

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.

April 2017

He Is Risen

Pastor Nicholas Kandoll
New York Mills, Minnesota

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

1 Corinthians 15:19-26

At this time in the Church year, Lent ends and Easter begins. In the season of Lent we are reminded of our own sinful state, our own need for repentance. We are faced with our sin, and the penalty of sin is death. We remember the words recorded in Genesis ...for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. (Genesis 3:19)

As we enter into the season of Easter we are reminded of Jesus' victory over our sin and death. In Easter we are encouraged by the resurrection; even though this mortal frame will fail us, even though we will die. Just as Jesus rose from the dead, so will we.

Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. (2 Corinthians 4:14)

In Romans Paul speaks of the implications of the resurrection on our lives here. *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:3-11)*

The new life we live in Christ is a direct result of what He did for us on the cross. He continues to gift us with His grace through Word and Sacrament even now. Jesus rose again victorious. He defeated death, hell and the devil for us!

*He is not here:
for he is Risen,
as he said.*

MATTHEW 28:6

His victory extends beyond this life here; it extends beyond our human comprehension. It extends to the new creation where He has a place prepared for us. We are victorious, not because we were great, not because we were strong, but because He who was the greatest became the least, because He who was the strongest, became the weakest.

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

God's peace.

THE THEOLOGY OF THE CROSS obviously does not mean that for the theologian the whole church year shrinks to Good Friday. It rather means that one cannot understand Christmas, Easter, or Pentecost without Good Friday. Luther was, alongside Irenaeus and Athanasius, one of the great theologians of the incarnation. He was that because he saw the cross behind the manger. He understood the victory of Easter as well as any theologian of the Eastern Church. But he understood it because he understood it as the victory of the Crucified.

Hermann Sasse

Maundy Thursday

Pastor Dennis Hannu
Wolf Lake, Minnesota

MAUNDY THURSDAY IS OBSERVED DURING Holy Week on the Thursday before Easter. Maundy comes from the Latin word *mandatum* which means “commandment.” This commandment is found in the Gospel of John 13:34:

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

The Gospel text for Maundy Thursday found on our church calendar, which finds its source in the Revised Common Lectionary, is always John 13:1-17, 31b-35. In this text we find Jesus celebrating the Passover with His disciples, washing their feet, and giving the commandment to love one another. Many churches hold a special service on this day which may include a Communion Service and washing of each other's feet to commemorate Jesus washing His disciples' feet.

John 13:1-17: Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

John 13:31b-35: Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him. Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you. A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

Although John does not record the institution of the Lord's Supper, we know from the other Gospels that Jesus did in fact institute it on this night (Matthew 26:26-29, Mark

14:22-25, and Luke 22:18-20). Jesus, who is our Passover Lamb, celebrates the Passover with His disciples and gives to them and His Church the Sacrament that we still partake of today.

No longer would the disciples break bread and partake of the cup in memory of the exodus from Egypt, but rather in memory of Jesus' death and their exodus out of the wilderness of sin. We as well celebrate or commemorate this day because of the great work our Savior did on our behalf. We partake of the body and blood of Jesus which is found in, with, and under the elements of bread and wine, fully aware of our sinfulness and receiving what is offered in the Sacrament, namely the forgiveness of our sins.



Jesus on this night also did something unthinkable: He washed His disciples' feet. He who was their Master and Lord washed their feet. Peter could not understand this kind of action and recoiled at the thought of Jesus washing his feet, but as Jesus said to Peter, “If I do not wash you, you have no part with me.” Peter then said, “Wash my hands and head as well.” Jesus said, “He who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean.” Jesus did this to teach His disciples humility and love. Their concern was to be for the other as Jesus would demonstrate further in His dying for them on the cross. This lesson is borne out for us today in all areas of our lives. Though we may not literally wash one another's feet, we carry out this command of humility and love as we offer forgiveness to fellow believers who are feeling the weight of their sin or perhaps have offended us in some way. We carry out this command of humility and love as we by our actions imitate the actions of Christ. We carry out this command of humility and love as we lay down our lives (figuratively) for the sake of others. Jesus taught His disciples that they would no longer live for themselves in this world but for the other. We are to learn the same thing as we live in this world. The most beautiful thing about Maundy Thursday is that our Savior demonstrates why He came. He came to wash us and to make us clean so that we could then live like Him in this world. ~

