

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.**

January 2021

Take the Name of Jesus

Pastor Dennis Hannu
Wolf Lake, Minnesota

THE NAME THAT WOULD BE given to the Christ child is announced to Joseph in Matthew's gospel record and to Mary in the gospel of Luke. Joseph received the announcement by a heavenly messenger in his dream, *Matthew 1:20-21: But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.* Mary received the announcement by a heavenly messenger as well, recorded in *Luke 1:30-31: And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.*

The name Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua. Jesus literally means Savior, and, as Matthew says, He Himself will save His people from their sins. This name is the name above every name, for there is no other name under heaven whereby men can be saved. It is this name that will bring everyone to their knees in confession that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. It is this name that strikes fear in the demonic forces and has defeated once and for all Satan himself, that great accuser of the brethren. *Luke 10:17-20: And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.* It is the name of Jesus that has brought us the message of salvation and given us our place in heaven, for when the roll call is given there, our name will be found written in the book. It is the name that remains with us always and the one we take with us wherever we go. It is this name that calms our fears and brings us hope in all of life's circumstances and into this new year.

It is this message that the song writer Lydia Baxter expresses in her hymn "Take the Name of Jesus With You."

She was born on September 8, 1809, in Petersburg, New York. Lydia was a zealous Christian worker despite being bed-ridden for much of her life. Her home was known as a gathering place for preachers, evangelists, and Christian workers, who came to her for inspiration and advice. Her friends used to say that a visit to her sickroom was not so much to give her encouragement and comfort as to receive some buoyancy for their own spirits. Mrs. Baxter was an avid student of the Bible and loved to discuss the significance of scriptural names with her friends. But the name that meant everything to her was the name of Jesus. When questioned about her cheery disposition in spite of her physical difficulties, she would reply, "I have a very special armor. I have the name of Jesus. When the tempter tries to make me

blue or despondent, I mention the name of Jesus, and he can't get through to me anymore." "Take the Name of Jesus with you" is said to have been written by Lydia on her sick bed just four years before her death on June 22, 1874, in New York City. (*101 More Hymn Stories*, by Kenneth W. Osbeck) Here are the lyrics to the hymn:



*Take the name of Jesus with you, child of sorrow and of woe.
It will joy and comfort give you; Take it, then, where'er you go.
Take the name of Jesus ever As a shield from every snare.
If temptations round you gather, Breathe that holy name in prayer.
O the precious name of Jesus! How it thrills our souls with joy
When His loving arms receive us, And His songs our tongues employ!
At the name of Jesus bowing, Falling prostrate at His feet,
King of kings in heaven we'll crown Him, When our journey is complete.
Precious name, O how sweet! Hope of earth and joy of heaven;
Precious name, O how sweet! Hope of earth and joy of heaven.*

Loved ones, as we begin this new year 2021 A.D., also known as the year of our Lord, let us take the name of Jesus with us wherever we go. Let us speak His name into the lives of the people we encounter at home, at work, at school, and elsewhere, by the things we say and do. God bless you this year and always with that amazing testimony of the name above every name: the name of Jesus, our Savior, our Redeemer, our Lord, and our God. ~

A New Year in the Lord

Alvin Holmgren
January 2002 CM

AS WE WELCOME EACH NEW YEAR, we tend to linger between two thoughts. On the one hand, we look back in retrospect on the year that is passing. On the other, we look forward in anticipation to the new year that is dawning.

From my early youth, I remember the special feelings that would fill my entire being on New Year's Eve. It seemed that I could not pass this milestone without a certain amount of regret in my heart. I had a sense of remorse over the failures of the year: my inability to keep the resolutions that I had conscientiously and prayerfully made at the year's beginning.

As I thought upon the new year and the opportunities it would provide, I wanted to live so carefully, to walk so cautiously, that I would not again immediately put the stain of sin upon this new, clean, and beautiful page of life which the Lord was opening before me.

