

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.

August 2018

Dual Citizens

Pastor Jason Salmi
Vancouver, Washington

WE ARE ALL FAMILIAR WITH the fact that a person may be the legal citizen of more than one country. That, depending on one's circumstances, two different nations could recognize them as having the full rights, privileges, and responsibilities of a citizen.

And, though it might not always be on our minds, every Christian falls into this category. According to Paul in his letter to the church in Rome, we who are citizens of this place where we still live, are also citizens of heaven: *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ...* (Romans 8:16-17a)

Now if this is true, that is to say if we are truly God's children and share with Christ the inheritance that He has won for us, that knowledge should have an impact on our whole lives! After all, every citizenship comes with rights, responsibilities, and privileges. And we do well to call this to mind frequently, and to allow it to shape us.

Just think of what it means that, to each of us who has believed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, He gave the right to become children of God. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power*

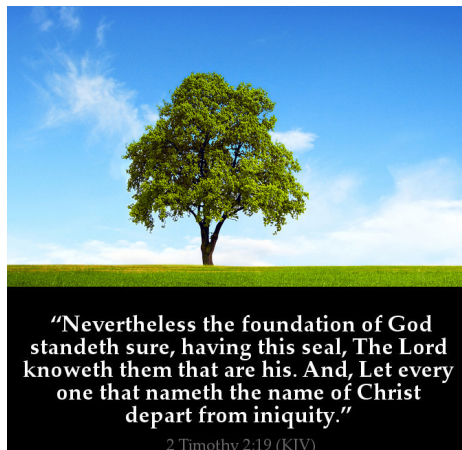
to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:12-13) For starters, this means that, since this thing has been done in us by God Himself, no one can take it away from us or change it. When Satan accuses us of sin, and tries to convince us that we don't deserve to be one of heaven's citizens, we may reply, "That's true, but what of it? My citizenship is not based on my own merit, but on Christ's!"

It also means that we should never feel as if we need to apologize for being Christians! In fact, when we are faced

with the accusation that Christianity is too exclusive, that is to say that we believe no one can be saved any other way except through faith in Christ, we may hold our heads high and proclaim, "Yes, this is true. And YOU can be saved this way, too!"

Dear saint, I encourage you to take some time to look at the Scriptures and to contemplate what it means that you are a citizen of heaven. And though you still live here in this world, that the Lord is even now preparing you to spend eternity in His presence.

May the peace of the Lord be with you.



"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

2 Timothy 2:19 (KJV)

We have a God, my friends, who is perfectly acquainted with the most secret thoughts of our hearts and whose eyes, like flaming fire, dart through the chambers of our soul, and descend into the most secret recesses of our nature. Even before we have opened to Him our distress, He is already making arrangements for our help, regarding our very uneasiness as a cry to Him, and giving ear to our inward groanings. He always knows exactly, and much better than we do, what is good and necessary for His children; and in truth He never leads them otherwise than they would wish Him to lead them, if they were able to see as clearly into their hearts and their necessities as He does. But we very seldom know what is good for us and therefore the ways by which God leads us are generally mysterious and obscure, just because the why and wherefore are concealed from us. But however severe, painful and dark the Lord's guidance of us may occasionally appear, it is in reality nothing less than an answer, if not to our express petitions, yet to our wants, and to those necessities of ours with which we may be acquainted. They are all ways of mercy and their simple end is salvation and blessing.

F.W. Krummacher [From *Elijah the Tishbite*]

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

He the Pearly Gates Will Open

Pastor Dennis Hannu
Wolf Lake, Minnesota

LOVE DIVINE, SO GREAT AND WONDROUS" is the opening line in this hymn written by Fredrick Arvid Blom. Fredrick was born in Enköping, Sweden, and came to the United States in the 1890's and became an officer in the Salvation Army in Chicago. Later he studied at North Park College and Seminary and then pastored Mission Covenant churches until 1915.

