

# 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.**

February 2012

## Jesus Christ, the Same Forever

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**S**ome people say: "I could never believe in a God who lets people suffer excruciating pain, die in the prime of life or of diseases, abuses, and natural disasters." Do they really know Jesus Christ? For it is recorded: *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!* (Romans 11:33) God's ways are mysterious. If a person tries to figure Him out without the Christ, the result is *there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.* (Romans 3:11)

*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. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.* (John 3:16-17)

**G**od has been so merciful to show us His Son and how His Son acts. Jesus says, *For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.* (Luke 9:56) Jesus did not act as Joshua, David, and many other men who destroyed lives. The Son of God was sent to this earth to reveal the heart of the Father, and in the heart of the Father is charity, kindness, love, mercy, tenderness and forgiveness.

Jesus says, *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.* (John 6:44) When a little child runs to his parent, especially his mother, and he remembers the consistent love of his mother and he knows and trusts that she will always be forgiving and loving toward him, the child is confident and assured that he can find rest and safety in the arms of his mother. How similarly the Father has drawn me to Jesus, for Jesus has always been a comfort to me, *for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,* (Hebrews 13:5) and *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus...* (Romans 8:1) I can find comfort in Him. Jesus is and

has always been all about forgiveness. The last few words He said as the people crucified Him were, *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.* (Luke 23:34)

**Jesus is and has always been  
all about forgiveness.**

**J**esus was very direct and full of truth and grace. There were times when He took action as when He chased the moneychangers out of the temple. *And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.* (Matthew 21:13) It is very interesting that Jesus just chased the money-changers out of the temple and did not destroy them. Contrast Elijah at Mount Carmel: *Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God. And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.* (1 Kings 18:38-40) Elijah had a purpose for his actions, but it is Christ who I can relate to, as Paul writes, *That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.* (Ephesians 3:17-19)



**M**any people wonder why tragic things happen and long for answers from God. I believe the revelation of Jesus Christ is the answer. He never condemns or blames you or lays heavy burdens on you; He knows you don't understand why things happen. He will give you such strength that even the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Paul writes, *And we 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)*

To know and believe that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8) is a great comfort to me. I am blessed of the Father to know Jesus and to understand that Christ was as forgiving in the Old Testament as He is in the New. The Holy Spirit

gave me insight by the hearing of the Word to know that the greatest act of the Father was to reveal Christ to His children and to cause them to be drawn to Him. *Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. (1 Peter 1:20-21)*

I can trust Him to always be my helper and comforter in time of need. I don't claim to know why God allows/does so many mysterious things, but I do believe that God the Father has been merciful unto me to reveal Christ in me that whatever happens, good or bad, Christ has been, is, and always will be my Savior.  
*God's peace to all who love God.*

## The Only Way



**The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach. (Romans 10:8)**

*Kalle Innala, May 1992 CM*

*Submitted by James Kurtti; Reedley, California*

**G**od has always spoken to men with a calling voice, by the prophets before and in this last time through His Son and those whom He has placed in the ministry. A living, justifying faith has always come by the hearing of the Word of God. Adam was able to hear the word of promise in the seed of the woman—Christ—who was to redeem him from that great sin which he had drawn upon himself and the entire human race. Abraham believed God's promise of the same redemption and blessing, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. This fulfilled promise belongs also to us and our children, even to the end of the world. Through faith a new and living way has been opened to all penitent sinners by the suffering of Christ and His victorious resurrection.

Many examples in the Bible show how a contrite, needy soul has sought and found grace in time of need. Such examples indicate that an audible declaration and forgiveness of sins has been necessary before an awakened soul has been able by living faith to comprehend the Lord Jesus and His work of redemption. To this place God has led such souls which have been seeking His grace, as they have understood it is not to be found of themselves.

The Ethiopian man had not comprehended faith, although he had come a great distance to Jerusalem to pray; neither had he comprehended faith by reading as he was returning homeward. But God, who had awakened the Ethiopian's conscience, sent Philip to explain the text. He was able to hear the Gospel through the mouth of Philip, and so faith came by the hearing of the Word of God. Then reading the Word also became clear. The sorrow which had been upon his heart vanished, and joy came in its place. Continuing the journey homeward now was easy.

