

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.

April 2012

By the President of the United States of America.

A Proclamation.

Whereas, the Senate of the United States, devoutly recognizing the supreme authority and just government of Almighty God in all the affairs of men and of nations, has, by a resolution, requested the President to designate and set apart a day for national prayer and humiliation.

And whereas it is the duty of nations, as well as of men, to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God, to confess their sins and transgressions in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon; and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord.

And, insomuch as we know that, by His divine law, nations, like individuals, are subjected to punishments and chastisements in this world, may we not justly fear that the awful calamity of civil war, which now desolates the land, may be but a punishment inflicted upon us for our presumptuous sins, to the needful end of our national reformation as a whole people? We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven. We have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power, as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious Hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us!

It behooves us then, to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness.

Now, therefore, in compliance with the request, and fully concurring in the views of the Senate, I do, by this my proclamation, designate and set apart Thursday, the 30th day of April, 1863, as a day of national humiliation, fasting and prayer. And I do hereby request all the people to abstain, on that day, from their ordinary secular pursuits, and to unite at their several places of public worship and their respective homes in keeping the day holy to the Lord, and devoted to the humble discharge of the religious duties proper to that solemn occasion.

All this being done in sincerity and truth, let us then rest humbly in the hope authorized by the Divine teachings that the united cry of the nation will be heard on high and answered with blessings, no less than the pardon of our national sins and the restoration of our now divided and suffering country to its former happy condition of unity and peace.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the City of Washington, this thirtieth day of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the Independence of the United States the eighty seventh.

By the President:

Note: In 1988, President Ronald Reagan fixed the date of the National Day of Prayer as the first Thursday in May.

Please join other Americans in specific prayer for our nation on Thursday, May 3, 2012.



The Atonement

Kenneth B. Hendrickson, April 1967 CM
Submitted by Jesse Fraki, Ottertail, Minnesota

The doctrine of the atonement—that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners—is the central, vitally fundamental doctrine of the Word of God and the Christian Church. Upon this foundation a living and transforming Church can be built. The removal, or weakening, of this truth has always had the result that such a church has become a society, instead of one in which the renewing, transforming power of Christ has been conveyed to the penitent soul. This truth applies to the Church as a whole and to the individual Christian.

The doctrine of the atonement is not new with the introduction of the New Testament. Throughout the Old Testament it was prefigured and foretold. One of the church fathers has said that the books of Moses have been written in the blood of the Lamb. The atonement accomplished is the whole burden of the New Testament.

This doctrine has never been proclaimed without opposition. In no age has it been attacked more than in the present; therefore, it would seem right to dwell on its truths. First, because it presents the only real, satisfying remedy for the guilt and smite of sin. Then, because of the widespread, insidious attacks made on this doctrine. Some blindly call it the "slaughter house gospel," revealing both their ignorance and malice for the substitutionary atonement which the Bible has proclaimed from its first pages. As long as the Bible remains the foundation and fountain head of Christian faith and practice, so long as men remain what they have ever been, poor sinful creatures, so long will the old Bible doctrine of atonement be in place; so long will it be a necessity. But the most dangerous enemies of this doctrine are not the open and avowed ones. Those who, under the guise of high-sounding and, to the casual hearer, well-meaning words, are dethroning Christ as the Son of God, and defying man, and preaching a gospel of human endeavor, of culture and progress, are the worst enemies of the atonement.

One of the best, most simple definitions of this doctrine is in the explanation of the second article of our creed: "I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sin, from death and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death." The underlying thoughts of this explanation are: human sinfulness; human inability to escape its consequences; and the divine love of the Incarnate Son of God who has actually paid the penalty of man's transgressions and potentially set him free.

The biblical doctrine of atonement may be briefly set forth in the following statements. All men are by nature lost sinners. Scripture says we by nature are sons of wrath. There is not one that does good, no not one. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. God's holiness, justice and truth cannot allow Him to overlook man's sins or treat him as if he had not sinned. The very nature of God, and of sin, make it imperative that sin be punished. God's love still desired the sinners good, and divine

wisdom eternally devised the plan for man's redemption. Jesus Christ, the God-man, became man's substitute. He put Himself under the Law and fulfilled all its requirements. He endured the full penalty which was man's just due. He did for man all that God's righteousness demanded. This meeting of all man's obligations, fully satisfied to God, that the Scriptures call redemption, reconciliation, an offering for sin, we, in the language of the Church, call the atonement.

