

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.

September 2024

A Question the Christian Must Not Utter

Martin Luther

The Gospel is a precious and comforting word. It comforts and refreshes the sad heart. It wrestles it out of the jaws of death and hell and transports it to the certain hope of eternal life, through faith in Christ.

For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

2 Corinthians 3:6

WHEN MAN, CONSCIOUS OF HIS failure to keep God's command, is constantly urged by the Law to make payment of his debt and confronted with nothing but the terrible wrath of God and eternal condemnation, he cannot but sink into despair over his sins. Such is the inevitable consequence where the Law alone is taught with a view to attaining heaven thereby. The vanity of such trust in works is illustrated in the case of the noted hermit mentioned in Lives of the Fathers. For over seventy years this hermit had led a life of utmost austerity and had many followers. When the hour of death came he began to tremble, and for three days was in a state of agony. His disciples came to comfort him, exhorting him to die in peace since he had led so holy a life. But he replied:

"Alas, I truly have all my life served Christ and lived austere; but God's judgment greatly differs from that of men."

Note, this worthy man, despite the holiness of his life, has no acquaintance with any article but that of the divine judgment according to the Law. He knows not the comfort of Christ's Gospel. After a long life spent in the attempt to keep God's commandments and secure salvation, the Law now slays him through his own works. He is compelled to exclaim:

"Alas, who knows how God will look upon my efforts? Who may stand before Him?"

That means, to forfeit heaven through the verdict of his own conscience. The work he has wrought and his holiness of life avail nothing. They merely push him deeper into death, since he is without the solace of the Gospel, while others, such as the thief on the cross and the publican, grasp the comfort of the Gospel, the forgiveness of sins in Christ. Thus sin is conquered; they escape the sentence of the Law, and pass through death into life eternal.

Now the meaning of the contrasting clause, "the Spirit gives life," becomes clear. The reference is to naught else but the holy Gospel, a message of healing and salvation; a precious, comforting word. It comforts and refreshes the sad heart. It wrestles it out of the jaws of death and hell, as it were, and transports it to the certain hope of eternal life, through faith in Christ. When the last hour comes to the believer, and death and God's judgment appear before his eyes, he does not base his comfort upon his works. Even though he may have lived the holiest life possible, he says with Paul: "I know nothing against myself, yet am I not hereby justified."



These words imply being ill-pleased with self, with the whole life; indeed, even the putting to death of self. Though the heart says, "By my works I am neither made righteous nor saved," which is practically admitting oneself to be worthy of death and condemnation, the Spirit extricates from despair, through the Gospel faith, which confesses, as did St. Bernard in the hour of death:

"Dear Lord Jesus, I am aware that my life at its best has been but worthy of condemnation, but I trust in the fact that Thou hast died for me and hast sprinkled me with blood from Thy holy wounds. For I have been baptized in Thy name and have given heed to Thy Word whereby Thou hast called me, awarded me grace and life, and bidden me believe. In this assurance will I pass out of life; not in uncertainty and anxiety, thinking, who knows what sentence God in heaven will pass upon me?"

The Christian must not utter such a question. The sentence against his life and works has long since been passed by the Law. Therefore, he must confess himself guilty and condemned. But he lives by the gracious judgment of God declared from heaven, whereby the sentence of the Law is overruled and reversed. It is this: "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life." (John 3:36) ~

Ponder We Our World Today

Donny Matson; Yacolt, Washington
July 2009 CM

Ponder we our world today...
That we've all together gone astray.
Only strife we see about,
Within we find but fear and doubt.
In life so cold, what could there be
To cleanse this mold and make us free?
The stain is dark and set so deep,
Though strive we all the Law to keep.
To scrub it out is all for naught
Results are but a bigger blot.

But Jesus' blood so pure and true
Avails for us the work to do.
So pure it is—like dazzling light—
‘Twill stop through faith the awful blight.
“Enough,” they say, “A little pin
Could prick His flesh and purge the sin
Of all the world and all our vice...
‘Twould pay the debt and pay it twice!”
But He shed it all; He overpaid
Though every sin on Him was laid.

Would Christ not stop at such a price
If one small drop would all suffice?
Nay, dear one, for Jesus knew
How dim our eyes though faith be true.
He shed His blood so full and free
That through the glass we might still see.

