

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.

JANUARY 2011



PROPERLY CLOTHED

Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies (compassionate hearts), kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. (Colossians 3:12-15)

The time has come to start acting like a body, and when I say body, I mean the Body of Christ! We have people all around us constantly at odds with one another because of our undue expectations and lofty goals spurred on by our own self-righteousness. Yes, we are self-righteous and the Church at times is one of the most prominent culprits! When did it become proper to beat one another up? We are a family, and it is time to act like brothers and sisters in Christ and support one another and build one another up. All around us in the world we see strife in families, countries at war, violence escalating from our young and we wonder why. Examples of Christ in this world are sometimes very hard to come by. We need to be properly clothed in Christ!

We need to take stock of the ways that we think and re-evaluate our lives to see if they are guided by our own motives or by the will of our heavenly Father. When we have difficulties with another person, we are more prone to tell everyone else their faults rather than stop and talk to them directly; we all struggle in this area. It is time to learn to communicate with and bear with one another. We blame others rather than take ownership of the fact that we lack faith in God and His ability to work in and through us!

The Body of Christ needs a wake-up call and a reminder to recognize that Jesus Christ is the head of that Body. We will

The Body of Christ needs a wake-up call...

fail if left to our own devices to cure the situation, but if we give it to God and ask Him to guide us, He will see to our success. Do we truly believe this or are we confident in our own ideas and solutions? God wants us to recognize that once we are found in Him, it is then that He can begin a good work in us.

So often, when someone struggles in this world, we are quick to pounce on them rather than walk beside them, quietly place an arm around their shoulder, tell them we love them and that we will be there for them. We aren't there yet and, unfortunately, we often watch these situations much like a car racing fan watches for a crash. We need to stop beating one another up and cloth ourselves properly as a Body with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Above all this, we need to put on love which comes from a proper relationship with God.

Christ listened and loved and spoke the truth in love. If we think that we have all of the answers in a critical situation, then we are most likely not the person to be there. God will guide us to love and listen, rather than to speak and command, when others are in need. We must stop thinking about ourselves so much and start to see others through the eyes of Christ, who forgave us and gave His life for us. Peace will come when we place our lives in the hands of our gracious Lord and start to see one another through the person of Jesus Christ, who has granted us all things.

*Pastor Charles Bergstedt
Plymouth, Minnesota*

PROMISES, PROMISES

As we begin the new year, many will make resolutions to do better than in the past. We promise to work harder at our jobs. We promise to be better parents to our children, and better spouses. We promise to be more helpful to our neighbors and to share with the less fortunate. All of these promises require dedication on our part. Unfortunately, we as humans fail because we are so weak in ourselves. Too often we trust in our human strength and not in God.

What kind of promises do we make to God and the church? We know that we are living in trying times. Are we able to give to the church and to the work of God as we have in the past? God only asks that we give according to our ability. God has promised to bless our tithes as He promised in *Malachi 3:10*: *Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.*

Do we promise to be more faithful in our worship? Will we make every effort to attend the worship services? Are we willing to come to the Bible studies each week? Do we promise to come and join our voices in the song services, where we can praise God with His children? Do we promise to pray for the church, that there would be a revival and that many more would repent and believe? Do we promise to pray for the sick, and for all who are going through difficult times in their lives? Do we promise to pray for the mission work that is being done in far-away lands? Do we promise to pray for the leaders of our country? The list of things that we should pray for goes on and on.

We know that we are all sinners by nature. That is the very reason that we have to turn to God and seek His guidance. This calls for a complete surrender to God's will in our lives. We are to die to ourselves and to sin. *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? ...Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

(Romans 6:1-2, 11) Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. (Colossians 3:2-3) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-25)

If our fellowship is with Christ, His Spirit will mortify the deeds of the flesh. *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. (Romans 6:6-7) For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. (2 Corinthians 4:11) 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)*

May this be our prayer for the new year:

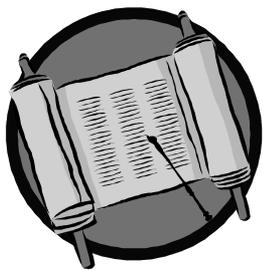
Just a closer walk with Thee,
Grant it, Jesus, is my plea,
Daily walking close to Thee,
Let it be, dear Lord, let it be.