It will doubtlessly surprise some to know that the term "atonement" occurs but once in the New Testament. This need not alarm us; though we do not find the term used, the doctrine we know by this name is plainly written on the pages of the Bible. In the Old Testament, the word is of frequent occurrence. "Atone" originally meant to cover, then to cover sin, to forgive sin, to discharge from punishment. Its noun form signifies to expiate, to propitiate, to redeem. Jesus everywhere teaches that He is the fulfillment of the Old Testament types. In the New Testament there are an abundance of words which set forth the precious truth known to us as atonement:

Reconciliation: *Romans 5:10 ...we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son...* tells of the coming together of those who were alienated—God and man. Man was under God's displeasure and wrath; reconciliation was made possible through the death of Christ. Our salvation is based on the real atonement (2 Corinthians 5:18-21). How God can forgive sin is strongly emphasized *...he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin...* Here we have atonement not in name, but in deed.

Propitiation: To be "propitious" is to be disposed to forgive. To "propitiate" is to render an offended person clement and forgiving. The propitiation is that whereby the favorable change is wrought. In this light let us recall these words: "Jesus Christ the righteous is the propitiation for our sins (1 John 2:2)" and "God loved us and sent His son to be the propitiation for our sins (4:10)."

Redemption: Redeem is to purchase back; to ransom; to liberate from slavery, captivity or death by the payment of a price. "The Son of Man came to give His life a ransom for many (Matthew 28:20)," and "Who gave Himself a ransom for all (1 Timothy 2:6)."

Substitutionary: Christ's work is substitutionary. Isaiah 3:5-12 is undeniably Messianic. Peter clearly refers to Isaiah 53, saying, *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.* (1 Peter 2:24) And Romans 5:6-8 shows an unmistakable substitutive atonement: *For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* Those for whom Christ died were in the state of condemnation; they are called ungodly, sinners, enemies. The ground of their acceptance is the death of Christ.

This is the doctrine of atonement, without which our preaching would be in vain, we would still be in our sins and there would be no hope had not Christ risen from the dead. Is this hope real and living in your heart?~

The Fight of Faith

Pastor Wayne Juntunen
Esko, Minnesota

I am sensing within my spirit a burden that I believe is from the Lord, and He is moving me to tell it. The message from the Lord regards our fight of faith. What I believe concerns our Lord, and ought to concern us as well, is the fact that many seem to be afraid to confess their faith, both in word and deed.

This Scripture verse references the confession of our faith: *Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.* (1 Timothy 6:12)

The reason this counsel was so timely is the context surrounding that verse. The way of life that surrounded Timothy was vile, harsh, ungodly, self-centered, self-serving, and in every way anti-Christian. In the midst of this society Paul exhorts Timothy to stand strong in the faith. This is an accurate description of our own society today. No matter what country we live in, the spirit of antichrist is on the rise.

We may not feel the impact of this growing, strengthening anti-Christian worldview until it impacts our own cities, schools, homes and children. Not long ago at a Bible study in our congregation, the pastor said that many young people do not dare to confess their faith in school because of ridicule and rejection from other classmates, and even the teacher.

That comment brought to mind two passages from Scripture. The first: *...when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?* (Luke 18:8) The context of this saying of our Lord is within the parable of the importunate woman whose determination to be avenged of her adversary kept her pleading with the unjust judge until he helped her. Our Lord's comment at the end of this parable ought to be taken seriously. I believe God is saying through this Holy Spirit-inspired Word not to give in to our foe! No matter how much we suffer from an unbeliev-

ing world, let us not cower in fear before them but unceasingly cry unto the Lord to give us boldness and courage. We do this not for our sakes, not that we would get some relief or comfort, but rather that the Lord's will would prevail, so the kingdom of God, the kingdom of true light, will begin to transform the lives of those who are opposed to Christ. Only as we are "salt" and "light" (Matthew 5:13, 14) can we be the vessels through whom Christ can do His transforming work in this world.