However, not many hours into the new year, I would again, to my dismay, find that, although the spirit was willing, my flesh was weak. It would become necessary to renew my heart with the comfort of the words, *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.* (1 John 2:1-2)

Repentance from sin and the forgiveness of God are personal and individual experiences that the Holy Spirit continues to work in the hearts of all believers. Biblical records, as well as church history, show that God has also created spiritual awakenings that have led to revivals in many nations.

Since the terrorist attacks in our country on September 11th, many people have been moved to seek God in prayer, and to ask for His protection. Christians have been more diligent in prayer on behalf of our President and those who share the responsibility of government. Prayer has been made that God will extend His grace, and bless these signs of concern for our national security so that they will include a much-needed signs of repentance from sin and God's forgiveness on a national level.

It has been gratifying to observe that our President, members of Congress, and members of the Supreme Court, along with two chaplains, came together in the rotunda of our Capitol to pray and seek repentance for our nation, and to ask God to forgive our nation for its sins. We have been urged by members of Congress to pray that God will bless our leaders so that this moment in history will become real in our hearts.

Upon opening the mail today, I was moved when I read the verses of sacred Scripture that were included in the

Christmas greeting President and Mrs. Bush have mailed throughout the nation. These are the words: *Thy face, Lord, will I seek. I believe [I shall] see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.* (Psalm 27:8, 13)



Dear friends, as we enter this new year, let us all remember to take the name of Jesus with us because it will give us joy and comfort wherever we go. *And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.* (Colossians 3:17)

Let us not carry with us from last year in a conscience matters that would be a hindrance to us in this new year. Rather, let us leave the sins of the past at the throne of grace, remembering the biblical counsel to *lay aside every weight, and the sin which*

doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith... (Hebrews 12:1-2)

To speak a little more directly of conscience matters, many which involve our inter-relationships, let us pause and consider our walk. Where we have been harsh and uncaring, where we have been cold and indifferent, where we have been selfish, judgmental, and fault-finding, where we have committed the sins of the tongue—backbiting, slandering, evil-speaking, bearing false witness—where we have been unforgiving, harboring bitterness and envy, where we have thought of ourselves more highly than we ought to think (Romans 12:3), been proud and unyielding, looking down on our brethren and not seeing them in the light of Calvary and the redemptive work of Christ, or we have yielded to fleshly temptations—yes, wherever we have sinned, let us hasten to the fountain of cleansing which is open for sin and all uncleanness.

In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness. (Zechariah 13:1) Then we can more freely run the race that is set before us, *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.*

This verse of Scripture reminds us that our time here is not to be spent in carefree living, as one would meander through a peaceful meadow. We are running a race, and not one of our own choosing. It has been set before us by the love and grace of the Almighty.

We cannot run this race with the desired degree of success if our spiritual help is hindered by burdens that are inappropriate for the children of God.

If, in the light of God's Word, we find that we are not properly outfitted for this race, our gracious Lord has left us a remedy. He wants to reopen our eyes to the provision that He made at the supper table in the upper room, when He instituted the Holy Supper. As He washed His disciples' feet, Jesus said, *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 13:14-17)

Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained. (John 20:23)

Let us enter this new year relieved of all the burdens of sin, having faith and a good conscience, so that we may walk in charity with God and with our fellow men. The Word says, *If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. (Romans 12:18)*

The Lord went so far in His concern for this true harmony and His church that He taught His disciples to go one step beyond the care of their own consciences when He said, *Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. (Matthew 5:23-24)*

The Lord's promise is that *if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. (1 John 1:7)* ~

Coming for Rest

Frances R. Havergal

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Matthew 11:28-30

"This is *not* your rest." God says so, and therefore it is no use seeking or hoping or trying for it. You may as well give up first as last. The dove found no rest for the sole of her foot till she came to the Ark (Genesis 8:9); and neither will you. And the end of the dreary vista of unrest (Revelation 14:11) all through the years of a life without Christ, is, "They have no rest day nor night."