Fredrick fell into deep sin and ended up in prison. He explained, "I drifted from God, and became embittered with myself, and the world, and not the least with ministers who looked on me with suspicion, because I was a member of the Socialist Party." He later was restored in his relationship with God; it is believed that he wrote this song either in prison or shortly after his spiritual revival.

Recently, this was sung at a funeral and I was struck by its lyrics. The message of God's love for sinners and His opening of the gates of heaven to receive us into His heavenly abode abounds in this hymn.

"Love divine, so great and wondrous, Deep and mighty, pure, sublime, Coming from the heart of Jesus, Just the same through tests of time!" *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.* The love that God has shown to us through the finished work of Jesus is described in the first verse of this song. It is a love that transcends human love, for it is a love that is truly divine. It is expressed in the Incarnation of our Lord: "Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, Hail, the incarnate Deity!" (Hark the Herald Angels Sing)

The second verse speaks of God's provision: "God has given you His promise, That He hears and answers prayer; He will heed your supplication, If you cast on Him your care." *Luke 11:2-5: And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.* Jesus taught His disciples that God indeed hears and answers prayer as He taught them to pray. I have often been reminded that the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread," includes not only food but all the provisions that we need to live in this world. God does hear our prayers as we cast our cares on Him.

The third verse speaks of the forgiveness of our sins: "Love divine, so great and wondrous, All my sins He then forgave. I will sing His praise forever, For His blood, His power to save." *Colossians 1:12-14: Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the*

saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: We have been redeemed by His blood. Our sins are forgiven never to be remembered anymore. Hebrews 8:12: For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

The fourth verse speaks of our entrance into heaven: "In life's eventide, at twilight, At His door I'll knock and wait; By the precious love of Jesus, I shall enter heaven's gate." *2 Timothy 4:6-8: For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.* The confidence that the songwriter and Paul express is based on the finished work of Jesus Christ.

The love of God, His provision, His forgiveness, and, finally, our being with Him in heaven are all given to us by the work of Christ. It is in our union with Christ that we gain all things: we have been made right, we have been made holy, we have been purchased out of our captivity, and in all of this we simply boast about Jesus Christ who made it all possible.

The chorus of this song from which it gets its title reiterates the verses: "He the pearly gates will open, So that I may enter in; For He purchased my redemption and forgave me all my sin." It is indeed the work of Christ that opens heaven to me, for He is the one who has thrown open the gates of heaven. He has abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. That is why when we lay the earthly remains of a loved one into the ground, we rejoice in the One who says

that when we are in Him we never die. *John 11:25-26: Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?*

Dear believer, take heart today that even though you still feel the effects of sin in your life, the work of Christ has been done for you. He has purchased your redemption and forgiven you all your sins. He the pearly gates will open, so that you may enter in. Dear believer in Christ, today the gates are open and your name is written in the Lamb's book of life. Praise God! To Him belongs all glory, power, and strength.

God's peace.



What Manner of Man Is This?

Pastor Nicholas Kandoll
New York Mills, Minnesota

And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, let us pass over unto the other side. And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, what manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

Mark 4:35-41

THIS ACCOUNT OF JESUS CALMING THE STORM is a very well-known event in the life of Jesus. We see it in coloring books and Bible story books. It's an account that captures the imagination of children. The imagery that Mark gives us is incredible. With but a word He rebukes the wind and calms the sea!

Through this account we see the faithfulness of our Lord Jesus Christ. He does not ignore the disciples' pleas, but instead answers and delivers them. We also see the faithlessness of the disciples. Hours after Jesus had "expounded all things to his disciples" (v 34), they exhibit a clear lack of faith. This is our humanity in action. Faith trusts God, but our flesh trusts only the things we can control.