The second passage of Scripture: *...from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.* (Matthew 11:12) I have not understood this verse until now. The larger context within which this verse is placed is preceded by the ministry of John the Baptist and

succeeded by the ministry of Christ. The point our Lord was making is that both the ministry of repentance and forgiveness is essential. What is meant by "violence" and "violent" in this context is the boldness and courage necessary to confront the hardness of the hearts of the hearers, not merely the hearers of this parable, but the hearers of our day. The "violence" or "courage" we need is not the arm of flesh, but the power of the love of God.



Public Domain image titled "Therefore to him let me give lasting praise." from *The Pilgrim's Progress*

We have no choice, as disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ, but to become more courageous and determined to bring to bear upon our world the truth of the Gospel.

Because we know on the day of judgment every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:10-11), let us boldly, lovingly, faithfully and consistently love our "enemies" that they may be drawn to Christ and humble themselves in repentance and faith in the time of grace when they can be blessed with the assurance of forgiveness, so when they bow before the Lord on that final day, they will bow, not in fear, but in adoration and praise to Him, the Lamb of God who takes away our sin!~

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Our Hope of Glory—Jesus

Gwen Wilson
Ridgefield, Washington

Dear Children far and near,

How are you? I hope this finds you well. It is Easter time again, when we stop to think on what Jesus did for us so that we may have eternal life. Let's go to God's Word in the book of *St. Luke, chapters 22-24*.

Jesus ate His last supper with His disciples. He gave them their first communion (the Lord's Supper), and He talked of His death. As they were gathered together, Jesus said, *Behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.* (*Luke 22:21*) This was Judas. Judas left the supper and went to the priests to collect his money for telling them where Jesus could be found, because Judas knew where Jesus would go.

After Jesus and His disciples (except Judas) were done eating, they went out to a garden on the Mount of Olives and He went off alone to pray to His Father God. He was in deep sorrow at this time as He was carrying all the world's sin on Himself. These sins even included yours and mine and all people's from the beginning to the end of time. His heart was so sad, but He knew He had to die so that the Scripture would be finished as it was written, and so we could have life in Jesus. While He was in the garden, Judas brought the priests and soldiers to get Jesus. Jesus did not struggle as they grabbed Him; He only wanted to know why they took Him then and not some other time when He had been teaching. He told them it was their hour to do their dark deed. He knew it was His time to die.

He was taken to the high priest's house. Jesus was beaten; they hit Him and said mean things to Him. They questioned whether He was the Christ. Jesus said that if He told them He was, they would not believe, and if He asked them if He was, they would not answer. He told them that the Son of Man will sit at the right hand of the power of God. They were angry at hearing this and sent Jesus to Pilate the governor to be tested further so they could accuse Him more. Pilate questioned Jesus and sent Him to Herod, the ruler of Galilee.

Herod and his men of war made fun of Jesus and put a purple robe on Him. He asked many questions which Jesus did not answer, and he sent Jesus back to Pilate.

Pilate did not find Him guilty of anything worthy of death. The people were more angry and told Pilate not to let Him go. They shouted, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"

Jesus was led out to Calvary where He was hung on a cross. Above His head a sign was placed that said: **THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.** Jesus died on the



cross. Before the day was over, His friends took His body down and put it in a new stone tomb. They took special care when they put Him there. The women who came with Jesus from Galilee watched and saw how He was buried.

Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

Luke 24:1-3

While the women wondered at this, they turned to see two men in shining clothes who told them, "He is not here for He is risen." Jesus did not stay in the grave but arose on the third day, this day we call Easter. Jesus had told His disciples that He would die and rise again. He did this so that we could have eternal life with Him one day.

God sent the Holy Spirit to help us to understand and believe in Jesus. He wants us to believe and be saved and come to Him. *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*) This is a promise for all people and for each of you children. God loves you so much He sent His Son to die for you so you could come live with Him—FOREVER.

God bless each of you with faith to keep believing in the gift of Easter.~

Judging. Gossiping. Two ridiculous actions with hideous outcomes. Judging is our perception of people's actions, looks, circumstances, etc. This critical mindset stems from a negative idea or thought inside our own hearts. Gossiping is us losing control of our tongues and not caring about what kind of impact our words will have. Being two of the "lesser" sins, they are rampant and often overlooked. When addressing this topic, more focus is usually turned to the victim, if you will. The victim is wounded and thrust into unnecessary drama which he/she has to painfully sort through. This time let's look at the instigator—that's us, by the way. Notice how judging is OUR perception and stems from OUR negative thoughts? And how gossip is US losing control and US not caring about the impact of our words? Not only do these actions affect others in a negative way, but they reflect sin in ourselves.

