

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.

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The Kingdom of Christ

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And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him, Saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles: And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again. And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldst do for us whatsoever we shall desire. And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory. But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized: But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared. And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John. But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Mark 10:32-45

OUR TEXT BEGINS WITH JESUS and the disciples on the way to Jerusalem for the Passover. Mark tells us that the disciples were both amazed and afraid, perhaps afraid of what would become of Jesus and them. Jesus foretells His suffering, death and resurrection. Jesus' words are

clear and don't leave anything to the disciples' imagination as to how things will go in Jerusalem. The disciples have seen the miracles that Jesus worked and have been under His instruction and influence for a long time. Still, the Bible doesn't record that the disciples would have asked much about what He told them or tried to understand more about the events to come. Instead, James and John come with a request for Jesus. They ask that one of them could sit on His right hand and one of them on His left hand in His glory.

Jesus understands that they still don't fully comprehend what His kingdom is and where it is located; neither do they understand what they are asking for. It seems that the cup and the baptism that Jesus is speaking of in our text are not Holy Communion and Holy Baptism, but instead this cup of suffering, pain and death, as well as the sprinkling, even immersion of wrath and mistreatment He is to receive. The disciples are bold to say that they are ready to accept the same that Jesus was to receive, not realizing that even Jesus Himself asked our Father in heaven if this cup could be taken away, but still was ready to accept that God's will would be done. There was no other way than to have the sacrifice that was perfect: Jesus, God Himself made flesh, slain to atone for the sins of the entire world—even for yours and mine. Still, Jesus said that this same cup, this same treatment from the world would be for them, and for you and me.

Jesus' kingdom is a spiritual kingdom. It is equally as real as this world we live in, but today it is still spiritual in nature. One day it will be the only reality. He is looking for those who want to worship Him in spirit and in truth. He asked His disciples then, and He asks us today, to follow Him and to be obedient to His will. He says that *all* those who labor and are heavy laden can come to Him and He will give them rest. This kingdom is not for the good people who have no recognition of their sinful condition, but for you and me who are sinners in need of God's grace. We who are troubled, even in despair



over sin. We who are struggling with some particular sin. We are laboring to overcome and be better, but Jesus asks us to turn to Him.

He wants us to take His yoke, His cross upon us. He wants us to learn more about Him. In doing this, we find rest for our souls. God's grace is not like our work. He simply asks us to acknowledge our sinfulness and our need for Him to save us. What is it to work the works of God, but to believe in Jesus and in Him that sent Jesus, the living God. The Bible tells us that our own righteousness is as filthy rags before God. The sacrifices that He wants from us are a broken spirit and a broken and contrite heart. And as the Psalmist writes, we can also offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving for what God has done for us.

We can easily imagine the indignation of the ten to hear that James and John were asking for special favor and a

special position in Jesus' kingdom. "How could they!" you and I can think. But if we consider, we see in ourselves the same tendency to have selfish ambitions and motivations. Jesus explains to us that the way to lead in His kingdom is not the same as earthly leadership. We are called to serve one another. "How can we get anything done if everyone is serving and not leading?" we may think in our flesh. This doesn't mean that God hasn't given us gifts and skills that can be used in His work and kingdom, but Jesus is still the one leading. We are not to try to command, drive and manipulate each other in a fleshly way to achieve some goal. Instead, He desires that each of us, in our respective places, follow in His footsteps. "What would Jesus do?" may sound trite, but is really something that we can often ask. Paul assures us that we have the mind of Christ. May He give us the faith and courage to continue to allow Him to lead in our lives. ~

Who Is This Man?

Author Unknown

In GENESIS He is the Seed of the Woman,
In EXODUS He is the Passover Lamb,
In LEVITICUS He is Our High Priest,
In NUMBERS He is the Pillar of Cloud by day and the Pillar of Fire by night,
In DEUTERONOMY He is the Prophet like unto Moses.

In JOSHUA He is the Captain of our Salvation,
In JUDGES He is our Judge and lawgiver,
In RUTH He is our Kinsman Redeemer,
In I and II SAMUEL He is our Trusted Prophet,
In KINGS and CHRONICLES He is our Reigning King,
In EZRA and NEHEMIAH He is the Rebuilder of the Broken Walls of our shattered lives,
In ESTHER He is our Mordecai,
In JOB He is our Ever-Living Redeemer.