"The people shall weary themselves for very vanity (Habakkuk 2:13)." Do you know anything about that? "They weary themselves to commit iniquity (Jeremiah 9:5)." "Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way (Isaiah 57:10)." Do these words come home to you? Or, "But now He hath made me weary; Thou hast made desolate all my company (Job 16:7)"? Whether it is the weariness of sin or of sorrow, of vanity or of desolation (and sooner or later the one must lead into the other), the gentle call floats over the troubled waters, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor (or "are weary") and I will give you rest."

But stay; you may, or rather you must, put in a double claim to the promise. You may not be, consciously, particularly weary of laboring; but, whether conscious of it or not, you are heavy laden (Isaiah 1:4), unless the one great burden of sin is taken away from you. It is a fact, whether the Holy Spirit has convinced (John 16:8-9) you of it or not as yet, that unless your iniquity is taken away by personal washing in the only Fountain, you are in the position described in the 38th Psalm (38:4): "Mine iniquities are gone over my head; as an heavy burden, they are too heavy for me." So much too heavy for you, that if you do not accept Christ's offer of rest from that burden, you will never be able to find or follow the path of life. But why bear it one minute longer, when Jesus says, "Come unto Me, all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"?

"He hath given us rest by His sorrow, and life by His death (John Bunyan);" "rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from thy hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve (Isaiah 14:3)." Come and take the gift! It is gloriously real. It is no mere slight and temporary sense of relief. "We which have believed do enter into rest (Hebrews 4:3)."

And He gives us "rest on every side," complete rest, (1 Kings 5:4) guarded and sheltered all round.

It is not only rest from all the weariness and burdens, but rest in Himself. Jesus is spoken of in type as "the Man of Rest (1 Chronicles 22:9)," "and His rest shall be glorious (Isaiah 11:10)." It is this, His own Divine rest, that He will give.

"This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest (Isaiah 28:12)." Is it not worth having? Will you not come for it? You cannot have it without coming to Jesus (Hosea 13:9); but only come, and it shall be yours—for there stands His word—and "in returning and rest shall ye be saved (Isaiah 30:15)."



**I heard the voice of Jesus say, "Come unto Me and rest;
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down Thy head upon My breast."
I came to Jesus as I was, Weary, and worn, and sad;
I found in Him a resting-place, And He has made me glad.**

Dr. H. Bonar

Jesus Lead Us

Gwen Wilson
Ridgefield, Washington

Dear Children,

Hello to each of you. I do hope you are all well. I want to tell you I had a nice stay with my daughter and her family and it was special to be there to meet our newest granddaughter. I really appreciated my husband offering to write the last page in my absence.

SOMETHING HAS HAPPENED TO A few of our family, including me. We contacted the COVID virus. Most of us had mild symptoms and a couple had the aches, some fever and we all had tiredness. Thankfully we have all recovered. It's a very strange thing that has happened to the whole world, and maybe some of you have even been affected.

We do not know how this will all turn out long term, nor does anyone out there in the scientific world. The one and only certainty for the Christian is that we know that God knows and we need His leading. That is part of the reason I titled this article as I did.

This has been a challenging year for the whole entire world. Now the old year is behind us, and the new year has come. The One we must often go to in prayer is God. We need to have Jesus living in our hearts, and we need to allow Him to lead us through every day that He gives us.

We need Jesus to hold onto us and help us through what may be evil forces at work. We know there are many things out there to take the Christian's eyes off of the Savior. The children of God will always be in some kind of battle. *Ephesians 6:12: For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

I am so thankful God sees all that goes on down here, not only with the whole world but with each and every person living, those who are just born, the very young, the youths, all those older people, and the oldest ones. No one escapes His view. NOTHING is hid from Him.

I honestly will admit I'm guilty of not always putting my trust in God and His Son as I should. I don't mean to be untrusting, but I do know God lifts me up and helps me in my weak times and keeps setting my feet on solid ground. I need Jesus to carry me, and to hear me when I cry for help.