Jesus Calms the Tempest James Tissot
Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Faith does not fear death, but our fallen nature fears its end. The disciples fear for their lives, with the result that they wake Jesus and ask a question that at first seems rather silly. "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" We know the answer to this! Of course, Jesus cares. Knowing He cares does not stop us from asking the same question. How often in our lives when things look bleak do we say, "Master, carest thou not that I..." Our own humanity is displayed in this question. In this our own sin and faithlessness is brought out.

Despite the questioning and despite the lack of faith, Jesus rebukes the wind and calms the storm. He answers their cry and delivers them, displaying for all to see that He is God and His Word is authoritative and eternal. In the same way, He shows us our sin and reminds us of His sacrifice on the cross. He uses His authoritative Word to rebuke us in our faithlessness. He uses His eternal Word to show us that our sins are washed away in His precious atoning blood.

One can draw a metaphor from this text. The boat represents the church, the disciples are the Christians in this world navigating the sea of life. The wind and the waves are the storms of life. The pleas for deliverance that come from the disciples are the prayers of the believers for help. And Jesus is who He is, our Lord and Savior. The meaning is that even though it would seem that our Lord is asleep and uncaring about what His people are going through, in due time He will arise and deliver them from the storms and trials unto salvation.

May God give us the grace to see beyond the present suffering and look forward to the life to come. In Jesus' name, Amen.

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

Hebrews 11:13-16

YOU HAVE A FREEDOM THAT people that don't have this faith don't understand. Even though you fall and you make mistakes and you sin, God promises you through what Jesus did on the cross that those sins are forgiven. That brings you a freedom that no one else—anyone that's not a believer—they just don't have. That makes no sense to them. You are reassured and assured that when you go to your grave, you're not going to stay there forever. You can freely know, deeply within your heart, that that's just a temporary resting place. You have the freedom to know that Jesus Christ has already freed you from that grave. Even though Satan tempts you and tries to tell you that you're worthless, you're meaningless, you're just another dot or another grain of sand on the seashore, God's Word gives you this great liberty and freedom to know that you are important, you are precious, and you are meaningful and a valued member of His kingdom. This comes through this gift of faith that God has given you through His Holy Spirit. This gift of faith sets us free from the moment we receive and have been given and realize that we have this gift. This gift of faith that God gave to these people that are, shall we say, in the cemetery of this chapter, they're really not there. They're part of a far greater kingdom that you and I belong to. We don't see them with our natural eyes but we will one day by faith.

Pastor Ray Stenersen; Lake Worth, Florida

Teach Me, O Lord

Gwen Wilson
Ridgefield, Washington

Dear Children, far and near,

Hello to each of you. I hope you are well. I suppose many of you children have just finished the school year and are starting summer vacation. For most of the USA that is what is happening now. Many students have graduated from high school and are starting their first jobs or will start jobs soon. I want to congratulate all of you young grade school and high school students on completing your school year and moving up to the next grade. I also want to give special congratulations to those of you who have graduated from high school. That is a great accomplishment. God bless you as you look to your future.

As you young walk this road of life as well as us older people and we endeavor to lead a Christian life in this world, I want to share with you a very fitting chapter of encouragement from *Psalm 119:33-40*.

THE 119TH PSALM IS FULL OF instruction, praise, prayers, and pleadings to be led in the right path.

Verse 33: *Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end.*

The Lord's statutes are His laws and commandments. I am sure most of you know the Ten Commandments, and in them are all the things we need to know in God's laws and by faith we live by them. We pray to God that we would be able to keep them all our days.

V-34: *Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.*

To ask God for understanding is a very good thing. We need to ask Him for that so that we can really know what He is asking of us in His law. When we ask and learn, then we pray that we would realize that God's law is very important and look on it with our whole heart, not just take it lightly.

V-35-36: *Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight. Incline (make willing or ready) my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.*

This is a prayer that God would make our hearts ready to learn of His written and spoken law that He has especially given to guide those who love Him. The Psalmist David is asking also to be kept from wrong, selfish desires, that we would not want to do things the WAY we think because it suits us more.

