

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.

July 2014

God's Leading Hand

Pastor A. Zoldners; Ropaschi Church in Latvia
Submitted by Alvar Helmes; Battle Ground, Washington

It has been about 70 years since Germany capitulated to the allies in World War II. But the war was not over for some people, like Pastor A. Zoldners of Latvia. I received the following letter from him in 1992 for publishing in the *Christian Monthly* since I had previously published one of his articles. I did not publish the letter but saved it for possible future use. The following is a shortened version of his letter.

A brief history regarding Latvia during wartime: Russia invaded and occupied Latvia and the other Baltic countries in 1940; in 1941, at the beginning of the Russian/German war, Germany took control of Latvia; in 1944 Russia drove Germany out of Latvia; when the USSR was disbanded in 1991, Latvia again achieved freedom. It is estimated that the population of Latvia decreased by at least 25% during the German and Russian occupations. It would be good for us to remember some of the suffering and abuses that many people experienced during those times.

Alvar Helmes

I BEG YOUR PARDON FOR being so obtrusive in sending this article to you, but perhaps it might be of interest to your readers. I was a judge in Latvia in 1944, but now I'm a pastor serving the Lord. After the capitulation of Germany in 1945, I was arrested for being a judge and sent to a concentration camp in Russia after the Soviet Union overran the Baltic countries. When I was released, I was not permitted to earn a living for my wife and children through my education. I could only work at manual labor, first as a woodcutter, then as a bricklayer, and lastly as a chimneysweeper. In 1969, I became a pensioner and began to study theology. In 1973 at age 66, I was ordained into the ministry. I think that every faithful man can give witness to the fact that he has felt God's guidance, especially in wartime. And in my case, especially the year 1944, of which I want to relate.

In June 1940, the Latvian republic was occupied by the Soviet Union. Many honest and guiltless people were imprisoned in Latvia, and others were deported to Siberia

or to the Arctic regions where they perished from hunger or the cold. When in June 1941 the Soviet regime was driven out by German forces, we welcomed Germany as liberators. We only slowly discovered that they were also occupiers.

In July 1944, the German forces were retreating from the Russian forces and the warfront was nearing our home. I and my wife, who was with child, determined to abandon our living in the provincial city of Kraslava, where I worked as a judge, and go to my father's home which was about 200 miles further from the nearing warfront. To determine to do this was one thing, but to realize our goal was quite another, since the German military forces had extremely limited the traffic of civilians. We would only be able to buy railway tickets with the permission of the German Ortskommandantur (District Commander), and this was only in case of an extreme necessity. As to our belongings, we could only take what I could carry in two bags.



Blidene Railway Station, photo courtesy of wikimapia

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I had heard that the local merchant, Mr. Jesperinsh, was also preparing to leave and had a railway car. He was very kind and took my family and our belongings. He gave me four chests in which to pack our things. The four chests were not sufficient for everything, but we did the best that we could. From my library, I took only my New Testament. We quickly loaded our things onto the railway car and waited in the station for Mr. Jesperinsh to arrive. The railway car would then be joined to a passing train.

Suddenly we heard that a local train was nearing the station, which went once a day and in which the tickets may be obtained without permission of the Ortskomandantur. In a moment we decided to run into the station, buy tickets for the nearing train, and go away, leaving our things in the railway van! We begged the wagon driver to inform Mr. Jesperinsh, when he arrived, that we had gone.

The local train went only to Daugavpils, a railway center. To continue our journey, we had to go to the Ortskomandantur to obtain permission. As a reason for our travels, we explained that we were fugitives (literally displaced persons, or DP's), and we were finally able to obtain permission to continue our journey.

There was only one car for civilian passengers; all other cars were for German soldiers. The car was packed with people. My wife got a corner of a bench and took our two boys on her knees, but I had to stand in the corridor, squeezed together with others, so close that I could feel the pulsing of the neighbor's hearts. We were trembling with fear, for the previous night Daugavpils had been bombed by Soviet bombers and could be struck again. At last, hours overdue, the train started. It was as if a heavy load had been removed from our trembling hearts.