The Kingdom of Grace

the late Rev. Alvin C. Holmgren
February 2005 CM

THE KINGDOM THAT JESUS CHRIST established here on earth is a kingdom of grace. It is in this kingdom that we received the favor of God. One of the most outstanding gospel proclamations is found in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter nine, verse two—the words of Jesus to the paralytic: *Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.*

If the kingdom of God, the Church, is to grow as Christ would have it grow, it must remain a kingdom of grace—where the Gospel is freely preached, where sins are proclaimed forgiven, for that is the very essence of the Gospel.

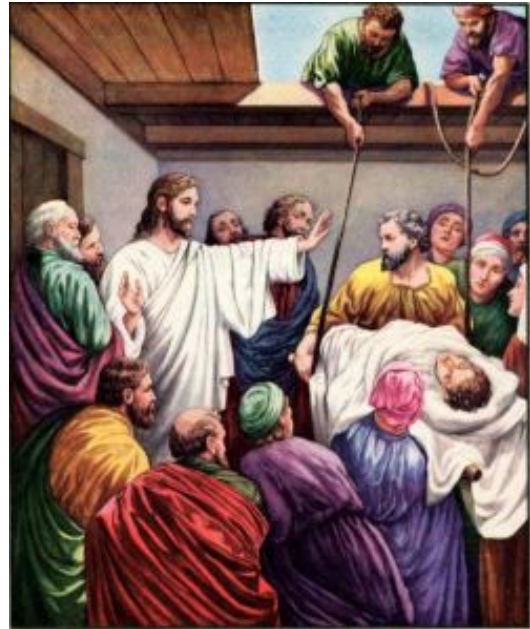
Using the light of the sacred Scripture we can safely conclude that there is no greater theme for our ministry than the grace of God that is revealed in the forgiveness of sins. Yet, it has become evident that the Lord's charge to His disciples to preach repentance and the remission of sins is diminishing and at times entirely overlooked. It seems to be much more acceptable today to enroll people as citizens of the kingdom of God by challenging them to make Christ the Lord of their life.

It appears that people are asked to make a decision for Christ and then walk full-grown into the kingdom of God without experiencing new birth. This is not the Biblical way. The right way is to be born into the Kingdom of God as Jesus called it in His conversation with Nicodemus. *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5:17-18)*

It is my prayer that in the lesson before us we will learn a deeper appreciation for the essence of the Gospel. Let us not follow the trend and think that we have become masters of theology, and begin to look for something that would be greater and more impressive to our carnal minds. Let us not cease to thank God for the power that He has enclosed in the Gospel, and be reminded again by Prophet Isaiah's exhortation recorded in the 51st chapter of his book of prophecy where he says: *Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. (Isaiah 51:1)*

In the healing miracle referred to in the opening paragraph of this article, a paralyzed man was brought to Jesus for healing. One thing was sure. He did not come on his own and without help. Four men brought him into the presence of Jesus. The house was full of people. They removed some tiles from the roof and lowered the man into the room where Jesus stood. Upon seeing their faith, Jesus began to speak to this helpless man. The first words spoken by Jesus were these: *Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.* Who knows how long this man had been in that state of helplessness? The Lord did, and perhaps his friends also knew how long he had been afflicted with that crippling disease. But Jesus also knew how long he had been under conviction

because of his sins. The Lord knew how long the man had been helpless and in search of release from the burden of sin that Jesus knew was resting upon him. Although he was helpless, he was not hopeless. If only I can get to Jesus, must have been his daily prayer. And he was fortunate that he had friends who knew Jesus.



