

# 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 2021

## Thanksgiving

Pastor Jay Weidner  
Laurium, Michigan

*Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.*

**2 Corinthians 2:14**

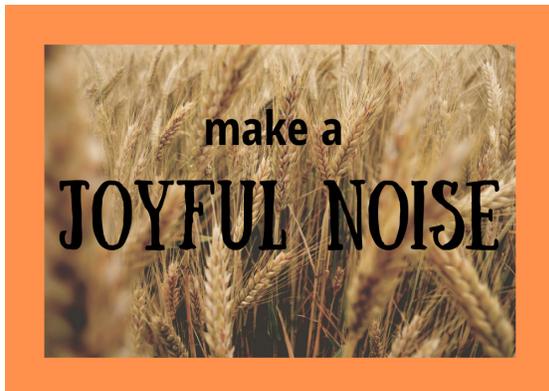
**T**HERE HAVE BEEN SOME PEOPLE I have heard musing on this current year and saying it offers little to be thankful about. Difficulties are not pleasant and often they are hard to press through. Certainly, the current pandemic and its variety of painful circumstances qualify as troubles unique to the experience of most of us. The present time is filled with tribulation no doubt, but it is not unprecedented in that regard. The Apostle Paul went through many such times of trial and offered the words quoted above. Our victory is in Christ and nothing can take that from us. We, of all people, always have much to be thankful for. We are the children of God, robed in righteousness through the finished work of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. We have been brought from death into the kingdom of God's own Son enjoying a new life that continues into eternity. We have indeed been most blessed.

George Washington, the Father of Our Nation, so prayed:

*Almighty God, and most merciful father, who didst command the children of Israel to offer a daily sacrifice to thee, that thereby they might glorify and praise thee for thy protection both night and day, receive, O Lord, my morning sacrifice which I now offer up to thee; I yield thee humble and hearty thanks that thou has preserved me from the danger of the night past, and brought me to the light of the day, and the comforts thereof, a day which is consecrated to thine own service and for thine own honor. Let my heart, therefore, Gracious God, be so affected with the glory and majesty of it, that I may not do mine own works, but wait on thee, and discharge those weighty duties thou requirest of me, and since thou art a God of pure eyes, and wilt be sanctified in all who draw near unto thee, who doest not regard the sacrifice of fools, nor hear sinners who tread in thy courts, pardon, I beseech thee, my sins, remove them from thy presence, as far as the east is from the west, and accept of me for the merits of thy son Jesus Christ, that when I come into thy temple, and compass thine altar, my prayers may come before thee as incense; and as thou wouldst hear me calling upon thee in my prayers, so give me grace to hear thee calling on me in thy word, that it may be wisdom, righteousness, reconciliation and peace to the saving of the soul in the day of the Lord Jesus. Grant that I may hear it with reverence, receive it with meekness, mingle it with faith, and that it may accomplish in me, Gracious God, the good work for which thou has sent it. Bless my family, kindred, friends and country, be our God & guide this day and for ever for his sake, who lay down in the Grave and arose again for us, Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.*

Let us persevere as he did keeping the words of thanksgiving ever in our hearts and in our prayers. A most blessed Thanksgiving to you and yours! We are very thankful to you for your kindness towards us. Thanks be to God!

*God's peace.*



**Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands.  
Serve the Lord with gladness:  
come before his presence with singing.  
Know ye that the Lord he is God:  
it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves;  
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.  
Enter into his gates with thanksgiving,  
and into his courts with praise:  
be thankful unto him, and bless his name.  
For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting;  
and his truth endureth to all generations.**

**Psalm 100**

# Paul's Fight and Victory

Paul Kretzmann

*For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*

2 Timothy 4:6-8

**I**N THIS PARAGRAPH THE APOSTLE gives the reason for making his admonitions to Timothy so comprehensive and explicit. He himself was about to withdraw from the field, and so his successors in the work of the Gospel-ministry should always keep his example in mind: For I am about to be poured out as a drink-offering, and the time of my dissolution is at hand. As in Philippians 2:17, the apostle here uses the term for making a drink-offering to designate his approaching death. He knows that he must soon die, that he must seal the testimony of the truth as preached by him with his blood. And still he speaks of his impending martyrdom with all the quiet confidence in God which knows no fear of death. His dissolution, his departure from this world, is at hand; his soul was destined soon to leave the body which had suffered so much in the interest of the Gospel. Death has not even a remnant of horror for him that trusts in Christ's death and resurrection.