V-37: *Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way.*

We would want for the Lord to keep us from seeing ourselves as being pretty good in our own eyes. We would want that He would keep us from being prideful, but rather that He would make us hasten on our journey of faith only to be closer to Him, and not be slothful and lazy.

V-38: *Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear.*

Here the prayer is that God would make His law so sure in the servant's heart that nothing can move it, and that the believer will very lovingly fear and reverence the Lord.

V-39: *Turn away my reproach which I fear: for thy judgments are good.*

The Psalmist is asking that he would be kept from addressing someone with words of disapproval or disappointment and maybe even end up judging them wrongly, but rather that he would wait on the Lord to be the one to judge, because the Lord is always right.

V-40: *Behold I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness.*

The writer has desired greatly to learn God's laws, commandments, and teachings to guide him always. He wants to be a follower of the Lord and Him only. He pleads to have correct thinking and understanding and be found right in the eyes of God. His plea also is for God to give this rightness in his heart now and not to wait.



David Singing James Tissot
Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

I pray for all of you, and for myself also, that we would daily desire to learn more about God and who He really is and what His commandments mean for us. He has laid everything out for us, and the greatest thing He did is send Jesus to die for us – WHY? to forgive us for all our sin and one day we get to go live in heaven with Him, FOREVER!

As you children young and very young walk your journey of this life and even now as you have finished up a school year and enjoy some months off before the next school year starts, keep your mind on God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Keep your focus on Him above who is looking down on you this very minute. He loves you so much and is waiting and ready to hear your prayers. He will give you the best things. I will leave you with these two verses from *Psalm 119:9-10*:

Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?

By taking heed to live according to thy word.

With my whole heart have I sought thee:

O let me not wander from thy commandments.

Enjoy your summertime. Stay safe!

God's peace.

Every One that Loveth

C.O. Rosenius

...And every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

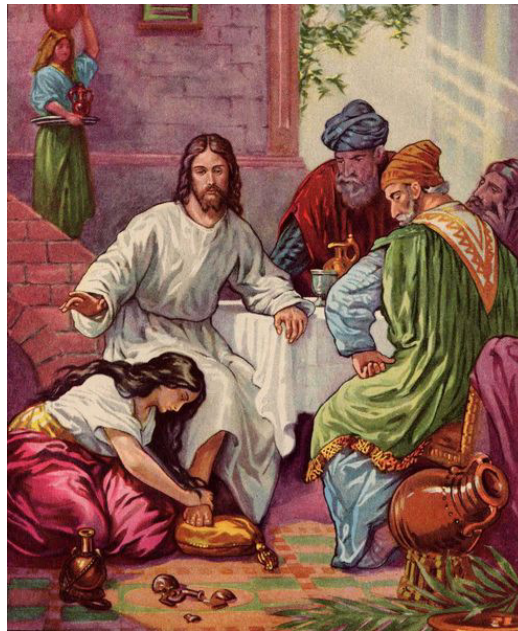
1 John 4:7

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO MAKE SNOW AND ICE to be warm and still remain as snow and ice. Equally fruitless it is to force oneself to love God rightly, and to love one's neighbor rightly, before the heart has been changed, before one has got a new heart which itself goes out in love. Love is a free thing, a thing of the heart. Love cannot be forced. No matter how you force yourself to speak and live, you still cannot force your heart to love what it does not want to love. Therefore, it is foolishness to preach about love to a heart who has not been born again. *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. (Romans 8:7)* All the love a neighbor thinks he has for God before the new birth, is imagined, selfish and limited. You love God only when He does and speaks what pleases you. But when He puts you to a test, or bids you do something you do not want to do, then you murmur against Him and accuse His commandments of being severe. Neither do you love your neighbor as yourself, but you are always more anxious for your own benefit than for his.