Without further hindrance we arrived at my father's house, far away from all centers of population that might be bombed. And there we at last found the rest that was so necessary for my wife, who keenly felt the Soviet bombers over our heads at night in Kraslava. But how long could we be at ease, as we awaited the fifth member of our family? And what about the things we left behind? A week passed without knowing where to go and what to do.

I learned that Mr. Jesperinsh's railway car had been joined to a passing train the second day after our departure. The train had only gone as far as Daugavpils. That night, the city had again been bombed, especially in the area of the station. Bombs had fallen on the train to which

the railway car was adjoined and the train started to burn so badly that the Jesperinsh's had to rush to the station and move their car away from the train. Many people were killed or wounded, especially the family of the policeman of Kraslava. His daughter was horribly torn apart by the bombing and his wife had been wounded. Upon seeing the carnage, the policeman lost his mind.

I got the address of a merchant in the town of Jelgava where our things were stored and I was able to load our belongings on a train headed in the direction of my father's house. The nearest station on the railway line to my father's house was at Blidene, but the engineer did not have permission to make a stop at this station. I begged him to drive by the station as slow as possible, and as he did so, I threw out our chests from the train, then my bicycle, and last of all, I jumped.

It was midnight and perfectly still. My chests lay along the railway at a distance of 200 steps, the first to the last. I brought them to the station on my bicycle, one by one. It was daylight when I finally stopped trembling. At 9 o'clock I phoned my father. After five hours my brothers came by horse and carriage to bring me to my father's house.

WHY DO I RELATE THIS STORY? It is because there is evidence of the safe leading and guiding hand of the Lord.

First, if there had not been the thought to leave our things at the station and run away, then we would have been in the station of Daugavpils when the bombs were falling, the train was burning, and people were being killed and wounded.

Second, after a week of being in ignorance of what to do, I finally was pointed to people who could help me locate our belongings.

Lastly, after three days of wondering what to do, we arrived at a train station in Jelgava that would take us to Blidene. And even though the train engineer was not authorized to stop at Blidene, he agreed to go slowly by the station so that I could throw our belongings from the train and I could also jump from the train.

If one link in this story was missed, our future could have been very different. About two weeks later, the warfront entered Jelgava and left it in ruins. Of course, I am not sure those who read this story will feel as I felt.

I felt that there is ONE who takes care of us, not only for our immortal souls, but also in cases of necessity. ~

WHEN WE ARE IN CHRIST, we are citizens of heaven and our treasure is to be there. Because we belong to Him, we are to walk in Him. He is to be the Lord of our everyday lives. The way we behave and treat others reveals to others what we believe. Our attitude and behavior at home, at school, at work, and in the community is important. Our behavior can draw others to the Lord or it can become a stumbling block to them. When we have a new life in Christ it means death to our old self. We desire to live in His will.

Pastor Elmer Yliniemi; Wolf Lake, Minnesota

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Ephesians 2:19-22

Blessing Into Blessing

Pastor Orval Wirkkala
Kingston, Minnesota

MAY THE ABUNDANT GRACE OF GOD be received and multiplied unto us today as we start a new day of opportunity to rejoice in the matchless giving of Himself for us, a thankfulness which can best be outwardly expressed through giving of ourselves in service to others in love. From the miracle of the feeding of the multitude by Jesus we are able to see in a practical way in which blessing received translates into blessing extended due to its abundance.

And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would. When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.

John 6:11-13

Let us look at this in this way. Whenever we experience the joy of fellowship within the body of Christ, there is always more left over of that which we received from the hand of God through being around the Word of God, whether it was through the hearing/reading of the Word, through fellowship with other members of the body of Christ around the Word of God, whether it is in prayer with Him individually or corporately, whether it is through the enjoyment of experiencing the beauties of creation, whether it is communing together at His table, or however the Bread of Life is received and experienced into our mind, heart and soul. Is it not true that upon being strengthened by the various means of grace that we are so encouraged and so strengthened in the joy of the Lord that it is difficult to keep it to ourselves? Is that your experience? Has it been in the past? I think it is a common experience for all of us, for that is simply how the body of Christ works today. There is no difference between how He ministered when He walked on this earth and how the body of Christ ministers today.