A true believer may rather call out with the apostle: The good fight I have fought, my course I have run, faith have I kept. The great warfare for Christ against sin and unbelief had engaged the apostle ever since his conversion. It was a continual, hard, and fierce battle, but he had persevered to the end, he had not given way one inch, he could claim the honor of the victor. The course, furthermore, which had stretched out before him through the long years, like the track before a runner, he had finished; he had reached the end of his life of faith. No matter whether he had often stumbled by the way, no matter whether he had often been on the brink of losing courage, the Lord had enabled him to endure to the end. He had kept the faith; he had not only been faithful in the work of his ministry, but, through the grace of God, he had held his faith in his Redeemer secure against all attacks, in all persecutions.

With this blessed assurance in his heart the apostle was able to look forward beyond death and grave into the glorious future of eternity: Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord will deliver to me on that day, the righteous Judge, but not only to me, rather to all whose love was firmly placed in His manifestation. The apostle speaks so confidently, so cheerfully, as though he had death behind him and were even now about to receive the reward which had been promised to him. It is a characteristic of every Christian's faith that it trusts absolutely and implicitly in the promises of God, that the believer is altogether sure of his salvation. Of course, if the redemption of a man's soul depended upon his own works and merit, even in the most infinitesimal degree, this joyful confidence would be out of the question. But the true believer places himself altogether into the hands of the heavenly Father, knowing that no enemy can pluck us out of His hand. The prize and reward of grace is the crown of righteousness, the final declaration of righteousness by God, the final imputation of the righteousness of Jesus, by which we are free from all guilt and condemnation. This assurance is given to us before the throne of God, as the wreath was placed upon the head of the victor in the games of the Greeks. Christ, who will Himself be the Judge on the last day, will be acting in His capacity as just Judge in awarding this prize, not to works, but to faith. Since we shall appear before the judgment-throne of God with a firm reliance upon the imputed righteousness of Christ, it will be a merciful and yet a just judgment which will award to us the crown of righteousness. This is by no means a special privilege of the apostle, but, as he assures us, will be the happy experience of all those that have looked forward to the final revelation of the Lord, to His second advent, with the love that grows out of faith. All true Christians long for the redemption of their body, for the coming of their Lord to take them home. The words of the apostle therefore contain an earnest admonition to the believers of all times to be faithful and patient to the end, since the goal toward which they are striving will repay them a thousand fold for all the misery and tribulation of this short earthly life. ~

*Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.*

Psalm 119:9

**W**E KNOW THAT THIS SAYS "young man" but I believe this speaks to all young people, man or woman. And how can we cleanse our way? How can we become purified before God? *By taking heed thereto according to thy word.* God's Word! It is through God's Word that we come to know our sin, and the great sacrifice that Jesus gave through His blood as the only remedy for sin. It is this blood that the Word always points our hearts to for cleaning and forgiveness. The Word also speaks to the redeemed soul to walk righteously and carefully upon the road of life. Do we love the Word? Do we love the statutes of the Lord which show to us how we should go? Have we hidden His Word in our hearts? In verse 11 it says, *Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.* Let us hide it there, and take heed to it, and be obedient to His Word, and sin not, as it says in 1 John 2:1: *My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not...(purposely, willfully).* It is by His strength that we are able to overcome! O precious Word, our guide to Heaven, the lamp unto our feet, and the light unto our path, the bearer of the gospel through the message of the blood, of redemption, the worker of awakening and new birth, the giver of faith, hope, joy, peace, our Saviour, our eternal life!