That is the way all human hearts are by nature. Yes, all without exception. If you then ask how you can get a new heart, a heart that loves rightly, then take note of this: you will never get true love to God before He first shows you His so great love that your heart is melted by the warmth of His love. You cannot begin by presenting Him with your love. But begin by receiving love from Him. As the Apostle John says: *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us. (1 John 4:10)* And Jesus says: *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you... (John 15:16)* But now there is no love of God which could so melt and change all your being as the love which comprises and saves all your being—the love which means life itself for time and eternity, namely, your pardon with God, the forgiveness of your sins and your blessed adoption to be a child of God. The Lord Himself spoke about this in the house of Simon, the Pharisee.

A notorious, sinful woman comes in, falls down at His feet, washes them with her tears, wipes them with her hair. The Pharisees are astonished hereby, but Christ explains the matter thus: "There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore which of them will love him most?" The reply was: "He, to whom he forgave most." And Jesus added: "Thou hast rightly judged. Her sins which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much" (Luke 7). See here the meaning of the words of the apostle: *Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. (Romans 5:20)* The more of law in the conscience, the more the sins storm within and are felt. The more sin is felt, the greater grace becomes, when all these sins are being forgiven. And the more grace you get, the greater your love, your joy and your gratitude become.

This is the order of the ruling of the New Testament, that God—who commanded us to love our enemies and heap coals of fire on their heads by benefactions—Himself does the same to us. He melts and overcomes us by the glowing coals of overflowing grace. And now, not until now, do you begin to return His love. Now your heart becomes changed so that you can love all human beings with an entirely new love. Because the love of God has been poured into your heart by the Holy Spirit you have received.



This love to the neighbor is twofold, charity and brotherly kindness. With charity you love all human beings and do good to them wherever you can and in all their needs. This love does not presuppose any confidence, any friendship, because it does not demand anything from the object than that it is a human being. About this love Jesus said: "Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you," etc. It is important to observe this, if you want to be a Christian, so that you do not only love those who

are your friends and do good to you—those whom people call lovable. It should not be like that, if you want to be a Christian! You are supposed only to think whether they have the same human blood as you, or whether they are descended from the same Father in heaven and the same ancestor on earth as you are and whether they have been redeemed by the same blood as you. When you see a person needing help, it would then be a great encouragement for you to love them, if you would think: this is my brother, my sister! Because, according to the flesh, we are all of us brethren!

The second kind of Christian love is brotherly love. Brotherly love makes all the children of God in the world become united in a blessed, sincere and intimate circle of brethren and sisters one of another. This brotherhood does not know any limits because of the different confessions of different churches, different forms and places, different status and conditions of living, but it looks at something else, something present wherever Christ is preached, namely the children of God, born of God. Because the foundation of this brotherly love is only this: *...every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. (1 John 5:1)* And here is the reason why Christ stated plainly that this love is the mark of His true "disciples" when He said: *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. (John 13:35)* Because hypocrites can imitate everything else, except brotherly love, because brotherly love looks at those who are born of God. ~

Mercy Rejoiceth Against Judgment

Leonard Typpö [From Siionin Lähetyslehti, Dec. 1915]

Submitted by Ralph and Barbara Somero; New Ipswich, New Hampshire
 judgment. There we see how the savor of the bloody sacrifice scatters the clouds of Zion, appeases the wrath of the righteous God, and quenches the fire of judgment. May that blessed flame of eternal mercy and love ever burn in the heart of the bride, even as it has burned in the heart of the Bridegroom on Golgotha's cross even when He drank the gall of condemnation in our stead. Amen! Hallelujah! Mercy rejoiceth against judgment! ~

For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

James 2:13

THROUGHOUT HIS WHOLE EPISTLE THE Apostle James is speaking of what living faith effects, from which is brought clearly to light also the difference between living faith and dead faith. A person who is born of God is united with God in the Holy Spirit by faith—united to Him who is eternal mercy and love. By faith, the grace, mercy, and love of God are continually flowing into the heart. This quenches fleshly zeal and effects true humility and obedience in love to God. The believer lives in the mercy of God, and mercy toward all reigns in his heart. He can no longer remain idle, for love constrains him to serve and to do good to his

neighbors. Thus he follows the steps of the Redeemer and strives to “learn of Him is meek and lowly of heart.”

