

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 2018

According to John

The Gospel of John, Chapter 20

THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

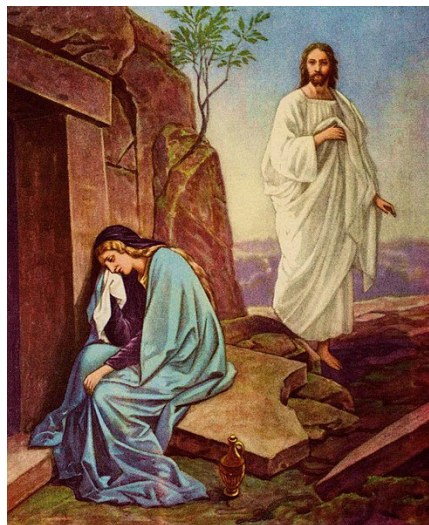
But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my

brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.

Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. ~



The Resurrection Day
Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

At the Rising of the Sun

The late Rev Alvin Holmgren
April 1995 CM

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.

Mark 16:1-2

WHAT A SUNRISE THAT MORNING!
The grave was open, the stone
rolled away! Jesus was risen!

This sunrise was different from all others that had occurred before in the history of our race. Its difference did not lie in the natural phenomenon seen every day when the sun rises and sets according to the well-devised plan of the Creator. This difference was not seen by the tomb guards when the angel came and rolled away the stone from the entrance to the tomb. Neither the guards nor the Lord's inner circle of followers recognized, at first, the significance of this morning's events.



The difference in this sunrise was that it ushered in a new day, a new time, a new era for believers: the New Testament era in which the followers of Christ call themselves Christians. The sin debt has now been paid by the conquering Lord. The power of death was destroyed. The devil was vanquished. Even hell itself quaked; its gates closed and the doors of heaven opened. All because Jesus, the Savior, lives!

The miracle that attended His dying—the rending of the temple veil—signified the coming of this new era. *For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us... So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.* (Hebrews 9:24, 28)

The Heavenly Father accepted the work of His Son. The message *He is risen* signified an open heaven. Now Satan could no longer make accusation that our salvation rested only on an unfulfilled promise. Apostle John gave testimony to this truth, saying: *And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.* (Revelation 12:10-11)

With the Prophet Isaiah we can now say: *O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.* (Isaiah 12:1-2)

Four hundred years before Christ, Malachi, the last Old Testament prophet, close his prophetic writings with this promise: *But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.* (Malachi 4:2) Likewise John closed Revelation, the last book of the New Testament, with a promise concerning Christ. This promise referring to His second coming is brief but filled with hope: *And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me...* (Revelation 22:12)

May the Lord give us renewed faith this resurrection morning so that we may respond: *Even so, come, Lord Jesus.* (Revelation 22:20)

Victory in Jesus

I heard an old, old story how a Savior came from glory,
How He gave His life on Calvary to save a wretch like me;
I heard about His groaning, of His precious blood's atoning,
Then I repented of my sins and won the victory.

I heard about His healing, of His cleansing power revealing.
How He made the lame to walk again and caused the blind to see;
And then I cried, "Dear Jesus, come and heal my broken spirit,"
And somehow Jesus came and brought to me the victory.

O victory in Jesus, my Savior, forever.
He sought me and bought me with His redeeming blood;
He loved me ere I knew Him, and all my love is due Him,
He plunged me to victory beneath the cleansing flood.

Eugene M. Bartlett

Our Great High Priest

Martin Luther

Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 4:14-16

FOR NO MAN'S, NO ANGEL'S, no other creature's suffering has accomplished and is able to accomplish what this Man's suffering has. For He suffers not for His own person but for us, that in this way we might be free and rid of sin and death.

Now as our dear Lord Jesus Christ is lifted into the air to hang on the cross, suspended between heaven and earth, with nothing any longer on earth to call His own, He is exercising His true, real, priestly office, accomplishing the work He came on earth to do, not only with His suffering, by offering up Himself, but also by His intercessions. For both constitute a priest's work, to sacrifice and to intercede.

