

# 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.

November 2014

## Gratitude!

Pastor Rod Johnson  
Laurium, Michigan

*In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*

*1 Thessalonians 5:18*

**A**NNUALLY AS A NATION WE celebrate the holiday of Thanksgiving. The importance of this holiday cannot be overestimated. We as humans, because of our sin nature, seem to spend more time and energy dealing with the negative aspects of life. Complaining about the government, the 'next-door-neighbor', the lack of money, too many bills, our ill health, our spouse's shortcomings, and on and on it goes...

We somehow think that everything should always 'come-up-roses' for us and that troubles should always flee away. However, the reality of life is that which Job experienced: *Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. (Job 14:1)* When we keep this in mind, we will be joyful when we have good days and thank God for them. People who have been in bondage, either spiritual or physical, rejoice in their freedom. Those who do not have enough to eat rejoice in having food to eat regardless of the quality of it. Those who are seriously ill rejoice when they feel well again.

Above all if we are burdened with the guilt of sin, we rejoice in the blessed assurance of the forgiveness of sins, thanking God for our Savior Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. It is a simple thing to say "thank you" for a blessing of some sort, whether a gift from man or a gift from God. However, a true sense of gratitude is more than a momentary giving thanks. Giving thanks is more than a quick prayer or word of grace before meals. It is an overall continual expression in life of praising God for His mercy, love and grace. When we so live, our attitude in life is a blessing to others, thereby serving both them and God!

Gratitude is a moment-by-moment heartfelt gratitude to God for life and all that it contains. It is an appreciation of life in body and soul, the gift of God in Christ Jesus of the forgiveness of sins, the gift of faith to believe it, and the promise of eternal life. Therefore it is written: *In every*

*thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.* The emphasis here is "in every thing" and "in Christ Jesus," whether we consider it good or bad. Knowing the hand of God is upon us and that His promise is that *all things work together for good to those who love God (Romans 8:28)*, how could it be wrong? This is what FAITH accomplishes in us and why the Lord teaches us to be grateful and GIVE HIM THANKS!

*Serving the Lord with thanksgiving and thanking Him for Jesus!*



*Sing unto the LORD with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God: Who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains.*

*Psalm 147:7-8*

# But God...!

Taken from a sermon by John Isaacson  
Hockinson, Washington

*And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins... But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*

*Ephesians 2:1, 4-6*

**W**HEN WE THINK OF SIN we think of the vile sins. When we look at the Ten Commandments, we see there is the sin of adultery, the sin of lust, of covetousness, of theft, and lying, and slander and defaming. But what about the first commandment, the most important commandment? “I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.” Why do we overlook that one so quickly? Why do we not measure ourselves against that one? When we want to make our own self-glory, to make ourselves better than others, to lift ourselves up before God and not glorify Him and His Son Jesus, denying His righteousness that He has offered, it is our nature. We want to justify what we are. We are all by nature the children of wrath. We are in a certain doom by ourselves, and we are certainly hopeless in this world. We have no way to redeem ourselves.

*But God...* Now comes the difference! Now comes the saving power. Now God comes and redeems the helpless person. *But God, who is rich in mercy...* this is what makes the difference. This is grace. *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us...* His love is immeasurable. His grace is immeasurable. *But God... even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ.* Even when we were dead, when everything in us is against Him, when everything in us is at enmity with God—even then—He makes us alive in Christ. This is love! This is grace!

*And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in*

*heavenly places in Christ Jesus.* How could one who is so dead before God, who is so at enmity with God, so unrighteous before God, how could he now sit in heavenly places? How could God allow such a one to sit in heavenly places, such a one as you and such a one as I? By grace. By love. When He has quickened us together with Christ, we are made pure before Him, pure and holy, and able to sit in His presence. We can sit in the very presence of God Himself. What a grace, what a love, what a mercy!

Paul has made it clear that we of our own selves can never be saved. We can never offer anything to God. But God has offered this grace to us, this unmerited favor to us, so that there isn't one iota of our own work there. If there is anything that we offer, then it is no longer grace. Grace is totally unmerited. Not one thing can man offer to God. Oh, we would like to offer something. We would like to be a part of something, so that we could say that we played a part in this salvation. We would even like to be able to offer faith. But it's clear that we can't even offer faith. *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. (Ephesians 2:8)* Faith is not of yourself; it is the gift of God. We can't even offer faith! We can't say, “I brought faith to the equation, and God brought His grace, and together we made salvation.” We can't say that. We can't even believe of our own reason or strength. Why? Because we are dead. Without Christ, we are dead, and there's nothing in us that will be able to do the will of God. Salvation is by grace completely, and by a gift. The only thing we can offer is our thanksgiving, and our praise. We are His workmanship. God works. He does the work.