Now, how can we bring a seeking soul to Christ? We do have proper means available to us. In the first place, there is power in prayer. We can share our faith with them—we can speak of our own spiritual experiences. We can make known to them how Christ, through His boundless grace, imparts faith and healing. Like the paralytic, we too have heard the words of Jesus: *Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.*

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation... So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Romans 10:10, 17)

When Jesus appeared to His disciples on the evening of His resurrection, He said unto them: *Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained. (John 20:21-23)*

Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Matthew 18:18-20

WHO CAN DESCRIBE THE BOND of God's love? Who is able to explain the majesty of its beauty? The height to which love leads is indescribable... In love the Master received us, Jesus Christ our Lord, in accordance with God's will gave His blood for us, and His flesh for our flesh, and His life for our lives.

Clement of Rome

Follow Me – I Make All Things New

Gwen Wilson
Ridgefield, Washington

Dear Children far and near,

Hello! As I write, I think of each of you, wherever you may be. I hope this day finds you well, and that you remain a follower of Jesus. He loves you best and cares for you.

WE ARE IN THE LENTEN SEASON, when Jesus prepared the people, especially His disciples, for His death. Let us look into the Bible and hear what Jesus told His disciples. Matthew 15 says that crowds of people followed Jesus. He had been teaching throughout the region for nearly 2 years, and His followers wanted to hear everything He had for them. The Pharisees followed Him, too, but for a different reason. They wanted to find fault with His teachings and they really didn't have any use for Him. The main reason for their distaste was that, in their minds, Jesus was changing the way Old Testament laws were to be followed while, in actuality, Jesus was fulfilling God's will in making ALL things new.

In Matthew 16, Jesus asked His disciples, *Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? (verse 13)* They replied that some said Jesus was John the Baptist, some said Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets. Then Jesus asked, "But whom do you say that I am?" *Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. (verse 16)* Jesus told Peter he was blessed because God the Father had revealed it to him; no man made him believe this. Jesus had been teaching His disciples and He presented them with that question as He wanted to know if they were learning who He really was.

Jesus told His disciples that He would give them the keys to the kingdom of heaven and they would have power to bind people in their sins or release them. They were to tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ. From this time on, Jesus began to share with the disciples how He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things, be killed, and rise again the third day. Peter tried to defend Jesus, saying no one would harm his Lord, but Jesus told him very plainly that all He said was going to happen.

I'm sure the disciples could hardly believe all that they heard, and it was hard for them to understand that their Friend and Lord Jesus was really going to suffer and die.

Six days after Jesus talked of His death, He took Peter, James, and John his brother up into a high mountain and Jesus was changed right before their eyes. A bright cloud covered Him and God spoke from the cloud, which made the disciples fall on the ground and hide their faces. The voice of God said, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. (Matthew 17:5)* Jesus touched them and told them to rise up and be not afraid. When the three disciples looked up they only saw Jesus. God wanted the disciples to follow only Jesus. Before they went down from the mountain, Jesus told them they were not to tell anyone what they had seen until He was risen from the dead.

Jesus spent another year teaching, healing and showing His love to those who loved Him, and to those who did not. Then the chief priests and elders of the people took action and plotted how to put Jesus to death. Jesus' own words came true. He went to Jerusalem and suffered many things at the hands of the elders and chief priests. Lies were told about Him; He was bruised, beaten, spit upon, slapped and called

names. In the end He was made to carry His heavy cross to Mount Golgotha, where He was nailed to the cross to die.

On either side of Jesus, a thief was also sentenced to die. One thief ridiculed Him while the other said they deserved to die, but this Man had done nothing wrong. He then asked Jesus to remember him when Jesus came into His kingdom. Jesus, who was hanging there suffering, and who is all about love and saving the lost, told that thief that he would be in paradise that day. Oh, what joy and peace would have filled the thief's heart! He saw Jesus only.

In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. (Matthew 28:1) When they came to the grave, the stone had been rolled away from the entrance and an angel sat on it. He told them that Jesus was risen, to come and see for themselves, and to go quickly and tell His disciples. They ran with fear and great joy to bring word to the disciples; on the way Jesus met them. They held Him by the feet and worshipped Him. Jesus told them to bring word of His rising to the brothers and that they would see Him in Galilee.



Women at the Tomb W.A. Bouguereau
Wikimedia Commons

The Marys brought this good news to the disciples, who went to Galilee. There they saw and worshipped Jesus their Lord, but some doubted. This was a lot to take in, I'm sure. Jesus had been with them, then He was put to death, and now here He was again. This was starting to sink in for the disciples, as Jesus had told them He would die and rise again, and they were seeing it come true.