But why would love such as this
Come to earth from heaven's bliss?
Love like this for such as I?
The Word does say. But I wonder, “Why?”
But alas! God's Love cannot be bound
By human minds, nor words be found
To explain its depth or comprehend
‘Tis beyond the realm of mortal men.

So trust the Word He gave we must
‘Til in the grave we turn to dust.
And by His blood our souls will rise
To wait with Him in Paradise.
For that final tape to run
When all the work on earth is done
And souls 'n bodies reunite
To dwell forever in His light.

They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

Romans 3:12

For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

Romans 7:9

O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

Romans 7:24

How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Hebrews 9:14

Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

Isaiah 40:2

...because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Isaiah 53:12

For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face...

1 Corinthians 13:12

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God...

1 John 3:1

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

Isaiah 55:8

But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

1 Peter 1:25

Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken... Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

Ecclesiastes 12:6-7

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout... and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 4:14, 16-17

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

2 Timothy 4:8

FOR THE CROWN IS DUE the justified because of the promise. And this promise saints should know, not that they may labor for their own profit, for they ought to labor for the glory of God; but in order that they may not despair in afflictions, they should know God's will, that He desires to aid, to deliver, to protect them. Just as the inheritance and all possessions of a father are given to the son, as a rich compensation and reward for his obedience, and yet the son receives the inheritance, not on account of his merit, but because the father, for the reason that he is his father, wants him to have it.

Apology to the Augsburg Confession

Tempering Tool

Ernest Shubird; 1999 Guideposts; Used with permission
Submitted by Laurel Ojala; New Ipswich, New Hampshire

When I was growing up I sometimes got into school yard scraps. One day after a brawl I slunk into the house, ducking my head to hide my black eye.

“How was school today, Ernest?” my mother called. When I didn’t answer, she came to the front hall. “Ernest! Not again!” She wet a towel and gently pressed it over my eye. “You have to learn how to control that temper of yours, young man.”

“But, Ma, the other kid started it.”

“I don’t care,” she said. “It takes two to make a fight.”

The next day she sent me to visit Grandpa Will Shubird. I found him out by his toolshed. “Morning, Ernest,” Grandpa said. His smile faded when he saw my bruise. “Now, you’ve been staying out of trouble haven’t you?”

“Not exactly...” I couldn’t lie to Grandpa. He knew I had a hair-trigger temper—unlike him. He had never so much as raised his voice to me, not even when I had let his buggy roll down the hill with my brother and sister inside it. Grandpa had just calmly talked to me about what a dangerous thing I had done.

“There’s no reason to let your anger get the best of you,” he said now.

“What if another kid pushes me? I protested. “Aw, you wouldn’t understand. You never get mad.”

Grandpa Will scratched his chin. “Son, I do understand. I used to get into fights too.”

“You?”

“Yep. I threw things. I kicked in doors. Even marrying your grandmother didn’t mellow me. I had the meanest, rottenest temper around,” he said. “Until something made me change.” He beckoned me to the doorway of the toolshed and pointed to a battered piece of iron sitting on a shelf inside.

“See that wedge? One day when your uncle J.D. was a boy we were using it to split firewood. Halfway through a big oak log the wedge popped out. I banged it in deeper, but it came out again. Steaming mad, I raised the hammer over my head and smashed it down with all my might. Bam! The wedge

went flying. It hit J.D. on the head and knocked him out cold.

“Fortunately J.D. was all right, though he did get a good knot on his head. I was horrified at what I’d done. I went back to the woods and knelt by that log and prayed, ‘Lord, I’ll do anything to get over this terrible temper of mine.’”

“Later that day I missed a nail and hit my thumb. I was about to throw the blasted hammer across the road when I suddenly saw in my mind that wedge flying through the air.”

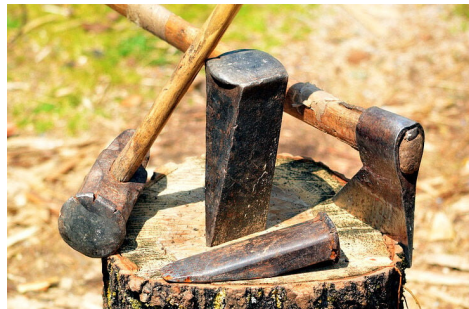
“Then what did you do?” I asked skeptically. I couldn’t believe my gentle grandfather had ever had a temper.

“I stopped short and said a prayer,” Grandpa told me.

“And you know, when I finished asking the Lord for His help, my sore thumb didn’t seem so important.