Cornelius was a devout man who feared God with all his household, but he had not comprehended living faith, though he constantly prayed to God and gave alms. God, who had awakened his conscience, heard the penitent's sighs and prayers. God sent Peter to preach the Gospel to Cornelius; thus he and his household received faith to believe their sins were forgiven and were filled with the Holy Spirit.

The Macedonians had not comprehended faith in the living God, though their custom was to pray by the riverside. God had awakened their hearts. Paul brought God's help to them by an audible sermon, whereby the Lord opened Lydia's heart to give heed to what was preached by Paul. And so the lamp of faith was lit in the land of Macedonia.

On the first Pentecost Day, three thousand souls were given living faith through the apostles' preaching.

**T**hese examples point out that God begets children unto Himself through one method: by the Word of truth in His own kingdom of grace, where two or three are together in Jesus' name. Therefore, it is offensive to employ such form of speech which says that man can by many different ways be born of God and come into the faith of Christ. May the Bible remain the sole guideline by which former as well as present teachers are to be tested. Though an angel from heaven teach a different way of salvation than the Bible, we are not to follow it.

The Bible and our experiences teach that God through different ways awakens people from their sleep of sin to begin to consider what might belong to their peace, but He justifies a repentant sinner only one way. We do not make light of the reading of God's Word or prayer; it would be an especially precious thing that all people would read the Bible much more and would seek for God in a spirit of prayer from the Bible. The Scriptures testify that every one who believes on the Lord Jesus must, through His work of reconciliation, receive the forgiveness of sin. And so, we testify to all repentant believers that even at this moment you can believe all your sins forgiven in Jesus' name and blood. Blessed is he who so believes. ~

# Behold, I Make All Things New!

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Are you feeling without hope? Recall the Word of God in *Lamentations 3:21-24: This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. It is of the LORD'S*

**H**ave you watched a child when he gets a new toy, a ball or even a piece of candy? Such happiness and excitement! No matter our lot in life, I think we all can say that we enjoy new things. Even as adults we get a new bicycle, phone or camera which causes us a temporary feeling of happiness. But then... the candy is gone, the toy breaks, the camera falls into a water puddle. In other words, life happens. Let's look at what our Lord says when we look at life and find it to be wanting. This same thing happened to all mankind so many years ago in the Garden of Eden. Sin entered the world (Genesis 3), and destruction and death began.

Our Lord God Almighty, the One who sits upon the throne, the One who created all things, says, *Behold, I make all things new. (Revelation 21:5)* God is in the creation business, not the fix-up business. He is not a God who can fix only the small things; neither is He limited in what He can do for us, by and through His Son Jesus Christ!

*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17)* While the devil seeks to destroy and tear down, God creates and recreates! God makes us new creatures in Christ Jesus. No news is more encouraging than to know that when we believe by faith in the complete redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ, we have become new.

**D**ear believing reader, you are brand new. The faith He has given is not of ourselves. It is a gift of God, therefore we know it cannot and will not become old. The things of God are new and fresh. The work of Jesus Christ makes men new.

This is made so clear in the discussion of the old and new covenants. *In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away. (Hebrews 8:13)* We have a new and living way in Christ Jesus. *Hebrews 10:10* says: *By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.* The old covenant, the old way, would have us to do and live but the new covenant says, "Live and do!" Life is in Christ. Whatever we do when we are in Christ, it is because of Him working in and through us by the power of His Holy Spirit. *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)*

God wants us to have a new song in our hearts. *O sing unto the LORD a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory. (Psalm 98:1)*

*mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.*

Do you have many trials and cares in life? The Bible has all the answers. *Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations. (1 Peter 1:6)* We must look at this life as a preparation for the next, like a baby in the womb of the mother. Our reality in Christ Jesus is eternal life, not the temporal life we now live.

