

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 2023

A Sweet Sleep

Hans Lampinen
Snohomish, Washington

When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.

Proverbs 3:24

I'VE HEARD IT SAID THAT we can die from lack of sleep faster than from hunger. While I don't know if this is true, I do know how poor we feel when we lack sleep. Many people need less sleep than others, but we all need the restorative effects that sleep brings. One of the providential things that God created for us when He separated day and night, was a time to sleep.

In performing my electrical trade in a hospital, I learned about something called Circadian Rhythm. This rhythm follows a 24-hour cycle with periods of sleep and periods of wakefulness. Because some people have to spend long periods in the hospital, we had to install a lighting system that simulated sun rising and sun setting. This was done so the patients could maintain a normalcy in their circadian rhythm and sleep more naturally for better healing.

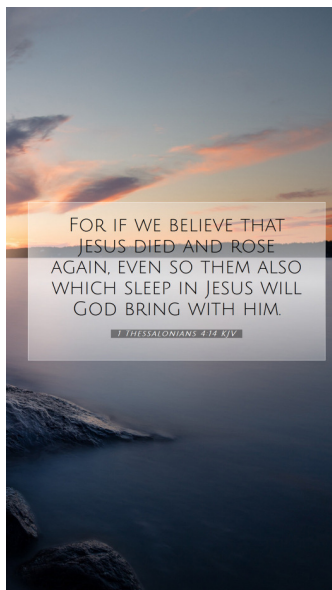
One of the keys to better sleep is a sense of security. Children will often come to their parents for comfort after experiencing a bad dream. Parents sleep better when they have done a final check of all the doors and windows in the house. Another part of that security is the peace we have in Jesus Christ. Nights can be long when we have the burden of sin on our minds. We can busy ourselves during the daytime in order to put these kinds of thoughts out of our mind, but in the quiet stillness of the night we are left with just our thoughts. I don't find it a coincidence that our Savior was born at night. He came that darkness would be made light. He came to conquer those things that keep us from restful sleep. Instead we are able to have that sweet sleep that the Proverbs writer mentioned.

There is another kind of sleep that for a believer is sweet and peaceful. This is the sleep of death. My wife has had some recent opportunities to travel to see family, and also to attend the funeral of a loved one. I was happy for her to go, but admittedly had a case

of the "missing her" blues as the week went on. One evening on one of her trips, while we were talking on the phone she used a phrase that we've adopted with the smaller children when they haven't yet acquired an understanding of time. She said, "Only one more sleep until we see each other." We've used this term "sleep" as a unit of time for our little children. They invariably get excited about some future event and are always asking lots of questions about when it's going to happen. For instance they might know we are going on a road trip, but don't really grasp that we are leaving on say Friday. When we tell them it's only one or two more "sleeps" they seem to grasp the concept a little better.

After I heard that term from my wife, I was reading in the Word and read a verse in Thessalonians that brought great comfort. It is in the first book Paul wrote to them, in the 4th chapter, verse 13: **For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.** As believers we recognize that while death is our final enemy, we really are blessed to be asleep in Christ where time ceases to exist, and we wait for His second coming where we will be able to be raised from our rest and be caught up to meet Him in the air along with those who are alive.

After reading this, I had the thought, that while we all will face death in this life, we can think, "We only have one more sleep." We too can be excited about a future event and be comforted by the thought of Jesus coming in the clouds. He has been at the right hand of His father making intercession for us and at a time that only the Father knows, He will return. What a blessed thought to have that hope, and to be able to say as Paul did in his letter to the Corinthians, *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:55-57)* Praise God for His unspeakable mercies toward us in Christ! ~



A Blest New Year

Pastor Stan Lampinen
Marysville, Washington

THE OLD HAS PASSED AND the new begun in our measurement called time. One of the multitude of blessings we have in believing is knowing not only the gift of life, but also knowing the God of eternity. The Apostle Paul wrote about this to the believers in Galatia almost 2000 years ago, and it is preserved for us.