“I didn’t want that wedge ever to hurt anyone again. So I put it up. But I learned the problem was me, not the wedge.

“Then I had a real test a few years later. A neighbor confronted me on the church steps, brandishing a knife. ‘Will Shubird,’ the man snarled. ‘Word’s out that you said my boy’s runnin’ a still. I don’t like that kind of talk. I feel like carvin’ yer gizzard.’”



“Now the old Will Shubird would have grabbed a stick and prepared for combat. Instead I looked him straight in the eye and said, ‘Brother Sam, what you heard ain’t so. I know you don’t want to get into trouble over something that ain’t true. Let’s forget about it and go on into church.’ Sam was so surprised he put his knife in his pocket and walked away.”

“I haven’t flown off the handle since that day in the woods,” Grandpa said. “The Lord done His part, and remembering this ol’ wedge helped me do mine.”

From then on I tried to do my part whenever I felt my temper about to get the best of me. It wasn’t always easy, especially when another kid put up his dukes, but slowly I discovered my grandfather was right. By the time the prayer left my mouth, whatever I had gotten all fired up about never seemed to matter anymore. What did was trying to be more like Grandpa Will, the kindest, most patient person I’ve ever known. ~

And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter 5:4-11)

I HAVE ALREADY BEEN PREACHING Christ and fighting against the devil in his false teachers for a number of years; but I have experienced how much difficulty this business has caused me. For I cannot repel Satan as I would like. Nor can I finally grasp Christ as Scripture propounds Him to me, but the devil often suggests a false Christ to me. Thanks be to God, however, for preserving us in the Word, in faith, and in prayer! We know that one should walk in humility and fear in the sight of God and not presume upon our own wisdom, righteousness, doctrine, and courage. One should rely on the power of Christ. When we are weak, He is strong; and through us weaklings He always conquers and triumphs. To Him be glory forever. Amen.

Martin Luther

My Little Children

Gwen Wilson
Ridgefield, Washington



Dear Children far and near,
Hello to each of you. I pray this finds you well, and that your day is going good. The summer months have come and gone and the duty of returning to school for many of you has arrived. It's time to settle into the routine of study and bookwork, and prepare to work towards completing yet another year of the required school years before one graduates.

I want to use a chapter from a Bible book that begins: "My little children..." (1 John 2). Such good instruction and encouragement for all believers as you/we are faced with being part of the public system, going into school, or working a job, etc. The world has changed so much and so much of that is contrary to how God and Jesus want us to live or act.

We need to keep ourselves in the Word and close to God and pray for strength to flee those things that would seriously hinder our faith.

THE OPENING VERSE of 1 John 2 jumps right into instruction and encouragement.

(Instruction) *My little children, these things I write unto you, that ye sin not.*

(Encouragement) *And if any man sin, we have an advocate (someone who supports a particular policy or cause), with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*

Vs. 2 And he (Jesus) is the propitiation (one who makes atonement) for our sins: and not ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. Jesus will always take our requests for help or even good things, to God and plead for mercy on our behalf.

It's important to not only know of Jesus, but to KNOW Him and these next verses touch on that.

Vv. 3-4 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. Wow, those are some serious words! Did you know that lying is one of the six things that God hates (Proverbs 6:16)? I pray we would be mindful of the fact that lying is something God hates, and we should hate it, too.

Vs. 5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily (truly) is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. Here is some encouragement that can only produce good fruit through faith, not of works so we can boast and think we're so good.

Vv. 6-7 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.

Vv. 8-11 John is expressing how when one is in Christ he is a new creature, and the light of Christ shines in you. If one says he loves his brother he is in the light. But he that hates his brother is in darkness and the light of Christ is not in him.

Vs. 12 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. Here John wants to stress and encourage us to believe and know that our sins have been paid for through Jesus giving His life for us.

Vv. 13-14 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye

have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

John goes on to encourage us to not love the world nor the things that are in the world. If we love the world, the love of the Father is not in us. There is much out there that could blind our eyes and draw us away from our Lord. We are to flee (run from) all these things. These "things" are not of the Father, but only of the world. This world will pass away and all that is in it, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life (a sinful desire that draws attention to oneself), but the will of God is forever.

John gently encourages again: *Vs. 18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.* These were those who went away from the truth and could not hold to sound doctrine and still went about teaching a wrong doctrine to draw Christians away from Christ. There are these antichrists out in the world today.

