

# Christian MONTHLY

DEDICATED TO THE  
PROCLAMATION OF THE  
WORD OF GOD



Psalm 119:105  
Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,  
and a light unto my path.

JULY 2011

## Serving God and Country

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

Romans 13:1

**A**ppropriately, patriotism has increased since the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks. This being so, it indicates a greater appreciation and love for our country, its freedoms, and its blessings to all citizens. We commemorate Flag Day and Independence Day, in which we rejoice in our liberty and freedoms.

It is important, then, for us to remember our personal responsibilities and the Christian teachings of our duties as citizens serving our nation.

The first component of citizenship is: *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. (1 Peter 2:13-14)* And the apostle Paul writes in the letter to the Romans: *For he (the leader or ruler) is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do*



*that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. (Romans 13:4-7)*

Sometimes, as Americans, we take our liberty and freedom for granted and expect that it will always be so. We pray that it will, though when we recall that we do have enemies, both within our borders and without, it behooves us to pray for our country and its leaders. Also, as President John F. Kennedy said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." This reminds us of the words of the above Bible passages in Romans and in 1 Peter.

As our love for God, as Christians, motivates us to do His will, may it also continue to direct our lives in obedience to His Word in such a way that we may rightly serve our nation. We are reminded of the warning and blessings which God has recorded in *2 Chronicles 7:13-14*: *If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.* May we thus be reminded to thank God for His blessings as we seek His grace upon us, that we may continue to enjoy and rejoice over peace in our land for truly this is a great blessing of God! GOD BLESS AMERICA!

*Enjoying the privilege of being an American and a citizen of  
the heavenly kingdom,  
In His peace and love,  
Pastor Rod Johnson  
Laurium, Michigan*

It is impossible for that man to despair who remembers  
that his Helper is **omnipotent**.

*Jeremy Taylor*

## PRECIOUS PROMISES

**A**s you recall from the book of Esther, evil Haman—out of selfishness, pride and arrogance—seduced King Ahasuerus into issuing a decree to destroy all Jewish people. However, God used King Ahasuerus, Queen Esther and Mordecai (Esther's uncle) to reverse all that Haman had done.

One night when King Ahasuerus was troubled and could not sleep, he had the royal records read and discovered that Mordecai had exposed a plot to murder him. Therefore, the king wanted to honor Mordecai and he had Haman parade Mordecai through the streets wearing the king's royal purple apparel and had him ride on the king's horse. Haman was so humiliated by this he covered his head and returned home. When Haman told his wife and friend what had happened, they made a prophecy. *And Haman told Zeresh his wife and all his friends every thing that had befallen him. Then said his wise men and Zeresh his wife unto him, If Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him. (Esther 6:13)*

In the book of Esther, Haman is a spiritual picture of our enemies: the devil, the world and our own flesh. We can be sure that these enemies are still unable to prevail against those who are the seed (offspring or descendants) of the Jews.

**Is this promise for us?  
Are we of Jewish descent?**

Is this promise for us? Are we of Jewish descent? You may say, "I'm certainly not a Jew, since I wasn't born in Israel and I don't have Jewish parents." However, Apostle Paul declares that when we acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord, we are indeed Jews. *For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God. (Romans 2:28-29)* He also declares that we are the seed of Abraham (father of the Jews). *And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:29)*

Why is it important to be the spiritual offspring of the Jews—or Abraham's seed? Because a promise was given to Abraham by God: *That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.* (Genesis 22:17-18) Since we are spiritual descendants of Abraham, we have the privilege to be heirs to the very same promise and blessings given to him.

Paul also explains it another way by using a natural picture: *And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree...* (Romans 11:17) We that were like a wild olive branch (Gentiles—not Jews) have been grafted into the root (Jesus Christ); that is, we have been joined to Christ and He provides and gives everything to the branches.