Let us take a look at a couple verses in the Scripture which would illustrate this. (Please read the surrounding passages so as to understand the context in which they were written, but they still are able to stand alone in order to illustrate this truth that grace received always gladdens us as well as empowers us to extend it to others).

And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a

watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. (Isaiah 58:11) He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly (heart, innermost being) shall flow rivers of living water. (John 7:38) I might add a little comment here: For years I understood this only from the standpoint that as long as we believed according to the Bible (we were scripturally correct in our doctrine) we would be a blessing to others. But it has opened up to have a richer meaning, for now it seems that it means more in this sense that the Scripture has said that when we believe on Him, out of our heart will flow the blessing of life to others. The first understanding is certainly necessary and correct, but to me the further revelation opened up to me more joy in my heart and soul at the understanding that we are more like a conduit pipe than a reservoir within ourselves, which is what Isaiah wrote when he described the life concerning how blessing received causes us to be a blessing to others.



"The Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes" by James Tissot

How about one more example: *Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. (Genesis 12:1-3)*

Through Abraham we have received the promise of the Blessing into our lives through Jesus Christ. Because we have been blessed in and by Christ and are in Him today, may we be a blessing to those who are placed in our paths today, beginning with those who are the closest to us, our families. ~



IF MAN HAD HIS WAY, the plan of redemption would be an endless and bloody conflict. In reality, salvation was bought not by Jesus' fist, but by His nail-pierced hands; not by muscle but by love; not by vengeance but by forgiveness; not by force but by sacrifice. Jesus Christ our Lord surrendered in order that He might win; He destroyed His enemies by dying for them and conquered death by allowing death to conquer Him.

A.W. Tozer

The Ten Commandments

Gwen Wilson
Ridgefield, Washington

Dear Children of God in the 4 corners of the world,
I'm praying that God will bless your day and all month through. I want to share the Ten Commandments with you today. You can find these in *Exodus, chapter 20*.

And God spake all these words, saying,

1. I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Meaning as stated in the Bible: *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.*

2. Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. (example: swearing, using God's name)

3. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Meaning as stated in the Bible: *Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it (made it holy).*

4. Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

5. Thou shalt not kill.

6. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

7. Thou shalt not steal.

8. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

9. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house.

10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

GOD DID NOT GO INTO DETAIL from commandments four through ten. He just said them very straightforward and they are not so hard to understand. Maybe your parents have gone over these with you. Our children learn these in Sunday school as well as at home.

In verses 18-26, we read that all the people (the children of Israel) were gathered at the foot of the mountain which Moses had climbed to commune with God. Moses received these commandments to give the people. They needed guidance as they were sinning.

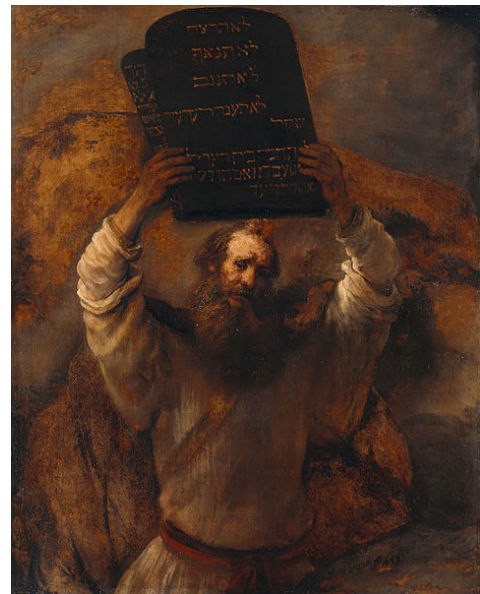
The people gathered at the foot of the mountain to wait for Moses to return and heard thunder and saw lightning, and heard the sound of a trumpet, and saw the mountain smoking. They were frightened and even moved a little farther back from the mountain.

