

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 2020

Serving One Another

Pastor Orval Wirkkala
Stanwood, Washington

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 12:2-3)

He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (John 7:38)

Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. (Romans 15:2)

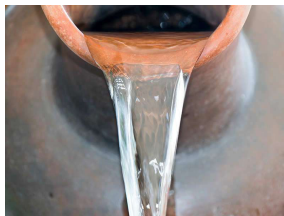
From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. (Ephesians 4:16)

IN THE SEASONS OF LIFE there are many ups and downs, not only outwardly, but more so inwardly. Of course, everyone around us is able to see the outward ups and downs that we go through, but the inward struggles we all face and deal with are invisible to most of the eyes around us. In fact, sometimes those closest to us may be oblivious to our inner struggles, depending on our ability to hide and mask what is really going on inside. We seem to have a resistance to opening up with someone, yes, even our spouse at times, so that we would be able to have someone to share our burdens with, and thereby receive comfort, empathy, encouragement, counsel, direction and so forth.

The four Scripture references above give a brief outline: 1) of the promise of blessing recorded in the Old Testament which will come through Christ, and 2) of how from faith love flows outward to others for the purpose of edification to individual persons or to those within our homes or congregations.

What do we do when we do not feel the inspiration to serve one another? What do we do when rather than willingly and joyfully serving others, we either do it grudgingly or not at all? How do we get out of a slump that we may find ourselves in? This is the real world, is it not!

That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. (1 John 1:3-4)



Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider (focus upon) one another to provoke (encourage, stir) unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting (coming along side) one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. (Hebrews 10:23-25)

What practical ways are we able to do these things? Let me leave all of us with one example, an inspiring real life example. I received a gift in the mail from a close relative and I know that the gift I received was meant for support and encouragement as well as inspiration. We might say that in the gift I received an affirmation of love, encouragement for today and, in addition, encouragement to continue into the future. I was and am encouraged, and that has led to renewed inspiration to serve. Here are some of the comments I made in my response to my dear loved one:

So, I thank you that you sent me this gift, for the love and encouragement you send it with is very much appreciated. You exercised your gift of encouragement by spending money and taking the time to arrange for the gift to be sent to me. If we do not exercise the gift which we have received, we are more or less buying into the devil's lie of serving ourselves. And we do this by yielding to the discouragement within ourselves; thereby we do not allow Him who wants to be a blessing to others to flow out from our heart. And when we continue down this path, we slowly buy into the lie that nobody cares, we are alone; and then we end up spending time doing things, even good things that in the end are less important than serving others. I read a quote last night: Everything Christ received from our Father, He received to give away. Certainly eternal life is the main idea, but also many other gifts and blessings He has received from our Father and has given them to us so that we can bless others.

May each one of us be blessed with the assurance of His love and acceptance; may we be encouraged in who we are in Him today; and may we be inspired to serve so that others may be built up in love through love, thereby His body is strengthened and knit closer together in the love of Christ. ~

Natural and Spiritual

Pastor Joel Kandoll
Castle Rock, Washington

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

Isaiah 26:3

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

2 Timothy 1:7

AS WE GO THROUGH LIFE, often we are met with pressures, and the stress of life begins to weigh us down. Many times our physical minds can become weary, and we are tempted to give up in whatever endeavor we are engaged. We may be met with opposition to our efforts.

In a similar manner, our spiritual minds can become weakened by the forces against us as we become affected by the wiles of the devil, the wickedness of the world around us, and by the waywardness of our own flesh. We may begin to swerve from the straight and narrow pathway and begin to follow the broad road that leads to destruction. Jesus cautions us against that in *Matthew 7:13*, where He teaches, *Enter ye in at the strait gate...*

We find through experience that our natural minds are also often affected by the manner in which we care for our natural bodies. It is important that we recognize the need for proper nutrition and rest in our natural lives.

I believe that these are very important in our spiritual lives also. The nutrition which our spiritual minds need is the Word of God. We must avail ourselves of that Bread from heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Living Word is able to nourish our souls. When through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit we come to understand the grace of God toward us, we also receive the rest that is necessary to us. We find that we can rest from our labors as it is revealed unto us that Jesus has performed everything for us, and He removes from us the fear of failure, the fear that we have not done enough

to merit salvation. We see in Jesus salvation, full and free. He gives unto us His Holy Spirit, which leads and guides us, which gives us comfort.

Another aspect of our lives concerning our minds is the need for others. In our natural lives, we benefit greatly from having friends, and it is a great blessing if our closest loved ones are our friends also. Loneliness and sadness can result from a lack of social activity and from a lack of caring friends. This can affect our minds immensely.