But when He offers Himself thus for us, what garment or priestly garb does this priest, Jesus Christ, wear and what is His altar? His adornment is not a gold or silk cloak, decked with pearls or jewels, like the pope's bishops adorn themselves, nor like the Old Testament high priest who had his special priestly resplendent robes. Instead He hangs on the cross bare and naked, covered with wounds, and has, so to speak, not a thread on His body. Instead of a purple robe He is red with blood, His body covered with wounds and welts, badly swollen. Instead of a priestly headdress He wears a bloodied crown of thorns. That is the adornment of this High Priest. For He is "a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek," as Psalm 110:4 states. This High Priest is both priest and offering; for He offers up His body and life on the cross. It

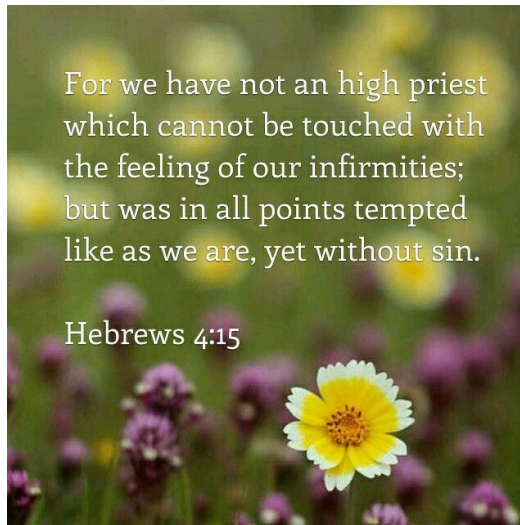
appears to be totally out of priestly character for Him to hang on the cross, naked and bare, bloody and swollen, wearing a crown of thorns. Yet, He is the true Priest and Bishop, who in great love offers up Himself and lets His own body be consumed for the redemption of the whole world.

It is our comfort (and we are therefore exhorted to take comfort in this) that this High Priest has prayed for you and me and for us all, that is, for His crucifiers. For just as He suffers for us all, so He also prays for us all. Thus His crucifiers are not only the Jews and Gentiles, who at that time laid hands on Him and nailed Him to the cross, but also we ourselves and the whole world. For it was our sins which

crucified Him, wounded, and crowned Him with thorns. Those crucifiers were simply our sins' servants and lackeys. Had your sins and mine not nailed Christ to the cross, those crucifiers would have had to let Him alone. Christ is there as the true Priest and Lamb of God paying for the sins and death of the whole world with His offering; that is why the Jews and Gentiles seize Him. For that reason His prayer covers the entire world. When Christ prays for those who crucify Him, He is praying for

all men, also for us who by our sins were the cause of His cross and death; and He does not pray for our condemnation but for our salvation.

The chief point simply is this, that Jesus Christ, God's Son, offered Himself on the cross for us, and there was nothing else that moved His heart but our distress and misery. For you and I, all of us, are implicated in the wounds, thorns, and spittle, because by those very wounds, thorns and spittle, He snatches and grabs at us in order to deliver us. ~



LET NO ONE GRIEVE AT HIS POVERTY, for the universal kingdom has been revealed. Let no one mourn that he has fallen again and again; for forgiveness has risen from the grave. Let no one fear death, for the Death of our Savior has set us free. He has destroyed it by enduring it.

John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople (349-407 AD)

HE [JESUS] FOUGHT AND CONQUERED. On the one hand, he was man who struggled for his fathers and through his obedience cancelled their disobedience. On the other hand, he bound the strong one and freed the weak and bestowed salvation on his handiwork by abolishing sin. For he is our compassionate and merciful Lord who loves mankind ... Had not man conquered man's adversary, the enemy would not have been conquered justly. Again, had it not been God who bestowed salvation we would not possess it securely."

Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons (died about 202 AD)

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

Hebrews 2:9-10

Jesus Dies to Save Us

Gwen Wilson
Ridgefield, Washington

Dear Children,

Hello to each of you. I do not know most of you who read this, but I think of you as I write and hope you are encouraged in your walk of faith. I write to feed myself also.

It's now April, that time when we will start to see flowers poking their heads up toward the sunshine and showing their pretty faces. A time to see the trees and all other plants change our dreary landscapes into beauty. I find spring to be so refreshing. When I open my back door I can hear familiar songs of birds returning to welcome in spring. I am so thankful that God gave us the birds and flowers. The world would be ever so much drearier without them. I know my world would be.

TODAY WE WILL STOP AND THINK about Jesus dying and being laid in a tomb and new life when He arose. God's creation is all very beautiful and it makes us feel better when we can see it all around us, but the thing that should make us the happiest is that God gave us His Son Jesus. If it were not for Jesus we would not have true happiness and peace, or a hope of a life after this life that is forever.