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. (Galatians 4:4-8)

As we reconcile the past, present, and future, may we remember to entrust our lives into the hands of One who loves us with an eternal love. When it seems like answers are hard to come by, we can know that God controls time.

Paul assures us that in “the fulness of the time,” God provided what He had promised from eternity, and prepared in time, for us. Our promised redemption came not when we were ready, but when the preparation by God was complete. The gift of faith calls us to believe in the complete redemptive work, that Jesus alone can provide. His virgin

birth, sinless life, atoning suffering, death, resurrection from the grave, and ascension to heaven are sent to us in Christ by the Holy Spirit to bring strength for each day.

The Gospel assures us of God’s forgiving love to us, points us to Jesus and His completed work that has made us “an heir of God through Christ.” As we look forward to the coming year may we do so with joy and thanksgiving. The Apostle James gives us insight into the source of thanksgiving, writing in *James 1:17-18: Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.*

Our God has begotten us, or become our Father, with the “word of truth,” and will continue to send gifts that are good and perfect, according to His will. May you put all of your hope and aspirations in His care and keeping.

The Apostle Peter encourages us in *1 Peter 5:7: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.* The Scriptures encourage us to rest, and cast all of our cares, upon God. There isn’t a better way to look to the future than to believe His Word and trust His leading. May you look to Him not only in time, but for eternity. ~



God Is Constant

Pastor Jason Salmi
Vancouver, Washington

AS A NEW YEAR DAWNS, and as we flip our calendars forward once more, it is good for us all to reflect back on the year that has gone, and to look forward to the year that is to come. To contemplate, and to anticipate.

Some of us will look back on the year that has just passed, and will think fondly of good and exciting changes that have come into our lives. Others will look back and think of pain, loss and regret. For most, there will be a mixture of the two. This is because, if there is anything constant in life, it’s that everything changes. Time has a way of moving forward and bringing with it change, whether we want change or not.

But in the midst of change, there is one thing that we can count on. And that is the constant care and guidance of God. Through all of the changes that inevitably come to us, He is ever present.

Late in his life, King Solomon wrote the book of Ecclesiastes. In it, he reflects on the inevitability, even the necessity, of change: *To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace. (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8)*

For some, these words end up being depressing. They find in them futility, as all good things are eventually succeeded by bad... all gain followed by loss. But underlying these words is profound wisdom. In teaching us that all things are fleeting, Solomon teaches us to look to that which does not change. He teaches us to look to our Creator, who knows all of these things and carries us through them. As we look back at the year that has passed, it is good to remember that, through it all, our Lord has been by our side.

Looking back and calling to mind how God has been with us through all of the changes (and challenges), also gives us confidence when we look forward. We may want things to remain as they are now, or we may wish that they would change quickly. But, regardless of what comes our way, we must always remember that God is with us, and that He never changes.

So, dear Saints, as you make your plans for this new year, I pray that you will always be reminded of God’s presence with you. Everything else may come and go, but He will never leave your side.

God bless you and keep you.

Of the Faith of the Wise Men

Martin Luther

THE WISE MEN HERE TEACH us the true faith. After they heard the sermon and the word of the prophet they were not slow to believe, in spite of obstacles and difficulties. First they came to Jerusalem, the capital, and did not find him, the star also disappearing. Do you not think they would have said within themselves, if they had followed human reason alone: Alas, we have traveled so far in vain, the star has misled us, it was a phantom. If a king were born he should of course be found in the capital and lie in the royal chamber. But when we arrived the star disappeared and no one knew anything about him. We strangers are the first to speak of him in his own country and royal city! Indeed, it must be all false!

Besides, his own people are troubled and do not care to hear of him, and direct us from the royal city to a little village. Who knows what we shall find? The people act so coldly and strangely, no one accompanies us to show us the child; they do not believe themselves that a king is born to them, and we come from afar

and expect to find him. O how odd and unusual everything appears at the birth of a king! If a young pup were born, there would be a little noise. A king is born here, and there is no stir. Should not the people sing and dance, light candles and torches and pave the streets with branches and roses? O the poor king whom we seek! Fools we are to permit ourselves to be deceived so shamefully.