In PSALMS He is the Lord our Shepherd,
In PROVERBS and ECCLESIASTES He is our Wisdom,
In the SONG OF SOLOMON He is our Lover and Bridegroom,
In ISAIAH He is the Prince of Peace,
In JEREMIAH He is the Righteous Branch,
In LAMENTATIONS He is our Weeping Prophet,
In EZEKIEL He is the wonderful Four-Faced Man,
In DANIEL He is the Fourth Man in the Fiery Furnace.

In HOSEA He is the Faithful Husband, forever married to the backslider,
In JOEL He is the Baptizer with the Holy Ghost,
In AMOS He is our Burden-Bearer,
In OBADIAH He is Our Savior,
In JONAH He is our great Foreign Missionary,
In MICAH He is the Messenger of Beautiful Feet,
In NAHUM He is the Avenger of God's Elect.

In HABAKKUK He is God's Evangelist,
In ZEPHANIAH He is the Lord Mighty to Save,
In HAGGAI He is the Restorer of God's Lost Heritage,
In ZECHARIAH He is the Fountain opened in the House of David,
In MALACHI He is the Sun of Righteousness, rising with healing in His wings.



In MATTHEW He is the Messiah,
In MARK He is the Wonder-Worker,
In LUKE He is the Son of Man,
In JOHN He is the Son of God,
In ACTS He is both Lord and Christ.

In ROMANS He is our Justifier,
In I and II CORINTHIANS He is our Sanctifier,
In GALATIANS He is our Redeemer from the Curse of the Law,
In EPHESIANS He is the Christ of Unsearchable Riches,

In PHILIPPIANS He is the God Who Supplies all our Needs,
In COLOSSIANS He is the Fullness of the Godhead Bodily,
In I and II THESSALONIANS He is our Soon-Coming King.

In I and II TIMOTHY He is our Mediator between God and Man,
In TITUS He is our Faithful Pastor,
In PHILEMON He is the Friend that is Closer than a Brother.

In HEBREWS He is the Blood of the Everlasting Covenant,
In JAMES He is our Great Physician,
In I and II PETER He is our Chief Shepherd Who soon shall appear with a crown of unfading glory,
In I, II, and III JOHN He is Love,
In JUDE He is the Lord coming with Ten Thousands of His Saints,
And in the REVELATION He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

The Fourth Commandment

Excerpt, The Large Catechism

Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother.

To this estate of fatherhood and motherhood God has given the special distinction above all estates that are beneath it that He not simply commands us to love our parents, but to honor them. For with respect to brothers, sisters, and our neighbors in general He commands nothing higher than that we love them, so that He separates and distinguishes father and mother above all other persons upon earth, and places them at His side.

For it is a far higher thing to honor than to love one, inasmuch as it comprehends not only love, but also modesty, humility, and deference as to a majesty there hidden, and requires not only that they be addressed kindly and with reverence, but, most of all, that both in heart and with the body we so act as to show that we esteem them very highly, and that, next to God, we regard them as the very highest. For one whom we are to honor from the heart we must truly regard as high and great.

We must, therefore, impress it upon the young that they should regard their parents as in God's stead, and remember that however lowly, poor, frail, and queer they may be, nevertheless they are father and mother given them by God. They are not to be deprived of their honor because of their conduct or their failings. Therefore we are not to regard their persons, how they may be, but the will of God who has thus created and ordained. In other respects we are, indeed, all alike in the eyes of God; but among us there must necessarily be such inequality and ordered difference, and therefore God commands it to be observed, that you obey me as your father, and that I have the supremacy.

Learn, therefore, first, what is the honor towards parents required by this commandment, to wit, that they be held in distinction and esteem above all things, as the most precious treasure on earth.

Furthermore, that also in our words we observe modesty toward them, do not accost them roughly, haughtily, and defiantly, but yield to them and be silent, even though they go too far.

Thirdly, that we show them such honor also by works, that is, with our body and possessions, that we serve them, help them, and provide for them when they are old, sick, infirm, or poor, and all that not only gladly, but with humility and reverence, as doing it before God. For he who knows how to regard them in his heart will not allow them to suffer want or hunger, but will place them above him and at his side, and will share with them whatever he has and possesses.