Bethany Helmes

Battle Ground, Washington

Some people use the Law of God as a hammer instead of a mirror!

Author Unknown



Share the Gospel

Shane Juuti
Gimlet, Alberta, Canada

Dear brothers and sisters in faith, and anyone whose heart is seeking comfort: may the peace of God be yours. A portion of Scripture has struck my heart as a reminder to believers of the importance to share the true message of the Gospel with people.

Paul tells the Thessalonians not to be troubled about things that are going to happen. He talks of a falling away from the truth. Then he speaks of the son of perdition being revealed ... *Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.* (2 Thessalonians 2:4-7)

This mystery of iniquity, which is already at work I believe, is another picture of the antichrist spoken of in 1 John 4. On one hand this iniquity wants to deny Christ abides in flesh; on the other, it wants the worship due God and to replace God with worship of self, which is in reality idol worship. But someone is withholding, constraining, preventing it from having free rein. The word "let" is Old English for "to hinder or prevent." It is important to look closely at what is withholding—"letting"—this iniquity.

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.



Revelation 20:1-3

Further on, we read of those who have shared in the first resurrection living and reigning with Christ a thousand years. This is the time in which we live, from Christ's resurrection until He comes again. Angels are often used as messengers in the Bible, so I believe this is a message that binds Satan, and this binding is the same spoken about using the word "letteth" in Thessalonians.

It's very telling that the angel has a key. This message is so important that Christ Himself delivered it: *I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.* (Matthew 16:19) Christ first gives the disciples the Holy Ghost, and then says, *Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.* (John 20:23) If one doesn't first have the Holy Spirit the keys are of no value, because we only exercise them by the power of God through the Holy Spirit. The message believed by faith that a sinner can believe his sins are forgiven in the name and because of the blood of Christ releases him but binds Satan, for Satan is no longer free to accuse that heart that sin is standing between him and a righteous God. A heart that has heard and believed this truth will not be deceived into thinking there is another way to the peace and joy of a good conscience before God.

If the true, full Gospel of Christ is not spoken—for it is Christ who letteth—the Devil is free to deceive. The Word tells us he sits in the temple of God. We know the hearts of believers are the temple of God. *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?* (1 Corinthians 3:16) Satan will try to deceive men into believing that there is some other way to deal with sin. Any other way is in reality a work of flesh, and the worship of Christ's work is replaced by worshipping one's own ability to cleanse one's own heart. This deception leads to falling away from the truth, and because people don't love the true Gospel message, *God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.* (2 Thessalonians 2:11) What a very sad state.

May God grant that the true Gospel of Christ Jesus would never be lost in our midst but go forth to others.~

Polycarp to the Philippians

Submitted by Pastor Andrew Kandoll
Champion, Michigan

Polycarp, martyred in AD 155 and a close companion of the Apostle John, is considered one of the three church fathers after the apostles. He is believed to have been the leader of the church in Smyrna, based on writings of other church fathers. The following are excerpts from the *Letter to the Philippians*, the only surviving work attributed to his authorship.



Salutation

Polycarp and the presbyters with him, to the church of God, the one temporarily residing in Philippi. Mercy to you and peace from God the all-powerful and Jesus Christ our Savior be multiplied.

Thanksgiving

I rejoice with you greatly in our Lord Jesus Christ, having welcomed the replicas of true

love and having sent on their way, as was incumbent upon you, those confined by chains fitting for saints which are the crowns of those truly chosen by God and our Lord and because of the secure root of your faith, being proclaimed from ancient times, still continues and bears fruit to our Lord Jesus Christ, who endured because of our sins, to reach even death, whom God raised up having loosed the birth pains of Hades. In whom, not having seen, you believe with joy inexpressible and glorious, which many long to experience, knowing that by grace you have been saved, not by works, but the will of God through Jesus Christ.