When Jesus was asked, “What might we do that we might work the works of God?” He simply answered, “This is the work of God, that you believe on Him whom He has sent.” This is the work of God. ~

## On Faith and Good Works — from the *Augsburg Confession*

“We begin by teaching that our works cannot reconcile us with God or obtain grace for us, for this happens only through faith, that is, when we believe that our sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, who alone is the mediator who reconciles the Father. Whoever imagines that he can accomplish this by his works, or that he can merit grace, despises Christ and seeks his own way to God, contrary to the Gospel.

“This teaching about faith is plainly and clearly treated by Paul in many passages, especially in *Ephesians 2, verses 8-9: For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

“It is also taught among us that good works should and must be done, not that we are to rely on them to earn grace but that we may do God's will and glorify Him. It is always faith alone that apprehends grace and forgiveness of sin. When through faith the Holy Spirit is given, the heart is moved to do good works.

“Consequently this teaching concerning faith is not to be accused of forbidding good works, but is rather to be praised for teaching that good works are to be done and for offering help as to how they may be done. They cannot be done without the help of Christ, as He Himself says in John 15:5: *For without me ye can do nothing.*”

May these excerpts from the teaching of the early reformers help us to better understand and apply the basics in our daily lives.

Pastor Raymond Hilman  
Greer, South Carolina

# Men, Our Most Critical Need

A.W. Tozer

From This World: Playground or Battleground?

*Therefore said [Jesus] unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.*

Luke 10:2

**T**HE MOST CRITICAL NEED of the Church at this moment is men—the right kind of men, bold men. The talk is that we need revival, that we need a new baptism of the Holy Spirit—and God knows we must have both—but God will not revive mice. He will not fill rabbits with the Holy Spirit.

We languish for men who feel themselves expendable in the warfare of the soul because they have already died to the allurements of this world. Such men will be free from the compulsions that control weaker men. They will not be forced to do things by the squeeze of circumstances. Their only compulsion will come from within—or from above.

This kind of freedom is necessary if we are to have prophets in our pulpits again instead of mascots. These free men will serve God and mankind from motives too high to be understood by the rank and file of religious retainers who today shuttle in and out of the sanctuary. They will make no decisions out of fear, take no course out of a desire to please, accept no service for financial considerations, perform no religious acts out of mere custom, nor allow themselves to be influenced by the love of publicity or the desire for reputation.

Much that the church—even the evangelical church—is doing today, it is doing because it is afraid not to do it. Ministerial associations take up projects for no higher reasons than that they are scared into it. Whatever their ear-to-the-ground, fear-inspired reconnoitering leads them to believe—or fear—the world expects them to do, they will be doing come next Monday morning with all kinds of trumped-up zeal and show of godliness. The pressure of public opinion calls these prophets, not the voice of Jehovah.

The true church has never sounded out public expectations before launching its crusades. Its leaders heard from God and went ahead wholly independent of popular

support or the lack of it. They knew their Lord's will and did it, and their people followed them—sometimes to triumph, but more often to insults and public persecution—and their sufficient reward was the satisfaction of being right in a wrong world.

Another characteristic of the true prophet has been love. The free man who has learned to hear God's voice and dared to obey it has felt the moral burden that broke the hearts of the Old Testament prophets, crushed the soul of our Lord Jesus Christ, and wrung streams of tears from the eyes of the apostles.

The free man has never been a religious tyrant, nor has he sought to lord it over God's heritage. It is fear and lack of self-assurance that has led men to try to bring others under their feet. They have had some interest to protect, some position to secure, so they have demanded subjection from their followers as a guarantee of their

own safety. But the free man—never. He has nothing to protect, no ambition to pursue and no enemy to fear. For that reason he is completely careless of his standing among men. If they follow him—well and good. If not, he loses nothing that he holds dear. But whether he is accepted or rejected, he will go on loving his people with sincere devotion, and only death can silence his tender intercession for them.