Jesus told them to go into all the world and preach, teach and baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, *teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen. (Matthew 28:20)* St. Luke wrote: *And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. (Luke 24:47)*

Through Jesus' coming to the earth as a babe, growing up and teaching the way of His Father God, and dying and rising again, He changed everything. The old ways were done away with and everything became NEW. God's will for mankind is that they would have new life if they believe on His Son Jesus and one day live an eternal life in heaven. I encourage you children to keep believing in Jesus who loves you and forgives you for all your sin. He died for you. Let us praise and thank Him for all He has done for us. ~

Consolation for the Exile

Eino Miettunen; Excerpts from Nov 1949 CM
Submitted by Dave Impola; Everett, Washington

How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.

Psalm 84:1-2

THIS PSALM HAS BEEN SUNG OF OLD to the children of Korah. It expresses the thirst that the pilgrim on earth has for the heavenly courts. "How beautiful are Thy courts, O Lord of hosts."

A Christian longs for the courts of the Lord. Our hearts' desire and prayer is for the living God. If Christ is lacking, then we lack much indeed. In these courts below, the weary exile rejoices in his salvation. Holy Writ says that God wants to dwell in us. Jesus says: *Behold, the kingdom of God is within you.* (Luke 17:21)

How beautiful are God's tabernacles even here on earth, for God dwells in those souls in whom He has placed His seal of approval. And wherever such a one goes, despised though he may be in the eyes of the world, he is the counterpart of those who dwell in the courts on high. This is because when God looks at us He does so through the blood of His Son, by whose merits we are redeemed—redeemed by the blood and the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Although but dust and ashes, we are nevertheless the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, according to His Word (Revelation 21:3).

Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah. (Psalm 84:4)

As many as are unified in faith in the heavenly Father are heirs to this great salvation. In our militant church on earth, how often does a hymn of praise ascend to the Father? The Christian has made many an attempt to learn a paean of praise. We are told in Revelation that none could learn the new song but the hundred and forty-four thousand which were redeemed from the earth. Many of us cannot sing for our proverbial harps are hung upon the willows. Oh, if only a warm breath from the heart of God could knock off the willows from the sideposts of the heart that our hearts could sing a mighty hymn of praise, a hymn that is often mixed with tears! We are as exiles, afflicted and often overwhelmed with sorrow, and at those times the Sun of Righteousness seems hidden. Our tears blind us and we cannot even see the natural sun, much less the Sun of our righteousness, who washed us in His own blood.

We can feel comfort in the thought that such were the pilgrims who have gone before. For it is written here: *Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them. Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools. (Psalm 84:5-6)* Thus have the afflicted been comforted throughout the ages. Many are they who have attempted to make wells unto themselves with which to revive themselves. Through His prophet, God tells us how man made wells to quench his thirst, but he rejected the true well of life in which we are able to refresh ourselves. Only they who have experienced sorrow are able to comfort their fellow travelers in distress. Today our great prayer is, "Reveal unto us the great fountains in Zion, heavenly Father, the kind

that do not run dry." Would that God would disclose to us the refreshing oases so that some unrepentant soul could drink thereof and go home acknowledging the true God of Zion!

They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God. (Psalm 84:7) I am a jealous God, says God to unrepentant sinners, but what ineffable joy burns in His heart toward the sinner who repents! Should you think that you are too great a sinner, we want to show you this merciful God in whom we go from strength to strength, from victory to victory. Wrestling with the desires of our flesh, we do obtain one triumph after another through Him.

It is my great privilege to preach to you the forgiveness of sins in His name and blood. May God open our eyes to see His eternal truths. Some of you may have known bankruptcy. In our daily walk we would indeed be bankrupt without Jesus. But be comforted, your loss becomes a victorious gain in Zion forever. When God gives us power our defeat turns into victory. Thus when you show the Great Healer to one who has known nothing but defeat, and if he comprehends wholeheartedly, you have been instrumental in turning his defeat into gain for him. For if the voice of that blood shall cease, then shall also the voice of thanksgiving. When you are downcast and oppressed in spirit, believe, dear Christian, all your sins forgiven.