Paul Coponen; Chassell, Michigan

Submitted by Ralph and Barbara Somero; New Ipswich, New Hampshire

# Amazed by Grace

Pastor Jason Salmi  
Vancouver, Washington

I recently had the privilege of speaking at the ALC Youth Camp in Washington. The theme for this year was *Amazing Grace*. As I told the kids, when I first saw the theme and realized that I'd need to speak on it for four sessions, I was a little bit hesitant. After all, this is such a familiar phrase to all of us that it seemed as if there wouldn't be much to say that hadn't been said before. But then, that's the point, isn't it? Proclaiming God's Word is not about novelty. It's about faithfulness. So we spent those four sessions going over things that we all already know... but of which we need constant reminders. In our four sessions we went through a progressive unveiling of what God has done for us which should leave us all amazed by His grace. Here's a very brief summary:

1) Grace is Needed: The definition of grace is "unmerited favor." Which is to say that God is kind and loving towards us, though we've done nothing to deserve it. More than that, we've done everything to deserve God's just wrath. When Adam and Eve fell into sin, they acted on the temptation to "be like God." (Genesis 3:5) In other words, the creature rebelled against the Creator and wanted to go it alone. And the Bible states that, "sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned." (Romans 5:12) And it also says that, "the wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23)

2) Grace is Promised: From the very instant of the first sin, it was clear that God was not going to deal with His image bearers according to justice, but according to grace. This is demonstrated in the fact that, after they'd sinned, God came looking for Adam and Eve and spoke with them. And even in the pronouncement of what they'd earned for themselves and unleashed on the world, He gave them a promise. A man would be born who would crush the head of the deceiver, though He Himself would suffer harm in the process. (Genesis 3:15) And all through the Old Testament God's grace was

shown as He continued to unveil how this would take place. All who believed in that promise of God's salvation were saved through faith in His promise.

3) Grace is Given: It was not justice, but the Father's pure mercy and grace that sent His Son to take on human flesh. We lack the ability to conceive of just what it is that God came down to be one of us. The Creator took upon Himself the stuff of the creature. He lived up to the perfect standards of the Law, which we never could. And when His time had come, as He was scorned and beaten, He did not revile. As He was crucified He did not destroy those who pierced Him. As He hung on the cross, He could have spoken a word and legions of angels would have come to bring justice upon mankind. But in the greatest display of His immeasurable

grace, He instead prayed for those who'd put Him there, and all of us whose sins held Him there, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34) And when He'd paid the penalty due for the sins of the world He cried out, "It is finished," and He bowed His head and gave up His spirit." (John 19:30) God's grace had been given to the world.

4) Grace is Yours: The message of the Gospel is only good news if it's *for you*. It's possible for someone to think that they are such a sinner, have been so disobedient towards God, that His grace can't possibly include them. After all, they don't deserve it. But then again, no one deserves God's grace. That's why we always point to the definition of grace which is "unmerited favor." Christ delivered us from our sins on the cross at Calvary, and now the grace that was extended to us there is delivered to us in Word and Sacrament. We are saved by believing the very same promise God gave to Adam and Eve. You, yes you, can believe that God's grace is yours! We have all been given a gift of immeasurable and eternal value. We gave God every reason to turn away from us, and instead He loved us so much that He died to redeem us. Dear Saints, may we never cease to be amazed by God's Amazing Grace. ~



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# God Is Our Refuge and Strength

Gwen Wilson  
Ridgefield, Washington

Dear Children,

Hello to you all. God's peace be with you today.

I was trying to think what to write and my mind was so full of thoughts about the time we are living in and just life in general, with duties, schedules, etc., that I of course just turned to the Bible and looked for something to settle my thoughts. I found something for myself and to share with all of you, so let it encourage you. This is *Psalm 46*.

*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.  
Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed,  
and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;  
Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled (be stirred up),  
though the mountains shake  
with the swelling (of the rough waters) thereof. Selah.  
There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God,  
the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.  
God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved:  
God shall help her, and that right early.  
The heathen (those who hold to no religion) raged,  
the kingdoms were moved (fell to ruin):  
he uttered his voice, the earth melted.*

**The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.**

*Come, behold the works of the Lord,  
what desolations he hath made in the earth.  
He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth;  
he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder;  
he burneth the chariot in the fire.  
Be still, and know that I am God:  
I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.*

**The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.**



Yes, our God is with us even in these troubled, stirred-up times and He has promised to always be with us. It's so easy to look around and be fearful or uncertain, but God wants us to continually look to Him for our strength. He is able to fight the enemy, calm the waters, and speak quietness into our hearts and minds. He goes before us each and every day, leading and helping us to conquer every foe.

I do pray you all have a good day. Keep praying to God for all your needs and for the needs of others, and give Him thanks. *Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen. (1 Peter 5:14)*

God's peace.