Prepare Yourselves

Therefore prepare yourselves. Serve God in reverence and truth, leaving behind empty, fruitless talk and the deception of the crowd, believing in the one who raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead and gave him glory and a throne at his right hand,

to whom all things in heaven and earth are subject, whom every breathing thing worships, who is coming as judge of the living and dead, whose blood God will require from those who disobey him. But the one who raised him from the dead also will raise us if we do his will and follow in his commandments and love the things he loved, refraining from all unrighteousness, greediness, love of money, evil speech, and false witness, not paying back evil for evil or abuse for abuse or blow for blow or curse for curse, but remembering what the Lord said when he taught: Do not judge so that you may not be judged; forgive and then you will be forgiven; show mercy so that you will be shown mercy; with what measure you measure out it will be measured again to you; and blessed are the poor and those being persecuted for the sake of righteousness; for theirs is the kingdom of God.

Remember Paul's Words

Brothers, I write these things to you concerning righteousness not on my own initiative, but because you requested this of me. For neither I nor another like me is able to follow after the wisdom of the blessed and glorious Paul, who, when he was with you in the presence of the people at that time, taught the word of truth accurately and reliably, who also being absent he wrote letters to you regarding which, if you examine them you will be able to build yourselves up in the faith given to you which is the mother of all of us, hope follows after and the love which is for God and Christ and for the neighbor goes before. For if anyone is in their company, he has fulfilled the commandment of righteousness, for he who has love is a long way from all sin.

Follow in the Commandment of the Lord

But the beginning of all difficulty is the love of money. Knowing, therefore, that we have brought nothing into the world, and neither are we able to take out anything, let us arm ourselves with the weapons of righteousness and let us teach ourselves first to follow in the commandment of the Lord. Then also teach your wives to walk in the faith given to them, and in love and in purity, feeling affection for their own husbands in all fidelity and loving all others equally in all chastity, and to instruct their children with the instruction of the fear of God. The widows, being sensible concerning the faith of the Lord, interceding unceasingly for everyone, being far removed from all slander, evil speech, false witness, love of money, and every kind of evil, knowing that they are an altar of God, and that each sacrifice is examined for blemishes and nothing escapes his notice, neither reasonings, thoughts nor any secrets of the heart.

Walk in a Manner Worthy

Understanding, therefore, that God is not mocked, we ought to walk in a manner worthy of his commandment and glory. Likewise, deacons must be blameless in the presence of his righteousness, as servants of God and Christ and not of people, not slanderers, not insincere, not lovers of money, but self-controlled in all things, compassionate, careful, walking according to the truth of the Lord, who became the servant of all. If we please him in this present age, we will receive also that which is to come, just as he promised us, to raise us from the dead, and that if we conduct our lives in a manner worthy of him, we will also reign with him, if indeed we have faith. Likewise also, the younger men must be blameless in all things; above all being concerned about purity and holding themselves in check from all evil. For it is good to abstain from sinful passions in the world because all sinful passion wages war against the spirit, and neither the sexually immoral, nor the passive homosexual partner, nor the dominant homosexual

partner will inherit the kingdom of God; nor those who engage in perversity. Therefore it is necessary to refrain from all these things, being subject to the presbyters and deacons as to God and Christ. The virgins must conduct themselves with a blameless and pure conscience.

Be Compassionate and Merciful

And the presbyters also must be compassionate, merciful to all, turning back those who have gone astray, caring for all sick, neglecting neither widow or orphan or the poor, but always taking thought for the good before God and people, refraining from all anger, partiality, unjust judgment, being far removed from all love of money, not quickly believing against anyone, not relentless in judgment, understanding that we are all debtors in the matter of sin. Therefore if we ask the Lord to forgive us we are obligated to forgive also, for we are before the eyes of the Lord and God, and we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and each must give an account of oneself. So, then, let us serve him with fear and all reverence, just as he himself has commanded, as did the apostles who proclaimed the gospel to us and the prophets who publicly proclaimed the coming of our Lord. Let us be enthusiasts concerning the good, refraining from those who cause others to stumble and the false brothers and those bearing the name of the Lord in hypocrisy, who mislead foolish people.

Confess Christ

For everyone who does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is an antichrist, and whoever does not confess the testimony of the cross is from the devil, and whoever twists the sayings of the Lord for one's own sinful passions, and says that there is neither resurrection nor judgment, this one is the firstborn of Satan. Therefore, leaving behind the idle speculation of the crowd and their false teachings, let us turn back to the word which was delivered to us from the beginning, being self-controlled with regard to prayer and being persistent in fasts, making petitions of the all-seeing God to lead us not into temptation, just as the Lord said, "The spirit is indeed willing, but the flesh is weak."