Our spiritual minds have similar needs. How good it is to know that we have Christian friends, those who have come to know the truth of the Gospel, who have come to experience the grace of God to us as sinners. And, most importantly, how good it is to know that we all have a great true Friend in Jesus, the lover of our souls. The fellowship of other Christians is an important part of our lives, and the writer of Hebrews exhorts us, *And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. (Hebrews 10:24-25)*

We must also consider the fact that in our natural bodies there may be chemical imbalances that affect our minds. This may be something that can only be addressed by qualified physicians, who can then prescribe proper medication.

In our spiritual lives, we can also draw close unto Jesus, the Great Physician, who is able to heal us by His hand, who knows our needs so much greater than even we can know. He is able to heal our souls of all afflictions through His Holy Word and by His Spirit. His desire is to heal us, and He has shown us His love for us, as we consider how He humbled Himself unto death, even unto the death on the cross. Through His death, we have been given the hope of life eternal. Believe on Him!

Leaving you in God's peace.



For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

Colossians 1:9-12

DEAR FRIENDS, I ASK YOU this morning of grace, do you need to be strengthened on your journey? Do you feel your own weakness and long for the strength of your Savior to fill you? Here Scripture tells us that we can be strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power. This is God's might, which is all might, for He is the Almighty and is all-powerful and full of glory. Also unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness. Another place says, *Strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man. (Ephesians 3:16)* And so giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Yes, surely we can thank God if we are partakers of this eternal inheritance. I pray that we are! Unto Him belongs all praise, and honor, and glory, and thanksgiving now and forever. Amen!

Paul Coponen; Chassell, Michigan
Submitted by Ralph & Barbara Somero; New Ipswich, New Hampshire

Our Enemy, Satan

C.O. Rosenius

IN *EPHESIANS 6:12*, WE READ: *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

If we consider and summarize what the apostle here indicates about our enemy, we get a rather terrible picture of him as very mighty, very cunning and smart, and also an invisible enemy, who can be quite close to us without our suspecting it. First we want to look at the last mentioned thing. When the apostle says: *We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers*, the meaning is not that we have not got to fight against our own evil flesh, or inborn depravity. It means, according to Paul's way of speaking, that in this fight we do not, as in ordinary ways, have any visible bodies to aim our weapons at, so that we could hit them with a sword, but that our enemies are spirits, whom we cannot kill, and invisible enemies, who can be quite close to us without our seeing them, or fearing their presence the least little bit. This, of course, is a rather precarious circumstance.

Secondly, he lets us understand that our enemies are not weak and ignominious ghosts, but on the contrary, very mighty and considerable, when he calls them principalities and powers, or authorities. These words make us understand that the devil has a real empire with special orders and constitutions, so that some evil over-angels, as princes and authorities, rule over the other devils. Moreover, he calls them rulers of this world, which certainly is a rather terrible name. So also has Christ Himself call the devil the prince of this world, and Paul even calls him the god of this world, which names clearly announce, what we also in part can see with our eyes, that the devil fully rules over all unconverted mankind, so that kings and emperors are under his power and government as small, weak slaves, or faithful and obedient subjects.

We also know that our enemy is of high decent, namely a fallen angel, and that he has a terrible courage when he dares to fight against the Mighty God. In the days when Christ was flesh, he went so far in haughtiness that he was even bold enough to ask the Lord Himself to fall down and worship him. Then we can understand what a power he has over poor man, when Christ symbolizes the man and the devil by a house and its owner, when he speaks of a strongly armed man, who

defends his house; so that to the devil the man is only as a house for its owner. So also his strength, no less than his ardour to destroy us, is symbolized by the picture of the Apostle Peter, when he calls him a lion, a lion roaring with hunger, and walking about seeking whom it may devour (1 Peter 5:8). It is true that all these are such terrible indications of our enemy, that a man can well dread living on the earth. And this at least is sure, that those who do not stick to the Lord in the fear of God, must no doubt be in, or will get into, the

hands of the devil. This at least is sure, that if the Lord only leaves us to ourselves, then we are lost; then at any moment the devil can throw us into a most awful depth of sins and follies, and thereafter into the abyss of hell. But we also know, that if we do not sleep at ease, or believe in our own strength, but have become small children and weak sheep before the Lord, the fight will not depend on our own strength, nor on the devil's power, but the Lord Himself will fight for us and carry us in His arms, and protect us as His lambs. If for a single hour only the Lord were to give the devil full freedom over us, within that very hour he would tear us to pieces and throw us into hell. Thus each moment of our life when this does not happen, is a witness of the faithful, gracious, and mighty presence of God. Oh, that we would bear this in mind!