In the end, Haman met the same fate the devil will meet: destruction. Haman was hung on the very gallows where he personally planned to have Mordecai hung. The devil attempts to entice us by offering us his own promises (twisting God's promises). However the devil is subdued and will ultimately be destroyed (judged) by the very same Word that he twists.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, we still have this prophecy and promise 2500 years after it was recorded. Let us continue on in faith, firmly believing in this promise: evil cannot prevail against God's chosen people. Then with all boldness we can declare: we are bound for the Promised Land.

*With Grace, Mercy and Peace,  
Pastor Burt Farley  
Portland, Oregon*

**What does love look like?** It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has the eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men. That is what love looks like.

*St. Augustine*

## CORNELIUS

**I**n 1524, Erasmus of Rotterdam wrote a book refuting Luther's stance on the will of man called *The Freedom of the Will*. In the book, Erasmus contended that Cornelius the centurion did good works without the Holy Spirit which pleased God and prepared him for grace (Acts 10:4). Luther answered Erasmus the following year with his famous *On the Bondage of the Will*. Luther countered:

I, too, have read Luke on the Acts, but I have never found a single syllable to suggest that Cornelius' works were morally good without the Holy Spirit, as [Erasmus] dreams. On the contrary, I find that he was "an upright and God-fearing man"—for that is what Luke calls him (Acts 10:22). But to call a man without the Holy Spirit "upright and God-fearing" is the same as calling Belial "Christ."

Moreover, the whole argument there turns on the fact that Cornelius was clean in God's sight, as is shown by the vision sent from heaven with its rebuke to Peter; and it is obvious from the importance of what is said and done that Luke is making a special point of the uprightness and faith of Cornelius. Nevertheless [Erasmus and his] sophists are blind to all this, and though their eyes are opened and the words could not be clearer nor the facts more evident, they see just the opposite; so careless are they in their reading and marking of Holy Writ, which they then have to brand as obscure or ambiguous. Granted he was not yet baptized and had not yet heard the word concerning the risen Christ, does it follow from this that he was without the Holy Spirit? In that case, you will have to say that John the Baptist and his parents, and even Christ's mother and Simeon, were without the Holy Spirit. But let us take our leave from such deep gloom.

### **De Servo Arbitrio**

**"On the Enslaved Will"**

**or**

**"On the Bondage of the Will"**

Luther says further concerning the condition of Cornelius in his *Lectures on Galatians*:

Cornelius was a just and holy man in the Old Testament, because of his faith in Christ which was to come, as all the fathers, prophets and godly kings in the Old Testament were righteous, having received secretly the Holy Ghost through faith in Christ to come. But the popish sophisters put no difference between faith in Christ to come, and in Christ which is already come. Wherefore if Cornelius had died before Christ was revealed, yet had he not been damned, because he had the faith of the fathers, which were saved by faith only in Christ to come (Acts 15:11).

Luther concludes his explanation on faith in a coming Christ:

For seeing that Christ is now revealed, we cannot be saved by faith in Christ to come, but we must believe that He is already come, has fulfilled all things, and abolished the law [in justification]. Therefore necessary it was also that Cornelius should be brought to another belief, not that Christ was yet to come, as he believed before; but that he was already come. So faith gives place to faith: "from faith to faith" (Romans 1:17).

*Ted Matson  
Yacolt, Washington*

**I**t is so common in our human thought to think in this way: when we do well God is pleased; when we do badly God is angry. That is so close to our thinking, as if somehow the grace of God would depend on our actions. Scripture doesn't teach that. God is gracious in His Son, through Christ Jesus. It is His nature. He is inclined to be gracious through His Son; otherwise, He is not. We have a Mediator between God and man: Christ Jesus. All of our transactions as people are handled and are dealt with through Christ Jesus. Every matter of our heart, every transaction between God and man, is handled through Christ Jesus.

*Pastor Reino Maunu  
Watertown, South Dakota*

# TIME FOR GOD

And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake.

Luke 21:17—Please read Luke 21.

