

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.

July 2012

The Solid Foundation

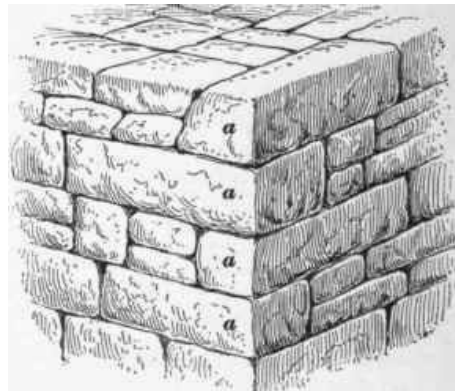
Pastor Ron Holmgren
Hockinson, Washington

We too often look in the wrong places to find assurance that we are God's child. It is common for the "sons of Adam" to look within, perhaps searching for some feelings we have had after some spiritual experience. Or we might think that if we look for some "fruit" or "work" we will be sure of the work of God in our heart. Some look for some charismatic gift of the spirit. Or we might look back over our life, or at least the years since we have been a Christian, to see if we have progressed in our Christian walk. That must be a sure way to determine if God favors us. In doing this we either despair because we are never good enough or we begin to think lofty thoughts about ourselves. But these are not the places where we will find true assurance. We must look to that "more sure word of prophecy" that Peter spoke of. There we will find the Gospel—the good news—that we so desperately need.

Luther found this to be true after so many attempts to assure his fearful heart. But when he finally found peace in the "external promise of Christ" (apart from us and our contributions) he wanted to remain there because he saw how solid that foundation was.

Read how he put this in his own words:

God will not have us rely on anything else, or trust with our heart in anything that is not Christ in His Word, no matter how sacred and full of Spirit it may be. Faith has no other foundation on which it can endure... We must seek Christ in that which is the Father's, that is, we must simply and solely cleave to the Word of the Gospel, which shows and reveals Christ aright to us. If you would effectively comfort others and yourself,



then learn in this and other spiritual temptations to say with Christ: Why are you running to and fro, tormenting yourself with fearful and distressed thoughts, as though God had no more grace for you and as though Christ were not to be found, and refuse to be satisfied unless you find Him in yourself and feel holy and without sin? That will get you nowhere; it is all toil and labor lost. Don't you know that Christ is minded to be present and to be found nowhere but in that which is His Father's and not in that which you or all men are or have? The fault does not lie with Christ and His grace; He indeed is and remains unlost and can always be found; the fault lies in you, that you do not seek Him right, namely, where He is to be sought, because you are judging according to your feelings and expect to seize Him with your thoughts. But you must come here, where there is neither yours nor any man's, but God's business and rule, namely, where His Word is. There you will meet Him and hear and see neither wrath nor displeasure, as you fear, but only grace and cordial love

toward you... But it means a struggle for the heart to get there and take hold of this; first it must crash and experience that all our notions of seeking Christ are futile and in vain and that in the end there is no other choice than to turn away from oneself and all other human consolation and trust only in His Word. (Martin Luther)

God help us to see this clearly and in his Holy Word find the hope that our hearts long for, found in the proclamation of the Gospel heard in the preaching of God's Word, and in the receiving of the Holy Sacraments wherein the same Word is, and Christ alone is found. We have an external hope that is not based on us or on some changing and uncertain foundation.~

God Is Faithful to His Promises

Pastor Travis Seppala
Laurium, Michigan

And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,

As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. (Genesis 17:1-8)

When examining the life of Abraham and the many descendants who followed after him, it becomes very evident that these people were in no way perfect. Instead, the Bible tells of people who made mistakes, who often lacked trust, and who proved to be undeserving of the promises of God.

Abraham and Sarah tried to take matters into their own hands and ended up with Ishmael, Hagar and conflict. Jacob and Esau fought over the birthright. Joseph was betrayed and sold into slavery by his own brothers. Upon being rescued from Egypt, the Israelites were quick to worship idols rather than God.

Time and again this chosen people turned their backs on God and proved to be unworthy of the promises made to Abraham, and yet, through it all, God remained faithful to these promises. Even when they were in captivity, He watched over His people and raised up men like Daniel, Nehemiah and Ezra. Though they did not always seek after Him, God continually made Himself known and still held to the covenant He had made with this people.