O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah. (Psalm 84:8)

A Christian has this inward prayer: "Do not leave me, but take me all the way home!" The archenemy of the soul urges us to disbelieve, but there is a great consolation in Revelation where we read that the prayers of the saints are gathered into golden vials before the throne of God. We are to be vigilant, especially so in these restless times. When we take our burdens to God in prayer, it behooves us to pray for the Zion of the Lord that it may be kept from all harm. Many a father and mother pray in spirit, "O that my children shall one day stand before Thy altar in glory! Then could I truly rejoice! Father, carry them on the wings of Thy grace that they would ever be soldiers for Christ so that they could dwell in Thy courts forever!"

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(continued from page 5)

For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. (Psalm 84:10-11)

God is our shield. Of what use was the shield in warfare? For what else but to protect the vital organs from the poison-tipped arrows of the enemy. The archenemy of the soul knows well how to send poisoned arrows into the hearts of Christians. But the heart armored in faith is a bulwark against the piercing darts, for the Christian's armor is God. We are anointed with the oil of the Holy Spirit and pray that the Lord would let us feel His grace. May the Lord give us a humble spirit that we may dwell as doorkeepers in His house! When we shall reach the courts in glory at our journey's end, the troubles of the way shall be forgotten.

We stand amazed when we see crowds of people like rivers flowing toward eternity oblivious to their ultimate end, little heeding nor caring. Oh, if God could halt them to an awareness of their condition! All about us people are snatched into eternity in the twinkling of an eye. These are solemn warnings; it is high time to take heed of them. Death lurks all about us and none knows whose turn is next. But blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord!

Truly it is so. Blessed is the man that trusts in the blood-stained Son, Jesus Christ. May He be our Sun and thaw our cold hearts. May He send heavenly moisture on parched ground. I often wonder about the condition of the parched hearts that await the showers of blessing. Indeed, no good thing will God withhold from them that walk uprightly, that is, from His righteousness. This matter of eternity is a serious thing and the most precious. We can trust in Jesus both in life and in death, for we are His and He is ours. ~

The Comfort of Christ's Sufferings

Martin Luther

UNTIL THE PRESENT WE HAVE BEEN in the Passion week and have celebrated Good Friday in the right way; now we come to Easter and Christ's resurrection. When man perceives his sins in this light and is completely terror-stricken in his conscience, he must be on his guard that his sins do not thus remain in his conscience, and nothing but pure doubt certainly come out of it; but just as the sins flowed out of Christ and we became conscious of them, so should we pour them again upon Him and set our conscience free. Therefore see well to it that you act not like perverted people, who bite and devour themselves with their sins in their heart, and run here and there with their good works or their own satisfaction, or even work themselves out of this condition by means of indulgences and become rid of their sins; which is impossible, and, alas, such a false refuge of satisfaction and pilgrimages has spread far and wide.

Then cast your sins from yourself upon Christ, believe with a festive spirit that your sins are His wounds and sufferings, that He carries them and makes satisfaction for them, as *Isaiah 53:6* says: *The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all*, and *St. Peter in his first Epistle 2:24*: *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree of the cross*; and *St. Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:21*: *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*. Upon these and like passages you must rely with all your weight, and so much the more the harder your conscience martyrs you. For if you do not take this course, but miss the opportunity of stilling your heart, then you will never secure peace, and must yet finally despair in doubt. For if we deal with our sins in our conscience and let them continue within us and be cherished in our hearts, they become much too strong for us to manage and they will live forever. But when we see that they are laid on Christ and He has triumphed over them by His resurrection and we fearlessly believe it, then they are dead and have become as nothing. For upon Christ they cannot rest, there they are swallowed up by His resurrection, and you see now no wound, no pain, in Him, that is, no sign of sin. Thus *St. Paul* speaks in *Romans 4:25*, that He was delivered up for our trespasses and was raised for our justification; that is, in His sufferings He made known our sins and also crucified them; but by His resurrection He makes us righteous and free from all sin, even if we believe the same differently.