Secondly, notice how great, good, and holy a work is here assigned children, which is, alas! utterly neglected and disregarded, and no one perceives that God has commanded it, or that it is a holy, divine Word and doctrine. For if it had

been regarded as such, every one could have inferred that they must be holy men who live according to these words. Thus there would have been no need of inventing monasticism nor spiritual orders, but every child would have abided by this commandment, and could have directed his conscience to God and said: "If I am to do good and holy works, I know of none better than to render all honor and obedience to my parents, because God has Himself commanded it. For what God commands must be much and far nobler than everything that we may devise ourselves; and since there is no higher or better teacher to be found than God, there can be no better doctrine, indeed, than He gives forth. Now, He teaches fully what we should do if we wish to perform truly good works; and by commanding them, He shows that they please Him. If, then, it is God who commands this, and who knows not how to appoint anything better, I will never improve upon it."

Behold, in this manner we would have had a godly child properly taught, reared in true blessedness, and kept at home in obedience to his parents and in their service, so that men should have had blessing and joy from the spectacle. However, God's commandment was not permitted to be thus with such care and diligence commended, but had to be neglected and trampled under foot, so that a child could not lay it to heart, and meanwhile gaped like a panting wolf at the devices which we set up, without once consulting or giving reverence to God.

Let us, therefore, learn at last, for God's sake, that, placing all other things out of sight, our youths look first to this commandment, if they wish to serve God with truly good works, that they do what is pleasing to their fathers and mothers, or to those to whom they may be subject in their stead. For every child that knows and does this has, in the first place, this great consolation in his heart, that he can joyfully say and boast (in spite of and against all who are occupied with works of their own choice): "Behold, this work is well pleasing to my God in heaven, that I know for certain." Let them all come together with their many great, distressing, and difficult works and make their boast; we will see whether they can show one that is greater and nobler than obedience to father and mother, to whom God has appointed and commanded obedience next to His own majesty; so that if God's Word and will are in force and being accomplished, nothing shall be esteemed higher than the will and word of parents; yet so that it, too, is subordinated to obedience toward God and is not opposed to the preceding commandments.

Therefore you should be heartily glad and thank God that He has chosen you and made you worthy to do a work so precious and pleasing to Him. Only see that, although it be regarded as the most humble and despised, you esteem it great and precious, not on account of our worthiness, but because it is comprehended in, and controlled by, the jewel and sanctuary, namely, the Word and commandment of God.



Son, Hear a Wise Father's Instruction

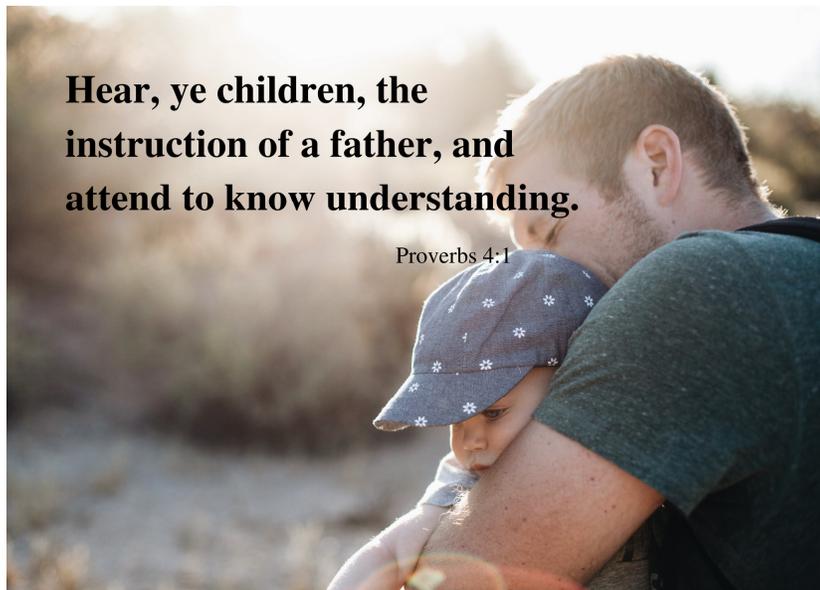
Gwen Wilson
Ridgefield, Washington

Dear Children,

Good morning to all of you. I say that because it is morning for me. I pray this finds you all well and growing a little more each day in the knowledge of our great God and His Son Jesus.

It is nearing the end of winter where I live, and the weather has been very mild. Spring in its splendor will soon be here. Our woods are showing new life on certain bushes. Some of the flower bulbs that are the first to bloom are already shooting up the first tips of the plant. Spring will bring renewed hope after this difficult past year for us, and really for the whole world.

