have thoughts that pop up, the answer isn’t to not attempt to do good works but to repent. To experience contrition, that is godly sorrow, over our sin, and look to Jesus who graciously forgives. This is how God works in this world. He accomplishes His good through sinners that are saved by grace. And we give Him all the glory.