Be Imitators of Christ

Therefore we should persevere unceasingly in our hope and down payment of our righteousness, which is Christ Jesus, who bore our sins in his own body on the tree, who committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth, but because of us, in order that we might live in him, endured all things. Therefore let us be imitators of his endurance, and if we should suffer because of his name, we should glorify him. For this is the example he set for us in himself, and this we have believed.

Let Your Anger Be Removed, and Pray

Now may God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the eternal Priest himself, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, build you up in faith and truth, and in all gentleness, and without wrath, and in patience, and in longsuffering, and endurance, and purity, and may he give you a share and place with his saints, and to us with you, and to all under heaven who shall believe in our Lord and God Jesus Christ and in his Father who raised him from the dead. Pray for all the saints. Pray also for the kings, for magistrates, and princes, and for those who persecute you and hate you, and for the enemies of the cross that your fruit may be evident among all people, that you may be perfected in him.

Translation: Brannan, Rick. The Apostolic Fathers Greek-English Interlinear, Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2011; www.logos.com. © 2011 Logos Bible Software. Excerpts used by permission.

In Memory of Ruth Marie Johnson

In Vancouver, Washington, on January 15th, 2012, my godmother and mother-in-law went home to be with the Lord forever. Ruth was 88 years old and the widow of Olaf Johnson for 31 years. She left behind numerous family and friends who are both happy for her and sad for the loss of her love and fellowship. Memories of her will remain in our hearts with loving gratitude.

She lived many decades with infirmities that required many surgeries and medications; nevertheless, she patiently endured them and "made the best of it" (her term), especially this last year when mobility and breathing became more difficult. She often said she yearned for the day "when strife is ended." Arne and Lorraine Nordahl, her son-in-law and daughter, cared for her in their home the last five weeks of her life, and she was surrounded by family when she passed away. Her son, Stan, and I saw her the evening before her passing. We could see how grateful she was for the loving care of her daughters, Lorraine and Carolyn. Her daughter, Diane Bisila, in Minnesota, is a nurse with hospice experience and was with Ruth and the family via Skype assisting with her comfort. Her son, Mark, was also present at the time of her passing. I remember the smile on Ruth's face that evening as she realized she would soon be released from this life. *Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also... (2 Corinthians 4:14)*

Ruth had a genuine interest in people and always had a concern for the salvation of the souls of others. We can know that her many prayers for her family and others are stored in golden vials before the Lord, as are the prayers of all the saints (Revelation 5:8). She enjoyed Christian fellowship above all and showed much hospitality to the children of God; opening her home to them was a joy to her. During family holidays she would often take the opportunity to remind her family of what is most important, that we remain in the precious living faith that we may be all together in heaven one day.

Satan did not miss opportunities to accuse Ruth, especially in her physically weakened state; but she was able to believe her weaknesses, shortcomings and sins forgiven through the blessed name of Jesus for the sake of His precious and cleansing blood. Satan's accusations can never overcome our faith in the blood. *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. (Romans 3:24-25)*

We rejoice in Ruth's victory, that her journey of faith is over and faith has become sight. We thank everyone who has prayed for Ruth and the family and for the outpouring of love that has been shown to us. May we all have a safe and successful journey to our heavenly homeland. Ruth loved this song:

**There's a land that is fairer than day, And by faith we can see it afar;
For the Father waits over the way, To prepare us a dwelling place there.
In the sweet by and by, we shall meet on that beautiful shore. (Sanford F. Bennett)**

*In God's peace and love,
Phebe Johnson with husband, Stan, and in behalf of Ruth's family*

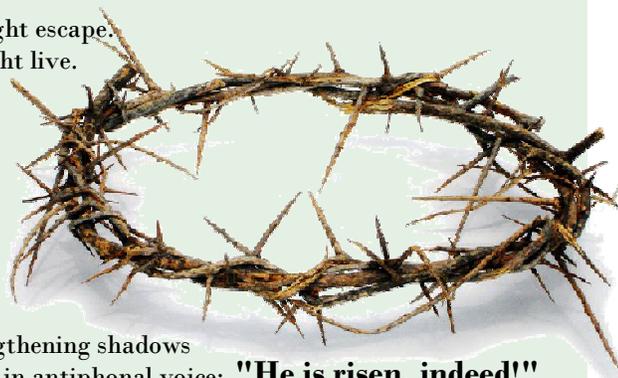
Do you understand me, sinful soul?
He wrestled with justice, that you might have rest.
He wept and mourned, that you might laugh and rejoice.
He was betrayed, that you might go free; was apprehended, that you might escape.
He was condemned, that you might be justified; was killed, that you might live.
He wore a crown of thorns, that you might wear a crown of glory.