In doing this, God clearly demonstrates that His promises and His Word do not depend upon the ability of the human race to be found worthy of them. What is evident in the Scriptures is that Israel was never really able to demonstrate a worthiness of the promises. Rather, what is revealed is that God remained faithful even when His people were not able to do the same. God is faithful even when His people lack faith and break the covenants.

His promises do not depend on us; we depend on His promises. This is something that is all too easy to lose sight of: people can easily think that God's grace and forgiveness depend on their good behavior and righteousness. What the Scriptures show is that though people fail on a regular basis, God continues to remain faithful and, ultimately, it is because of HIS faithfulness that He sent His Son. The promises of God are fulfilled by Him through the work of Christ Jesus, and though one does not have to be righteous to come to Him, one does have to come to Him in order to be righteous. ~

O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory. Awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early. (Psalm 108:1-2)

By nature the heart is fickle, roving, inconstant. What it seeks today, it shuns tomorrow. But grace brings a blessed change. All the affections are then firmly fixed on God. We love Him because He has first loved us. Love in the heart cannot but be praise on the lips. The tongue, which is man's glory as his distinction from the brute creation, will be consecrated to Him. It is our glory when it gives glory to the Lord. Not the tongue only, but all means within our reach will be pressed into this service. From the earliest dawn praise will be heard. Returning consciousness shall resume the work.

Henry Law



Did You Know?

The *Christian Monthly* has a great deal of potential for the future, both here at home and in foreign countries. In what other Christian publication do you see the priesthood of believers so active in espousing their faith? Is there any other publication where the laity (non-pastors) provides as much written material?

Some other inspirational publications have material written by ordinary people. Their articles are interesting and well-written; however, the name of Jesus never appears or hardly ever appears. Why is this so?

This unique feature of the *Christian Monthly*, the publication of articles written by the laity and which proclaim the name of Jesus, is a precious heritage. Won't you please write something today and send it in?

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The Time of Our Visitation

Beth Staudinger
Leslieville, Alberta, Canada

Having just passed through the Easter Season, the words Jesus spoke have been coming to me over and over again. As Jesus was coming into Jerusalem in His triumphal entry, the Bible text reads:

And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out. And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

(Luke 19:37-44)

How thankful we should be for the visitation which we have so enjoyed. The Word of God has been opened and spiritual understanding so freely given by God to our faithful pastors and other believers, as well. Can it happen to us, as it did to the Pharisees in Jesus' day, that these things can also

become hidden from our eyes when we no longer appreciate or realize the gifts that we have been given? The deep enlightenment of Scripture that has been opened among us in our lifetimes is something only God can give. It is an incredible blessing!

Can we take for granted the working of the Holy Spirit in our midst, enlightening us and warming our hearts? Are we thankful for the fellowship that we have enjoyed around the Word of God and where the blood of Jesus has cleansed us from every sin in the living Gospel? We have not had to grope in darkness with a heavy burden of sin but we have had the altar of grace in our midst for us to freely access. How blest we have been!

It was truly a visitation to the Jews when Jesus walked among them in the flesh, but have we not also had Him in our midst, walking among us in the Spirit? Are we beginning to value head knowledge more than heart knowledge? What a blessing to us that we can have Jesus in our midst with His forgiveness, enlightening us and giving us peace. We would not want to be as the Pharisees in Jesus' day where we do not find ourselves to be sinners and in need of forgiveness and therefore have no need of Jesus and His forgiveness. The value of His coming as our Savior would then be hidden to us also. I pray that we could all be as the disciples of Jesus were at the time of His triumphal entry into Jerusalem in that they rejoiced and praised God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen. May we ever be thankful for our heritage and the visitation we have enjoyed! ~

In Loving Memory of Rudella (Della) Nelson 1923-2011

Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. (Matthew 25:34)

Della passed away in Perham, MN on December 10, 2011, with her family at her side. She was born March 22, 1923, in Carpio, ND, to Ole and Blanche (Johnson) Askvig, the third of ten children. She was united in marriage to Oliver Nelson on a warm day in January 1944. Their marriage was blessed with seven children: Judine, Ellen, Leroy, Nancy, Margie, Linda and Patty. Della and Oliver farmed in the Carpio area until 1968, when they moved to New York Mills, MN. For the last few years, Della lived at Someplace Special Assisted Living.

I brought Holy Communion to her once a month. She was always happy to receive it and was certainly a worthy recipient. Each time I encouraged her to continue to lay hold of her faith in her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Though her earthly tabernacle began to fail, her faith never wavered. She thanked me each time I visited her. She partook of communion one week prior to her passing.