**W**hen you read the Old Testament prophets and the psalms, some words bring about questions. There are words that do not seem to fit with the things being said. For example, we are reading a psalm about peace, safety and comfort and then the psalmist talks about how their enemies are closing in on them from behind and before. How often do we see the prophets speak in terms of destruction and despair? I believe they were both writing and speaking because their faith was in God and not in this world. Their words may seem out of place at times but the people were reliant on God. As we read through the Word, we find that the Word reveals how foreign the thoughts and intentions of God are in this world.

With that in mind, we, who are called by God, are strangers here in this world. The people who put their faith in the things of this world are left meandering around looking for purpose in themselves and others rather than in God. When God is brought up, anger ensues and lashing out comes at the speakers of truth. Thus, we see the brutal treatment of the prophets and ultimately of the truth itself, Jesus. This life will not be easy and we need to stop trying to accomplish things alone; God is calling us to Himself. We hear Him and we know He speaks to us through the Word, yet we move forward and disobey. We go everywhere else and neglect to stop and plead on behalf of others as the psalmist did amidst certain death. Do we believe the Lord is truly with us or do we just say that He is so people will think we are Christians?

The words written above in the Gospel of Luke are words spoken by Jesus to His disciples to prepare them for the things to come. Do we truly recognize that WE ARE His disciples? He calls us unto Himself and promises that He will give us the words to say when needed and that He will deliver us. Yet, we walk away time after time because we think we know better. Understand this: Jesus said, "People will hate you because of Me!" Jesus said these words to warn us all of the fear and rejection of His name by many. When truth is placed in any

form other than in God, it is a lie. We could argue the semantics of this but truth is from the Lord and we learn this truth by reading the Word.

Jesus goes on to say that many things will happen in the last days but not a hair on your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your lives. The destruction of Jerusalem was near and when that happened many people probably thought it was the end of the world. Wars have come and gone that made it look like hell on earth, yet we continue on. We cannot become complacent and act like Christ's return is not going to happen soon. If we believe this, then we will find that we are only relying on ourselves and the world, and not on God. This is the subtle nature of sin: self-reliance. The prophets of old and the psalmist found themselves in trials. What did they do? They cried out to the only one who would listen: God.

When we live in truth, the Lord will live in and through us and many will not understand. I am not saying that we should separate ourselves from the world but rather we should unite with the world as Christ did in love and service toward others. How often do we cry out to God for others? How often do we stop and just call out to God regardless of the situation? Jesus said, "Many will hate you on account of My name." This is not said to scare us but, rather, to show us that this world is not our home. We can't begin to understand the trials of the Old Testament prophets. We also cannot begin to understand what happened to Jesus and His disciples, but we can cry out to Him for guidance daily, for when we stop calling out to God, we will be living in times far more difficult than the days of the Bible.

I pray that this is a time for God to call His people to Him anew and I pray that, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the Word, we will hear Him.

*May the Lord richly bless you,  
Pastor Charles Bergstedt  
Plymouth, Minnesota*



**Prayer** is a shield to the soul,  
a sacrifice to God, and a scourge for Satan.

*John Bunyan*

## KEEPING THE FAITH

Watch ye, stand fast in the faith,  
quit you like men, be strong. Let all  
your things be done with charity.

1 Corinthians 16:13-14



**C**losing remarks of a letter or message sometimes can be overlooked. We have heard the contents of this letter and have taken note of them. We try to conform or use the information to better ourselves, and this is good. But Paul here would not leave to us just a list of marching orders. He knows how important it is that everything he has written in the letter must be shored up with a foundation that will stand in the testing of the future. He gives us five imperatives. They are given to protect us from falling away from the faith. I have used some thoughts from RCC Lenski, from his commentary on this passage of Scripture.

Paul would have us be watchful. We must keep our eyes open and be on guard so that we would not be surprised by the things that would erode our faith.

We are to stand fast in "the faith," not like a dead post driven into the ground but like a tree that has roots and lives.