So the fight is a spiritual fight. It does not depend on our power or strength. Therefore the most terrible quality of the devil is his cunning, his manifold cunning and schemes, by means of which he can deceive and charm us so that we do not seek the strength of the Lord, but willingly surrender to the enemy. Therefore also the Scripture has spoken most of this quality of his. In the last book of the Bible he is called the old serpent, which deceives the whole world, and in it so many clever, learned and enlightened men. But maybe there is no word more indicative of this enemy's dreadful richness of cunning and schemes than the one from the mouth of Christ: "the depths of Satan," and when the apostle says that the devil also is transformed into an angel of light. May God preserve all men! Certainly no human intellect, no culture, and no watchfulness are enough against "the depths of Satan," if God Himself does not preserve our spirit with His enlightenment. Against "the depths of Satan" I want only to put "the depths of God," and "the Watchman of Israel who shall neither slumber nor sleep." ~

Behold, he that keepeth Israel
shall neither slumber nor sleep.

Psalms 121:4

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.

Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.

Psalms 121

The Ten Commandments Given

Gwen Wilson
Ridgefield, Washington

Dear Children,

Hello to each of you once again. I pray you are well. We are doing okay here, and enjoying some lovely fall weather. The earth has circled the sun, and summer comes to an end and fall returns, changing the color of the leaves, which begin their decent to the floor of the earth. God watches over all and the timing is always perfect.

I was thinking about what to write and as I flipped pages in my Bible I came upon this account. Let's look into Exodus 19 and 20, when God visited Moses on Mt. Sinai and gave him the Ten Commandments to teach to the people.

AFTER LEAVING EGYPT, MOSES HAD been leading the Israelites for three months when they came to the wilderness of Sinai. The people pitched their tents near Mt. Sinai.

God called to Moses from the mountain: *Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians (all the plagues, the drowning of Pharaoh and his army), and how I bare (carried) you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me (a people that are God's personal property) above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. (Exodus 19:3-6)*

God told Moses to prepare His people (the Israelites) to receive further instructions from the Lord. The people were to wash their clothes so they would be in clean garments when Moses called for them to hear what God said. They were to be ready on the third day. They, and even their animals, were not to touch any part of the mountain at the base, or they would die.

On the morning of the third day, there was thunder and lightning and a thick cloud over the mountain, and the sound of an extremely loud trumpet. The people in the camp trembled. Moses had the people come near the mountain to meet with God.

The mountain smoked and shook, and the trumpet blew louder and louder. God told Moses to come to the top of the mount. There God told him to go down to make sure the people knew not to even get near to the mountain or they would die.

*Exodus 20:1-17: And God spake all these words, saying, 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.** 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 (sin) 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.*

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. (An example of this is exclaiming by saying, "O my God!" That is using God's name wrongly.)

***Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.** 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.*

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

Thou shalt not kill.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Thou shalt not steal.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

***Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house,** thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass (donkey), nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.*

All the people saw the thundering and lightning and heard the trumpet. They were afraid and kept their distance from the mount. They asked Moses to tell them what the Lord said. They did not want the Lord Himself to speak to them as they were afraid they would die when He spoke.

Moses told the people not to be afraid, but that God was come to prove them (to demonstrate His truth and have the people follow Him), so that they would reverently fear God, and turn from sin and sin no more.

You can read in Exodus 31:18 about the Ten Commandments written by the finger of God on tablets of stone, and in Exodus 32:15-20 where Moses broke the tablets on the ground. The second set of stone tablets were given to Moses in Exodus 34:27-28.

Our God is the same yesterday, today and FOREVER. His Word will never change and His will for His people will always be that we fear, love and trust Him with our lives.

God wants us for His own. He is a jealous God, and does not want any other god to take us away from Him. He LOVES us so much and we often get carried away with our own things and sort of forget about Him, not that we totally forget Him but the business of life can make us selfish. I know it can for me.

I pray that Christians will be in prayer every day for protection of our hearts and minds, and that we will serve God with our lives.