Yes, if evangelical Christianity is to stay alive, it must have men again—the right kind of men. It must repudiate the weaklings who dare not speak out, and it must seek in prayer and much humility the coming again of men of the stuff of which prophets and martyrs are made. God will hear the cries of His people as He heard the cries of Israel in Egypt, and He will send deliverance by sending deliverers. It is His way.

And when the deliverers come—reformers, revivalists, prophets—they will be men of God and men of courage. They will have God on their side because they are careful to stay on God's side. They will be co-workers with Christ and instruments in the hands of the Holy Spirit. Such men will be baptized with the Spirit indeed and through their labors He will baptize others and send the long-delayed revival. ~



*Zion heard, and was glad; and the daughters of Judah rejoiced because of thy judgments, O LORD. For thou, LORD, art high above all the earth: thou art exalted far above all gods. Ye that love the LORD, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked. Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.*

Psalm 97:8-12

# Old Testament Books History

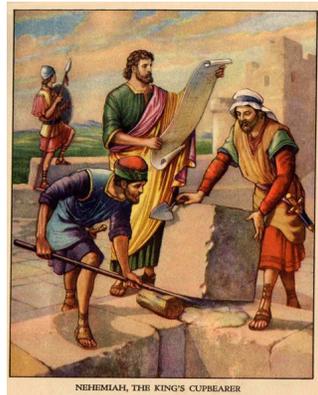
Gwen Wilson  
Ridgefield, Washington

Dear Children,

Hello to each of you. I hope you are having a good day. I have had a very quiet day as I watched the rain falling rather hard at times. Our area has not seen rain for many months and we needed some. Soon the rain will be more steady and we will have rain falling for the winter/spring months. That is our winter weather.

I want to share with you kids a few more Old Testament books and some of their history. It has been quite a while since we did this. We will look at 3 books.

**Nehemiah** – This book covers a lot of Nehemiah's life. He was a cup-bearer (bringing drink) for King Artaxerxes (Art-a-zerk-sees). That was a very important job if you worked for the king. He enjoyed his job, but when he received word that Jerusalem (God's holy city) was destroyed, he wept and pleaded with God for forgiveness and left his cup-bearer job to go rebuild the city and return to his own people.



Nehemiah was a leader by nature. He went back to Jerusalem, gathered the people together to help rebuild the city, and led the project to the finish. He was even threatened by an enemy who wanted to make him stop building but could not.

It is unclear as to who actually wrote this book.

**Esther** – Esther was a young, beautiful Jewish woman who was being raised by her cousin Mordecai. She was summoned along with many other young women to come and live at the king's palace for a time so the king could choose a new queen. Esther was eventually chosen. Her cousin Mordecai told her to keep her Jewish heritage a secret. This would not go over well with the king or his people. Esther found out that some of the king's important men



Esther by Minerva Teichert

wanted to kill all the Jews. Esther told the king (who loved her), and when he found out that she was a Jew, he did what he could to keep her people safe. This book recorded the deliverance of the Jews from the hands of their enemy. It is a picture of how God has promised to keep His people safe from the enemy—not only in body, but more importantly in our souls. It is unknown who the author of the book of Esther was.

**Job** – Job was a true follower of God, a righteous man. He was wealthy in home, land and cattle, and he also had a large family.

The devil came one day when God's sons presented themselves to God, and God confronted the devil and asked him, "Where are you coming from?" The devil said, "From going to and fro in the earth." God then asked the devil if he tried to bother Job, a man so upright that there was none like him on the earth.

The devil knew all about Job and knew also that God had a special protection around him. The devil told God to make a mess out of everything Job owned. God told him, "All that Job has is in your power to do so." Then God told the devil NOT to touch Job himself.

The devil put his evil powers to work and Job suddenly lost everything he owned—land, cattle, home, and if that was not enough, all his seven sons and three daughters died at the same time in one of the brother's homes because a strong wind blew the house down.

Then God gave the devil permission to make Job very sick, but He wouldn't let the devil take Job's life. Job got awful sores all over his body.

He was a sad, beaten-down man. Three of Job's friends sat with him and tried to tell Job that his suffering was because he had sinned. Job's wife told him



Job and His Friends by Ilya Repin

to forget God and die. Poor Job! But Job was sure there was another reason for his trouble. In the end of the book Job's sores are healed and he does NOT and would NOT turn his face on God. The book ends more happily with Job having more than he did before.