You need Jesus, too, and you can go to Him whenever you need help. He has promised to be there for His children for as long as life shall last.

I want to encourage all of you to keep Jesus in your heart in this new year. I pray that it will yet be your desire to serve Him with your life in this new year. I pray that you will allow Him to lead you. I pray that when temptations come that you will flee the devil and the sneaky ways he tries to snare you.



Our God is a jealous God and He wants you all to Himself in this life and for the next. He loves us SO much and is ever ready to give us those things we need for this life. He is such a good Father.

I want to leave you with these tender Bible verses:

**My son, keep my words,
and lay up my commandments with thee.
Keep my commandments, and live;
and my law as the apple of thine eye.
Bind them upon thy fingers,
write them upon the tables of thine heart.**

Proverbs 7:1-3

I wish you all a happier New Year in the Lord.

God's peace.

2021 Apostolic Lutheran Church Calendars

We are now taking orders for the 2021 ALC calendars that will be ready for shipment in December. The price of the calendar is \$5.50 each to cover the cost of printing and mailing. Do not prepay for the calendars. A bill will be included with the calendars for payment to be mailed to the Federation accountant.

Please send your order in one of the following ways:

- By email: alc_calendars@mac.com
- By telephone: Leave a message at 925-454-1648
- or by mail to: Corrie Karlsen, 2994 Rodeo Lane, Livermore, CA 94550

Corrie Karlsen, ALC Calendar Committee

The Second Commandment

The Large Catechism

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain.

AS THE FIRST COMMANDMENT HAS instructed the heart and taught the basis of faith, so this commandment leads us forth and directs the mouth and tongue to God. For the first objects that spring from the heart and manifest themselves are words. Now, as I have taught above how to answer the question, what it is to have a god, so you must learn to comprehend simply the meaning of this and all the commandments, and to apply it to yourself.

If, then, it be asked: How do you understand the Second Commandment, or what is meant by taking in vain, or misusing God's name? answer briefly thus: It is misusing God's name when we call upon the Lord God, no matter in what way, for purposes of falsehood or wrong of any kind. Therefore this commandment enjoins this much, that God's name must not be appealed to falsely, or taken upon the lips, while the heart knows well enough, or should know, differently; as among those who take oaths in court, where one side lies against the other.

For God's name cannot be misused worse than for the support of falsehood and deceit. Let this remain the exact German and simplest meaning of this commandment.

From this every one can readily infer when and in how many ways God's name is misused, although it is impossible to enumerate all its misuses. Yet, to tell it in a few words, all misuse of the divine name occurs, first, in worldly business and in matters which concern money, possessions, honor, whether it be publicly in court, in the market, or wherever else men make false oaths in God's name, or pledge their souls in any matter...

But, the greatest abuse occurs in spiritual matters, which pertain to the conscience, when false preachers rise up and offer their lying vanities as God's Word.

Behold, all this is decking one's self out with God's name, or making a pretty show, or claiming to be right, whether it occur in gross, worldly business or in sublime, subtle matters of faith and doctrine. And among liars belong also blasphemers, not alone the very gross, well known to every one, who disgrace God's name without fear (these are not for us, but for the hangman to discipline); but also those who publicly traduce the truth and God's Word and consign it to the devil. Of this there is no need now to speak further.

Here, then, let us learn and take to heart the great importance of this commandment, that with all diligence we may guard against and dread every misuse of the holy name, as the greatest sin that can be outwardly committed. For to lie and deceive is in itself a great sin, but is greatly aggravated when we attempt to justify it, and seek to confirm it by invoking the name of God and using it as a cloak for shame, so that from a single lie a double lie, nay, manifold lies, result.

For this reason, too, God has added a solemn threat to this commandment, to wit: For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain. That is: It shall not be condoned to any one nor pass unpunished. For as little as He will leave it unavenged if any one turn his heart from Him, as



little will He suffer His name to be employed for dressing up a lie.