John gives encouragement once again in verses 20-21. He wrote to the people, not because they because didn't know the truth, BUT because they knew the truth and that no lie is of truth. I trust the same with you, dear reader, that you KNOW the truth and it is hidden in your heart.

Vs. 22 John explains who antichrists are. They are those that deny the Father and the Son and that Jesus is the Christ.

Vs. 23 John simply states that whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; and he who acknowledges the Son, has the Father also. We must acknowledge the Father and Son both in our petitions, prayers, and when speaking to others.

In verses 24-27 John encourages us to abide in the Father as He has promised eternal life. You/we have been anointed from above and the Holy Spirit will continue to guide us through the Father. There will be no lies taught when truth abides.

Vv. 28-29 And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

John so tenderly closes this letter. It is so beautiful because he is writing to you and me and all believers.

One day Jesus will break through the clouds and I pray that you, me and all believers who hold fast to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit will be unashamed at His coming and be full of rejoicing and praise.

Have confidence, dear believer in Jesus who loves you and carries you each day. God bless your coming year of studies. I hope God's Word will be part of your studies. It's the best way to start one's day. I'll leave you with a couple encouraging verses that will be easy to find in the Bible if you need them.

I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3:14

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Philippians 4:13

God's peace.

This Temporary World

Gerry Southerton
Osage, Minnesota

IN WATCHING THE NEWS OF the day, it seems as if the world is falling apart all around us. We see and hear the threat of war, the riots in our streets, and the redefining of marriage. Though all these things seem to be out of control, we, as believers, have nothing to fear. We serve the One who has overcome the world.

And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. (Matthew 24:6-14)

I am not saying that the end of day is here today—even though it could be. What I'm saying is that what Jesus told His disciples (and we have received this same word) is still true. And Jesus told the disciples (and us) not to be alarmed about these things that were and are happening, but to endure. The thing is, even though we know that this world is a fallen place, we tend to idealize it, and envision it to be like heaven where all people live in peace. Like paradise. Like the Garden of Eden. But the Garden of Eden is where the problems began.

Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. (Gen. 3:1-7)

Adam and Eve sinned. Sin entered into the world in the Garden, and with it came all the problems of the world. All these things we see going on in our fallen world we think are new, but history and the Old Testament tells us that people sinned just as badly back then as they do today. Sin is the problem in our world. There are no new problems developing in our world. Men have been killing each other since the first offspring: Cain and Abel.

And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord. And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him. (Genesis 4:1-8)

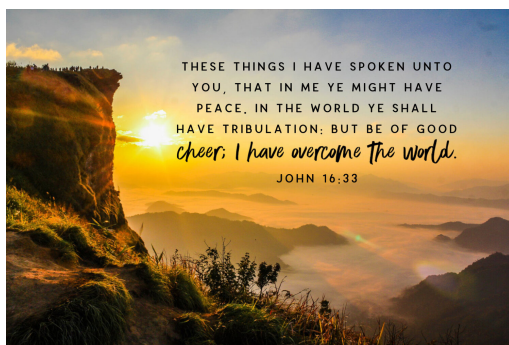
Sin is the reason that we see, hear and read about all the “terrible” things happening. And it is not going to change until we see the coming of Jesus Christ and we have a new heaven and a new earth that are permanent and everlasting, unlike our temporary world.

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. (Revelation 21:1-6)

In our temporary life in this world, we will always face the results of sin. This is our present reality until the day that God calls us home or Jesus comes back and we have our true, permanent, everlasting reality. Jesus told us (and His disciples) that even though we face tribulation and trials here, we should not worry because He has overcome the world.

Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. (John 16:31-33)

Thanks be to Him that this world is not our home. So, as Jesus said, “Take heart.” He has overcome the world. Look to God who calls all people to repent of our sin and keep our eyes on the One who has overcome the world. And like the words of a hymn, “Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face; and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace.” (Helen H. Lemmel) ~



Doing God's Work

Pastor Ryan Kandoll
Plymouth, Minnesota

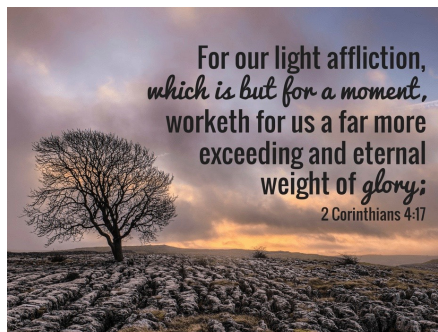
We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

2 Corinthians 4:13-18

IT WAS THE LAST DAY of camp. I was saying goodbye to my cabin group. The children were going back home and would soon be back at school and in their regular day to day life. It struck me how little time they had focused on the most important things in life. Just a short few days with a few more services and Bible studies in the middle of a busy (or maybe an idle) summer filled with other activities. It's not that those other activities are bad but unless they see Faith modeled in their parents and engage in regular devotions with them odds are their mental and physical diet is mostly secular and "transient."