Take a moment to think how last spring and summer there were plants and trees with life. In the fall of the year those plants and trees dropped all their beauty and looked as though they had died. But were they dead? Not at all. They were only asleep a while until God did His work that we can't see and again started new plant life.

Jesus was alive and well, walking, talking, teaching, etc. and living as other men on earth (but without sin) and then He was put to death. Did Jesus stay dead on the cross? No, because God His Father made Him come back to life, a new life; He was victorious over the grave, over death. The grave had no power to keep Him there. What a wonderful thing Jesus did for us by dying, and He

arose from the dead to show us we can be victorious, too, and have life in Him.

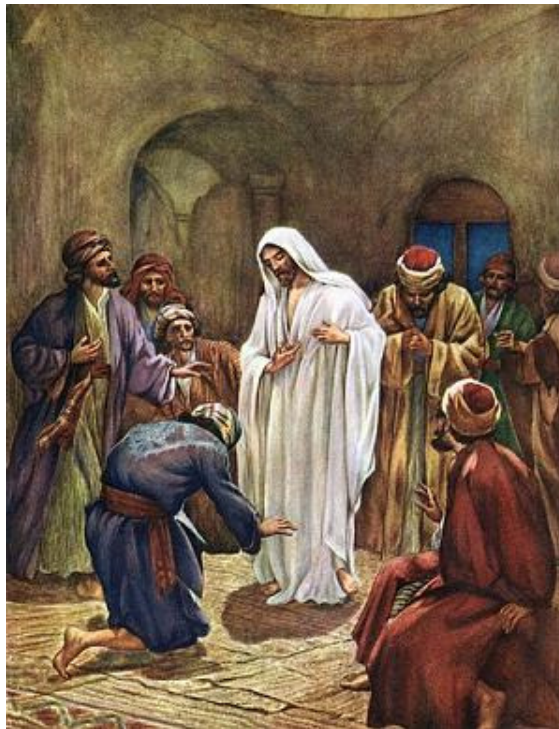
When Jesus was laid in the tomb, He was only there 3 days and God brought Him back to life. He was every bit alive when He arose and showed Himself to His disciples and others several times before He was taken back to His first glory – Heaven.

Jesus had to die for you and me. Why? Because of sin. We would be lost without Him. He died to forgive us our sins. If we believe on Him, and He lives in our hearts, we are promised eternal life. The Bible says in *John 3:16: For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* That is a promise to us from the Lord. He loves you and me and all people so much that He went so far as to give His life and die so terribly by being put on a cross.

Children, did you know that Jesus instructs us, *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.* (Matthew 5:48) That sounds like a very hard thing to do, and

you know it is impossible for us to DO that on our own. We can only be perfect in Jesus. We will always struggle with our imperfections but don't ever think for a second that God does not love you or cannot love you, because He does and always will. God's love is big and never ends. When you children fight with your brothers or sisters, or call each other ugly names, or maybe you don't obey your parents in some way, that is not God's love coming from you. We must pray in faith—believing—and ask God every day for the strength to love Him and each other as we should. Let us all remember what Jesus did for us and praise and thank God for His Son and the promise of life eternal. What a great and wonderful God we have. Let's pray every day that we will be able to love and serve Him all our days. May God bless each of you children with His love. I wish for each of you a blessed and happy Easter.

God's peace.



Jesus Appears to the Disciples William Hole
Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Romans 8:31-34

BY HIS RESURRECTION CHRIST WON THE VICTORY over law, sin, flesh, world, devil, death, hell, and every evil. And this His victory He donated unto us. These many tyrants and enemies of ours may accuse and frighten us, but they dare not condemn us, for Christ, whom God the Father has raised from the dead is our righteousness and our victory.

Martin Luther

My Help Comes From the Lord

Pastor Dennis Hannu
Spruce Grove, Minnesota

Psalm 121:1-8: I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.

THIS PSALM IS PART OF A GROUP of psalms, 120-134, that are called the “Song of Ascents” or “Song of Degrees.” It is thought that they are called this either because the Israelites sang these psalms as they made their way up to Jerusalem, or they were sung or read on the 15 steps in the temple between the Court of the Women and the Court of the Israelites. They are traditionally sung during the Jewish Feast of Booths or Tabernacles in the autumn. The Feast of Tabernacles commemorates Israel’s wandering in the wilderness; thus the pilgrimage theme of these psalms. These psalms would be sung as the worshipers approached the hills of Jerusalem.