Now, alas! it is a common calamity in all the world that there are as few who are not using the name of God for purposes of lying and all wickedness as there are those who with their heart trust alone in God.

For by nature we all have within us this beautiful virtue, to wit, that whoever has committed a wrong would like to cover up and adorn his

disgrace, so that no one may see it or know it; and no one is so bold as to boast to all the world of the wickedness he has perpetrated; all wish to act by stealth and without any one being aware of what they do. Then, if any one be arraigned, the name of God is dragged into the affair and must make the villainy look like godliness, and the shame like honor. This is the common course of the world, which, like a great deluge, has flooded all lands.

Hence we have also as our reward what we seek and deserve: pestilences, wars, famines, conflagrations, floods, wayward wives, children, servants, and all sorts of defilement. Whence else should so much misery come? It is still a great mercy that the earth bears and supports us.

Therefore, above all things, our young people should have this commandment earnestly enforced upon them, and they should be trained to hold this and the First Commandment in high regard; and whenever they transgress, we must at once be after them with the rod, and hold the commandment before them, and constantly inculcate it, so as to bring them up not only with punishment, but also in the reverence and fear of God.

Thus you now understand what it is to take God's name in vain, that is (to recapitulate briefly), either simply for purposes of falsehood, and to allege God's name for something that is not so, or to curse, swear, conjure, and, in short, to practice whatever wickedness one may.

Besides this you must also know how to use the name of God aright. For when saying: Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain, He gives us to understand at the same time that it is to be used properly. For it has been revealed and given to us for the very purpose that it may be of constant use and profit.

Hence it is a natural inference, since using the holy name for falsehood or wickedness is here forbidden, that we are, on the other hand, commanded to employ it for truth and for all good, as when one swears truly where there is need and it is demanded. So also when there is right teaching, and when the name is invoked in trouble or praised and thanked in prosperity, all of which is comprehended summarily and commanded in the passage *Psalm 50:15: Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.* For all this is bringing it into the service of truth, and using it in a blessed way, and thus His name is hallowed, as we pray in the Lord's Prayer...

Behold, thus we might train our youth, in a childlike way and playfully in the fear and honor of God, so that the First and Second Commandments might be well observed and in constant practice. Then some good might take root, spring up

and bear fruit, and men grow up whom an entire land might relish and enjoy. Moreover, this would be the true way to bring up children well as long as they can become trained with kindness and delight. For what must be enforced with rods and blows only will not develop into a good breed, and at best they will remain godly under such treatment no longer than while the rod is upon their back.

But this manner of training so spreads its roots in the heart that they fear God more than rods and clubs. This I say

with such simplicity for the sake of the young, that it may penetrate their minds. For since we are preaching to children, we must also prattle with them. Thus we have prevented the abuse and have taught the right use of the divine name, which should consist not only in words, but also in practice and life, so that we may know that God is well pleased with this, and will as richly reward it as He will terribly punish the abuse. ~

Rejoice in the Truth

Pastor Gary Geer
Corvallis, Oregon

JESUS SAID, *I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.* (John 14:6) John wrote these words, which came also from the loving heart of God, our Father. The truth that John wrote of is clearly stated in Christ's ministry.

Jesus spoke to the Jews with longsuffering and patience concerning what God has sent Him to do. First, Jesus told them, *When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he.* (John 8:28) Then Jesus identified the true disciples as those who believe in Him and continue in His Word.

To those who believe, they will be freed from sin and condemnation by the truth.

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?

Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. (John 8:32-36)

Yes, there is joy and spiritual affection for those in faith, as John expressed when he wrote, *The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.* (3 John 1:1) I believe John knew of this love and its power from experience.