Feeling soiled by the sins of the past year? The Lord wants to, as said in *Ezekiel 18:31: Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit.* The New Testament says: *Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. (James 5:16)* The One who washes away our sins wants us to hear loud and clear: *Behold, I make all things new!* He does not want us carrying paid-for sins. Jesus shed His blood to wash away our sin. Let's believe by faith that this is so.

**A**s Christians, we have new names. Imagine, even our names are changed! Our names are no longer "lost sinner," no longer "the condemned one," or whatever name the devil has for his people. *...and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name. (Isaiah 62:2)* *...To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. (Revelation 2:17)*



What is your condition? Are you appreciating your new name? Are you an overcomer or have you been overcome? Have you not yet believed by faith and received your new name? Have you not yet repented of your sin and unbelief and become totally new in Christ?

Recently I was in Kenya and there they sing so wonderfully, "Jesus is coming soon, coming to take me home!" Come to Jesus; tomorrow you never know!

Are we ready to meet our Lord? If not, may He recreate us in His time, so that we can then say, "Come, Lord Jesus!" There is coming a day when my Jesus I shall see. There will be no more sorrow, sadness, dying, death or heartache. All will be new forever! This is what waits eternally for the redeemed of the Lord. ~

Please visit [www.themissionsite.com](http://www.themissionsite.com) for more information on the Foreign Mission of the Apostolic Lutheran Church of America.



# John—The Voice in the Wilderness

Gwen Wilson  
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**R**emember Jesus' cousin, John? He was born to Zacharias and Elisabeth in their old age (*St. Luke 1*). John was six months older than Jesus. He was born to prepare the people's hearts to receive Jesus when it was time. You can find this in *St. Luke 3* and *St. Matthew 3*.

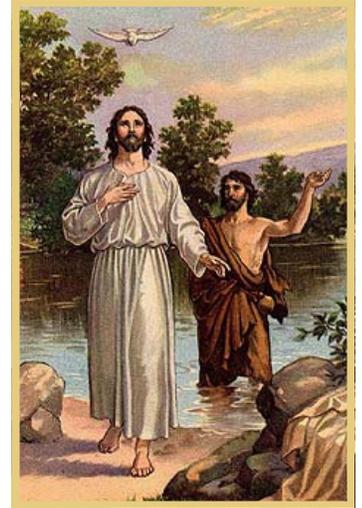
John leaped in his mother's womb when he heard Mary greet Elisabeth (her aunt and John's mother) on her visit. When John was grown, he was the one chosen to start preaching about Jesus, who was coming after him and who would save the people from their sins.

John lived in the wilderness of Judea and wore rough camel hide for clothing; his food was locusts and wild honey. I'm sure if you had seen him he may have looked somewhat frightening, but if you heard him preach it would be full of promise.

John's message was this: *Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. (Matthew 3:2)* He was speaking of Jesus who had grown into a Man and would soon come to be among the people. Jesus would begin His ministry. As John walked through the countryside of Jerusalem, Judea and Jordan he preached repentance for the remission of sin, and people came from all around and were baptized in the Jordan River. John spoke to the people, *I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me (Jesus) is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. (Matthew 3:11)*

While John was baptizing by the river, Jesus, the Mighty One of whom John was speaking, came and asked John to baptize Him. John felt that he needed to be baptized by Jesus, but Jesus said to him, *Suffer (Allow) it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. (Matthew 3:15)* Jesus entered the water and was baptized by John. *Now when all the*

*people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, And the Holy Ghost descended (came down) in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased. (Luke 3:21-22)* God, Jesus' Father, spoke from heaven to make it clear who Jesus is and that He was very pleased with His Son. Jesus was sent to save His people. Jesus was 30 years old, and He began the ministry God sent Him to fulfill.



**J**esus gathered 12 disciples to be His helpers and He taught them many things. Jesus helped them understand who He is and taught them about His Father God, and God's plan for Him and them. He helped them so that they would be able to teach other people after Jesus was gone.