Mercy

He who has true knowledge and heavenly wisdom will *shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.* (James 3:13) This wisdom is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. (James 3:17) Works testify that faith has been “made perfect,” (James 2:22) that is, living, and this life is purely a gift by faith through the Redeemer’s merits. Bitter “envying and strife” (James 3:16) depart from the heart. One no longer feels that he is big, nor does he want to become big by human means. Beloved, the merits of the Lord Jesus by the grace of God are the only means by which we are acceptable to God. We have need to become more deeply rooted therein—into that eternal mercy and love—so firmly that even the power of the fiercest storm cannot sever us from it.

Mercy rejoiceth against judgment. God has taught us this mercy, and still is teaching us in knowing Him. This is no doctrine of outward customs which is followed unwillingly because of demands of the law, but is the constraint of the love of God in the hearts of His children which ever renews mercy, kindness, and brotherly love. Faith in a good and clean conscience does not leave one idle, nor does it raise man up to be a lord or a master in the kingdom of heaven. Rather, it causes one to follow the example of Jesus in love; washing one another’s feet, not in the zeal of the lawyer with fiery darts, nor with any murderous doctrine, for we have not come to the mount that cannot be touched and that burneth with fire. But the true place of cleansing is at the springs of Zion which flow in a mercy-stream from the blood of the Lamb. Let us go often to that fount, so that we can always feel how mercy rejoiceth against

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The Breath of Life

Lois Matson
Yacolt, Washington

Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; **he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein:** I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. (Isaiah 42:5-7)

Breathing is important. If someone isn't breathing, we know that their life expectancy is very, very short. Without the precious oxygen that nourishes the brain and body, death is mere moments away. If someone is unable to breathe for themselves, a person can perform CPR—cardiopulmonary resuscitation—to force the heart to manually pump blood and oxygen through the incapacitated person's body.*

WHEN GOD CREATED ADAM FROM the dust of the ground, He breathed His life-giving breath into the man and man became a living soul (Genesis 2:7). The Apostle Paul, in preaching to the people of Athens, said that God gives to all of us natural life and breath. *God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth... seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things...* (Acts 17:24-25)

Elihu explained to Job: *The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.* (Job 33:4) If God stopped giving breath to us, we all would die immediately. *Yea, surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment. Who hath given him a charge over the earth? or who hath disposed the whole world? If he set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath; All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.* (Job 34:12-15)

Notice that the Holy Spirit of God is connected to His breath. "Pneuma," the Greek word for Holy Spirit is also translated as "wind, breath." Remember on the Day of Pentecost that the Holy Spirit came as a rushing mighty wind. Another reference to Spirit/wind is in the gospel of John (3:5-8), when Jesus told Nicodemus: "Truly, truly I say to you, unless a person is born of water and the Spirit (pneuma) he cannot enter the kingdom of God... The wind (pneuma) blows where it wants to, and you hear the sound of it, but you can't tell where it comes from or where it goes: it is the same for every person who is born of the Spirit (pneuma)."

In the Valley of the Dry Bones, Ezekiel prophesied at the command of the Lord. *Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord.* (Ezekiel 37:4-6) And it happened as the Lord had commanded.

It still happens this way today. Everyone who is born of the Spirit has been touched by the life-giving and God-breathed Word. Through the Word, the Holy Spirit testifies of Christ, revealing Christ to us, and drawing us to faith in Him. Through the "foolishness" of preaching, by the words of mere mortals who prophesy at the command of the Lord, the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to contrite sinners, bringing LIFE to their dead souls. The breath of God enters as a rushing mighty wind, the Comforter of their overheated and anguished hearts. Their dry bones are renewed and restored, and they are strengthened to walk another day.