When Moses finally came down, they asked him to speak to them and not God, as they thought they would die if God spoke to them.

Moses told the people, *Fear not: for God is come to prove (to test, to establish the truth about) you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.*

Moses then walked back toward the mountain into the thick darkness and met with God again who said to him, *Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you (for yourselves) gods of gold.*

At this time the people offered sacrifices of burnt offerings to pay for their sins. The Lord then told Moses to tell the people He desired that they make altars out of earth and offer those animal sacrifices with fire unto Him. In all the places where His name would be honored He would come to the people and bless them. He also told them not to build any altars out of stone or use tools to shape them as the tools of man would make the altar unholy and not fit to sacrifice on.



"Moses With the Ten Commandments" by Rembrandt

GOD HAS ALWAYS LOVED HIS PEOPLE and did not want to see them perish. He was and is forever having a heart of grace, forgiveness and love, then and even now, and He will never stop reaching out to save those He loves.

He wants us to stop sinning and live a life for Him as that is what pleases Him.

Hebrews 11:6: But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. I pray for you children that you diligently seek to learn more about God and His Son and to follow them all your days. This is pleasing to God, to see His children walking in the truth. ~

Worship the Living God

Mark Sunnarborg
Rhineland, Wisconsin

WE ARE TO WORSHIP GOD with prayer, praise and thanksgiving. At all times and seasons we have much to be thankful for. If we would stop and consider the things God has for all those that love His appearing, we would not be able to contain or pen the love that He has given to His children. May we see the work that God has done within and may we live in the new man. We are able to worship God in spirit and in truth which is in His Son for He is truth. I thank God that He has given each of us all things in and through His Son. Our worship is a pure child-like worship with rejoicing, prayer, praise and thanksgiving that comes from the depth of our hearts. God is pleased to see faith that is at work and a faith that is based in His Son.

The beginning of our worship is the faith given us. God is a Spirit and He is worshiped in spirit and in truth. Jesus is the truth and He is the one whom God the Father is pleased with. Jesus is the only living God today for He has risen from the dead and is no longer in the grave; all other gods are false gods and remain still dead. Jesus reigns, He rules and He lives in His redeemed children. Some people have said that Jesus is risen, has ascended up to heaven and He now sits on the right hand of the throne of God the Father. This is true and He lives in the hearts His children by His Word of which the Holy Spirit testifies.

The Holy Spirit is given and Christ has ascended to the Father. This was necessary that we as well as the disciples would walk by faith and not by sight. Jesus tell His disciples: *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you*

into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. (John 16:7-14) God is pleased that we believe in His Son and we walk by faith. Unbelief has been removed from us by the Holy Spirit revealing Jesus unto us.

As I worship the living God I am able to come unto Him in Jesus' name and by the faith given of Him, as God reveals Jesus into my heart. I believe in Jesus by faith and I am not ashamed of Him or afraid to come unto the Father in His name and through His blood as His cleansed and redeemed child. I feed in our Lord's pastures and am drawn to Him, because I know His voice and as His sheep I follow and hear no other voice. In this worship I am fed with the living Word of God which produces a thankful heart.



"Pentecost"
by Joseph Milderfer

I am thankful for life and salvation, for family and friends, for mercies sure and sweet. I am thankful to God that He has given me true contentment in life and I have great hope for His plan for my life. I am thankful He has kept me safe, that I know the Good Shepherd and am known of Him by name. I'm thankful I have a testimony of God's Spirit revealing to me His Son.