I am weak, but Thou art strong,
Jesus, keep me from all wrong,
I'll be satisfied as long
As I walk, let me walk close to Thee.

Through this world of toil and snares,
If I falter, Lord, who cares?
Who with me my burden shares?
None but Thee, dear Lord, none but Thee.

When my feeble life is o'er,
Time for me will be no more,
Guide me gently, safely o'er
To Thy kingdom's shore, to Thy shore. *(Author Unknown)*

*God's peace,
Pastor Don Salo
New York Mills, Minnesota*



COME BACK

For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not. (Isaiah 30:15)

They were unwilling because the very idea of return suggested defeat, precisely because it suggested to a stubbornly independent people that their true victory depended upon another beside themselves: The Holy One of Israel. Their rejection of Him guaranteed their failure on every field of conflict, whether physical or spiritual. In such a state, the reality of God is scorned, and the person is referred back to himself, not to God, as the only possible source of rest. Men, however, prefer the bragging rights that attend violence to the honor that attends quietness, for that honor belongs to another. This is the assessment of God upon His ancient people, concisely stated, "You would not." That is, "You would rather go it alone. You would rather glorify your own strength. You would rather be 'Alpha and Omega'—source and goal!" Returning and rest was no option for the stalwart and bristling "spiritual soldier" of Israel; neither is it an easy option for the modern "spiritual athlete" of our own day. For these things demand a humiliation of the most profound type.

True quietness of heart is had at a terrific price. We must actually die to obtain it. We cannot war to own it. We cannot possess it unless we have first lost all things. Its very nature demands that we recognize the failure of self-quieting and, instead, surrender ourselves to the quieting action of God. This is all quite paradoxical and must have inspired acute grief in its first audience. They were told, in essence, "Everything you think you know is wrong. Everything that appears to be the means to the end is a miscalculation." All the world is turned upside-down.

And thank God it truly is! For the *foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.* (1 Corinthians 1:25) So stated the Apostle Paul in relation

to the cross of Christ Jesus, who, in very form God, humbled Himself to death, even the death of the cross (Philippians 2:8). Christ Jesus lived and lives the perfect human life in returning and rest, quietness and trust. And His strength was expended on the ground of the hill of Calvary, in supposed weakness, in supposed failure. He was willing, where all else were unwilling. He did not grasp where all else greedily grasped. Having opened now the fount of blessing, He grants true quietness of heart to all who believe in Him, all who have grown weary of grasping. That quietness of heart is the very gift that one can neither earn nor strive to obtain. We have been quieted by God and rest in God.

In a world defined by aggression, debate, and abject hostility, we are refreshingly defined by something that transcends the hopeless fray: returning and rest. It is the unmistakable characteristic of the new Man. It is the unmistakable characteristic of His Church.

*Pastor Nathan Juntunen
Vancouver, Washington*

The Creation of Man

Why did God use such deliberate care in the creation of man? God wanted to demonstrate in this manner that man was not on the level with other creatures in the world, but was a higher and more noble creation of God, as we read: *And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. (Genesis 1:26)* Having created light, sun, moon, and stars, the sea and the land with all their living creatures and vegetation for their food, God now proceeds to create that being whom all creation was to serve—man. The earth with the skies were to be the abode of man. As the occupant of the house is greater than the house in which he lives, so man is greater than the world in which he lives, for all things were created to serve him.

~ Selected from a website in India

THE SEASONS OF LIFE

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace. (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8)

There are many things in life that we have a hard time accepting and many that we do not understand. Then we ask the question: WHY? We will rarely ask, "Why me?" about the things that bless our lives. Usually the question is asked when we do not like what is happening. Our human nature is to think that only good things should happen in our lives and bad things should only happen to others.

The primary reason for this is we cannot see into the mind of God, nor into the future. Many things we see as "bad" come with an unseen blessing from the Lord our God, the purpose of which is revealed in His time! No one likes to be weeping in sorrow or mourning, to be sad over loss, to live with hatred or in war, but they are, unfortunately, the realities of life.

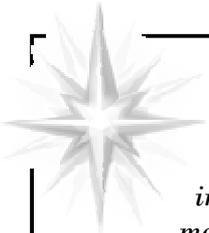
What we must learn from these things is that all things are in the hand of God to allow or perform, according to His will, and therefore to trust Him, for He knows what is best. King Solomon illustrates this reality, from his perspective, in the 7th chapter of *Ecclesiastes*, verses 1-5, where he shows us the contrast of wisdom and folly:

A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth. It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart. Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is

in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth. It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools.