Having been flesh and blood, doubtless they were not free from such thoughts and views, and they had to battle for their faith. Natural reason could here not have held its own; if they had not found the king as they had expected, they would have murmured and complained and said: The devil must have led us here. A king cannot have been born since everything is so quiet and nothing is going on. There is more noise when a child is born to our shepherd, and a calving cow is more talked about than this king.

Reason and nature never proceed any farther than they can see and feel. When they cease to feel they at once deny God's existence and say as Psalm 14:1 says. "There is no God," therefore the devil must be here. This is the light of the universities which is to lead men to God, but rather leads to the abyss of hell. The light of nature and the light of grace cannot be friends. Nature wants to feel and be certain before she believes, grace believes before she perceives. For this reason, nature does not go further than her own light. Grace joyfully steps out into the darkness, follows the mere word of Scripture, no matter how it appears. Whether nature holds it true or false, she clings to the Word.

For the sake of this very strife and struggle, by which the wise men accepted the word of the prophet and followed it into such wild, unnatural appearance of a royal birth, God

comforted and strengthened them by this star which went before them more friendly than before. Now they see it near, it is their guide, and they have an assurance which needs no further question. Before it was far from them, and they were not certain where they would find the king.

So it is always with the Christian, after affliction has been endured God becomes more dear to him and is so near and so distinctly seen that man not only forgets anxiety and affliction, but has a desire for greater affliction. He gradually becomes so strong that he does not take offense at the insignificant, unattractive life of Christ. For now he experiences and realizes that to find Christ it must appear as though he found nothing but disgrace.

Even so the wise men must have been ashamed of themselves if they had doubted and had said, as perhaps they did say secretly in their hearts: We were so successful, let us travel a little farther on and seek new kings. I call this buffoonery, as Dame Gay, i.e. nature, conducts herself in the presence of divine words and works. For from the fact that the wise men were so much rejoiced when they saw the star we can infer that they were in such temptation and were heavy-minded when everything appeared so inconsistent. Their joy indicates that they were perhaps despondent and tempted with unbelief.

There was cause enough if you look at nature alone. Hence Christ says, *Matthew 11:6: Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.* Blessed indeed, but how difficult since appearances were against Christ's presence.

When the wise men had overcome their temptation and were born again by the great joy they were strong and took no offense at Christ, they had overcome in the trial. For although they enter a lowly hut and find a poor young wife with a poor little child, and find less of royal appearance than the homes of their own servants presented, they are not led astray. But in a great, strong, living faith they remove from their eyes and their minds whatever might attract and influence human nature with its pretense, follow the word of the prophet and the sign of the star in all simplicity, treat the child as a king, fall down before him, worship him, and offer gifts. This was a strong faith indeed, for it casts aside many things which impress human nature. Perhaps there were some people present who thought: What great fools are these men to worship such a poor child. They must indeed be in a trance to make of him a king.

This is the kernel of the Gospel, in which the nature and character of faith is explained as an assurance of things not seen. It clings alone to the words of God and follows the things that are not seen, as alone conveyed in the word of God, and looks askance at many things which urge it to disbelieve the Word. What nature calls playing the fool faith calls the true way. Nature may be wise and clever, faith remains nature's fool and idiot, and thus comes to Christ and finds him. St. Paul's words, *1 Corinthians 1:25* apply here: *The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.* For feeling and believing do not get together. ~



A New Year

Gwen Wilson
Ridgefield, Washington

Dear Youth,

As I sit here pondering what to write, I can't believe it's already the end of another year and a new year is beginning. I am thankful to know that we have been provided for from our heavenly Father, all through this last year. We can trust this new year to Him and let Him lead and guide us.

I often think of our youth who are so tried today. There is so much that could lead one astray if one is not careful and prayerful. I would like to write a few words of encouragement to all of you.