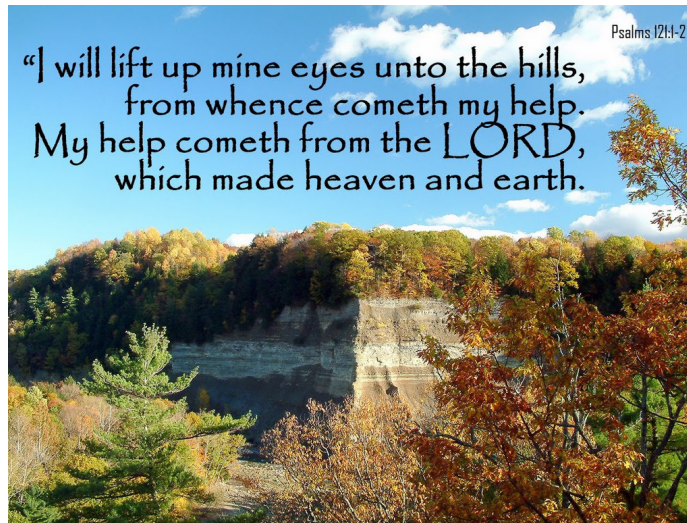
Psalm 121 opens with the psalmist saying, “I lift my eyes to the hills.” It could be that the psalmist was looking at the hills of Jerusalem when he wrote this psalm. Hills and mountains are quite significant in the Bible as we see God speaking so often from mountains or hills as He communicates with His people. Moses encountered God at Horeb, the mountain of God, in the burning bush. He would later receive the Ten commandments from God on Mt. Sinai. It was on Mt. Carmel that Elijah had his showdown with the prophets of Baal. In the New Testament we see Jesus giving a sermon on a mountain. We also see Him on a mountain praying and later being transfigured before Peter, James, and John on a mountain. Jesus was crucified on a hill called Golgotha. It was from the mountain called Olivet that Jesus ascended into heaven.

The psalmist asks: “From where does my help come?” He looks to the hills and wonders where his help comes from. He then makes this great statement: “My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.” The hills and mountains of this earth offer no help for us, but rather the One who created them, and so often used them to communicate with His people, is the One who helps us. The Lord is indeed the One who provides everything we need to sustain life in the here and now. He is never asleep on the job, but rather keeps watch over us always. He is our strength and our protector. He is with us always even unto the end of the world.

The church still today looks to the hills and asks the question: “From where does my help come?” The answer lies

within the season we have now entered, the Lenten season. During this season we make our annual journey toward “Holy Week.” We make our way by faith to the hill called Mt. Calvary. There we behold our Lord being crucified and we realize He is being crucified because of our sin. We sing with the song writer [Paul Gerhardt]:

“O Sacred Head, now wounded
With grief and shame weighed down,
Now scornfully surrounded
With thorns, Thine only crown!
Once reigning in the highest
In light and majesty,
Dishonored now Thou diest,
Yet here I worship Thee.
Lo, here I fall, my Saviour,
‘Tis I deserve Thy place;
Look on me with Thy favor,
Vouchsafe to me Thy grace.
Receive me, my Redeemer;
My Shepherd, make me Thine,
Of every good the Fountain,
Thou art the Spring of mine!”



It is from this hill that we find our help. It is on this hill that we see Jesus our Lord and as we observe, by the eyes of faith, Jesus in His suffering, death, and resurrection, we are reminded of another mountain recorded in Hebrews 12:18-24: *For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:)* But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

Our help truly has come from the Lord who spoke this world into existence and has breathed new life into His fallen creation. *2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.* Have a blessed Lenten season and glorious Easter! *God's peace.*

The Mystery of the Atonement

Paul Rantala
(from Sions Blad)

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.

2 Corinthians 5:19-20

ALL SPIRITUAL LEADERS boast about having pure doctrine; each one claims that his doctrine is the purest. Nevertheless, it is evident that the mystery of the atonement remains entirely hidden to many. I cannot boast that it is always totally clear to me either. My own sinfulness often causes it to become obscure. Nevertheless, the gracious Father by His Spirit is always able to reveal that which is in harmony with His written Word. Through the various spiritual experiences He works in us, He enables us to understand the mystery of His glorious riches which is expressed in these words: Christ in us, the hope of glory. Our understanding is enlightened so that the one who feels that he is hopelessly condemned under God's wrath comes to know that it was for him that the Lord Jesus came into the world; He came to save sinners from the punishment which sin merits. There was no other means by which the damage caused by sin could be repaired and guilty sinners reconciled to God. It was only Christ, the glorious image of the Father, who could take away our guilt and be the means of reconciliation between the Father and His sinful children.