We are to act like men. This attribute of men is used for all of us. Men, women and children are to live this way. We can take our place in the family of God with the assurance of one who would not give the enemy any quarter to destroy our faith.

Be strong; show strength! We are not helpless in this faith. We are offered all that we need for the walk of faith. Our bodies need food and water to be able to continue doing our tasks. So, too, have we been given the nourishment for our faith.

Keeping "the faith" requires watchfulness, firmness, manliness, and strength. But it also requires love. This fruit always comes after faith. Never separated, but always following faith, is love. Faith produces love; not the opposite.

God bless us and give us these attributes to keep us walking in faith. This faith has an object, and it is Christ Jesus Himself.

*Pastor Ron Holmgren  
Hockinson, Washington*

## Dear Children,

Hello to each of you. I do hope you are well. I began by saying "Dear Children," and you are dear children to your Father in heaven. I will share a story from the Bible, found in *Joshua 10:6-14, 42, and 43*.

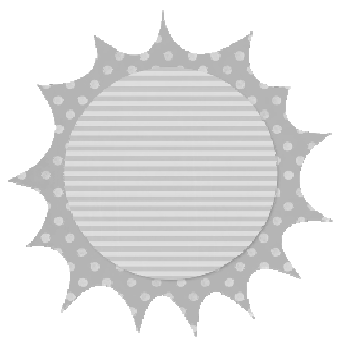
### THE SUN AND THE MOON STAND STILL

**J**oshua was the judge of Israel and he and his army had been fighting many battles. They were now camped in Gilgal, near the city of Gibeon, which had made friends with Joshua and the host of Israel. The last battle they had fought was against a very great city. When the king of Jerusalem heard how Joshua had destroyed that city, he was afraid and set to fight against him. This king gathered four other kings beside himself, along with their men of war, and went up and camped near the city of Gibeon to fight against it. These kings did not like that the Gibeonites had made friends with Joshua. The men of Gibeon heard that these five kings of the Amorites were ready to go to battle against them and they called on Joshua to help them.

Joshua did not wait. He gathered all of his men of war and went to the people of Gibeon. God spoke to Joshua and said, *Fear them not: for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee. (verse 8)*

Joshua and his men fought all night and with the help from the Lord they killed many of the kings' armies that day in Gibeon. Joshua's army chased the other kings' armies and along the way the Lord made hailstones fall heaven and many died. *...they were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword. (verse 11)*

**T**he battle was not over and the Lord said not a man of the kings' armies would be left standing, but Joshua felt the need to ask God for help. *Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he (Joshua) said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves (were satisfied with their battle) upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book*



*of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. (verses 12-13)*

Joshua asked God to keep the sun and the moon in the sky all day so they would have light to see for fighting. God heard Joshua and did just that.

Could you imagine what it would be like to have the sun and moon stay in one

place all day? God is most powerful and these things are easy for Him to do. He was there to help Joshua; He saw that Joshua trusted in Him and it pleased Him to help. God did not need Joshua's help to win this battle, but Joshua needed God's help.

The 14<sup>th</sup> verse says there never was a day like this one, not one before and not one after, where God listened to the voice of man and fought for His people, Israel.

*And all these kings and their land did Joshua take at one time, because the LORD God of Israel fought for Israel. And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal. (verses 42-43)*



So Joshua and his men were victorious and overthrew the Amorites, but it really was the Lord's victory.

**W**hen we walk as Christians on this earth, it is as though we are always in a battle against the enemy, the devil, and when we need to tell him to get away from us, we can call on God and He will give us the strength to be victorious, too.

Remember, children, that God does not need your help to overcome the evil one, but we always need His help. Pray to God when you don't feel strong and or when you feel the devil telling you to do something you should not do, and God will help you. God always hears your prayers and has promised not to leave you. God loves you—don't ever forget that.