Now if you are not able to believe, then, as I said, you should pray to God for faith. For this is a matter in the hands of God that is entirely free, and is also bestowed alike at times knowingly, at times secretly, as was just said on the subject of suffering.

But now bestir yourself to the end: first, not to behold Christ's sufferings any longer; for they have already done their work and terrified you; but press through all difficulties and behold His friendly heart, how full of love it is toward you, which love constrained Him to bear the heavy load of your conscience and your sin. Thus will your heart be loving and sweet toward Him, and the assurance of your faith be strengthened. Then ascend higher through the heart of Christ to the heart of God, and see that Christ would not have been able to love you if God had not willed it in eternal love, to which Christ is obedient in His love toward you; there you will find the divine, good father heart, and, as Christ says, be thus drawn to the Father through Christ. Then will you understand the saying of Christ in *John 3:16*: *God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son*. That means to know God aright, if we apprehend Him not by His power and wisdom, which terrify us, but by His goodness and love; there our faith and confidence can then stand unmovable and man is truly thus born anew in God.

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Cunningly Devised Fables

Lois Matson
Yacolt, Washington

What is a “cunningly devised fable”? It's a cleverly made-up story. “The Hare and the Tortoise” is a fable. The fantastic stories of Roman gods and goddesses are myths. They are not true. They didn't really happen.

Is the story of Jesus true or a fable? Was He really born of a virgin, with the Holy Spirit as His Father? That sounds pretty unbelievable. Did He really die on a cross and rise again from the dead? That also sounds pretty fantastic.

No matter how unbelievable it sounds, Jesus really was born of a virgin (Luke 1:27, 34) and He really did rise from death (Luke 24:6). The Bible says it and we believe it. God has given us FAITH.

EASTER HAS BEEN TAKEN OVER, in many respects, by the secular world with its bunnies and baskets, egg hunts and candy sales. While none of these in themselves are wrong, except that the Easter bunny is a fable, our focus should be on the important, real event that took place on Easter morning. The Man who had died on the cross on Friday was resurrected to life on the third day, never to die again. This was truly no ordinary event. Christians love the Easter story, and it's not difficult to understand why.

There is power implicit in the victory of the Christ over death. Jesus was given power from His Father to lay His life down and to take it up again. This is vastly different than Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. At the awe-inspiring resurrection of Lazarus, Jesus was there and alive and working. His power was the catalyst that brought Lazarus back to life. Now Jesus is dead, and dead men don't do anything. Dead men—even dead God-men—can't raise themselves from death according to our rational thought. But God can do ANYTHING, even bring Himself back from death.

Ponder the amazement of the disciples when confronted with the resurrected Lord. Thomas was not present at the time of Jesus' first appearance to His disciples. He stated that he would never believe Jesus was alive unless he saw and touched the marks of the nails and placed his hand into the hole in Jesus' side. Eight days later, when Jesus came to Thomas and told Him to stretch out his hand and touch the nail-prints, to put his hand in Jesus' side, and to believe, Thomas was only able to say, “My Lord and my God!” There is wonder in the resurrection of Jesus.

The power and wonder of the resurrection are not only for the moment. Jesus is alive forevermore! And He gives us life forevermore when we trust Him to save us from sin and death. We live in eternity now, although this physical body will die.

Let us proclaim the Good News that life eternal is only in Jesus, and in the power of His resurrection. Let us carefully and prayerfully teach others of faith in the ever-living One; let us instill the true doctrine of Christ. May our prayer always be that many would believe and, with Thomas, say, “My Lord and my God!”

When Jesus was transfigured before Peter, James and John (Matthew 17; Mark 9; Luke 9), His glory was shown to them. The honor and glory of God that had been hidden in a normal-looking human body for over thirty years was revealed, and God spoke from heaven. Peter, James and John saw it with their own eyes and heard it with their own ears.