In true worship we have communion of the saints, a common spirit and a common faith with other believers. As true worshipers we worship God in spirit and in truth. We come to worship God in Jesus, in His name and in the Spirit, because God is worshiped in spirit and in truth. We worship in Jesus because He is truth and has given us faith to worship. We worship in the Spirit because the Spirit testifies to us that Jesus is the Christ. ~

THIS MORNING I WATCHED A FUNERAL online for a 5 year old boy who died suddenly and tragically. This afternoon I received a text of a young man in his 20s who also died in a horribly tragic way. My heart breaks for both of these families. One month ago I would have thought it was me who would be planning a funeral for my own child. Keaton's infection threatened to take his life and, according to doctors and according to science, he should not be here, but God had other plans.

I do not know why these two families are faced with this unimaginable loss and Keaton is here. Don't get me wrong—I am GRATEFUL he is! But logic would say a child with cancer would be more likely to go than two healthy young people... My point here is that none of us know when we will take our last breath or when we will say goodbye to a close loved one.

Are you prepared that today could be your last on this earth? Do you know where you will spend eternity? Our comfort is in the promises of God, that we will have eternal life and see these loved ones again. It's so cliché, but live every moment like it's your last. We don't know when it will be our turn to say goodbye. My tears tonight are for those who are mourning and my prayers are with them all. <3

Sarah Helmes Traffie; Vancouver, Washington
Submitted by Alvar Helmes; Battle Ground, Washington

This Do, and Thou Shalt Live

Martin Luther

And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

Luke 10:25-28

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. That is teaching truly of high order; yea, the greatest thing that can be required of a man, as Christ Himself confesses and confirms, when He says: *Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.* But it is nevertheless a teaching that is common, that is well known to all the Jews as to the words, although they did not rightly understand them, and the disciples of Christ had also certainly heard them. Hence this critic should have indeed known that Christ spoke of another, a higher theme. But all such hypocrites and fanatics must prove that they esteem Christ and His Gospel as nothing, and let themselves imagine they know everything much better.

NOW, THIS COMMANDMENT HAS OFTEN been explained and there is still much to be said about it, for it is indeed the highest art and wisdom. It is never learned perfectly, much less perfectly fulfilled and lived; so that God's Son had therefore to come from heaven, shed His blood and give us the Gospel so that this commandment might be kept. Although here in this life it makes only a little beginning among Christians, yet in the life beyond we will constantly and forever have it in our eyes and hearts, and live it. In short, it is far too high above the mind, heart and sense of all mortals what the words mean, *to love God with all thy heart, with all thy strength, with all thy soul and with all thy mind.* For as yet no one experiences it, except those a little who have the Gospel and embrace Christ by faith, and receive the comfort and power of it in times of need, temptation and prayer, and thus experience a taste of it. Yet these persons themselves feel and lament, like all the saints and Paul himself, that they are still far from it and their flesh and blood feel nothing but sin and death, which of course would not be the case if this commandment had gone fully into practice and life.

Therefore such proud, godless spirits are shameless and troublesome, as this latter who went forward so boldly, that they esteem nothing at all, neither the high and earnest command of God nor do they wish to hear and know the doctrine of the Gospel: they imagine, it is enough if they have heard and can say the words: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and thy neighbor as thyself." They do not perceive that God wants such doctrines not only heard and spoken, but put into

practice, and where one does not esteem this, it will bring upon him higher and unbearable condemnation, as Christ says in Luke 12:47: *And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.* Therefore Christ gave this lawyer no other reply than this: *Thou hast answered right; this do and thou shalt live.*

That means preaching the law aright and delivering a good strong lecture, yea, snaring him with his own words and taking hold of him at the right place, to show him where he was lacking. The doctrine, He says, is precious and true; but, dear sir, do it also; I would gladly see the doer of the law then be a master and let your work of art be exhibited, for you all have spoken, written and known it, and you need nothing more. But just here you and others are lacking, that you do not do what you profess, but imagine it is enough to speak and think the words. No, in this way no one will live or be saved. The commandments must be kept and done, or the wrath of God and eternal death instead of life will abide upon you.

Yea, "this do" are the words of Christ, the eternal lesson and sermon that is here spoken and preached to all men, also to the saints, and it accuses them that they cannot and dare not glory before God on account of their works, merits and sanctity. But they must, if they would know themselves aright and stand before God, condemn themselves and their manner of life, so that here no saint has ever been able to stand upon this foundation, neither in the Old nor in the New Testament. They must all be mirrored in these words, "this do," which mean nothing more than: See, you have not yet done this, nor fulfilled it.