May the Lord help us to see life, death, sorrow, joy, and all things through the eyes of the Lord that we may overcome our human ways, submissive to His will, and know that *all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)*

*Relying on the grace of God in the love of Jesus,
Pastor Rod Johnson
Laurium, Michigan*



Come and Worship!

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. (Matthew 2:1-2)

It is all-important that we realize that nothing will take the place of faith in, and subjection to, the Lord Jesus Christ. Acquaintance with Scripture that does not control our lives will only add to our condemnation rather than prove a means for salvation. Herod and the scribes knew what the prophets had predicted concerning the coming of the Messiah, but they had no room for Him in their hearts. On the other hand, His birth meant so much to the wise men that they took a long journey to seek for Him and to pour out their treasures at His feet. His star not only showed the way to Christ, but it was the cause of their deep rejoicing, for they recognized it as the messenger of God leading them to Him whom they received in faith as earth's rightful King and whom they worshipped with adoring love. To "keep Christmas" while refusing heart-allegiance to the One who was born to reveal the Father and to make propitiation for sin is but a sham and a mockery.

H. A. Ironside

THE LIGHT OF GOD

When we awakened this morning and saw the light of day, we realized that the light of God is so great that it hides the night of darkness. ...*God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But 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 1:5-7)*

Pray that the Father and the Provider of hope and salvation will still help us to see and hear Jesus with the living Word. *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. (1 John 2:15-16)* There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (Romans 8:1) I hope that our little church paper will fall into some person's hand who is seeking for salvation.

When I became concerned for my spiritual welfare, I thought that I would seek out the biggest church building with the most members; that's where I would go. I did not know the Lord Jesus. I did not know of repentance or the forgiveness of sins. The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. God's ways are far above our ways. Jesus' own words: *For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. (Matthew 18:20)* There is the true church and kingdom of God where the true Savior is found in the believing hearts who rejoice that Jesus paid it all.

God sent us to many places to fellowship with God's children. My wife and I went when we were called or sent. Time went quickly preaching and also working for a living. God has called home many precious children of God whom we met on our trips.

Dear souls who have been redeemed by the love and faithfulness of Jesus, continue to believe and obey. You say, "But my faith is small and weak." Listen, dear ones, the Lord gives faith. Would you want to have no faith? The trial of our faith is needful.

*Be in God's care,
Pastor Harry and Lois Clemetti
Bovey, Minnesota*

Dear Children,

The Christmas season when we celebrate Jesus' birth comes and goes, but the memory of His birth never grows old or fades away. Because of this special birth, we live with such a great hope in our hearts to know Him and one day to live with Jesus in



Ordinary Son

heaven. I pray that Jesus will always live in your hearts and that you will want to learn more about Him as long as you live.

JESUS—NO ORDINARY SON

Long ago in the Old Testament, long, long before Jesus came, the prophets spoke of His coming. The Bible talks about the Savior coming as far back as Genesis 3:15, Jeremiah 10:10, Isaiah 9:6, Daniel 9:24, and Psalm 89:4, to name a few places.

Jesus came into this world as a tender Baby just as you did, but **He was no ordinary Child**. He was God's Son sent into this world by the hand of God to save the world from sin.

Mary was chosen to be His "mother" and Joseph His "father." They would experience things that no other parents would. In Luke 1:26-56, an angel visited Mary and told her she would have a Son and she would conceive this Child of the Holy Ghost; He would be called JESUS and He would be great.

Mary (who some studies say was around 16 years old) went to visit her cousin, Elisabeth, who was an old woman. She was also going to have a baby, and an angel said his name would be John. John and Jesus would be cousins. When Mary arrived at Elisabeth's home and spoke to her, Elisabeth's baby leaped in her womb and Elisabeth praised God and prophesied of the greatness of this Child who would be called Jesus. We have a young woman and an old woman who were cousins and they were both being blessed by God to have sons. These two sons would not be ordinary. God had a great plan for both of them.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem. When He was around 2 years old, wise men from the East came and found Him and fell down and worshipped Him. They offered Him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, not gifts like the ones you children get. No, because **Jesus was no ordinary Son**.