AS I CONSIDERED JESUS' TEMPTATION in the wilderness and how He was victorious over Satan, I silently pray that we all could be victorious, too. The beauty of it all is this, we can be. God is sure of what He promises and will give us the strength we need, if we only ask. The Bible says, *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. (1 John 5:14-15)*

I want to encourage you young Christians to ask for that strength, too. Pray that you can overcome the devil, and be strong in the Lord.

When one gives in to sin, the devil likes that. Do we want to give him any credit? God forbid. But we are so loved by God that he has made a way to escape, and that is through Jesus who speaks in our behalf to God our Father and provides that way of escape.

Satan has such subtle ways of getting a hold of our hands and our hearts that we need to always be on guard with prayer and fight him off at every turn. We must put on all our armor and be ready for battle. The Christians walk is a battle of sorts and we must keep our armor on and ready. Satan hates our armor which is Jesus.

I would encourage you all to put on your armor, not forgetting one piece. With diligence fight the enemy of your soul. Pray and fight, pray and fight. When you need strength, don't forget to pray. God will be on your side and will make you victorious.

Why should we let Satan have victory in our lives? He does not deserve the glory. He wants NOTHING good for us.

Don't let Satan pick on you for what Jesus' blood has washed away forever. It's gone, to be remembered no more.

What is important is serving your Lord. Pray that you can live in His will and not your own. The Lord loves you so much and wants to bless your life. He desires with ALL His heart that we come and live with Him. He sees us wherever we go and watches from His throne, and He will until the end. One day we will have a great victory and celebrate it forever.


Be strong in the Lord, bless His holy name. God's peace be in your heart, and I pray He gets to go with you every day, and everywhere, and that what your mouth speaks is pleasing to God.

God knows all the things we have need of for this life. *Matthew 6:33: But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

Happy New Year to all of you!

God's peace.

**THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD
EPHESIANS 6:10-18**



10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might,
11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil
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.
13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.
14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;
15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;
16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye be able to quench all of the fiery darts of the wicked.
17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God
18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH

Psalms, the Prayer Book of the Bible

Alvin Holmgren
August 1989

Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts. I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works. And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts: and I will declare thy greatness. They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness. The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. The Lord is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works. All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.

Psalm 145:3-13

IN OUR LUTHERAN CATECHISM, prayer is defined as speaking to God with our hearts, asking Him for all our bodily and spiritual needs in the Name of Jesus, and the thanking and praising of His holy Name. The book of Psalms fulfills this definition, and thus can rightly be called **THE PRAYER BOOK OF THE BIBLE**.

Some of the psalms are prophetic in nature. The Lord Himself verified this when He prayed excerpts from the Twenty-Second Psalm when He was on the cross. Other expressions given in this psalm also were fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

There are psalms which are cries for help in distress, for deliverance in time of trouble, for strength in trial, for comfort in sorrow, and for peace in strife and warfare. The psalms include expressions of deep penitence for sin: *Against thee, thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight; a pleading for God's forgiveness: Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow; a request for restoration: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me; and the expressed need for being sustained by the Spirit: Uphold me with thy free spirit. (Psalm 51)*

Each of us has found these various needs in our lives as Christians, and we have been able to enter into these prayers in heart and spirit so that we have prayed them as the very psalms of our hearts. I thank God for them today, and often use them as my "prayer book." I admit that there was a time in my earlier years when I did not know to appreciate them. I

share an experience from my youth. Among the many treasured memories of our church here in Seattle were frequent home fellowship meetings. I always wanted to be present so that I could enjoy the hymns and songs, and listen to the testimonies of the Christians as they followed the counsel of St. Paul: *When ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. (1 Corinthians 14: 26)*

I especially recall the words which one Christian sister spoke at a particular meeting. In her "psalm" she said that the book of Psalms had become a special comfort, inspiration, and joy to her in her walk of faith. That evening when I returned home, I began to read the Psalms. However, it was not until later in my spiritual growth that I came to value the Psalms—not only for their poetic beauty, but to understand whereof this Christian sister spoke. It was through the knowledge of sin and grace in my own heart that the Psalms took on new and deeper meaning for me. Then they also became my prayer book and book of praise because God had put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God (Psalm 40: 3). The praise of God is a very vital part of our prayer life. *Sing unto the Lord a new song. For He has done marvelous things. His right hand and His holy arm hath gotten him the victory. The Lord has made known His salvation. (Psalm 98: 1-2)*