I want to share with you *Proverbs 4*. It is instruction from Solomon for sons from Solomon, but I know myself and people of all ages, male and female, can hear the instruction and learn from it. All of God's Word applies to each of us.



Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding.

Proverbs 4:1

THIS FIRST VERSE CALLS US to listen carefully, and learn. *Proverbs 4:1-2: Hear ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend (pay attention) to know understanding. For I give you good doctrine (teaching that guides our thoughts or actions), forsake ye not my law.* The wise father desires to teach his children to be wise and seek to do right. He looks back to when he was a young boy and how he was taught. I like to picture the father talking to his children in a calm, pleading voice that is filled with love.

Vs. 4: He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain (hold on to) my words: keep my commandments, and live. To keep is a call to obedience. Our flesh does not always like to do what's right, but we are promised life in obedience by faith. That can only come by Jesus.

Vs. 5-6: Get wisdom, get understanding; forget it not; neither decline (do not turn away) from the words of my mouth. Forsake her (wisdom) not, and she shall preserve thee (save you from harm): love her, and she shall keep thee. Verse 7 says that wisdom is the very key to our learning. We need to have wisdom first. That is why I stressed GET in verse 5. It's so

important. *Vs. 8-9: Exalt (speak highly of) her, and she shall promote thee (increase your learning): she shall bring thee to honour (great respect), when thou dost embrace her. She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.* This is so beautiful. It brings me comfort to read it.

Vs. 10-15: Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many. I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths. When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened (hampered); and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble. Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life. Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way (lifestyle) of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away (flee). Can you hear the father's urgency in this section?

Verses 16-17 speak of the wicked and how they don't sleep until they have done their bad deeds. They live only to do wickedness. *Vs. 18: But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.* Let us pray to be lights in this dark world. Let's pray to have Jesus in our hearts and share the Good News of Him.

Vs. 19-24: The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble (sin). My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto (hear) my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find (learn and keep) them, and health to all their flesh. Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Put away from thee a froward (disobedient) mouth, and perverse lips (unacceptable speech) put far from thee. In other words, don't even think of being this way. Flee from the devil who promotes such things.

Vs. 25:27: Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder (think carefully about) the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established (ordered rightly). Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil. That last verse is so strong in its instruction, but the evil one will be ever near us waiting to make us slip, stumble and fall. We need to pray for WISDOM so that we can stand strong against evil and walk with our hearts at peace, shedding light wherever we go.

We all struggle with being obedient, whether young or old, but if we stop and be quiet and pray, we can hear with our hearts and minds that still small voice of Jesus that tenderly calls us to serve Him and be obedient. He loves us so much and watches us every day from up there on His throne. He is coming back for those who love and believe on Him, as He so desires us to come live forever with Him.

I pray you all continue to seek the Lord while He may be found and while you are young. ***Proverbs 3:5-6: Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.***

God be with you today and give you more wisdom and understanding, so that you may grow in your faith.

God's peace.

Means of Grace

Rev. Andrew Mickelsen
June 1968 CM

WHEN GOD CREATED man, He created him in His own image. What is the image of God and what are His attributes?

God is love (1 John 4:8, 16). God is good (Psalm 73:1). God is merciful (Psalm 116:5). God is faithful (1 Corinthians 1:9). God is righteous (Jeremiah 12:1, John 17:25). God is true (2 Corinthians 1:18). God is holy (Isaiah 5:16).

Unto this image man was created. All these attributes were his: love, goodness, mercy, faithfulness, righteousness, truth, and holiness.

Now we have a fuller picture of how great was the fall of mankind when he lost the image of God. The divine love was replaced by hate, goodness by evil, mercy by cruelty, faithfulness by treachery, righteousness by sinfulness, truth by falsehood, and holiness by wickedness. Thus, man became corrupted and all this because of his disobedience to God, his Creator.

This corruption is in all who are naturally born into the world; it is known as original sin. Man may forsake and repent of all his actual sins and live an upright, pious life, as St. Paul did, saying: touching the righteousness of the law, blameless (Philippians 3:6), and still not be saved. Why? *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. (Ephesians 2:8)* The grace of God is the forgiveness of sins, both original and actual sins.