*God's peace,  
Gwen Wilson*

**Faith never knows** where it is being led, but it loves and knows the One who is leading.

*Oswald Chambers*

## SIGNS OF THE LAST TIMES

God's Word gives many precious instructions for His children who live in this evil world, especially during the end times. Jesus, our Lord and Savior, explains how it will be in the last times: *For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. (Matthew 24:21-25)* Earlier Jesus said: *And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. (Matthew 24:11-14)*

When Apostle Paul was on his way to Jerusalem for the last time, he called the elders of the church of Ephesus and spoke these serious words to them: *For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. (Acts 20:27-31)*

Here, Apostle Paul manifests a sign of a true servant of the Lord when he, in love and by the enlightenment of the Spirit, was constrained to warn the elders in Ephesus. These warnings are also part of the Gospel message. It is written: *For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ. (2*

*Corinthians 2:17*) A false prophet will not warn the people, but will rather minimize the Word of God.

The question for us today is: how can a believer know these false teachers which arise to deceive the children of God? Apostle Paul gives this instruction: *And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you. (1 Thessalonians 5:12)* "To know them which labor among you" means to know their understanding of God's Word, especially important doctrines, such as the way of salvation regarding how a person is born again. Before Jesus ascended to heaven He spoke to His disciples: *...Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. (Luke 24:46-48)*

## **Beware of false prophets...**

There are many today who speak of repentance and have precious exhortations about how a person should live in this life, which are important

to take heed of from the Word of God; but there are few who preach the remission of sins as taught by Christ. John, the Apostle of Love, gives a serious exhortation concerning this matter: *If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds. (2 John 1:10-11)* Therefore, before we support and promote anyone in their preaching, teaching, or writing, let us get to know them in their doctrine and life.

Jesus also gives this warning about false prophets: *Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. (Matthew 7:15-20)*

One of the many signs of a child of God is that a person desires to love and uphold all of the teachings of God's Word, especially the doctrine of how a person can be saved, which is so important to understand. While we must always uphold the truths of God's Word, we must also remember that we do not have the authority to judge the condition of any person's soul. God has kept that responsibility for Himself.

When we see these difficult times approaching, it is important for us, as children of God, to believe and take comfort from the Word of the Lord: *Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me. (Isaiah 49:15-16)* Jesus said: *...and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. (Matthew 28:20)* Notice the words "continually" and "alway" and be strengthened by His promises.

Pray for those who labor in God's kingdom that they would be faithful to God's undying Word, minister to His glory for the salvation of souls and, in the end, receive the crown of life.

*God's peace,  
Pastor Arne Nordahl  
Vancouver, Washington*

The forgiveness of sin is of two kinds: The first is to drive sin from the heart and infuse grace into it; this is the work of God alone. The second kind is the declaration of the forgiveness of sin; this man can do to his fellowman. But here Christ does both. He instills the Spirit into the heart and externally He declares forgiveness with the Word, which is a declaration and public preaching of the internal forgiveness.

[The Pope, Anabaptists and errorists] have lost the Word; beware of them, and be assured that forgiveness of sins is not to be found except in the Word. Again, this Word is in Baptism, in the Supper, in Absolution, and in the preaching of the Gospel, and therefore they contain forgiveness of sins no matter man may say. Wherever the Word is, there faith will follow.

*Martin Luther*

## FAREWELL OF THE SOUL TO THE BODY

"Companion dear, the hour draws nigh; The sentence speeds—to die, to die.  
So long in mystic union held, So close with strong embrace compelled,  
How can you bear the dread decree, That strikes your clasping nerves from me?

"To Him Who on this mortal shore The same encircling vestment wore.  
To Him I look, to Him I bend, To Him your shuddering frame commend.

"If I have ever caused you pain, The throbbing brow, the burning brain,  
With cares and vigils turned you pale, Or scorned you when your strength did fail,  
Forgive! Forgive! your task doth cease, Friend, lover, let us part in peace.