Jesus came to die, and because of His love for sinners He gave up His life. God has this great love, too. God and Jesus are the same. The Bible says, *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)*

I pray that you and anyone who reads this will ask for faith to keep believing in God and Jesus and one day live in heaven. Heaven will be a perfect home. ~

**I** pulled up to the stop sign and there he was with his sign, "Anything will help." I excitedly rolled down my window and handed out one of the bags we had filled for just such occasions. "Here you go," I said. "God bless you." The man's eyes lit up as he focused on the goodies in the bag. "Thank you! Thank you very much!" he exclaimed. I smiled and said, "You are welcome. May God bless you." Moments passed; the light seemed to be taking a long time to change.

"Nice day," I continued, just making conversation. "Much better than yesterday," he responded. "Where do you sleep?" I questioned, wondering how street people survive in the cold weather. "Oh I have a house back there," he pointed behind him. "And a wife and a dog," he continued. He explained that he has a disability and has been unable to find work. "My wife is keeping us going right now," he said. "She has a job." He went on, "I can't just sit home. I have to do my part." .....His part? Standing on a street corner with a sign? His sincerity was doing a number on my lofty attitude.

His part. Standing on a corner, bearing ridicule, inquiring questions, rude comments, and sneers of passersby. His part. An honest sign, "Anything will help." Just trying to bring something into his household.

The light turned green. We exchanged another "God bless you" and I drove off, humbled, tears stinging my eyes, his words ringing in my ears. I realized that he had given me a gift, an opportunity to see the bigger picture. I was only doing "my part," different than "his part." But still, just my part.

**WHAT IS MY PART?**

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# Jesus Blesses the Children

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And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive

the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

Mark 10:13-16

**H**ow current the Word of God is! Though millennia have passed, this is as current as today's newspaper. The attitude of the disciples to these folks who were bringing their children to Jesus for His blessing is no different than the verbal, mental and emotional mistreatment of children today. We have become more aware of child abuse today, but it is not a recent phenomenon. What we may not be aware of is the abuse of children who, in their hearts, are longing to come to Jesus. In how many homes are children raised in spiritual darkness? No matter how adults excuse this inexcusable neglect, this is as much abuse as any other type.

Strangely enough, the mistreatment does not come from the parents or the adults. It comes from the disciples. The very ones who ought to have been praising this desire by the parents become stumbling blocks and hindrances to the blessing the Lord desires to pour out on these little ones.

**A** number of adults brought infants to Jesus. As they continued coming, the disciples continued rebuking. Tragically, they misunderstood this parade of children. They thought this hindered Christ from carrying on what they might regard as His primary teaching ministry. They didn't realize this was His ministry; in blessing these little ones, He was laying a foundation for the future generation of the Church for which these disciples had no vision.

While the disciples were hindering the children from being brought to Jesus, Jesus told them they were hindering the expansion of the kingdom of God. Christ was clearly upset with the disciples; He was indignant. Jesus was deeply concerned about the spiritual life of His disciples. Not only were they blocking the further expansion of God's kingdom, but they had lost their childlike love relationship with Jesus, for they failed to love for Jesus' sake. They had forgotten from what

darkness of unbelief they had been rescued, and from what bondage they had been set free. They needed to learn how to love children, too.

Children are "wet cement." They are open and receptive. Jesus wants to bless them, because if, on the one hand, they so easily believe, on the other hand, they can be easily deceived. They need the protection of Christ's blessing upon them. God commits Himself to be the Protector of those who are baptized into Christ, but every believer, regardless of age, is to live according to the obedience of faith (Romans 16:26). Therefore, we cannot neglect our responsibility to bring them up in the fear and admonition of the Lord. Such neglect is a form of abuse by those who are nominal members of a church but whose own life does not give evidence of a living, loving, growing spiritual life in Christ.