Oh how difficult it was to perform this work of atonement! The physical pain which our Savior suffered under the burden of sin was truly great. But the pain in His soul was much greater. The experiences in Gethsemane witness to this truth. When Jesus wept and prayed there, His perspiration was as it were drops of blood even before one wound had been inflicted upon His body. His lamentation included these words: *My soul is sorrowful, even unto death.* He also prayed to His Father: *Save me from this hour.* The entire record of His passion testifies of the anguish and the pain He endured in reconciling us to God.

Because unbelief darkens the heart, the awakened soul, languishing under his burden of sin, cannot readily understand this work of reconciliation. For that reason God established the word of reconciliation so that the truths of His wisdom and grace might be proclaimed in the church. And still, as humans we are slow to comprehend the mystery of the atonement even though we hear this wondrous word of reconciliation preached unto us.

It is not enough that we were able to understand this mystery at the time that God separated us from the world, when He first forgave our sins and instilled peace in our sin-troubled conscience by revealing the atonement of Jesus as the perfect payment for our sin, and His resurrection as the means by which He brought us the righteousness that is acceptable to Him. The atonement of Christ must always remain the primary object of our faith. The atonement is our only sufficiency in life and in death. Through the Lord Jesus we come into fellowship with the heavenly Father and are united with Him by the bonds of love. Out of gratitude for what He had done, we desire to walk in obedience to His will and endeavor to forsake everything that would be a hindrance to our faith and would separate us from Him.

And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

~ II Corinthians 5:18 KJV

Oh that the mystery of the atonement would always remain clear to us. Then the relationship between the Father and His children will also remain pure. Strife will not be a problem among those who are begotten of Him because *everyone that loves the Father loves also those that are begotten of Him.* And they who are born of God and have comprehended the mystery of the atonement will not live in sin, because God's saving grace teaches them to *deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.* The believers will remain one body in Christ. Let this be our sufficiency: Jesus is ours and we are His. *He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*

May the peace of God abide in His Zion, and our dear heavenly Father continue to make clear the mystery of the atonement so that it will remain our firm goal to the end—until we enter into His perfect rest. ~

GREAT ART THOU, O LORD, and greatly to be praised; great is Thy power, and Thy wisdom infinite. And Thee would man praise; man, but a particle of Thy creation; man, that bears about him his mortality, the witness of his sin, the witness that Thou resistest the proud: yet would man praise Thee; he, but a particle of Thy creation. Thou awakest us to delight in Thy praise; for Thou madest us for Thyself, and our heart is restless, until it repose in Thee.

St Augustine

O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people. For the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods.

Psalms 96:1-4

The Word of the Lord

Lois Matson
Yacolt, Washington

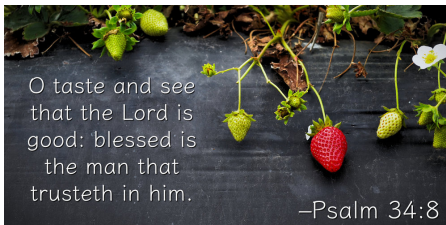
O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.

Psalm 34:8

How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

Psalm 119:103-105

How do we “taste” the Lord? He asks us to experience His goodness. When we taste (experience) Him, we will see (realize) that He is good. We put our trust in the Lord and we are blessed. His Words are sweeter than honey, lighting our path through this life and into the life to come.



*Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: **Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.** For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: **But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.***

1 Peter 1:22-25

The Word of the Lord is life-giving. The Word will never change, never end, and never stop bringing repentant sinners to life through the Gospel.

*Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, **As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.***

1 Peter 2:1-3

We eat and drink God's Word by reading and learning it, and by listening to ministers who preach it. The more we learn of God's marvelous Word of Life, the more we want to learn. God's graciousness is on display in His Word, and we can taste it and feast on it! Paul Kretzmann writes about our desire for the Word:

For just as a healthy baby at that age is eager for its nourishment, practically hungry all the time, so the Christians should have an insatiable longing for the milk of the Word, for the nourishment which is the proper food for all believers from their conversion to their death. This Word of the Gospel is a spiritual milk, which, as Luther writes, the soul must draw and the heart seek; and it is a pure, unadulterated milk, it should be used just as it is found in Scriptures, without the slightest addition of man's wisdom. Through this mental and spiritual food, the Word of the Gospel, the growth of the Christian takes place, the growth in grace, the growth in faith, the growth in sanctification, unto salvation. The Word works in us pure, holy, wholesome thoughts, wishes, and works, it gives us the strength both to will and to do according to the good pleasure of our heavenly Father.