John Bunyan, adapted

The benefits [of the resurrection] are innumerable. To list a few:

Our illnesses don't seem nearly so final.
Our fears fade and lose their grip.
Our grief over those who have gone on is diminished.
Our desire to press on in spite of obstacles is rejuvenated.
Our differences of opinion are eclipsed by our similar faith.
Our identity as Christians is strengthened as we stand in the lengthening shadows
of saints down through the centuries who have always answered in antiphonal voice: **"He is risen, indeed!"**

Charles Swindoll



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Festivals of Want

Submitted by Alvar Helmes
Battle Ground, Washington

In many ways our society is motivated by consumption. Our desire to have stuff charts the course of many of our pursuits and without such desire the economy would no doubt collapse. Yet reflect for a moment on how pervasive this is in our lives.

We have festivals of consumption. Every Easter and Christmas we have special rituals. Sale signs go up all around us, the good news of great deals is announced on television, and all are invited to join in the worship of consumption. So where do we go? To the temples of consumption: the malls and car dealerships and super-sized department stores. These centers provide an opportunity to find whatever we seek at a price we can afford, as we are invited to take the waiting out of wanting.

All the while, the atmosphere is tailored so that we are comfortable. The commercials and displays are attractive and compelling and it is all so much fun. We are soothed by a background of ambient music and stimulated by the smells of freshly ground coffee or freshly baked cookies.

To take it further, we even sing the songs of consumption, as we memorize our favorite commercials and slogans. I can still hear the sounds of the Rice Krispies commercials from my childhood in Scotland. Today it is probably a cosmetics commercial or a car commercial.

We buy and sell and work all day so that we can have these things, which, once we have them, keep us working

even harder to maintain the lifestyle we have achieved. We go to school so we can get good jobs. We send our kids through school so they can get out and make money to have nice things. But do we ever stop to ask, "Why?"

Now I'm exaggerating I realize, but there is some substance to what I'm pointing out. There is a story of Jacob and Esau in the Old Testament that might apply. Esau was very much a man of the field, a man of the world. One day, after finding no satisfaction in his search for something to consume, he sold his birthright to his younger brother for nothing more than a bowl of stew. The birthright was supposed to be a cherished thing. It represented the dignity, inheritance, and leadership that would come to its beneficiary in the future. But Esau saw neither sense nor value in waiting for the future. He was hungry and he wanted what he wanted now. And so he gave away what should have been the most important thing to him in order to feed his desire.

The lesson here seems so obvious, doesn't it? "How senseless," we might say of this story. Yet we do the very same thing when we spend our time in pursuit of what we want right now at the expense of what is lasting. Jesus said it simply: *What does it profit you if you gain the whole world and yet lose your soul?*

"Festivals of Want," by Stuart McAllister, A Slice of Infinity, No. 2610, originally printed 08 December 2011 (www.rzim.org). Used by permission of Ravi Zacharias International Ministries.

2012 ALCA Convention

The **New Ipswich, New Hampshire**, congregation invites you to attend the 104th Annual Convention of the Apostolic Lutheran Church of America. Devotional services will be held **Thursday, July 12 through Sunday, July 15, 2012**, at the Mascenic Regional School in New Ipswich, NH.

For information regarding lodging, please contact:

Aila Somero (603) 878-1449 or (603) 321-5292

Patsie Krook (603) 878-2998 or (603) 533-8401

For those who will be flying, it is highly recommended that you fly into Manchester-Boston Regional Airport (MHT) in Manchester, NH or Logan Airport (BOS) in Boston, MA. For questions concerning transportation or pick-ups please contact:

Roger and Cathy Somero (603) 878-2025

Gerald and Faythe Kantola (603) 396-7214 or gfkantola@myfairpoint.net

Please visit the website dedicated to the convention at www.alconvention.com for current information.

We pray God's blessings on this event and look forward to meeting you here for this time of fellowship.

*Karl Somero, Chairman
2012 Convention Committee*