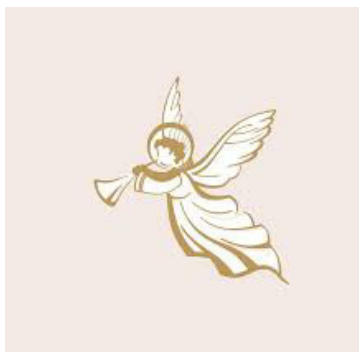
As you begin your school year in whatever way you are learning, ask God to help you, to give you patience and the ability to do what is asked of you. It is definitely a different year for all of you. I would tell my kids through the years, "Do your best, you'll be blest."

God's peace.



For Unto Us a Child Is Born

Pastor Dennis Hannu
Wolf Lake, Minnesota



The season of Advent brings to us the greatest wonder ever to be presented or seen in this world and that is the incarnation of Christ. God in flesh comes into this world in order to save it. This season causes us to reflect on the coming of Christ into this world. For unto us a child is born.

*Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian. For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire. **For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.** Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*

Isaiah 9:1-7

THE PROPHET ISAIAH SOME SEVEN HUNDRED years before Christ prophesied of His coming into the world. In the midst of the turmoil, heartache, and darkness of that day came the glorious proclamation of hope. “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given” carries a great amount of weight for it is the message of the promised king who would rescue his people from their current distress. And rescue He did as the child carried out the zeal of the Lord in His finished work on the center cross of Calvary. For you see this child would not only fulfill the role as King and Messiah but He would also be the Suffering Servant who would bear the grief and sorrow of His people. He would be wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, the punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by His stripes we were healed. This child—born in a stable and laid in a manger or

feeding trough—changed the world, because it is the message “For unto us a child is born” that demonstrates the magnificent grace of God. God in flesh, the creator of the world takes on flesh and becomes like His creation in order to pull it out of its darkness. The birth of Jesus has changed the dynamics of the human race. Its darkness is over because the Light of the world has cast His everlasting light into the darkness and overcome it! The curse has been reversed; no longer does death have victory over us but we have risen with Jesus Christ by the glory of God the Father and now live a new life.

This message is for the world which is full of people who are broken and walking in darkness and living as it were in the shadow of death. “For unto us a child is born” is the message that the world needs because it is the only message that brings us life and peace. The imagery of the yoke, staff, and rod being broken signifies that the enslavement is over. No longer are we enslaved to sin. Its power has been broken and we now learn of the One who says that His yoke is easy and His burden is light. The noise of the battle ceases as well, and all of its garments that are stained with blood are destroyed in the fire of God’s love. We are then granted new garments, the garment of salvation and covered with the robe of righteousness.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder.

We now live in the kingdom of Peace with the Prince of Peace who is our Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father. His kingdom is established forever and its peace will last forever. The throne that is established there is a throne of grace to which we can run at any moment to find mercy and grace to help in every time of need. The One who sits on the throne is the Lord who is worthy to receive glory and honor and power for He created all things and for His pleasure they are and were created. “For unto us a child is born” is the message of the Christian church here on earth for it encapsulates the entire gospel message. Charles Wesley captures this message beautifully in his hymn, “Hark, the Herald Angels Sing,” in the second verse:

*“Veiled in flesh the God-head see,
Hail the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as Man with men to dwell,
Jesus our Immanuel.
Hail, the heavenly Prince of Peace,
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
Risen with healing in His wings.”*

God’s peace.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

GREAT AND GRIEVOUS, INDEED, ARE these dangers and temptations which every Christian must bear, even though each one were alone by himself, so that every hour that we are in this vile life where we are attacked on all sides, chased and hunted down, we are moved to cry out and to pray that God would not suffer us to become weary and faint and to relapse into sin, shame, and unbelief. For otherwise it is impossible to overcome even the least temptation.

The Large Catechism

What Do You Lutherans Believe, Anyway?

A Couple of Notes on the Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel

Pastor Bryan Wolfmueller

SOMEONE ASKED ME, “So what is it that you Lutherans believe?” I only had a couple of minutes, and I knew I would probably never see this person again. A question like this cuts out all the extras and invites an often needed clarity. How, dear friends, would you answer a question? What would you say if a stranger gave you five minutes to teach them what we believe, teach and confess?

I said: “Lutherans see two teaching from God in the Scriptures: the law and the Gospel.” The law shows us what God requires, and because we do not and cannot keep the law, it also shows us that we are sinners. The Gospel, on the other hand, shows us what God has done for us in Christ, especially in His suffering and death, to win for us the forgiveness of our sins.