## From CM for Children, Fall 2011:

Have you ever had someone angry with you because you did the right thing? Daniel was a wise and honest man, and the king planned to set Daniel over all the kingdom. The men who worked with Daniel were angry that the king preferred Daniel over them.

The same thing can happen to us. Suppose you see a classmate cheat on a test, or he asks to copy your homework. If you don't let him cheat, he will be angry and may say bad things about you. But if you let him cheat, you are not honest and trustworthy yourself. It can be very difficult to stand up to a classmate or friend who isn't being honest. He may call you names or try to bully you.

It's not easy to do the right thing! Please talk to your parents. You may be afraid to talk about it, especially if you let someone cheat and only realized afterward that you shouldn't have. You may feel that you're tattling if you go to an adult.

Remember that your parents will be happy that you are honest and trustworthy, even if you make a mistake or fall into temptation. You will become known as an honest person, and you will be trusted with great things, as the king trusted Daniel with great things.

***A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold. Proverbs 22:1***

# A Season of Thanksgiving

Pastor Dennis Hannu  
Wolf Lake, Minnesota

**E**VERY NOVEMBER ON THE FOURTH Thursday we gather as families and eat a big dinner which typically consists of turkey, potatoes, squash, and many other dishes. We eat until we can hardly move and talk about what we are thankful for as we reflect on another year. It is a good time and usually filled with many laughs and maybe even a few stomach aches. It is a day set aside to thank our God for His abundant provisions which He has blessed us with. We are thankful for this opportunity to gather with loved ones and to give thanks. Giving of thanks is a way of life for a follower of Christ, as Paul says in *Colossians 2:6-7: 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.* And in *Philippians 4:6: Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.* It is also written in *Psalms 50:14-15: Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High: And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.* We are called to be people who give thanks, to acknowledge where our blessings come from.

As we enjoy this day let us not cease to be thankful when this day is over or when the leftovers are gone. For even when the turkey is gone and the last pie has been eaten we can be assured that we will always be full when we are in Christ Jesus. We thank God for our natural food, but how much more for the spiritual food that He provides, the food which endures or lasts unto eternal life. The food which we enjoy at our thanksgiving dinners lasts but a short time, but the food that Jesus gives lasts forever, and for this we are eternally thankful. My prayer is that during this thanksgiving holiday and all the preparing, planning and traveling that goes with it, that the message of the bread or food come down from heaven would be first and foremost in our minds for it is Jesus who gives us our life and He gives it in abundance. One day we will have a thanksgiving feast that will be greater than anything we can even imagine with all of the redeemed, those who washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. God, our Heavenly Father will be there, Jesus the Lamb will be there. He will feed us and lead us unto living fountains of water. The feast will be ongoing and we will never hunger or thirst again. We, Christians, of all people have much to be thankful for, so let us thank Him for this year and its many blessings. May God be praised and thanked during this thanksgiving season for His marvelous gift of salvation.

The church year is also winding down and we are approaching the Advent season and the beginning of a new church year. Then Christmas comes with its joyous message and its more family time and gatherings. Truly this is a season of thanksgiving. During Advent we commemorate the first coming of our Savior and look forward to His second coming. Sometimes we may think that His return is a fearful thing and we read passages in Scripture that may cause us to

fear. But the message of the Advent season is a message of not only joy and expectation, but also of thanksgiving because the first coming of our Lord sets the stage for His second coming. Jesus came to this earth in a humble way. He came as a baby and was cradled in the arms of His mother. When He comes again, He will be a reigning king who will then cradle those, who love His appearing, in His love for eternity. In His first coming, Jesus established the way of salvation by laying His life down for the sins of the world. 2 *Timothy 1:9-10: Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*

Because of the first coming of our Lord, we now are prepared for His second coming. When we have heard the Gospel preached and received it by faith, we can believe that our sin debt has been paid and we have received the righteousness of Jesus which assures us of salvation because

***Even when the turkey is gone and the last pie has been eaten we can be assured that we will always be full when we are in Christ Jesus.***



of His work on the cross and His glorious resurrection. Now we can look forward to His coming with joy and thanksgiving. With joy because we know what awaits us, eternal bliss, and with thanksgiving because even though we don't deserve to be received by Him yet He receives us anyway. *Titus 2:11-13: For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*

May this Advent season bring joy and thankfulness to us this year as we look forward with anticipation to His coming. Let us remember the events of His first coming, the life and ministry of Jesus on this earth and His sacrifice for us. Let us look forward to His second coming with full confidence that He will never leave us or forsake us and knowing already today we reign with Him. We have a blessed hope, a hope that is eternal.