"If you did sometimes check my force, Or trifling stay my upward course,  
Or lure from heaven my wavering trust, Or bow my drooping wing to dust,  
I blame you not, the strife is done; I knew you were the weaker one,  
The vase of earth, the trembling clod, Constrained to hold the breath of God.

"Well have you in my service wrought, Your brow has mirrored forth my thought;  
To wear my smile your lip has glowed, Your tear to speak my sorrows flowed.  
Your ear hath borne me rich supplies Of sweetly varied melodies;  
Your hands my prompted deeds have done; Your feet upon my errands run.  
Yes, you have marked my biddings well; Faithful and true! Farewell! Farewell!

"Go to your rest. A quiet bed Meek earth and sod with flowers shall spread,  
Where I no more your sleep shall break, With fevered dream, or rudely wake  
Your wearied eye. O quit your hold! For you are faint and chill and cold,  
And long your grasp and groan of pain Have bound me in your pitying chain,  
Though angels urge me there to soar, Where I shall share your ills no more.

"Yet we shall meet. To sooth your pain, Remember, we shall meet again.  
Quell with this hope the victor's sting, And wear it as your signet ring.  
When the dire worm shall pierce your breast And naught but ashes mark your rest,  
When stars shall fall and skies grow dark, And proud suns quench their glowing spark,  
Keep you that hope, to light your gloom, Till the last trumpet rends the tomb.  
Then shall you glorious rise, and fair, Nor spot, nor stain, nor wrinkle bear,

And I, with hovering wing elate, The bursting of your bonds shall wait,  
And breathe the welcome of the sky—No more to part, no more to die,  
Co-heirs of Immortality."

*Mrs. Sigourney, Adapted*

I found this poem in an old book about 50 years ago. I was working in a shop in Detroit, Michigan, and taking a few college classes at Wayne University. This poem has meant a lot to me over the years.

I often think of the words from the song, "Sweet Hour of Prayer." *This robe of flesh I'll drop and rise To seize the everlasting prize; And shout, while passing through the air, "Farewell, farewell, sweet hour of prayer."* (William Walford) This song meant a lot when I was in North Korea in 1953-54. Faith is an experience with each new day.

*In His Amazing Grace,  
Rev. Elmer R. Liimatta, Chaplain  
Chassell, Michigan*

## **WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?**

### **LUKE 10:29**

What is meant by our neighbor we cannot doubt; it is every one with whom we are brought into contact. First of all, he is literally our neighbor who is next to us in our own family and household; husband to wife, wife to husband, parent to child, brother to sister, master to servant, servant to master. Then it is he who is close to us in our own neighborhood, in our own town, in our own parish, in our own street. With these all true charity begins. To love and be kind to these is the very beginning of all true religion. But, beside these, as our Lord teaches, it is every one who is thrown across our path by the changes and chances of life; he or she, whosoever it be, whom we have any means of helping—the unfortunate stranger whom we may meet in traveling, the deserted friend whom no one else cares to look after.

*A.P. Stanley*

# A PUZZLE PIECE



Have you ever noticed the oddness of a single piece of a jigsaw puzzle? It has no basic shape, pieces are cut out around it, and there are weird balloon-like protrusions jutting out from its sides. Imagine stumbling upon one of these pieces and not knowing that it's a piece to a puzzle. You would discard it, believing it to be worthless. But it's not worthless; to the one who created the puzzle piece, it's beautiful. All the weird angles and funny protrusions are part of its creator's perfect design to connect it with other pieces and reveal a bigger picture. You can only understand the identity and purpose of a puzzle piece when you understand what it was created for.

How many hours do you spend trying to figure out your identity? How many books do you read trying to understand who you are and what your purpose is? And even after all that time, you still feel like a single piece of a jigsaw puzzle, strange and unusual, worried that you'll be discarded and seen as worthless. Maybe you need to see yourself as your Creator sees you. Maybe, like a single puzzle piece, you will only truly understand your identity and purpose when you understand where you fit into His bigger picture. *Psalm 139:13-14: For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.* What a beautiful description of your creation! Before you were even born God fearfully and wonderfully put you together. What you look like, the way you think, how you relate to other people, and every other characteristic were carefully and purposefully set into place. You were perfectly designed by the Creator of the universe!