This is the reason that God had to lay upon His Son the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:6). Therefore, although Jesus was sinless, holy, and innocent, He suffered the punishment and paid the penalty for all our sins and that penalty was death (Genesis 2:17, Romans 6:23). This inspired Paul to say: *For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead. (2 Corinthians 5:14)* And God says: *For this is as the waters of Noah unto me. (Isaiah 54:9)*

Now our sin debt was fully paid and the anger of God against sin was appeased. Salvation was provided for us only by the work of Jesus, but we must appropriate this salvation by faith in the grace of God, in the forgiveness of sin that Jesus merited for us. God's marvelous plan of salvation provides the means of grace, by which faith can lay hold of His redemption, in His Word and His sacraments.

During the 48 years that I have been in the living faith, I cannot remember a single one of the old servants of God who did not teach that the Word of God and His holy sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, are the means of grace that God has given to man by which they can be saved, but appropriated by faith. They are the means of grace but not the grace itself, for the grace itself is the forgiveness of sins.

Therefore, we be in *Ephesians 1:7: In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace*. Thus, if the Word of God and His sacraments are the means by which the riches of His grace

are extended to us, the forgiveness of sins must be found in them biblically.

In order that the Word of God would be the means of grace, Jesus commanded His own to preach in His name repentance and the forgiveness of sins (Luke 24:47). And He vouched that *Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them. (John 20:23)*

That none may dispute that the Word of God is not the means of grace and, in order that man may possess the grace of God, he must believe the forgiveness of his sins in Jesus' name and on the merits of His atoning blood.

Jesus has provided this grace by His redemptive work, and man appropriates it to himself by faith. Still, the most difficult thing for man to understand is that living faith is not possessed by man but given to him by God as a gift. This is

not a faith that is cultivated by man's mind or reason but a faith instilled in his heart by God. *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness. (Romans 10:10)* And this faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17).

Now the question arises: in what manner by the sacraments the means of grace according to the Bible? The first sacrament is Baptism, which Jesus instituted in place of circumcision. The Bible proves that circumcision was the outward token of the covenant that God made with Abraham

when He stated: *And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. (Genesis 17:7)* And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you. (Genesis 17:12) And in Ezekiel 37:27 we read: *Yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

Though God changed the outward token from circumcision to Baptism, the covenant was not changed because it was an everlasting government. Have we proof of this in the Bible? Yes, in *Hebrews 8:10, 12* we read: *For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people... For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.* Although the token of the covenant was changed to Baptism in the former requirements to fulfill the Law removed, the covenant remained the same. *I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.*

The covenant was made with believers, for God has never made a covenant nor instituted a sacrament for unbelievers. Since the sacrament of Baptism is a means of grace, the forgiveness of sins must be found in it. This the Apostles did, for Peter says in *Acts 2:38, 39: Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children.*

Note that the promise is also to the children, if they are baptized. To the adults the first requirement is repentance and then forgiveness of sins.



This is in accordance with the commandment of Jesus in Luke 24:47, but in order that no one would be misled into believing that his sins are forgiven just by being baptized, without believing, we read: *And with many other words did he (Peter) testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized Acts 2:40-41*

St. Paul also believed that there was the forgiveness of sins in Baptism, for when he speaks of his conversion in Acts 22:16, he quotes Ananias as saying, *And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*

Likewise, Paul did not believe that there was the forgiveness of sins in Baptism without faith, for, in speaking before King Agrippa, he quotes the words of Jesus saying: *To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. (Acts 26:18)*

Paul does not belittle Baptism although he considers himself commissioned by the Lord to preach the Gospel (1 Corinthians 1:17), for he includes the “doctrine of baptisms” in the principles of the doctrine of Christ (Hebrew 6:2).

I am so thankful to God for the statement of Jesus that the little children believe on Him (Matthew 18:3-6), and that the kingdom of God belongs to the infants also (Lk 18:15, 16).

If the little children and infants did not believe on Jesus, we would have no biblical right to baptize them. There are those who say the Jesus did not say that infants believed on Him, only little children. If the infants did not believe on Him, why was Jesus so pleased with them and said *for of such is the kingdom of God?* That He was pleased with them is sufficient proof that they believed, for in *Hebrews 11:6* we read: *But without faith it is impossible to please him.*

Anyone who says that little children and infants cannot believe because their minds are not sufficiently developed disputes the words of God and allows his own reason to get in the way of God’s truth, for true faith is not in the mind but in the heart. Cannot the Almighty God instill this faith into the hearts of infants also?