In Luke 2:25-39, when Jesus was taken to the temple to be blessed, the old prophet, Simeon, rejoiced to see the Child and proclaimed a prophecy about Him. He said he could now die in peace (as he was at the end of his life), for he had seen his salvation. Jesus was his salvation, which means to be saved from sin. There was also in the temple a prophetess named Anna. The moment she saw Jesus she praised God and gave thanks and spoke of Jesus as the One who would save all Jerusalem. How amazed Mary and Joseph must have been at hearing all these great things that their baby Son would grow up to do! **He was no ordinary Child.**

We don't know much about Jesus' growing up years, but in *Luke 2:40*, we read, *And the child grew, and waxed (became) strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.*

In Luke 2:41-52, when Jesus was 12 years old, He went with His parents up to Jerusalem to the Feast of the Passover. When the days of the feast were over, the family started on their way home. Joseph and Mary thought that Jesus was among the crowd as they walked. After a day of traveling they looked for Him and could not find Him. Where was He? They returned to Jerusalem and searched for three days and finally found Him in the temple with the doctors (men with wisdom) listening, and asking them questions. **He was no ordinary Son.**

His parents were very upset with Him for doing this to them and giving them a fright, but Jesus told them He was doing His Father's work. He was already doing what God had sent Him to do. His parents did not understand His speech. Jesus went home with His parents and was obedient to them and Mary kept these things in her heart. *Luke 2:52* says, *And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature (height), and in favour with God and man.* Mary knew **Jesus was no ordinary Son.**

In Luke 3, John, Jesus' cousin, had grown up and was living in the wilderness. God told him to preach to the people to repent and turn from their sinful ways and be baptized. John told the people that there was One coming after him who was mightier than he. He was preparing the way for Jesus to come to be among the people so they could learn from Him.

While John was preaching and baptizing people, Jesus came to be baptized by John. When Jesus came up out of the

water, the Holy Ghost came down on Him from heaven in the form of a dove. God spoke from heaven and said, *Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.* (Luke 3:22)

Jesus began His ministry at age 30. For 3 short years, He taught the people, preaching, healing and helping all He could. He was captured, beaten and hung on a cross to die for all mankind. Why? Because He loves us so much, and through His death we can have eternal life. No one loves us like God and Jesus do. No one will be there to help us as much as God and Jesus have and always will. *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.* (John 3:16) **Jesus was NO ordinary Son.** Praise God for the gift of His Son!

*God's peace,
Gwen Wilson*

In Loving Memory

Wayne Kinnunen went to be with the Lord on January 3, 2009. He wrote this poem in approximately 1985.

Because of sin, all things must die
The earth, sun, moon and stars of sky
The first creation completely gone
Love alone will then stand strong
Guide our hearts in paths of truth
Thy Word alone is Grace and Truth
The blood of atonement hath set me free
Which Jesus shed on Calvary
The Gospel goes out loud and clear
Come one, come all, and do draw near
Grant us courage, strength to be
Always looking unto Thee
Redeemer of my soul and life
Atonement won to God of Life

*Submitted by Wayne's wife, Eunice Kinnunen
Lake Worth, Florida*

OCCUPY TILL I COME

He (Jesus) said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. (Luke 19:12-13)

It is the time of year when many people think of New Year's resolutions that they have made or intend to make. Because of our very nature, most of them will not be kept and will soon be forgotten. However, the above Scripture from our Lord in the "Parable of the Pounds" (Luke 19:11-27) would be good for us to resolutely follow.

At this time the disciples mistakenly thought the kingdom of God would appear momentarily. They thought Jesus was the Messiah and supposed He would soon establish His kingdom on earth. They did not realize Jesus did not come to earth to reign as a king, and they did not understand Jesus would suffer affliction, die on the cross, and be raised again for our redemption. Jesus spoke this parable to indicate how they, and we as well, should live our lives while waiting for His second coming.

A nobleman went into a far country to have himself appointed king and to return. He called his ten servants together, gave each of them a pound to invest while he was gone, and said: *Occupy till I come.* (A pound is the Greek mina, worth about three month's wages.) The nobleman represents the Lord Jesus Christ, who is gone to receive a kingdom for Himself. He came visibly to this earth and visibly went away; when He comes the second time He shall visibly return. *...this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. (Acts 1:11)*

When the nobleman returned, he called his servants together so that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. (Luke 19:15) How did the servants take care of the things they were entrusted with? The first servant said, *Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. (v. 16-17)* The second servant said, *Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five*

cities. (v. 18-19) Another servant said, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man... (v. 20-21) The Lord told him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury (interest)? (v. 22-23) This servant did not really expect the king to come back, so he did not take care of the king's affairs.