The longer we follow Christ the more we begin to see Him at work in small ways around us the more and more we begin to focus on His kingdom and live as His disciples. We work for a kingdom that is yet to come. We work at making disciples so more people will come to know the saving work of Jesus to the glory of God!

The apostle Paul writes about the great affliction he, the other apostles, and all of the disciples of Jesus faced because of their faith in Christ and dedication to doing the work of His kingdom. They worked hard for a kingdom that is now but yet to come also. They died not seeing the full result of their work. We still haven't seen the full result. As a church, we have an opportunity to spread the Gospel and make disciples. We have an opportunity to bring a healing message that not only gives peace in this life, but for eternity. When we do this for the glory of God, the work will



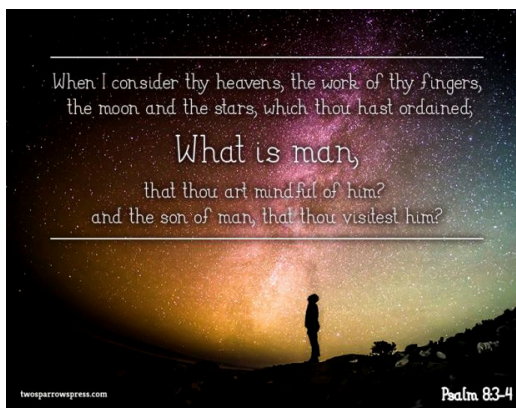
continue long after we are gone. As we see the decline of Christ's church in America with many churches straying away from preaching Law and Gospel, and many more closing their doors as their membership dwindles, as some Christians have to drive long distances to find churches that faithfully preach the Word, we have an opportunity to serve. His kingdom will continue, His will will be done. I pray that the Lord would help us to be good stewards of the resources He has blessed us with, to use them for His kingdom, that as a congregation we would be focused on the Gospel not only for ourselves but also for others; to be concerned about doing the work of God's kingdom so that His kingdom will come and His will will continue to be done even at Plymouth Lutheran now and for a long time after we who attend there now have died or moved away. Let's not lose heart in doing God's work.

God's peace.

The Change of Heart

What is our life?—a breath, a span,
A spark struck out, then lost in night;
Amidst Thy works, Lord, what is man,
That Thou in him shouldst take delight?
Thou self-existent, Thou alone,
Father of endless ages art!
Earth is Thy footstool, heav'n Thy throne,
Yet scorn'st Thou not a broken heart.
That drear and desolate domain,
By evil spirits long possessed,
Will bloom like Eden in Thy reign
Of love and joy, of peace and rest.
Oh! wouldst Thou deign to visit mine,
With Thy sweet presence fill the place,
How would that new creation shine
With all the glory of Thy grace!
Then life no more a breath would be,
A span, a spark, absorbed in night,
Life would be immortality,
And darkness everlasting light.

James Montgomery



When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou

madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!

Psalm 8:3-9

The Upside-Down World

Lois Matson
Yacolt, Washington

IS THE WORLD TURNED upside-down? That's the claim of the mob in Thessalonica. Paul and Silas were on a missionary journey, and they met opposition for the witness of Christ. In Philippi, as recorded in Acts chapter 16, Lydia, a seller of expensive purple goods, was converted, and then Paul cast an evil spirit out of a slave girl who told fortunes. Her owners were enraged because they had lost their chance to profit from her, and the city was in an uproar. Paul and Silas were beaten and imprisoned, but the Philippian jailer came to faith in Christ.

In Acts 17, Paul and Silas have traveled to Thessalonica, and Paul began to preach at the synagogue, as he often did. People were converted, both Jews and Greeks, and a mob formed in this city also.