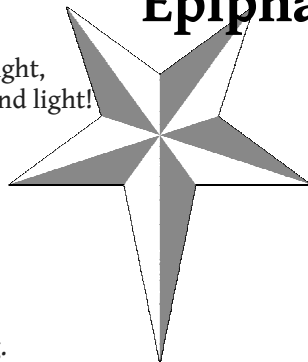
Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare Thy might acts. (Psalm 145)

Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; for praise is comely for the upright. Praise the Lord with harp; sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings. Sing unto him a new song; play skillfully with a loud noise. For the word of the Lord is right, and all his works are done in truth. (Psalm 33: 1-4)

God has prepared for Himself a song of praise to be sung throughout eternity. Those who are in fellowship with Him through His Son, the only Mediator, are privileged to sing this song. One Christian author said that this is the song that "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" at the creation, (Job 38:7); it is the song sung after passing through the Red Sea in the days of Moses; it is the song of Paul and Silas in the Philippi prison. Yes, it is the song of the redeemed who have come out of great tribulation and who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ~

Epiphany

O Morning Star, how clear and bright,
Your beam shines forth in truth and light!
My Sovereign meek and lowly!
O Root of Jesse, Promised One,
My God and Ruler, you have won
My heart to serve you solely!
You are holy,
Great and glorious, All-victorious,
Rich in blessing,
Rule and might o'er all possessing.



Come heavenly Brightness, Light divine,
And deep within my heart now shine,
There make yourself an altar!
Fill me with joy and strength to be
Your member, joined eternally
In love that cannot falter;
Longing for you
Does possess me; Turn and bless me;
Here in sadness
Eye and heart long for your gladness.

Philipp Nicolai

What a Mystery!

Donald Salo; New York Mills, MN
January 2008 CM

And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

Exodus 3:13-14

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

Matthew 16:13-17

The following article by Paul E. Lowenberg, entitled “What a Mystery,” describes this living God in all His fullness:

Who can possibly plumb the depths of the mysteries that surround the person of our Lord Jesus! He is without peer. He stands alone. Eternal—supreme—everlasting! Contemplate the mystery. The Father of Eternity becomes a child of time. The Infinite One becomes an infant. He who lived in heaven without a mother now lives on earth without an earthly father. He whom the heaven of heavens could not contain took up residence in the bosom of His virgin mother.

The Eternal Spirit takes on the body of human flesh. He holds the oceans in his hands, yet pleads for a drop of water. He who ten thousand times ten thousands of angels would worship and serve begs for just one hour of watchful fellowship from his sleeping disciples. The Creator of all plant life grows the tree upon which He dies.

Bethlehem gives the world its only comprehensible view of God—God in a manger, God on Mary’s breast; God eternal, immortal. Moses’ “I AM,” (*Exodus 3:14*); Daniel’s “great and dreadful God,” (*Daniel 9:4*) through the gateway of the virgin’s womb enters the world He created. God manifest in the flesh—a new God, a human God.

At Bethlehem God became what He was not before, but did not cease being what He always was. This duality is constantly in view. He is both the offerer and the offering; the altar and the sacrifice upon the altar; He is both the judge and the condemned one; He levies the penalty and then pays it; He demands blood for man’s sin and then gives his own for man’s redemption; He is just and the justifier of all who believe.

God was manifest before. In the Creation of heaven and earth, on Mount Sinai, and in the tabernacle His wonders were seen, His voice heard, His form traced; but He remained invisible, untouchable, unapproachable.

But now He is manifest in flesh. God walks, talks, sleeps, and eats; He heals and loves, blesses and saves, bears our sins on His own body, and dies for those sins. By the power of the Spirit He emerges from the prison of Joseph’s tomb to announce, “Behold, I am alive forevermore.”