The fact that the little ones believe on the Lord does not mean that they are the children of God by natural birth. The Bible says: *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. (Psalm 51:5) Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one. (Job 14:4) What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? (Job 15:14)* Paul also states that we were by nature (or natural birth) the children of wrath, even as others (Ephesians 2:3). Now, since no one by natural birth is a child of God, how then can the little ones please God?

There can be no other way than the way that God has provided, and Jesus says: *I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (John 14:6)* It is Jesus who

provided redemption for all, both small and great. In His redemptive work there is forgiveness of all sins, both original sin and actual sins, and the means of grace, the forgiveness of sins, that He has provided in His Word and His sacraments can be received only by faith.

When God has graciously instilled faith into the hearts of the little ones, they become acceptable to Him and through Baptism they enter into His covenant of grace and become His children. But now they are to be taught *to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you (Matthew 28:19, 20)*. God has never demanded repentance from infants because they have not committed any actual sins, for God is just.

Let us never be afraid to admit that there is forgiveness of sins in Baptism, as well as in the Lord’s Supper, but let us also point out that forgiveness is only for the believers, not for the unbelievers. No one can be saved by just partaking of the sacraments, be it Baptism or the Lord’s Supper, for Jesus says: *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. (Mark 16:16)*

There is no room for doubt or argument concerning the forgiveness of sins in the Lord’s Supper for Jesus says: *This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. (Matthew 26:28)* We also read in *1 Corinthians 11:29*: *For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.*

Someone may ask, “What happens to the little ones that are not baptized?” The words of Jesus in Mark 16:16 plainly point out that it is not the lack of Baptism but the lack of faith that condemns a person. If a person believes and is unable to obtain Baptism, he is saved by faith, but if he has the opportunity to be baptized and despises it, in so doing he despises the Lord who instituted Baptism, and his faith will not save him.

Little ones are not able to obtain Baptism by themselves; therefore, it is not their sin or fault that they are not baptized but the sin of the parents. Surely a gracious God would not condemn anyone for that which he is not guilty. Let us leave all things over which we have no control in the hands of a gracious God. Where the Bible is silent, so must we be.

Let us thank God for these means of grace and for the blessed privilege that He has given us to bring our little ones to Jesus in Holy Baptism, that their original sin may be forgiven them and blotted out by His redemptive work of suffering, bleeding, and dying on Calvary’s cross.

We thank God also for the privilege of confessing our sins to a servant of God and being allowed to hear and believe the blessed gospel of Christ, the forgiveness of our sins in Jesus, name and blood.

Thus our faith is strengthened by His Word and His sacraments, in which by faith we partake of *him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. (Revelation 1:5-6)*

Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead)...

Galatians 1:1



PAUL’S FIRST DROP OF INK is a decisive, challenging contradiction: “Paul, an apostle not from men nor by means of man.” Men did not send and commission him. He is not the ambassador or representative of men. What he utters is not the word and the wisdom of men. The authority back of him and his message is not human.

R. C. H. Lenski

Lord, Give What You Command

Lois Matson
Yacolt, Washington

NEW TESTAMENT SENTENCES are moody! Two of the moods are the **indicative** and the **imperative**. The indicative mood **indicates** something—it gives facts, information, statements of truth. In the Scripture, indicative sentences often tell us what God has done. An imperative sentence is a **command**, and the Scripture contains imperatives telling us what we are to do.

Here are some examples of imperatives:

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart. (Proverbs 3:5)

Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another. (Ephesians 4:32)

Whew! Those are steep demands! If we're not careful, we may read these kinds of imperatives with fearful hearts, knowing that of ourselves we are not capable of fulfilling them. But always in the Scripture the foundation and basis of the imperative is the indicative. What we are to do (imperative) is a **result** of what God has done for us in Christ Jesus (indicative). We must keep them in the proper order.

1 Peter 1:15-16 says:
But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. "Be ye holy" seems like an imperative, commanding us to

holiness in all our conduct and life (conversation). If we're honest, we would tremble when we read that, because we know that we are not—and will not be—holy by nature.

But remember: the foundation of the imperative is the indicative. What we are to do is a **result** of what God has already done for us! God is the One who **makes us holy**. God **imparts** holiness to unholy creatures. Is God saying "You be holy!" in the sense that Jesus used it in Matthew 8:3? A leper had come to Jesus and said, "Lord, if You will, You can make me clean." Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, "I will. Be thou clean." Maybe God is saying, "You shall be holy, because I am holy."