Now when they [Paul and Silas] had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ. And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, **These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;** Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus. And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things. And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go. (Acts 17:1-9)

Essentially, they were saying, "The world is upside-down because of this Jesus!" And in a sense, they were correct that the world had turned over.

When Adam and Eve fell into sin, the world turned upside-down. What had been perfect became blemished and broken. But Jesus turned the upside-down world back to its proper upright position. Through the Gospel, our Lord Christ has turned the world right-side-up again. And now, through Him, everything is opposite.

Hear the testimony of Mary in her Song of Praise: *He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.* (Luke 1:51-53)

Hear the testimony of Jesus Himself in Luke 6:20-25: *And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh. Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets. But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.*

Again Jesus shows the right-side-up nature of His kingdom: *Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest. And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by him, And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.* (Luke 9:46-48)

For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. (Luke 14:11)



And the preaching of the Word is the means by which hearts are both broken and then made whole. Through the foolishness of preaching (1 Corinthians 1:21), people come to repentance and faith in Christ.

By His death and resurrection, our Lord Jesus has set the world back in its proper orientation. Jesus Christ is the Solid Rock, the

Cornerstone, the Foundation whereon we can rest secure. God be praised! ~

Christian Monthly Vol. LXXX—No. 9

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.

What's in a Name?

Pastor Jason Salmi
Vancouver, Washington

EVERYONE HAS ONE. They're so common that it's easy to take them for granted. But names are extremely important. When you use someone's name, you're not just using a word that helps identify them. You're using a word that stands in for them. When someone uses your name, they are referring to everything about you that makes you you. Who your parents are, where you came from, what you've done in life, what you're known for. When you really get down to it, a person's name is one of the most important things that they have, as it is a short and easy way of condensing so much into so little.

This is, of course, true of God as well. When we use the name (or names) of God, we are referring to everything about Him. And we learn a lot about God by looking at what He's called. For instance, when the people of Israel were in bondage in Egypt and God appeared to Moses in a burning bush, Moses wanted to know what He was to call the Lord when speaking His words to the people: *And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. (Exodus 3:13-14)* God gave His people a name to use when referring to Him that speaks of the fact that He is the only God who is...the only God who exists. Apart from Him, there is no other.

Jesus' disciples had known His name for some time already when He initiated a conversation about who He was. He began by having His disciples list off who the crowds thought He might be before turning the question to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Jesus was not asking them to merely repeat back to Him the name that they and everyone else used to refer to Him in daily life. He wanted to draw out from them a name that more fully explained Who He was. Peter's reply, on behalf of the disciples, did exactly that, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matthew 16:13-16) In this, Peter declared that Jesus was the One who was to come, the One through Whom God would fulfill His promises of salvation and deliverance.

There is so much that can be said regarding the names of God, but in the end He has given us the one Name which is most important for us and all people to know: *Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:9-11)*

Dear Saints, take comfort in knowing the name of Jesus, and that you can call upon Him. May His Name be ever in our hearts and on our lips. ~

As I walked in the fields at sunrise
Looking at all that God has made,
I admire the tiny flower buds,
So delicate and each handmade—
Handmade by our Creator
Each in its fashion and style,
Some so fine and delicate;
I stood looking for a while.
Then a thought came to me—
I compared it to a child.
At birth God made a little one,
So tender and so mild.

However as life's trials
Get especially more than one can bear,
He'll have to toughen...
As the load is too heavy to share.
We often feel sunken and defeated
As we see no end in sight;
However, we know God will help us
As we struggle in the plight.

Some tiny rose buds
Mature to full bloom;
Others fall off prematurely
And life comes to an end too soon.
The soil they were planted in
Makes a difference you can see;
The roots may be smothered
And filled with much weed.

So, Mom and Dad, till the ground;
Do not let the thistles grow.
These hearts were so tender
When our Creator made them so.
Pray for guidance to help us
Nurture these tender buds,
So when they are mature in full bloom
They will know that it was in love.

Do not pass generational fault
From one generation to the next,
As so many lives are damaged
For these bad habits are not blessed.
The hearts can only get colder
And soon in a deep freeze,
And nothing seems to enter.
Get rid of these bad teachings.

Continue to pray to our Savior
To lead us down the right path,
So that we can be godly examples
And avoid the aftermath.
Our hope is to get to heaven—
Our children to get there, too.
So let us not be a stumbling block,
But support them all the way through.

Rose Buds

Laurel Ojala; New Ipswich, New Hampshire