The book of Job shows how God cares about His own and how we must put our trust in God, not in man.

The author is unknown.

There are many books in the Bible and each one is special. Many things in the Bible we can read and maybe we don't always understand, but I think we should read all of it anyway. God will give us what we need.

I do pray that God's Word will always be important in your lives and that you will try to read as often as you can. Remember to ask a believing adult about things you may not understand. We cannot expect answers to every question and God does not expect us to know everything. **St. John 10:9: [Jesus says:] I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. ~**

# Apostle Paul's Conversion

Pastor Arne Nordahl  
Vancouver, Washington

**T**HE BIBLE GIVES TESTIMONY THAT Apostle Paul was a chosen vessel in the Lord's hands. ...Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. (Acts 9:15-16) In Paul's letter to his dear fellow laborer in the Lord's vineyard, Timothy, he writes: *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.* (1 Timothy 1:15-16) It is good therefore to consider Apostle Paul's conversion since it is an example for those who would come to faith after him. When we read about Apostle Paul's journey to Damascus, which is about 150 miles from Jerusalem, we understand that he had a great zeal to persecute the Christians because he believed that they had a false faith and doctrine. In the Old Testament, we read that all false prophets and teachers should be destroyed (Deuteronomy 13). When he came near to Damascus, there shone a light from heaven and he fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him: *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.* (Acts 9: 4-6)

There are several things in this happening concerning Apostle Paul's conversion which are necessary and important to consider. We notice that when Paul was persecuting the Christians it was the same as if he was persecuting Jesus Christ. There was a light from heaven that was so bright that he could not see after he stood up from the ground. What is the meaning of this light for us today? This light is Jesus Christ, God's Word, and the Holy Spirit. It is written: *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.* Hebrews 4:12-13) I have personally experienced this concerning the Word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit in my preaching as a servant of the Lord. This light that shone was so bright that it revealed his own sinfulness as well as deeds of sin unto Saul; therefore, he fell to the ground and was both naturally and spiritually blind. Saul, knowing he was a sinner and that his former religion was to no avail, asked

the Lord what he should do. The old Pharisaical view which he had was taken away, and he became a beggar of God's grace with a humble heart. His question for Jesus was very simple: *What wilt thou have me to do?* The answer was given: *Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.* We notice that Jesus did not preach the precious gospel of the forgiveness of his sins to Saul, but rather told him to go to the city and there he would be told what to do. Then is the question: why didn't Jesus preach the gospel of the forgiveness of sins to Saul? We have the answer from what Jesus told His disciples after He was resurrected from the dead: *Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye*

*remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.* (John 20:21-23) In another Scripture place, Jesus says to Peter and all Christians who have received the Holy Spirit: *And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*

(Matthew 16:19) Apostle Peter also writes: *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.* (1 Peter 2:9)

We notice that while Saul was in Damascus, he was blind and did neither eat nor drink

for three days. What was he doing during this time? Without doubt, he was in prayer to our heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus Christ about his soul's salvation. In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias and the Lord said to him in a vision: *...Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name... And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightiest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.* (Acts 9:11-14, 17-18) Hands are a spiritual picture or sign of blessing which is confirmed with the word of the Gospel proclaimed with the power of the Holy Spirit so that both the spiritual and natural sight were given to Saul as well as a living faith, which is the faith of



Conversion on the Way to Damascus  
by Caravaggio

Jesus Christ (Romans 3:22; Galatians 2:20). Through this faith he received the righteousness and peace of Christ. With living faith in his heart and by the power of the Spirit, Paul began to preach salvation by grace through repentance and faith.

May God in His grace always enlighten us so we can understand that we are saved alone by God's grace through faith as Apostle Paul confirms when he writes: *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

*Ephesians 2: 8-9* We live in an evil world and no one knows what the future holds, but the reward is ahead of us. Therefore, let us continue to walk by grace through faith with God's love in our hearts, and *...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith... (Hebrews 12:1-2) For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love. (Galatians 5:6)* Faith and love will carry us all the way home! ~



## Punctuation Marks

Roy Lessin, Meet Me in the Meadow

Submitted by Shirley Lampinen; Snohomish, Washington

**A**RE YOU GOING THROUGH A time of change in your life? How does God want you to view this change? Consider your life like a story that God is writing, one sentence at a time. This time of change is one of the sentences in your story. Sentences are written with punctuation marks, and each punctuation mark has a different meaning. If God were punctuating this time of change in your life what punctuation mark would He use?