This distinction between the law and the Gospel stands at the heart of everything we believe, teach, preach, pray and do. It is the foundation of our worship, our church, our lives and our hope. We must then, dear saints, continue to study and learn the difference between law and Gospel. When we read the Scriptures we ask, “Is this passage law or Gospel? Is it telling me what to do (or what I have not done), or is the text telling me what Jesus has done for my salvation?”

We ask the same question when we listen to sermons and Bible lessons: “Is this law or is this Gospel?” And even more, we listen to our daily conversations, “Am I being told the law or the Gospel?” When we ask this question we find that most of our days are filled with law, instruction, demands, criticisms, etc., and that each of us lives in a barren wilderness in which the Gospel is rarely heard, even we Christians! That which we need to hear the most is that which is least spoken: that Christ Jesus has died for us, has forgiven us, and because of Him, we are the beloved of God the Father. This promise of forgiveness for the sake of Jesus is what gives us life, salvation, forgiveness, and freedom.

This distinction between the law and the Gospel is the foundation of all that we believe, teach and confess. I hope that the next time you are asked what a Lutheran believes you speak of the Lord’s law and the Gospel, and that you speak of these two teachings even when you’re not asked! And even more, that in our own lives we are always sorting out words of law and Gospel, and we continue to hold and cling to the life-giving words of the forgiveness of sins which we hear in the holy and precious Gospel. Amen.

Law	Gospel
Tells us what to do	Tells us what Jesus has done
Shows us our sin	Shows us our Savior
Always accuses	Always forgives
Brings death	Brings life
Demands perfect righteousness	Gives the righteousness of God
Kept by works	Had by faith
The Ten Commandments	The Apostles’ Creed
Revealed in nature and creation	Revealed in the Scripture alone
Threatens	Promises
Demand	Gift

This difference between the Law and the Gospel is the height of knowledge in Christendom. Every person and all persons who assume or glory in the name of Christian should know and be able to state this difference. If this ability is lacking, one cannot tell a Christian from a heathen or a Jew; of such supreme importance is this differentiation. This is why St. Paul so strongly insists on a clean-cut and proper differentiating of these two doctrines. [Martin Luther, Sermon On Galatians, 1532]

As the distinction between the Law and the Gospel is a special brilliant light, which serves to the end that God’s Word may be rightly divided, and the Scriptures of the holy prophets and apostles may be properly explained and understood, we must guard it with especial care, in order that these two doctrines may not be mingled with one another, or a law be made out of the Gospel, whereby the merit of Christ is obscured and troubled consciences are robbed of their comfort, which they otherwise have in the holy Gospel when it is preached genuinely and in its purity, and by which they can support themselves in their most grievous trials against the terrors of the Law. [The Formula of Concord V: On the Law and the Gospel] ~

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION (Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685)

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I certify that all information above is true and complete.
Anders Sundqvist, Business Manager

The Voice of the Lord

Lois Matson
Yacolt, Washington

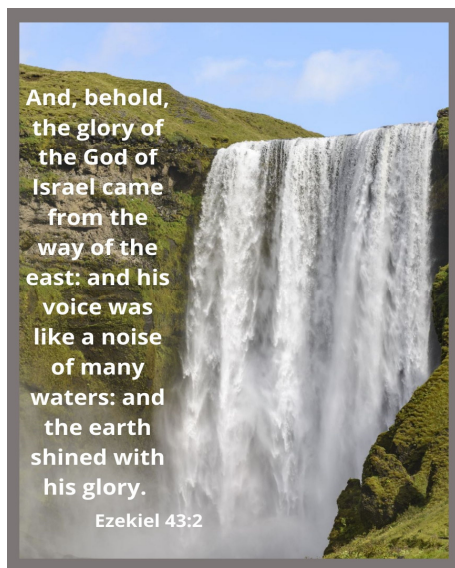
A Psalm of David.

Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. The voice of the Lord is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the Lord is upon many waters. The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars; yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn. The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire. The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness; the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh. The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests: and in his temple doth every one speak of his glory. The Lord sitteth upon the flood; yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever. The Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace.

Psalm 29

THE VOICE OF THE LORD is a force to be reckoned with. In the beginning, the powerful voice of the Creator spoke our universe into existence. The voice of the Lord pronounced the consequences of sin to Adam, Eve and the serpent in the Garden. The people of Israel trembled at Mount Sinai, begging Moses to bring them the Word of the Lord, so they need not endure the terrifying voice of God Himself. The people heard thunder at the baptism of Jesus, when the Voice from heaven said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Sometimes God's voice isn't like a hammer breaking rocks in pieces or shattering great trees. The voice of the Lord came to Elijah not in the wind, the earthquake, or the fire, but as a "still, small voice," a whisper. Though the Voice was quiet, Elijah wrapped his face in his mantle before going to the mouth of the cave to hear the Lord. When God first spoke to Samuel, the boy thought it was Eli, the old priest who was raising him. The Lord's message to Samuel was: "I am going to do a thing in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears it tingle."