Later, Peter wrote: *For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.* (2 Peter 1:16-18)

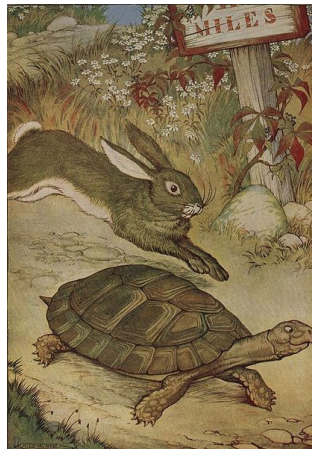
The story of Jesus isn't a “cunningly devised fable.” It is true; it really happened. Peter, James and John saw it and told people. It isn't a secret. You can tell people, too.

Anyone who believes in Jesus—that He lived, died and rose again to save them from sin and death—will live forever. We who believe are made into new people. Through faith in Christ we become the children of God.

The Apostle John wrote:

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. (John 1:12-14)

That's Good News, better than any fairy tale you've ever heard. ~



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Be Not Afraid

Paul Kretzmann

And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun... And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid.

Mark 16:1-2, 5-8

THE PRESENCE OF VARIOUS ANGELS on Easter morning, at various times and in various positions, need not cause surprise. There must have been multitudes of them present, though only a few of them or a single one may have been visible at any one time, such as had been specially delegated, as at the birth of Christ, to bring the Lord's message. But the appearance of this angel in the tomb greatly terrified the women. The reflection of the glorious light of heaven shone from the messenger's face and garment, and poor, sinful human beings cannot endure that splendor without flinching and becoming terrified. But the angel's message was intended to allay all fear: Be not terrified! As at the birth of the Savior the first words of the heavenly preacher were: Fear not, so the cheering cry went out at this time. The poor weak heart is inclined always to tremble, feeling the weight and the guilt of its sin. But there is no longer need of such trembling, there is no longer reason for fearing, since full and certain redemption lies before all men in the empty grave. The angel speaks of the Lord by the name which had been given Him to heap shame and reproach upon Him. But Jesus of Nazareth is now the name of which He Himself and all His followers are justly proud. As Jesus of Nazareth He hung on the cross, but as Jesus of Nazareth He also rose from the dead. The place where He lay is still there, the evidences of His having been buried are still to be seen; but He is risen from the dead. Mark the short, vivid method of speaking: He is risen, not is He here; see the place where they laid Him. All is joyful emotion, exultation which struggles for utterance. And the message is not for them alone, the kingdom of God cannot wait, there is work to be done in His interest, the news must be spread. They should tell His disciples and Peter the glorious tidings. And Peter: a direct mention of his name; Peter that had fallen so deeply, but who, as the Lord knew, had deeply repented of his sin; Peter who felt himself so utterly unworthy at this time, but who would yet feel the forgiving love of his resurrected Lord. ~

Annual Meeting Notice

The 109th Annual Meeting of the Apostolic Lutheran Church of America will be hosted by the Apostolic Lutheran Church of Esko, Minnesota, and will be held on July 13th at the Lincoln High School in Esko, Minnesota.

In accordance with the Bylaws, the Annual Reports will be read; the members of the Central Board, the Eastern Mission Board, the Western Mission Board, and the Southern Mission Board will be elected. All matters will be considered and acted upon. Congregations are requested to send their delegates to this meeting.

The schedule of meetings and services are as follows:

Tuesday, July 11	Ministers meeting 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM at the Apostolic Lutheran Church, Esko, MN
Wednesday, July 12	National Sunday School Meeting 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM and Eastern Mission Meeting 3:00 PM at the Apostolic Lutheran Church, Esko, MN
	Opening service 6:30 pm at the Apostolic Lutheran Church, Esko, MN
Thursday, July 13	Annual Business Meeting 9:30 AM to 5:00 PM at Lincoln High School, Esko, MN
	Foreign Mission Business Meeting will immediately follow the Annual Business Meeting

Devotional services will be held in the morning, afternoon, and evening, beginning on Thursday, July 13th, through Sunday, July 16th, at the Lincoln High School, Esko, MN. Ministers, members, and the general public are invited to participate in these services. The meetings will be held in conjunction with the devotional services.

On behalf of the Central Board of the Apostolic Lutheran Church of America,
Gary Bertram, Chairman
David Myllymaki, Secretary