God would not use a period. A period would leave you with the sense that you were at the end. This could lead you into despair and discouragement. Your life is not over just because you are going through change, no matter how great that change may be. God promises you hope and a future. [Shirley: Even if that change is death, God still would not use a period. Death is not the end, for a Christian.]

God would not use a question mark. A question mark would leave you with the sense of uncertainty. Uncertainty would be the doorway that leads you into worry. God does not want you to worry about the change you are going through or worry about what is ahead. God has promised to take care of you and He has told not to be anxious about your life. [Shirley: Even if the change is death, God would not use a question mark. For a Christian, there is no question where your future is after death.]

God would not use an exclamation point. An exclamation point would leave you with a sense of high emotion. Exclamations points have been called "screamers" or "gasps." These are the things that would lead you into panic and fear. God has not given you the spirit of fear, and He has promised to give you His peace. [Shirley: Even if the change is death, God would not use an exclamation point, not yet, not yet.]

**SINCE GOD WOULD NOT USE** a period, a question mark, or an exclamation point, which form of punctuation would He use?

God would use a comma. The reason God would use a comma to punctuate a time of change is because a comma means a brief pause. A comma lets you know that the sentence has not come to an end. A comma says that after the brief pause, something else will follow. God wants you to know that there is something ahead that He has planned for you. [Shirley: Even if the change is death, God would still use a comma, for there is something— heaven—ahead that He has planned for you. Then, when He comes to take all of His children home to dwell in heaven with Him for eternity, He will use the exclamation point: Welcome Home!]

*Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. (Isaiah 43:18-19) ~*

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Corrie Karlsen, ALC Calendar Committee

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Anders Sundqvist, Business Manager



# Looking Up

Lois Matson  
Yacolt, Washington

**T**HE LYRICS OF THE OLD HYMN “I Look Not Back” run through my head as I soar at 34,000 feet, crossing the North American continent in a matter of a few hours. Annie J. Flint, who was born in the late 1800s, probably never imagined such a magnificent method of travel, but her words are as timely today as they were at their writing:

*I look not back; God knows the fruitless efforts,  
The wasted hours, the sinning, the regrets.  
I leave them all with Him who blots the record,  
And graciously forgives, and then forgets.*

The past is past. Can we through any amount of desire or effort change one second of even the last minute? No, what is done is done, and it cannot be changed. Looking back at the sins of commission—the bad things we’ve done—and the sins of omission—the good things we’ve left undone—brings only despair and hopelessness. Rather we leave the past with a gracious God who daily and richly forgives me and all believers all our sins, as the Apostles’ Creed states.

*I look not forward; God sees all the future,  
The road that, short or long, will lead me home,  
And He will face with me its ev’ry trial,  
And bear for me the burdens that may come.*

As we need not fret over the past, we also need not worry for the future. Jesus has promised to stay beside us, to never leave or forsake us. He will care for us and provide strength for each day, regardless of the difficulty of the journey. Our Lord will travel with us through the valley of the shadow of death, whether our lives are long or short. He will carry His lambs all the way home!

*I look not round me; then would fears assail me,  
So wild the tumult of earth’s restless seas,  
So dark the world, so filled with woe and evil,  
So vain the hope of comfort and of ease.*

This world can be a scary place if we dwell on its utter blackness and depravity. But we have the Light, the Light of the world! We have the Word of God, which is both a lamp to our feet and a light to our pathway. The darkness is past and the true Light now shines (1 John 2:8), so we need not fear the darkness around us.

*I look not inward; that would make me wretched;  
For I have naught on which to stay my trust.  
Nothing I see save failures and shortcomings,  
And weak endeavors, crumbling into dust.*

No navel-gazing, as one of our pastors says. When we look within ourselves for goodness, we find none. Any attempt to secure God’s favor through our own labor is as much “fruitless effort” as dwelling on the past is. Our works will never bring about the perfection required of a holy God; in fact, He says our righteous deeds are like filthy rags.