THE VOICE OF THE LORD brings two different messages. The Law of the Lord is a killing Word, bringing us sinners to death and the end of ourselves. The Gospel of the Lord is a resuscitating Word, bringing us saints to life that will never end.

Martin Luther says:

These works He performs through the two ministries [of the Law and of grace]: the first by the letter, the second by the Spirit. The effect of the letter is such that because of His wrath no one can continue to exist; that of the Spirit is such that because of His grace no one can perish. Ah, this matter is so preciously profound that it deserves to be spoken of constantly.

People think: If I could hear God speaking in His own Person, I would run so fast to hear Him that my feet would bleed... If in former times someone had said: I know of a place in the world where God speaks, and when you arrive there, you hear God Himself talking; and if I had come there, had seen a poor preacher baptize and preach, and people had said: This is the place; there God is speaking through the preacher: he is teaching God's Word—then I no doubt would have said: Ha! I have taken pains to come here, and I see only a minister!

We should like to have God speak to us in His majesty; but I advise you: Do not go there. So experience certainly teaches. If He were to speak in His majesty, you would see what a running would begin, as there at Mount Sinai, where, after all, only the angels spoke; yet the mountain smoked and trembled. But now you have the Word of God in church, in books, in your home; and this is as certainly God's Word as if God Himself were speaking.

We hear the voice of the Lord in the written Scripture, and from the mouths of our pastors and preachers. May His voice continue to speak in our time, bringing people to death and to Life, for Jesus' sake. ~

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Abounding in Thanksgiving

Pastor Jay Weidner
Laurium, Michigan

For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.

Colossians 2:1-10



THANKSGIVING, WHAT A WONDERFUL TIME of the year. Yet it is strange to think that we only have one day of thanksgiving when thanksgiving is the single appropriate disposition of the Christian life. Paul indicates this very clearly as he says that being in Christ we should abound in thanksgiving at all times. We should acknowledge the gift of God in Christ and being found in Him walk in newness of life with thanksgiving. Our lives are full with the fullness of being in Christ. What else can we be but thankful?

Yet the fallen human being always pushes for more. Never satisfied with the work of God in Christ, it is driven into false holinesses and phony pieties of human tradition and empty deceit. How sad it is if these things are substituted for the completion of all things found in Christ. It is this falseness that the sixteenth century reformers sought to correct by restoring the New Testament teaching of justification by grace through faith alone. Only when we recover and understand this can we properly assign the completion of God's work to Christ alone and give Him the glory due Him through the kindness of His Father and ours.

As we approach Thanksgiving may these words be in our hearts and mind: *For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power. (Colossians 2:9-10)* Complete in Him, thank You, Lord. May the blessing of Christ keep us all in daily thanksgiving and bless you and yours in the days to come. ~

He Blots Our Transgressions

Hans Lampinen; Snohomish, Washington
Submitted by Shirley Lampinen; Marysville, Washington

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. (Psalm 51:1)

I SHOULD COUNT HOW OFTEN I use the backspace key when I am composing emails at work. I use that key more than any other. With today's technology we can quickly fix an error. Sometimes those errors are a misspelled word or poor grammar. Other times I find myself using the backspace to erase a sentence typed in anger, or one that has the potential to cause offense even if it's not intended.

When we think back in time, there has always been the need to cover mistakes in writing. Who doesn't remember the product "White-Out"? It was created to fix errors on a typewriter. If we go back even further in history, mistakes would have to be scratched out, perhaps blotted out before the ink could dry, or even the whole page would be thrown away and the writer would start with a new one.

When God wrote His Law on tables of stone, as well as on the hearts of men, He didn't make any mistakes. There wouldn't be a need to blot any of it out. The only thing He needed to do was fulfill the law completely, which we know He did, in His Son Jesus Christ.

It is only humans who need our mistakes erased. Because of God's loving kindness our mistakes or transgressions are blotted out or wiped out. Much like the White Out used in typewriters, the blood of His Son covers us. As it says in Proverbs 10:12, "Love covers all sins." He doesn't throw us away, but we are become new creatures when we realize that our sin debt has been paid through the multitude of His tender mercies, namely Jesus Christ and Him crucified. ~