Christmas is also a time of the year to be thankful. It is during this season that we again celebrate Christ's birth. It is a time of wonder for us as we recall the miraculous virgin birth of our Savior. *Isaiah 7:14: Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.* *Isaiah 9:6-7: 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.

Because of Christmas and its message we can be thankful year round. The angelic choir announced the birth of the Savior of the world to shepherds watching over their flocks that glorious night. Those shepherds heard the news that would change the world, the news that still is the only news that will save a person and give unto them eternal life. This message brings with it glad tidings of great joy that a Savior has been born, and He has saved you from your sins and has

brought peace on earth. A peace that the world cannot give you and you cannot find apart from the Christ child.

Christmas is a time of gathering together with our families and exchanging gifts and watching with joy as our children marvel and exclaim over their presents. It is a time when we marvel at the greatest gift ever given, the Christ child who brought salvation to the world so that all who believe on Him may not perish but have everlasting life. So let us be thankful, thankful for all that we have here on this earth, but even more thankful for what has been gifted to us eternally. ~

## On Thanksgiving

Martin Luther

**I** HOLD AND BELIEVE THAT I am God's creature, that is, that he has given me and constantly sustains my body, soul, and life, my members great and small, all my senses, my reason and understanding, and the like; my food and drink, clothing, nourishment, spouse and children, servants, house and farm, etc. Besides, he makes all creation help provide the benefits and necessities of life—sun, moon, and stars in the heavens; day and night; air, fire, water, the earth and all that it yields and brings forth; birds, fish, animals, grain, and all sorts of produce. Moreover, he gives all physical and temporal blessings—good government, peace, security. Thus we learn from this article that none of us has life—or anything else that has been mentioned here or can be mentioned—from ourselves, nor can we by ourselves preserve any of them, however small and unimportant. All this is comprehended in the word — Creator.

Moreover, we also confess that God the Father has given us not only all that we have and what we see before our eyes, but also that he daily guards and defends us against every evil and misfortune, warding off all sorts of danger and disaster. All this he does out of pure love and goodness, without our merit, as a kind father who cares for us so that no evil may befall us.

Hence, because everything we possess, and everything in heaven and on earth besides, is daily given, sustained, and protected by God, it inevitably follows that we are in duty bound to love, praise, and thank him without ceasing, and, in short, to devote all these things to his service, as he has required and enjoined in the Ten Commandments.

Here much could be said if we were to describe how few people believe this article. We all pass over it; we hear it and recite it, but we neither see nor think about what the words command us to do. For if we believed it with our whole heart, we would also act accordingly, and not swagger about and boast and brag as if we had life, riches, power, honor, and such things of ourselves, as if we ourselves were to be feared and served. This is the way the wretched, perverse world acts, drowned in its blindness, misusing all the blessings and gifts of God solely for its own pride, greed, pleasure, and enjoyment, and never once turning to God to thank him or acknowledge him as Lord or Creator.

Therefore, if we believe it, this article should humble and terrify all of us. For we sin daily with eyes, ears, hands, body and soul, money and property, and with all that we have, especially those who even fight against the Word of God. Yet Christians have this advantage, that they acknowledge that they owe it to God to serve and obey him for all these things.

For this reason we ought daily to practice this article, impress it upon our minds, and remember it in everything we see and in every blessing that comes our way. Whenever we escape distress or danger, we should recognize how God gives and does all of this so that we may sense and see in them his fatherly heart and his boundless love toward us. Thus our hearts will be warmed and kindled with gratitude to God and a desire to use all these blessings to his glory and praise.

**Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.**

**Revelation 4:11**

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Anders Sundqvist, Business Manager

# Finishing Strong

Lois Matson  
Yacolt, Washington

*I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*

2 Timothy 4:1-8

**Y**OU KNOW WHEN A RUNNER IS reaching the end of a race, and they are encouraged and cheered to “finish strong”? To keep running, to persevere, to never give up? What does that mean in a Christian’s life? Is Paul finishing, through grit and determination, the race set before him? No, he’s not!