The Catechism tells us how the will of God keeps us in His Word and in faith: “When God defeats and hinders every evil counsel and purpose which would not let us hallow God's name nor let His kingdom come, such as the will of the devil, the world, and our own flesh; but strengthens and keeps us steadfast in His Word and faith unto our end. This is His gracious and good will.” Though our hearts long for the pure Word of the Gospel, we can be tricked by the devil, the world and our own flesh into trying to rely on our own strength. Martin Luther writes:

I have already been preaching Christ and fighting against the devil in his false teachers for a number of years; but I have experienced how much difficulty this business has caused me. For I cannot repel Satan as I would like. Nor can I finally grasp Christ as Scripture propounds Him to me, but the devil often suggests a false Christ to me. Thanks be to God, however, for preserving us in the Word, in faith, and in prayer! We know that one should walk in humility and fear in the sight of God and not presume upon our own wisdom, righteousness, doctrine, and courage. One should rely on the power of Christ. When we are weak, He is strong; and through us weaklings He always conquers and triumphs. To Him be glory forever. Amen.

We pray that God would, by His grace, plant His Word into our hearts. When we are weak, He is strong. ~

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For You, For Me

Submitted by Pastor Ron Holmgren
Hockinson, Washington

US Army, London, England
April 7, 1944

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Today we again observe Good Friday as we have for years, though in different surroundings. But yet how many of us stop to ask ourselves, "Why does our Savior suffer such bitter agony and torment?" Have we stopped to ponder that it is because of His love for us poor condemned sinners and because of God's terrible righteous wrath and love?

Our Lord Jesus, His only begotten Son, was alone capable of fulfilling God's righteous law, opening the gates of heaven for us and closing the mouth of hell. Not through any merit of our own but of His boundless love for us He did all this *...that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)*

Therefore on this day, let us again behold our Savior as He kneels down to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane. When the agony of our sins is upon Him the torment is so great that even the sweat from His holy body is as great drops of blood that fall onto the sin-cursed earth. And why does He pray in such agony? Why does He say, *Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. (Luke 22:42)* An angel from heaven appeared unto Him to strengthen Him.

Then let us follow Him as He is taken before the chief priests and scribes and the elders of the people, before Pontius Pilate and Herod. He is mocked, spit upon, blasphemed, ridiculed and cursed, and beaten with manifold stripes, from which wounds holy blood already is flowing. Also a crown of thorns is pressed upon His head causing blood to flow from it. Then He is led away to be nailed on the cross where He cries out, *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. (Luke 23:34)* And after a time He dies saying, *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit... (Luke 23:46)*

Is it not a heart-rending sight to see our own Creator suffer so bitterly for us? And when we realize that we were there also murdering Him with our sins, does it not cause us to cry out, "O God, have mercy on me, a sinner. Do not let me sink into Hell in my unbelief. My Savior has suffered so much agony for me already, don't let me grieve Him any longer, but smite me with Your mighty hand so I will humble myself to ask, What must I do to be saved? Give me the grace of repentance that I could be a joy to my loving Savior, that I would follow His holy footsteps in faith through all the storms of life and then, when my earthly race is run, be taken into the glory of heaven to sing praises amid that great blood-washed throng forever and ever." Amen.

Wiljo Kandoll went to be with the Lord on April 7, 1991, exactly 47 years after he penned this meditation during his time in the US Army in WW2.



Lord, enthroned in heav'nly splendor, first-begotten from the dead,
Thou alone, our strong Defender, liftest up Thy people's head.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Jesus, true and living Bread!

Prince of Life, for us Thou livest, by Thy body souls are healed;
Prince of Peace, Thy peace Thou livest, by Thy blood is pardon sealed.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Word of God in flesh revealed.

Paschal Lamb! Thine off'ring finished once for all when Thou wast slain,
In its fullness undiminished shall forevermore remain.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Cleansing souls from ev'ry stain.

Great High Priest of our profession, through the oil Thou ent'redest in;
By Thy mighty intercession grace and mercy Thou dost win.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Only sacrifice for sin.

Life-imparting heav'nly Manna, stricken Rock, with streaming side,
Heav'n and earth with loud hosanna worship Thee, the Lamb who died.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Ris'n, ascended, glorified!

George Hugh Bourne