Now if the saints must confess this who still have grace and the Holy Spirit, how will or dare the other blind, poor spirits presume and imagine that they have kept the commandments of God, when they form human thoughts and dream they love God and their neighbor. Yet they are so far from it that they do not understand nor know what God's commandment requires and how it is kept. This they prove when they are put to the test, when they are to exhibit in a becoming manner love to their God and their neighbor. When they are required to suffer anything for God's sake, as injury and disgrace, either from men or when God Himself visits them with His rod, then one sees that the thoughts springing from their own brain are really nothing, yea, they work only the opposite, they rage, murmur, curse and blaspheme against God, as if God did them an injustice. In like manner they act to their neighbors. Where they know not how to enjoy a neighbor or to secure some advantage and honor from him, but should serve him gratuitously and help the poor, or expect also harm and ingratitude for extending the helping hand; then there is not only no spark of love, but at once they seek revenge, turn the people over to Satan and think they do right in this and are under no obligation to love such persons. ~

Both Free and a Slave

Lois Matson
Yacolt, Washington

AS WE APPROACH THE CELEBRATION of our national independence in the United States of America, my thoughts turn to liberty. Although it was purchased by the blood of those who fought for this country, our freedom has been handed to our generation as a free gift. In the same way, freedom from our bondage to sin and death has been purchased for us by the blood of Another. As we ought to guard our national liberty against all invaders, both foreign and domestic, even more fervently ought we to guard our Christian liberty against all enemies who would seek to terrorize us, whether without or within.

The blood of Jesus is the perfect payment for sin. Through His death and resurrection, the Anointed Son of God has redeemed us from the curse of the law. He has conquered death and secured our liberty for eternity. Once slaves to sin, we've been purchased and set free!

To what purpose is our freedom? Christ gave His followers this command: love one another. Because we are His, because He purchased us, because He loved us, we in turn love and serve one another. We are servants—slaves, actually—of Christ. He has given us the command to love and serve our neighbor, to let our light shine so people will see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven. Our service to Christ draws us directly and compellingly into service to our neighbor. Our good works are our service to our neighbor. We've been purchased and set free in order to be slaves!

Martin Luther explains how we are both free and in bondage:

A Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none; a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to every one. Although these statements appear contradictory, yet, when they are found to agree together, they will make excellently for my purpose. They are both the statements of Paul himself, who says, "Though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all" (1 Corinthians 9:19), and "Owe no man anything, but to love one another" (Romans 13:8). Now love is by its own nature dutiful and obedient to the beloved object. Thus even Christ, though Lord of all things, was yet made of a woman; made under the law; at once free and a servant; at once in the form of God and in the form of a servant.

Liberty is the sweetest to those who have been in bondage. *But now being made free from sin, and become servants (slaves) to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. (Romans 6:22)*



Happy and blessed Independence Day!

That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.

Philippians 3:10

That I may know Him. Ah! there is a great deal more in Jesus Christ than a man sees when he first sees Him through his tears and his fears, and apprehends Him as the Savior of his soul, and the sacrifice on whom the burden and the guilt of his sins were laid. We must begin there, as I believe. But woe to us if we stop there. There is far more in Christ than that; although all that is in Him is included in that, yet you have to dig deep before you find all that is included in it. You have to live with Him day by day, and year by year, and to learn to know Him as we learn to know husbands and wives, by continual intercourse, by continual experience of a sweet and unfailing love, by many a sacred hour of interchange of affection and reception of gifts and counsels. It is only thus that we learn to know what Jesus Christ is. When He lays hold of us, He comes like the angel that came to Peter in the prison in the dark and awoke him out of his sleep and said, "Rise! and follow me." It is only when we get out into the street, and have been with Him for awhile, and the daylight begins to stream in, that we see clearly the face of our Deliverer, and know Him for all that He is. This knowledge is not the sort of knowledge that you can get by thinking, or out of a book. It is the knowledge of experience. It is the knowledge of love, it is the knowledge of union, and it is in order that we may know Christ that He lays His hand upon us.