The Holy Spirit of God, through the Living Word, brings life and breath to dead people, moving as the wind we cannot see wherever and however He pleases. We can only see and feel the effects of the wind, and of the Spirit of God. We don't know how it happens, but we see dead men made eternally alive! Thanks be to God.

***NOTE:** Back in the old days, when I was young, CPR was done in A-B-C (airway-breathing-compressions) order, but in recent years C-A-B is recommended. At the urging of the medical community and emergency personnel, compression-only CPR has replaced the more complicated and germ phobic mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Please learn about compression-only CPR. You might save a life!



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Time

Pastor Jay Weidner
Laurium, Michigan

IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE HOW swiftly time passes. "Time flies." "Time marches on." "Time waits for no man." These are some of the quotes we often hear about time. We seem to be enslaved by it, it appears inescapable, we only have so much time. Such is our lot.

These things really aren't true. In fact, they're false. In my readings a while ago I came upon an author who indicated that Jesus had come to us from the future. In musing upon that thought I came to understand that it was just as true as saying Jesus came to us from the past. God isn't subject to time; time is subject to God. God created it. God is "I am" and Jesus Christ has always been with Him and in Him from the beginning. Therefore Jesus belongs as much to the future as He does to the past, but really belongs to neither of them. He, in fact, owns them both.

So the book of Revelation records of God the Father:

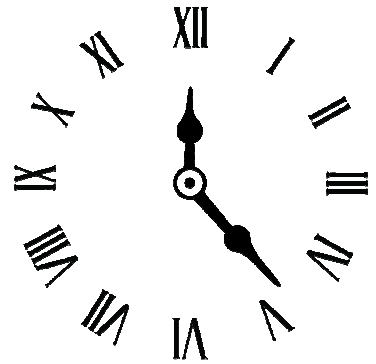
I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. (Revelation 1:8)

and of Jesus the Son:

And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: 18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. (Revelation 1:17-18)

Time, therefore, isn't some independent entity that marches on. It is supervised; God keeps it. The past, the present and the future are all relative to us. One generation's future is another's present and still another's past. Yet God in Jesus Christ remains "the same yesterday, and to day, and forever." (Hebrews 13:8) We are in union with Christ and therefore are eternal beings filled with the Spirit who have the promise of eternity. We are subject to time only as Christ made Himself subject to it during His earthly sojourn, but in the end it won't be time marching on but us marching in. We often need to be less influenced by time and need more simply follow Jesus. For in the end time will be no more, but God will be all and in all and we in Him. Blessings on your time (it never ends!).

God's peace.



DEATH IS INDEED AN AWFUL and undefeated tyrant; but God's power makes nothing out of that which is everything, just as it makes all things out of that which is nothing. Look at Adam and Eve. They're full of sin and death. And yet, because they hear the promise concerning the Seed who will crush the serpent's head, they have the same hope we have, namely, that death will be taken away, that sin will be abolished, and that righteousness, life, peace, etc., will be restored. In this hope our first parents live and die, and because of this hope they are truly holy and righteous. Thus we also live in the same hope. And, because of Christ, when we die, we keep this hope, which the Word sets before us by directing us to put our trust in the merits of Christ. It is vain to long for such perfection in this life that we become wholly righteous, that we love God perfectly, and that we love our neighbors as we love ourselves. We make some progress; but sin, which wars in our members (Romans 7:23) and is present everywhere, either corrupts or altogether obstructs this obedience.

Therefore just as our very life can be called a death because of the death which lies ahead of us, so also our righteousness is completely buried by sins. By hope we hold fast to both life and righteousness, things which are hidden from our eyes and our understanding, but will be made manifest in due time.

Martin Luther

**And I will put enmity
between thee and the woman,
and between thy seed and
her seed; it shall bruise
thy head, and thou shalt
bruise his heel.**

- Genesis 3:15 (KJV) -