## Children are "wet cement."

Having rebuked the disciples for their own hardness of heart, Jesus manifests His deep love for children by taking them in His arms, putting His hands on them and blessing them. Tragically, today this kind of behavior is almost forbidden. No one dares touch anyone else today, much less children, lest he or she be regarded as some kind of pervert. Scripture says, "Perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:18)." That is the kind of love we need to extend to one another, and we really cannot do it without touching. Not only did Jesus show how highly He valued children by holding them in His arms, but He conveyed to them a special future. Verbally declaring a blessing on a child can have widespread ramifications for him or her.

**I**nnumerable Scripture passages are blessings. Many have a prophetic nature; for instance, the dominion given to Adam and Eve over all creation; the promise of the seed of the woman, meaning Christ, crushing the serpent's head; the promise to Abraham of becoming a great nation; the Passover meal was a meal of blessing as the blood of the lamb protected the family from the angel of death. So, also, for us Holy Communion is a Sacrament of blessing: *The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? (1 Corinthians 10:16)* Christ blesses us with His promises to be with us to the end of the age, to never leave us orphaned, to go ahead to prepare a place for us in heaven, to send the Holy Spirit. What a beautiful picture is given when Jesus led the disciples out of Jerusalem as far as Bethany, where He raised His hands and blessed them (Luke 24:50-51). How precious is the blessing of the forgiveness of sin in the name and through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ!

If we have been so profoundly blessed by God, may we be a blessing to our spouses, children, family members, friends, neighbors, brothers and sisters in Christ, fellow laborers, the strangers, the sick and sorrowing, the lonely and forlorn. ~



# On Original Sin

Will Matson; Yacolt, Washington

Submitted by Mark Matson; Pasco, Washington

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? (Jeremiah 17:9)

**T**here are teachings in Holy Scripture which cannot be overemphasized, which are non-negotiable. They are essential truths that when rejected bring the dissenter's confession of faith into question. One truth is the Holiness of Almighty God; its antithesis is the sinfulness of man or "original sin." It is imperative that the "eternal verities" be taught from Scripture, as the Word of God alone brings conviction of the truth. To this end all writing, preaching, teaching and singing edify the church only as much as they bring the Word and its teachings to the human heart.

Where the essential truths are not taught, they can be lost to the church in one generation. Satan has a thousand lies to replace one essential truth, and believing his lies is much more natural than believing God's truth because of the tragic fall of man's nature. Ever since the Garden of Eden, mankind is more easily led away with every error and lie than he is convinced of the faithfulness of truth, as though man has a devil-shaped void in his heart that drinks lies like water. We would do well to remember, "Better are the wounds of a friend than the kisses of an enemy."

Now as in days gone by, many are prone to err saying, "The Spirit teaches," meaning that teaching deliberately and diligently the truths of Scripture is not necessary since the Spirit leads and teaches the believer. Remember the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17). All the epistles written by the apostles in the New Testament are written to the Church. Their letters are full of teachings on a correct understanding of God, man, sin and salvation, and also on how those who believe ought to conduct themselves (1 Timothy 3:15). Christ often declared the everlasting happiness of those who trust God and with sincere hearts bring forth fruit, and the eternal damnation and misery that awaits those who do not. If in the day of the apostles, when the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was so fresh, the church needed instruction and the Holy Spirit instructed through the apostles and teachers, why would we think it is any different in our day?

One reason the Holy Spirit chooses to teach God's children many things through one another is that He values fruit more than perfection. He values humility, which is esteeming "other better than ourselves (Philippians 2:3)." We as "lively stones are built up a spiritual house (1 Peter 2:5)" of the Holy Spirit. We, as living stones, are stacked together in the walls of God's temple and built up together.

I have been thinking often lately of an allegorical picture that John Bunyan should have included in *Pilgrim's Progress*. You who have read it will no doubt

remember when Christian is led through the mansion and shown different spiritual pictures. A striking one is Satan trying desperately to drown a fire near a wall. Though he tries his worst, the fire steadily burns, even increases. Then Christian is shown that someone on the other side of the wall is adding oil through an opening at the base of the fire. This, Christian is told, is representative of the Gospel pouring on the oil of grace while Christians are tempted and tried.