Alexander MacLaren

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Jesus Only

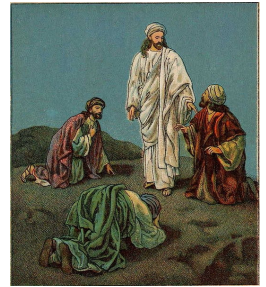
Pastor Jay Weidner
Laurium, Michigan

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea, With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me.

Julia Ward Howe "The Battle Hymn of the Republic"

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD celebrates the divinity of the Lord Jesus being revealed in stark display to Peter, James and John and to every reader/hearer of this sacred text. The God incarnate was momentarily unveiled to appear as He truly appeared and for a moment the disciples were awestruck and extremely afraid. Moses and Elijah had appeared with Jesus, yet when the disciples looked up they were gone and Jesus only remained.

This lesson is a powerful one: apart from Jesus the Law and the Prophets cannot save. They can only point and foretell; Jesus only is the substance. Only through Christ's atoning work can humans be saved. Jesus did not reveal Himself to us as He truly appears because we couldn't handle that, so He came in flesh so that we could look upon Him without fear and, even more, that we could see Him and be saved. The Transfiguration shows us how deeply God wanted to save us. He would even come in flesh so that we wouldn't be alienated by Him but rather that we would come to Him as one of us.



Jesus only. These words provide the theme of a sermon by Henrik Schartau, the Awakener of Lund. Schartau powerfully uses the redundancy of these terms to hammer home his point. It is Jesus only, the Christ for all of fallen Adam's race, who shows the true desire of the Father. His desire is to save, even if He must personally fulfill the requirements of His own regulation, even if He must pay the price in full for Adam's transgression passed down through many generations, even if He must offer the atoning sacrifice and indeed be sacrificed, He will do it and indeed has. Schartau depicts this as a gigantic cross overshadowing the world promising redemption to all those who would come to God. It is Jesus only and no other, Jesus only minus all the vain imaginings of humans, Jesus only apart from even the most holy of religious constructs. It is Jesus only; He is the Son with whom the Father is fully satisfied. Hear Him.

Hear Him we shall and do, whenever one dares to take up the Word and boldly declare the message of Jesus only. Yet this message always leads to incredible opposition. People may often choose to hear Jesus together with Moses and Elijah, Jesus together with the old regulation, Jesus interpreted by the Old Testament, instead of the Jesus who fulfills the original covenant in totality and now provides a new and living way, a New Testament in His blood and no other, Jesus only who takes away the sin of the world. Still nothing else provides satisfaction to God and nothing else will ever do. It is Jesus only or nothing. There is therefore no other option but to proclaim Jesus only and so by God's grace we will endeavor to do so, and by God's Spirit succeed. So that, as Julia Ward Howe indicated, we would all be transfigured by Him. All for Jesus only. ~

All creatures of our God and King, Lift up your voice and with us sing, Alleluia, Alleluia!

*Thou burning sun with golden beam, Thou silver moon with softer gleam,
Oh, praise Him, Oh, praise Him, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!*

Thou rushing wind that art so strong, Ye clouds that sail in heav'n along, Oh, praise Him, Alleluia!

*Thou rising morn in praise rejoice, Ye lights of evening find a voice,
Oh, praise Him, Oh, praise Him, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!*

And all ye men of tender heart, Forgiving others, take your part, O sing ye! Alleluia!

*Ye who long pain and sorrow bear, Praise God and on Him cast your care!
Oh, praise Him, Oh, praise Him, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!*

Let all things their Creator bless, And worship Him in humbleness, O praise Him! Alleluia!

*Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son, And praise the Spirit, Three in One!
Oh, praise Him, Oh, praise Him, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!*