This is the God He became! Became what I was in sin that I might become like him in His total righteousness; came to where I was that I might go where He is; took upon Himself human form that His divine likeness may be mine forever; became a curse that I might be justified.

God in the likeness of sinful flesh, bearing my sin on His own body on the tree; yet He is without sin. What a mystery; awesome, sublime, overwhelming, and incomprehensible!

He would not be God if He were not more than we can think Him to be. Enough for us that the angel said, “They shall call his name Immanuel... God with us.”

This is our strength, our hope, our song. God with us. We close out the dying year and embrace the unseen challenges of the new year with the solemn, yet glorious assurance: He is our Immanuel—God with us!

Jesus identifies Himself as the I AM fourteen times in the gospel of John, also two times in the Revelation. Our prayer is that everyone could say that the I AM, the Son of the Living God, is their Savior. If He is not, seek Him now while He is still near. Tomorrow may be too late.

God’s peace.



2023 Apostolic Lutheran Church Calendars

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Please send your order in one of the following ways: By email: jmiller@mtu.edu or by telephone: 906-334-2434.

Jennifer Miller, ALC Calendar Committee

From Death to Life

Lois Matson
Yacolt, Washington

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; **but is passed from death unto life.** Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

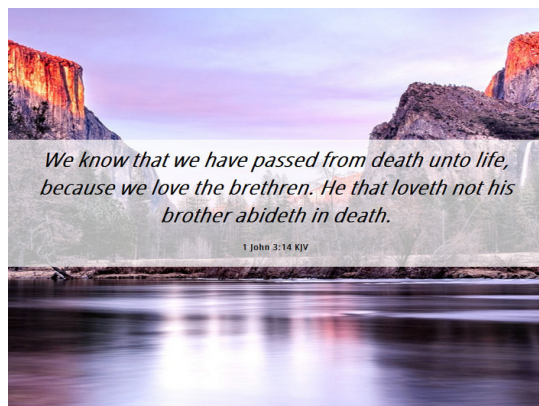
John 5:24-29

JESUS SAYS THAT THE ONE who hears His Word, and believes the One Who sent Him, has eternal life. That person has passed from death to life. Isn't it amazing that, though our bodies will die, we have already passed through death? We have already taken part in a resurrection from death!

And how does this resurrection from death happen? By the hearing of the Word of the Lord. Faith comes by hearing. God in His rich mercy and love makes us alive, raises us to life eternal. Though we were dead in trespasses and sins, He has given us life in His Son. We are already seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us [made us alive] together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 2:4-7



We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

1 John 3:14 KJV

Saint Augustine writes of this first resurrection:

"He that is passed from death unto life, has surely without any doubt risen again. For he could not pass from death to life, unless he were first in death and not in life; but when he will have passed, he will be in life, and not in death. He was therefore dead, and is alive again; he was lost, but is found (Luke 15:32). Hence a resurrection does take place now, and men pass from a death to a life; from the death of infidelity to the life of faith; from the death of falsehood to the life of truth; from the death of iniquity to the life of righteousness. There is, therefore, that which is a resurrection of the dead... Our Lord Jesus Christ, then, our heavenly Master, the Word of the Father, and the Truth, was willing to represent to us a resurrection of the dead to eternal life before the resurrection of the dead to eternal life."

Physical death is the last enemy, but he is a defeated enemy. Death cannot hold the Christian. In fact, death cannot hold the spirit of a Christian at all, because when we die we will immediately pass through the door of death into the presence of Jesus. Our body will decay, but at the sounding of the trumpet on the Last Day, the bodies of the dead in Christ will rise and be made new, eternal and immortal.

The fruit of our faith, of our passing from death to life is that we love our brothers and sisters in faith. This is how we know the love of God, that Jesus laid down His life for us, and we are to lay down our lives for others. Because of His great love for us, then, rather than loving only in words or by talking about love, we are to love in deeds and truth.

Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. **We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.**

1 John 3:13-18

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Sweet Names of Death

Pastor Bryan Wolfmueller

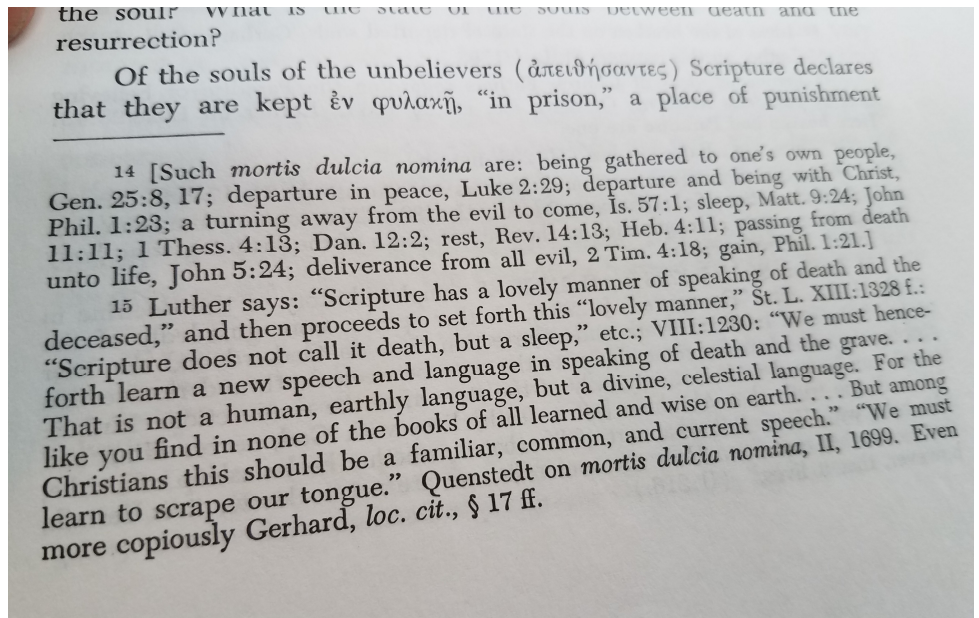
Tucked away in a few footnotes in volume three of Pieper's *Dogmatics* is this gem of comfort, both for pastors and die-ers: the sweet names of death.

Beautiful stuff. Pieper says in the text, "Every Christian, and especially every teacher in the Church, ought to know [the *mortis dulcia nomia*] well and use them" (Pieper's *Dogmatics* III.511).

Here, then, is our comforting and lovely list of the "Sweet Names of Death":

- "Gathered to one's people" (Genesis 25:8, 17).
- "Departure in peace" (Luke 2:29).
- "Depart and be with Christ" (Philippians 1:23).
- "Taken from evil" (Isaiah 57:1).
- "Sleep" (Matthew 9:24; John 11:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13; Daniel 12:2).
- "Rest" (Revelation 14:13; Hebrews 4:11).
- "Passing from death to life" (John 5:24).
- "Deliverance from evil" (2 Timothy 4:18).
- "Gain" (Philippians 1:21).

May God grant us joy in His victory over death. ~



Asleep
IN JESUS

For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

2 Corinthians 8:9

WE ALSO, BY GOD'S GRACE, briefly indicated that the Word of the Father is Himself divine, that all things that are of their being to His will and power, and that it is through Him that the good Father gives order to creation, by Him that all things are moved, and through Him that they received their being...

We must take a step further in the faith of our holy religion, and consider also the Word's becoming Man and His divine appearing in our midst. That mystery the Jews traduce, the Greeks deride, but we adore; and your own love and devotion to the Word also will be greater, because in His manhood He seems so little worth. For it is a fact that the more unbelievers pour scorn on Him, so much the more does He make His Godhead evident. The things which they, as men, rule out as impossible, He plainly shows to be possible; that which they deride as unfitting, His goodness makes most fit; and things which these wiseacres laugh at as "human" He by His inherent might declares divine. Thus by what seems His utter poverty and weakness on the cross He overturns the pomp and parade of idols, and quietly and hiddenly wins over the mockers and unbelievers to recognize Him as God.

Athanasius