So did Isaiah, when he recorded his joy, also in the truth. *So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace...* (Isaiah 55:11-12)

The heart of Jesus, as expressed in John, chapter eight, is of the same spirit produced in the Apostle Paul as he wrote unto the Romans. *First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers...* (Romans 1:8-9)

We desire that we would prosper in the truth, not just for our physical health, but also, as David wrote in Psalm 1:1-2: *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.* (Psalm 1:1-2)

We are blessed in the righteousness of Christ. Blessedness is a condition in which a righteous man is happy. By the leading of the Spirit, he avoids evil influences, deeds, and attitudes of the world. We delight in His Word; therefore, we prosper in Him, who has made all things ready for us.

May we continue to labor and prosper in the name of Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. And, as John rejoiced greatly when the brother and came and testified of the truth that was in Gaius, may our hearts rejoice, also, in those who carry the Word, and hold fast to it.

With love and God's peace.

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee. Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater.

Isaiah 55:1-10

The Face of God

Lois Matson
Yacolt, Washington

You can tell a lot about a person by their face. You can see joy, sorrow, peace, anger, pride, or shame in a face. When someone turns their face toward you, they show their favor to you or pay attention to you. When someone turns their face away, they reject or despise you.

Deuteronomy 34:10 tells us that there has never been a prophet in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew **face to face**, and yet even Moses could not see the face of God's glory.

AFTER THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL had fallen into idolatry with the golden calf, God was angry. Moses interceded for the people, and in that intercession, he made a very specific request: Moses asked to see the glory of God. You can read this in Exodus 33.

Moses told the Lord: "You have said 'I know you by name,' and 'You have found grace in My sight.' Now if I have found grace in Your sight, please show me Your way, so that I may know You, and I may find grace in Your sight. Consider that this nation is Your people."

The Lord replied, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

Moses continued, "If Your presence does not go with me, do not carry us up from here, for how shall it be known that I and Your people have found grace in Your sight? Is it not in that You go with us? So we are separate, I and Your people, from all the people that are on the face of the earth."

The Lord said to Moses, "I will do this thing that you have spoken, for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name."

Moses begged, "Please! Show me Your glory!"

And the Lord said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim My name 'the Lord' before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have mercy on whom I have mercy. But you cannot see My face, for no man shall see Me and live. Look! There is a place near Me where you shall stand upon a rock, and while My glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft of the rock. I will cover you with My hand while I pass by. I will take away My hand and you shall see My back side, but My face shall not be seen."

Matthew Henry writes regarding this passage:

"Moses speaks as one who dreaded the thought of going forward without the Lord's presence. God's gracious promises, and mercy towards us, should not only encourage our faith, but also excite our fervency in prayer. Observe how he speeds. See, in a type, Christ's intercession, which He ever lives to make for all that come to God by Him; and that it is not by any thing in those for whom He intercedes. Moses then entreats a sight of God's glory, and is heard in that also. A full discovery of the glory of God would overwhelm even Moses himself. Man is mean, and unworthy of it; weak, and could not bear it; guilty, and could not but dread it. The merciful display which is made in Christ Jesus, alone can be borne by us. The Lord granted that which would abundantly satisfy. God's goodness is His glory; and He will have us to know Him by the glory of His mercy, more than by the glory of His majesty. Upon the rock there was a fit place for Moses to view the goodness and glory of God. The rock in Horeb was typical of Christ the Rock; the Rock of refuge, salvation, and strength. Happy are they who stand upon this Rock. The cleft may be an emblem of Christ, as smitten, crucified, wounded, and slain. What follows, denotes the imperfect knowledge of God in the present state, even as revealed in Christ; for this, when compared with the heavenly sight of Him is but like seeing a man that is gone by, whose back only is to be seen. God in Christ, as He is, even the fullest and brightest displays of His glory, grace, and goodness, are reserved to another state."