The Apostle Paul gives instruction and guidance to his son in the faith, Timothy. Paul knew that his day of departure was at hand, and that he wouldn’t be there to encourage Timothy in his walk.

This is a pastoral letter, so the message is primarily for pastors, but we can all learn something about enduring to the end. First, there is the command to preach the Word, at all times and in all places. While pastors have a specific call to preach, we can witness to our friends and neighbors. All people everywhere need to hear the Law in its sternness and the Gospel in its sweetness.

Next is reproof. Prove again. And again. Witness the crucified and risen Lord, over and over, from the Scriptures that testify of Him. He is our only hope in this life and for the life to come.

Rebuking is hard, in this day of political correctness and there-is-no-truth. Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and no one comes to the Father except through Him. God the Father’s demand is perfection, and we can never attain that perfection without the blood of Jesus, His only Son, applied to our account. When the rebuke is heard, exhort and comfort the penitent sinners who long for the sweetness of the Gospel. Pour the life-giving and life-changing Word into their ears. Teach patiently the way of Truth.

Lord, protect us from itching ears and from turning our ears away from the truth. Lord, keep us steadfast in Your Word. Martin Luther wrote a beautiful hymn praying for that very thing:

*Lord, keep us steadfast in Thy Word;  
Curb those who fain by craft or sword  
Would wrest the kingdom from Thy Son  
And set at naught all He hath done.  
Lord Jesus Christ, Thy pow’r make known,  
For Thou art Lord of lords alone;  
Defend Thy Christendom, that we  
May evermore sing praise to Thee.  
O Comforter of priceless worth,  
Send peace and unity on earth;  
Support us in our final strife,  
And lead us out of death to life.*

Paul was ready to be offered. He had fought a good fight, he had finished his course. How did Paul accomplish those things? Was he fighting in his own strength, or running of his own merit? Not at all! The blessed Apostle knew he had no strength of his own to finish the course. Paul had kept the faith, not because of his own faithfulness, but because of the Word of God, which continually brought faith to his heart.

Paul had previously written to Timothy: *Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.* (1 Timothy 6:12) Again, this fight of faith is waged by the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17).

“Finishing strong” is not about grit and determination, and persevering to the end on our own strength, but finishing strong is about remaining in the God-given faith that comes by hearing the Word of God. Faith comes by hearing, remember? We need the life-giving and life-changing Word for sustaining faith as believers, and not only for conversion.

Thanks be to God for His Word, brought to us through the mouths of faithful pastors and preachers, brought to us on the pages of The Book, even brought to us through electronic formats.

***Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*** There is a crown laid up for Paul, and Timothy, and you, and me, and all those who love His glorious appearing. Thanks be to God! ~

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## Wait on the Lord

Pastor Ray Stenersen  
Kennewick, Washington

**I** RECENTLY CAME ACROSS THE following inspirational quote that is such a fitting reminder during this difficult time: “When you are going through difficulty and wonder where God is, remember that the teacher is always quiet during the test.” We pour out our prayers to God and expect an answer, immediately. When He does not answer, we grow discouraged and frustrated. We forget that the Bible is filled with believers, who waited without giving up, in spite of their struggles and problems, such as Job, Abraham, Moses and so on. They clung to their faith even when it seemed pointless and useless.

Christianity is nothing without patience, and learning to wait, even when it seems like God doesn’t find our situation dire enough to change. Waiting on the Lord is an important part of our journey. We will be encouraged as we hold on to the following Bible verses, as we wait, patiently, or impatiently during this time of testing.

*2 Peter 3:9: The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

*Isaiah 30:18: And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the Lord is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him.*

*Romans 12:12: Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer...*

*Psalm 27:14: Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.*

Praying that you are all healthy and well as we continue to WAIT on the Lord.

God's peace!

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### Psalm 27—A Psalm of David.

*The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?  
the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?*

*When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.*

*Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear:  
though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.*

*One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after;  
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,  
to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple.*

*For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion:  
in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.*

*And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me:  
therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy;*

*I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord.*

*Hear, O Lord, when I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me.*

*When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.*

*Hide not thy face far from me;*

*put not thy servant away in anger:*

*thou hast been my help; leave me not,*

*neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.*

*When my father and my mother forsake me,*

*then the Lord will take me up.*

*Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.*

*Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies:*

*for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.*

*I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.*

*Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.*