But what is to be learned from this parable regarding the present duty of all Christians? What is the

Jesus expects to see the fruits of the lives we have led...

duty of Christians between the first and second advent? Does "occupy" mean simply living in the place we call home? Does it mean just going about our daily occupations and duties until Jesus returns for His own? Yes, we must take care of ourselves and our families in this world, but this parable implies more than this—Jesus expects to see the fruits of the lives we have led; we are to fulfill the responsibilities Jesus has left for us.

An old writing by J. C. Ryle (1816-1900) from England provides further understanding of Jesus' words, *Occupy till I come*. Some excerpts from this writing are as follows:

The Lord Jesus bids you "occupy." By that He means that you are to be a "doer" in your Christianity, and not merely a hearer. He wants His servants not only to receive His wages, and eat His bread, and dwell in His house, and belong to His family, but also to do His work. You are to *let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works...* (Matthew 5:16) Have you faith? It must not be a dead faith: it must work by love (Galatians 5:6). Are you redeemed? You are redeemed that you may be *...a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* (Titus 2:14) Beware of an idle, talking, gossiping, sentimental, do-nothing religion. Think not because your doings cannot justify you, or put away one single sin, that therefore it matters not whether you do anything at all. Away with such a delusion! Cast it behind you as an invention of the devil. Think of the house built upon the sand and its miserable end (Matthew 7:24-27).

But the Lord Jesus also bids you to "occupy your pound." By this He means that He has given each one of His people some opportunity of glorifying Him. He would have you understand that everyone has his own sphere—the poorest as well as the richest; that everyone has an open door before him, and may, if he will, show forth his Master's praise. Your bodily health and strength, your mental gifts and capacities, your money and your earthly possessions, your rank and position in life, your example and influence with others, your liberty to read the Bible and hear the Gospel, your plentiful supply of means of grace—all these are your pounds. All these are to be used and deployed with a continual reference to the glory of Christ; all these are His gifts. You are not your own: you are bought with a price (1 Corinthians 6:20). Surely it is no great matter if He bids you honor Him and serve Him with all that you have.

But the Lord Jesus bids you also to "occupy till He comes." By that He means that you are to do His work on earth, like one who continually looks for His return. You are to be like the faithful servant who knows not what hour his master may come home, but keeps all things in readiness, and is always prepared. You are to be like one who knows that Christ's coming is the great reckoning day, and to be ready to render up your account at any moment. You are not to suppose that you have any freehold on this world, not even a lease; the greatest and the richest of mankind is only God's tenant-at-will. You are not to neglect any social duty or relation of life because of the uncertainty of the Lord's return. You are to fill the station to which God has called you in a godly and Christian way. You are to be like a man who never knows what a day might bring forth and, therefore, to put off nothing till a convenient season. You are to measure all your ways by the measure of Christ's appearing, and to do nothing in which you would not like Jesus to find you engaged. This is to "occupy till Jesus comes."

When Christ comes again, may we be found worthy to hear the praise of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on how we led our lives: *Well done, thou good and faithful servant...* (Matthew 25:21)

Alvar Helmes
Battle Ground, Washington

A NEW YEAR'S PROMISE

I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye. (Psalm 32:8)

As we enter another new year with all its yet-unknown events to unfold before us, may every true Christian take comfort and reassurance in these words of our Lord. They are given in the form of a promise to the psalmist David but are also intended to calm the anxious hearts of all God's children. In the preceding verse of this psalm, David expresses his confidence in the Lord with these words: *Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah. (v. 7)*

Dear friend, do the thoughts of what the new year could bring stir apprehension and perhaps a measure of fear in your heart? You are not alone in these thoughts. We all share a common nature. The children of the world are also prone to experience similar thoughts, but theirs may be prompted primarily by economic concerns and, perhaps, personal safety. Though we share in those concerns, ours may be centered on what we can expect, as Christians, in our nation governed by ungodly men and women in top leadership positions. These are indeed valid concerns, but let us be reminded who has the ultimate authority and control. Yes, it rests with the living God, whom we serve, and again He wants to reassure us with the same words recorded in our text verse. How often we need to be reminded that He is watching over us!