We know that if we are to become holy, it is only because of God's gracious work. He demands holiness and perfection from those who would be saved, but He also provides that holiness and perfection through the blood of His perfect, holy Son. When we are joined to Christ, crucified and buried with

Him in baptism, raised with Him to newness of life, we are credited with His holiness and perfection.

The holy God has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. He has illumined our hearts with His gracious Word, and given us the gift of faith. We trust in His fulfilled promises, His declaration that we are clean through the Word He has spoken to us. Without Him we can do nothing.

Jesus said:

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much

fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will,

and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. (John 15:1-12)

The command of Jesus to love one another is followed by "as I have loved you." He gives what He commands. He has loved us with an everlasting love, and He will help us to love one another.

Saint Augustine prayed: "O Lord, command what You will and give what You command." May we join in that prayer, knowing that God who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, will continue to give what He commands.

**"O Lord, command what You will
and give what You command."**

St Augustine

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Thou Art Great, O Lord

Rick Niska
Portland, Oregon

Wherefore thou art great, O Lord God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears. (2 Samuel 7:22)

DAVID DECLARED THAT THERE IS no other God like unto our Lord God after he had brought the ark of the Lord into the city. David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet. David and the people rejoiced, for the ark of the Lord carried the mercy seat. The prophet, Nathan, then declared to David that God's mercy would not depart from him, and his kingdom would be established forever. Nathan went on to declare that the kingdom of God would be established forever through David's line.

Christ, our Lord, was born of David's lineage, and through Him we have come to know the mercy of God. We rejoice in the birth of our Savior, for, in Him, we have the promise of eternal life. We see the love of our Heavenly Father in the Christ Child.

Now, in this time before Easter, we observe the season of Lent. We view the passion of our Lord as He took upon Himself our sins.

In the Old Testament, the ark held the mercy seat, and the ark itself could not be touched. We read that Uzzah stretched forth his hand to hold the ark when the oxen stumbled, and Uzzah therefore died. We see a picture of how the mercy seat of God cannot be reached through our actions.

We must come into the hearing of the Word, and into the revelation that it is through Christ alone that our salvation is complete. The works of our hands cannot attain unto the perfection demanded of God.

In the book of the Acts, we hear in Stephen's sermon that the Most High dwelled not in temples made with hands. As those in the council took the life of Stephen, his last words were *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge, (Acts 7:60)* for he had come to understand the mercy of our Lord.

The kingdom of God is found in the hearts of men where the Word has been revealed. The gospel message lifts us up as it declares to us that our sins are forgiven in Christ's name and through His blood that was shed on the cross.

Christ carried the cross that belongs to each one of us on those steps to Golgotha. During this Lenten season, may our eyes be open to see how Christ took upon Himself the sins of all. May we also be able to declare as David did, *Thou art great, O Lord God: for there is none like thee.* ~

Book Recommendation

The Suffering Saviour: Meditations on the Last Days of Christ

Are you looking for something to read during the Lenten season and Holy Week? Maybe try *The Suffering Saviour*, by F.W. Krummacher, recommended by Pastor Stan Lampinen.

Here are the first few paragraphs of the first chapter:

The history of our Saviour's passion is about to display before us its bleeding mysteries and its awful vicarious scenes. The "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world," submissive to the council of peace, which was held before the foundation of the world, approaches the altar of burnt-offering. Bonds, the scourge, the cross, and the crown of thorns, present themselves to our view in the distance; and the "seven words," uttered by Jesus on the cross, sound in our ears, like the funeral knell of the kingdom of Satan, and like intimations of liberty and joy to the sinful race of man.

It was said to Moses from the burning bush, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."—Exodus 3:5. With still stronger emphasis are these words uttered to us from the sacred spot, where that much-implying type found its actual fulfillment. O what wonders are we about to approach in our meditations! From the most appalling scene the world ever witnessed, a paradise of peace springs forth. From the most ignominious sufferings, we see the most glorious triumph emerge; and from the most dreadful of deaths, a divine and never-fading life arise!

May devotion, humbleness of mind, and child-like faith accompany us in our meditations, and penitential tears become our eye-salve! But do Thou, who hast the key of David, unlock for us the gates to the sanctuary of Thy sacred passion, and in the awful scenes of Thy sufferings, enable us to discover the mystery of our eternal redemption! ~