The picture I have been thinking of lately is an awful one, depicting "original sin" or our sinful nature. Other names are "old man," "the flesh" and "the carnal man." Jesus said, *Those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man...* (Matthew 15:18-20) *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?* (Jeremiah 17:9) Picture a man with a snake's fanged head sticking out of his chest. He grasps the hideous protrusion with both hands as though he would crush it and tear it from his chest. He stares at it horrified, his face twisted with revulsion, anguish and self-loathing. He leans backward from it, his face turns away in disgust and shame. An awful picture!

**J**esus said that when the Holy Spirit comes He reproves (convinces or convicts) the world of sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:8). The Holy Spirit not only convicts us of sinful actions but of the "motions of sin" within. He convicts of even the desire to sin and the desperate sinfulness of any heart desiring to violate God's good and perfect will. The conviction of the Holy Spirit is not of mere imperfection but that we are by nature enemies of God (Romans 5:10, Colossians 1:21) and children of wrath (Ephesians 2:3). Wrath is what we will inherit if we receive what we deserve.

**We need a righteousness entirely foreign to ourselves, a Goodness that comes from above.**

It is not an easy thing to be convicted that sinful actions and words are not a thing external to us but come from our deepest being, from the heart that God sees. For this reason the unbeliever often shies away from talk of why he or she needs a Savior. Jesus says, *This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.* (John 3:19-20) Our self esteem cannot stand the Light from heaven. When it shines, all the fig-leaves of our own works and imagined goodness wither like leaves detached from the vine. The Pharisees worked to maintain their fig leaves and thought they loved God's law, but when Jesus came He took the law out of their hands and let them feel its fine edge (Matthew 5:21-28).

When I came to realize I needed an entire covering of righteousness, God gave me peace and victory through the knowledge of Christ. There will be no snipping off pieces of Christ's righteousness to patch our rag-devil old man. We need a righteousness entirely foreign to ourselves, a Goodness that comes from above. Mercifully, the Holy Spirit never convicts people of sinfulness just to let them turn in a slow roast of fear over the coming judgment, although the coming judgment is indeed worthy of fear.

**F**rom the very beginning, the very genesis of sin, the promise was given that the Seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent (Genesis 3:15). *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. (2 Corinthians 5:21)* He who is purer than lilies, whose holiness is infinitely higher than ours as the heavens are above the earth, not only stooped down to become man, but became our sin?! Unspeakable humiliation! No wonder the angels were silent! He took our sins in His own body so they could be crushed in His body on the cross and God's just wrath against them could be satisfied forever for all who believe. No wonder the sun hid its face for three hours and the earth shook and the sky thundered when the Lord of Glory was lifted up on the cross and died! The promise in Eden was fulfilled when Jesus was crushed on the cross. He was crushed in body and spirit, as His Father turned His face away from His Son who had for all eternity enjoyed His pleasure and attention. "My God, my God! Why hast Thou forsaken

me?" His anguished cry came from the cross after the sun hid its face and could give no light to the God-forsaken Son. When Jesus died, the earth shook as though this last rending, crushing weight of God's holy wrath coming down on our sin in His Son was more weight than it could bear. The rocks broke and the veil that kept man out of the Holiest of Holies, where God would meet man with the blood of sacrifice in the temple, was ripped in two, signifying that the way into the true tabernacle, that is, into heaven itself, was opened to sinful man (See Hebrews 9:8, 24).

**D**ear fellow sinners, you cannot desire to be forgiven more than God delights to forgive you, more than God—who is full of loving-kindness and tender mercies—takes delight in forgiving you!

The serpent's head, our sin, was crushed in Jesus on the cross. When you look in faith at Jesus the Lamb of God, your hearts are purified by faith and the serpent's head of your old nature is crushed. You will still feel its motions within your members, but its head has been crushed. Jesus rose in victory over death, hell and the devil, and now sits at God's right hand where He intercedes for us. Hallelujah! Praise the Lamb!