It is time for every soul who has the spirit of prayer to fall on their knees and earnestly seek His face in humble prayer. We have learned from the Scriptures that God indeed hears and answers the prayers of His children. In the epistle of James we read, *...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. (James 5:16)* Let us, therefore, pray with believing hearts that God would both instruct and teach us in the way which we should go. We are like sheep who continually need the Good Shepherd's guidance. Will we seek after it and follow Him?

Another thing is very clear in the Scriptures. The Lord wants you and me, dear Christian friend, to be a light in this

sin-darkened world. Jesus commanded His followers with these words: *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)* Is our light of faith shining? Are we willing to testify and tell others what Jesus means to us? Will we reach out to those who journey down the slippery slope of sin and unbelief and assist them to the safe path that leads to eternal life? Will we tell them that God *...is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance? (2 Peter 3:9)* Will we tell them that God loves them and that He gave His Son Jesus to die for all of mankind? Will we tell them that there is grace and forgiveness freely given to the repentant for all their sins in the name and atoning blood of Jesus?

Beloved, as Christians, this is our purpose here on earth. Let us earnestly seek God-given strength to witness with greater boldness, yet with love and compassion, to others in this new year. Perhaps God will reward our humble efforts with salvation for some poor seeking soul, all to His honor and glory. If God's children do not bear this message of the Gospel, who will?

Is our light of faith shining?

Pray for our nation, for those leaders who are in unbelief, that they would turn to God. Pray for one another, that our land could once again enjoy the privilege of being recognized and known to the entire world as "one nation under God" where there is "liberty and justice for all." Being instructed, taught and guided by His unerring way, we shall prevail. He said it and we believe it.

May you have a happy and spiritually prosperous new year in Christ Jesus our Lord.

*Pastor Ken Storm,
Tapiola, Michigan*

Christ is a jewel of more worth than a thousand worlds, as all know who have Him. Get Him, and get all; miss Him and miss all.

Thomas Brooks

GOD IS GOOD

The children of God are in awe every day as we consider our status with God in this life and the life to come. *LORD, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him! or the son of man, that thou makest account of him! Man is like to vanity: his days are as a shadow that passeth away. (Ps 144:3-4) It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. (Lam 3:22-23) If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. (Ps 130:3-4)*

A great exchange has taken place: that which is mine (the wrath of God against sin) has become Thine, and that which is Thine (Thy glory and the freedom from the curse of sin) has become mine. Jesus is our wonderful Lord and Savior, through whom God has enlightened us by His grace to believe our many sins forgiven in His name and blood. *...God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. (Romans 5:8-11) ...Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. (Romans 4:7-8) Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:1)*

The devil, the world and our flesh may distract us from our blessedness with God, but pay no heed, *For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. (1 John 3:20) The Lord says, ...My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. (2 Corinthians 12:9)*

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into

heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. (Psalm 139:6-8) 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. (Psalm 92:1-2)

May these few words find you in the blessed liberty in Jesus Christ. *If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.* (John 8:36)

God's peace,
Dave Impola
Everett, Washington

CORRECTION: The ALC Convention notice had incorrect days listed. Opening services will be held **Wednesday, July 6, 2011**, at 7:00 pm at the Zion Lutheran Church in Hancock, Michigan. Services will continue **Thursday, July 7th**, through **Sunday, July 10th**, at the MTU campus in Houghton, Michigan. The editor regrets the error.

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Prayer for the New Year

Lord, we are Your people,
the sheep of Your flock.
Heal the sheep who are wounded.
Touch the sheep who are in pain.
Clean the sheep who are soiled.
Warm the sheep who are cold.
Help us to know Thy love through Jesus
and the Holy Spirit.
Help us to lift up that love and show it
all over this land.
Help us to build love on justice
and justice on love.
Help us to believe mightily, hope joyfully,
and love divinely.
And renew us, so that we may help
renew others on earth.

*Author Unknown
Submitted by Edith Bisila
Circle Pines, Minnesota*

2011 ALC CALENDARS

You may now order the Apostolic Lutheran Church calendar for the year 2011. The price for each calendar is \$5.50 to cover the cost of printing and mailing. Do not send your payment with your order. An invoice will be included with the shipment for payment to be mailed to the Federation treasurer.

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*Corrie Karlsen
ALC Calendar Committee*