But who dwells within Christians, in these cracked clay pots? None other than God the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16). This Holy Spirit does a wonderful work! As the Apostles’ Creed states, we cannot by our own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit calls us by the Gospel, enlightens us with His gifts, sanctifies and keeps us in the true faith. The Holy Spirit preserves our union with Christ. On the last day, He will raise us from death and give all believers in Christ everlasting life. The Holy Spirit points us to Jesus (John 16:14), as does the last verse of our hymn.

*But I look up—into the face of Jesus,  
For there my heart can rest, my fears are stilled;  
And there is joy, and love, and light for darkness,  
And perfect peace, and ev’ry hope fulfilled.*

These words bring our focus to where it should have been all along, to the only place we can find peace, to Jesus and His completed work on our behalf. We hear the blessed Gospel from the mouths of God’s servants who proclaim the forgiveness of sins as from the mouth of God Himself. There—there in Jesus—is joy and love and light for darkness! There is perfect peace and fulfilled hope. There we find rest eternally.

*In His peace!*

***Give ear to my words, O LORD, consider my meditation.  
Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God:  
for unto thee will I pray. My voice shalt thou hear in the  
morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer  
unto thee, and will look up.***

**Psalm 5:1-3**

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## Wait on the Lord

John Ruotsala, Foreign Mission Administrator  
New Ipswich, New Hampshire



*Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain.*

*Isaiah 40:4*

**H**OW HAS YOUR LIFE BEEN? Has it been perfect, without pain or suffering? Do you sometimes feel very low, in a valley? As though life seems to be very dark, full of worry and, yes, even doubt? Does it seem like the path forward is just too hard?

Remember what is stated in Psalm 23: *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. (Psalm 23:4)* Notice it says *through the valley of the shadow of death*. That means through, not just up to, the valley. You see, God will not leave us comfortless; He will lead us through the hard times, even when we lose loved ones, or we fear for our very own lives. He will lead us through!

David wrote from experience. He had many trials in his life. Do you remember the lion and the bear? How about Goliath? God won these battles for David, just like He can and will win our battles if we turn everything over into His care and keeping. We need not fear evil. Jesus conquered death, hell and the power of the devil when He died on the cross for our sin, and arose victorious! The Lord Jesus is our mighty conqueror; He has won! Believe it!

We also see in our text that *every mountain and hill shall be made low*. This is very important to remember. Let us not begin to get proud and mighty in our own strength and abilities. We have absolutely no strength except that which is given of God. We have none; He has it all. Let us be humble and not proud. *Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished. (Proverbs 16:5)*

Our lives here on earth are so very short. *All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field... The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever. (Isaiah 40:6, 8)* We see how short we live; even the oldest and greatest of all men are here on earth for only a very short time. Like a wave of the hand! Like grass, here, then gone. But God's Word shall stand forever.

Are we standing on the firm foundation of God's Word today? Do we believe in His promises for us? Do we know and believe by faith that the blood of Jesus washes our sins away, so that we are pure white and perfect in His sight? Believe this, dear reader. God's Word says it is true!

When we believe in the power of His name and blood, and we are resting in the assurance of our salvation by the power of the Holy Spirit given to us by victorious, risen and living Lord Jesus Christ, we have the victory! The victory that has been won is ours; may God be praised!

Let us wait on the Lord. We read in *Isaiah, chapter 40, the last verse: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint*. Let us wait on the Lord, for He shall give us strength. Wait on the Lord. The last shall be first. Let us soar in joy, liberty and peace, knowing that Jesus has won the victory for us. Be renewed today in your strength in the Lord Jesus. He has made us more than conquerors!

Rejoice, and again I say, rejoice! ~

**T**HE COMMUNION OR FELLOWSHIP OF OUR blessed Savior Christ was doubtless most loving and familiar; for He who thought it no dishonor, being equal with God, to be made man like unto us, yet without sin, served and waited upon His disciples as they sat at table, as my servant waits on me; the good disciples, plain, simple people, were at length so accustomed to it, that they were even content to let Him wait. In such wise did Christ fulfill His office; as is written: "He is come to minister, and not to be ministered unto (Matthew 20:28)." Ah, 'tis a high example, that He so deeply humbled Himself and suffered, who created the whole world, heaven and earth, and all that is therein, and who, with one finger, could have turned it upside down and destroyed it.

Martin Luther