Look to the Lamb, my friends. There we find cleansing of conscience, power over sin, yes, Life and Salvation! In Him the very mercies of heaven are poured like a waterfall into the parched, sin-blistered heart that hungers and thirsts after righteousness and those who drink deeply of it will become fountains, with the water of life, the Gospel of salvation in Jesus springing up into everlasting life (John 4:14). ~

*For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. (Exodus 34:14)*

**J**ealousy was ruining my friend's relationship. Sometimes I would be out with her and she would receive a dozen phone calls within just a few minutes: her boyfriend checking up on her. When they met, she would return the favor by grabbing his phone and checking to see who he'd phoned and who had phoned him. I questioned them about this extreme jealousy and asked why they couldn't trust each other. They both looked at me blankly and said, "Jealousy is good—it shows love!" Their jealousy was not healthy, but their answer made me think. I had always pictured jealousy as negative, never quite understanding verses that described God as jealous. My friends, though, had made a good point: we are jealous of those we love. Unfortunately, as humans, our jealousy is often taken too far.

Without Christ, our love for one another cannot be perfect—and therefore our displays of jealousy often lead to brokenness instead of wholeness. God's love, however, is perfect—God is love (1 John 4:8)! The jealousy of God, then, is not the distrustful jealousy that we often display. Instead it is absolute Love demanding absolute love in return. And because God knew we could never achieve this, He sent His Son ...and through Jesus we can live up to the standard of a God whose name is Jealous.

*Leona Matson; Langley, British Columbia*

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## Beyond the Jordan

There is a peace no tongue can tell;  
There is a song no throat can swell;  
There is a land where angels dwell,  
'Tis the land beyond the Jordan.

There is a friend that is so true;  
There is a sky that is so blue;  
There is a life that is so new,  
In the land beyond the Jordan.

There is a joy no man can take;  
There is a calm no storm can shake;  
There is a faith only God can make,  
In the land beyond the Jordan.

I'm going there His joys to share,  
To see my Savior, oh so fair,  
And leave my burdens and my care,  
In the Promised Land, o'er Jordan.

### Chorus:

Oh gracious land, Oh precious strand,  
To know your love, that is so grand,  
Where I can hold my Savior's hand,  
In the land beyond the Jordan.

*John E. Anderson*



## Jesus Loves Me

A church in Atlanta honored one of its pastors who had been retired for many years. He rose from his chair and walked slowly, with great effort and a sliding gait, to the podium. He placed both hands on the pulpit to steady himself and quietly and slowly began to speak.

"Your pastor asked me to tell you what was the greatest lesson ever learned in my 50-odd years of preaching. I thought about it and boiled it down to one thing that made the most difference in my life and sustained me through all my trials, the one thing that I could always rely on when tears and heartbreak and pain and fear and sorrow paralyzed me. The only thing that would comfort me was this verse:

Jesus loves me this I know. For the Bible tells me so.

Little ones to Him belong, They are weak but He is strong.

Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!



Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so." (*Anna Bartlett Warner*)

When he finished, the church was quiet. You could hear his footsteps as he shuffled back to his chair. I don't believe I will ever forget it.

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A pastor once stated, "I always noticed that it was the adults who chose the children's hymn 'Jesus Loves Me' (for the children, of course) during a hymn sing, and it was the adults who sang the loudest because I could see they knew it the best."

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Now there is a senior version for those who have white hair or no hair at all. If you are over middle age, or even almost there, enjoy this newest version of "Jesus Loves Me" just for you:

Jesus loves me, this I know, Though my hair is white as snow.  
Though my sight is growing dim, Still He bids me trust in Him.

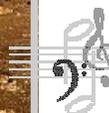
Though my steps are oh, so slow, With my hand in His I'll go  
On through life, let come what may, He'll be there to lead the way.

When the nights are dark and long, In my heart He puts a song  
Telling me in words so clear, "Have no fear, for I am near."

When my work on earth is done, And life's victories have been won.  
He will take me home above, Then I'll understand His love.

I love Jesus, does He know? Have I ever told Him so?  
Jesus loves to hear me say, That I love Him every day.

Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!



Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.

*Author Unknown  
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