Mere mortals cannot behold the face of the Almighty in its glory and live to tell about it. But God clothed Himself in flesh, becoming human, in order to show us His glory in the

face of His Son. Paul wrote to the congregation in Corinth: *For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 4:6)*

God has turned His face toward us in the Person of His Son Jesus. He has set our feet on the Solid Rock of Christ. God has made His glorious face to shine on us in mercy, and He has given us His peace. The presence of the Lord goes before us and gives us rest. This is amazing love! ~



For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.
2 Corinthians 4:6 KJV

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Send articles for publication to:

Lois Matson, Editor
Email: cm@apostoliclutheran.org
Phone: (360) 904-6951
Postal Mail to:
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Anders & Clara Sundqvist, Managers
THE BOOK CONCERN
PO Box 2126
Battle Ground, WA 98604 USA
Phone: (360) 896-7344
Email: books@apostoliclutheran.org

Apostolic Lutheran Church of America

www.apostoliclutheran.org

Western Mission: western@apostoliclutheran.org

Eastern Mission: eastern@apostoliclutheran.org

Foreign Mission: foreign@apostoliclutheran.org

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The Benediction

Paul Kretzmann

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them.

Numbers 6:22-27

The Form of Public Blessing. — And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, especially at the time of dismissal at the end of worship (Lev. 9:22), saying unto them, The Lord bless thee and keep thee. This first strophe of the blessing forms the general

foundation of the entire benediction, of the whole salvation brought to men by revelation. The blessing of Jehovah should be upon them, give to them all prosperity in material and spiritual things in full and rich measure. This includes that He will turn aside every curse, ward off every adversity from those that are His. The providence of God, both in granting blessings and in hindering misfortunes, is thus invoked.

The Lord make His face shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee. While the face of Jehovah is terrible upon those that oppose Him and strikes down His enemies with the rays of His glory, it is full of the richest and warmest sunlight of salvation to those that turn to Him in faith (Ps. 27:1, 43:3, 44:4). But the greatest beauty of this light consists in the fact that it throws rays of mercy into the heart that sighs for mercy and forgiveness. It is the grace of God in the redemption of Jesus Christ that blots out all guilt.

The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace. From the position of being raised up above the believer and shedding forth the rays of His merciful blessing, the warmth of the love of God sinks down upon the sinner and penetrates his entire being with its miraculous power. The aim of this work on the part of Jehovah is to give to the believer His peace, His salvation. The children of God should have the full assurance that all strife is now a thing of the past, that they are forever rescued out of all the distress and curse of sin and its consequences.

The threefold blessing reminds us of the Trinity of the Godhead and of the threefold form of the work of God's goodness and mercy in dealing with His children. There can be no doubt, therefore, that we are justified in finding here a statement of the Trinity of God.

And they shall put My name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them. The blessing, as spoken by the priest, was not a mere pious wish, but it actually transmitted the divine power of blessing to the people. Every Israelite that believed these words as pronounced upon him went to his home with the blessing of the Lord resting upon him. To this day the members of the congregation are dismissed with the words of this blessing, and should take home with them the merciful goodness of the Triune God, especially the assurance of the forgiveness of their sins. ~

"Jesus, Lover of my soul, let me to Thy bosom fly, While the nearer waters roll, while the tempest still is high; Hide me, O, my Savior, hide, till the storm of life is past; Safe into the haven guide, O receive my soul at last!" (Charles Wesley)

I WAS THINKING OF THIS SONG this morning, and how beautiful the words are. Is this our desire also, that Jesus, the Lover of our soul, would open His bosom and let us fly into the haven of His wounds? Do we also ask Him that He would hide us there and protect us from all the dangers and onslaughts that are against us? We have to acknowledge, by His Spirit, what it says later on in the song:

"Just and holy is Thy name, I am all unrighteousness; False and full of sin I am, Thou art full of truth and grace." We also plead with Him: "Cover my defenseless head with the shadow of Thy wings!" O dear friends, He is such a Saviour!

He is the friend of sinners, He supplies the needy, He supports the weak, He lifts up the fallen, He feeds the hungry, He forgives the penitent sinner, He saves the lost. Yes, and so much more, and He will guide His children upon the path of life until we reach our heavenly home. "Thank you, blessed Jesus, all my soul and tongue give thanks, Alleluia, Amen!"

Paul Coponen; Chassell, Michigan

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