Paul writes, *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:10)* Not only are you perfectly designed but you were made that way for a specific purpose—to do good work. To go into all the world sharing the same love that Jesus shared with us throughout His life, death, and resurrection. In other words, every single thing that makes you who you are, no matter how odd and strange, are all part of your Creator's perfect design to connect with others and reveal the bigger picture of God's kingdom and glory.

*Author Unknown*

## From the Mouth of Babes

Jackson: "Mom, you know that song about the power of the cross? I don't think the cross had any power. It was just made of wood and wood is NOT powerful. They should change the words to say the power of JESUS. He is powerful, because He died on that cross and then came back to life." I love the way his mind is always analyzing things. He gets the best discussions going in our home.

*Brooke Salmi*

*Vancouver, Washington*

I drove through a major rain storm. I was driving 40 on the freeway and could not see in front of me. When we got through it, Kaysha heaved a big sigh of relief and said, "Mom, when we were driving I was just praying that God would slow down the rain so we could be safe, and He made it come true!" I love that she thought to pray on her own and was so amazed God listened.

*Diana Benjamson*

*Woodland, Washington*

I was sad this morning and little Richelle must have been able to tell. She brought me her dolly and told me, "It's okay, Mommy! Jesus will come back!" She sure put my perspective right and reminded me where my joy comes from. Then she brought me her little pink Bible that her godparents gave her and said, "Here, Mom! Read this!"

*Marci Endres*

*Battle Ground, Washington*

Please send short prayers, praises, and inspiring thoughts for "**From the Mouth of Babes**" to address inside back cover or email to [cm@apostoliclutheran.org](mailto:cm@apostoliclutheran.org).

### **2011 REGIONAL FALL SERVICES**

The New York Mills Apostolic Lutheran Church in New York Mills, Minnesota, will host Regional Fall Services **August 18-21, 2011**. Soren Ylypaa from Finland will be the guest speaker. All are invited to join in worship and fellowship.

*God's peace,*

*New York Mills ALC*

# If for Christians

If the clouds should roll away And Jesus came to earth today,  
Would our hearts within us burn At our precious Lord's return?

Will we be glad to see His face The One who suffered in our place?  
If our consciences are clean, We'll be joyful at the scene.

Let's lay aside all weight and sin That doth so easily beset.  
When sins are covered by His blood God promises He will forget.

Then we can freely journey here In love and liberty with men,  
And joyfully anticipate When Jesus comes to earth again!

*Jeanne Sikkila*  
*Greer, South Carolina*

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# Lord, Heal Our Land

From ocean unto ocean,  
Our land shall own Thee Lord,  
And, filled with true devotion,  
Obey Thy sovereign Word:

Our prairies and our mountains,  
The woods and fertile field,  
Our rivers, lakes and fountains,  
To Thee shall tribute yield.

O Christ, for Thine own glory,  
And for our country's weal,  
We humbly plead before Thee,  
Thyself in us reveal;

And may we know, Lord Jesus,  
The touch of Thy dear hand;  
And, healed of our diseases,  
The tempter's power withstand.

Where error smites with blindness,  
Enslaves and leads astray,  
Do Thou in loving-kindness  
Proclaim Thy Gospel day,

Till all the tribes and races  
That dwell in this fair land,  
Adorned with Christian graces,  
Within Thy courts shall stand.

Our Savior King, defend us,  
And guide where we should go;  
Forth with Thy message send us,  
Thy love and light to show,

Till, fired with true devotion,  
Enkindled by Thy Word,  
From ocean unto ocean  
Our land shall own Thee Lord.

*Robert Lowry*

*Christian Monthly*