Once I asked her, "Why did you move to New York Mills?" Without any hesitation, she replied, "Because of the church. When Oliver and I received the grace to repent, Oliver

repented first and I soon after." This is the faith they lived, as Apostle Paul says: *I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)*

Now they have both received the crown of life that is awarded to all who believe in the promises of God. God's promises are sure and they never fail. Apostle Paul was confident of this when he told his young co-worker Timothy: *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. (2 Timothy 4:6-8)*

Having known Della for many years and observing her walk in faith, she always trusted in God's grace, as Apostle Paul makes known: *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. (Romans 3:24-25)*

**"As pilgrims in this world where life is fleeting,
We journey on to meet our dearest Friend;
Keep Thou, O Lord, our hearts from false affections
And lead us onward to the journey's end."** (O. A. Ottander)

Andy and Janet Tumberg
New York Mills, Minnesota

A Piece of Saul's Robe

Gwen Wilson
Ridgefield, Washington

I pray this is a good day for you. If you are not having a good day, I pray that Jesus will make it better. I want to share an account about David, from *1 Samuel, chapter 24*. First, I will tell what happened before.

Samuel was born, grew up and became the judge over Israel. The people demanded a king to be set over them. A man named Kish had a son—Saul—who was physically strong, handsome, and no one in Israel compared to him. Saul stood at least a head taller than any of the people. Samuel poured oil on Saul's head, anointing him as God had instructed, and Saul officially became the king.

Saul disobeyed the orders from God that Samuel gave him. God chose another to be king, a son of Jesse. God sent Samuel to Jesse and, after looking at seven of his sons and finding none of them to be the right choice, Samuel asked Jesse if he had other sons. There was one more son—David—and he was the one. Samuel poured oil on David's head to anoint him as the upcoming king.

Saul displeased God and God's Spirit left him. An evil spirit came over him. He was troubled and wanted someone to play the harp to calm him. Word came to Saul that one of Jesse's sons played well. This son was brought before the king; it was David.

David played and Saul felt better. David did this for Saul many times. David spent a lot of time around the king's house and became very good friends with Saul's son, Jonathan. Saul was jealous of this.

Later, Saul's army was at war with the Philistines, and David, who was home watching sheep, was sent by his father to bring his brothers a little food and get news of the battle. David found Saul's army afraid to fight the giant Goliath and his army. David got Saul's permission to go out against Goliath. He killed Goliath with a sling and a stone, and the Israelites had victory. Saul was jealous of David; he tried to kill David, who would one day be king in Saul's place.

Now, in *chapter 24*...

David has been running for his life from Saul and he is in hiding. Saul has been fighting the Philistines. When he returns from battle, he hears where David is hiding. He sets out to find him. During his search, he gets tired and needs to go to the bathroom. He finds a large cave where shepherders would rest their sheep for the night. Saul goes into the cave and relieves himself and then lies down to rest; he falls into a deep sleep. Do you know who is already hiding here? **David** and his men! Saul is right under their noses and Saul does not know it.

David and his men stay **very** quiet. David's men want to kill Saul, but David will not let them. He does not want to harm Saul. David walks quietly over to Saul and cuts off a piece of Saul's robe and goes back to his men. I'm sure they were amazed at David's bravery.

David waits until Saul wakes and goes from the

cave. When Saul is a short way off, David goes out of the cave and shouts to Saul, saying, "My lord the king." When Saul turns around he sees the very David he is hunting! David bows to the earth in reverence to his king (verses 7-8).



And David said to Saul, Wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt? Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the LORD had delivered thee to day into mine hand in the cave: and some bade me kill thee: but mine eye spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he is the LORD'S anointed. Moreover, my father, see, yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand: for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see that there is neither evil nor transgression in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee; yet thou huntest my soul to take it. (1 Samuel 24:9-11)

David pleads with Saul to stop hunting him. After David has spoken, Saul, who can hardly believe what he has heard, asks, "David, is that you, my son?" Saul lifts up his voice and weeps. *And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.* (1 Samuel 24:17) Saul can see that David is a good man of God and realizes that David will become king one day. He asks David to remember his family when he dies and David promises to do that. This is NOT the end of troubles concerning Saul, but David stays true to never harm Saul and God gives him strength, all the way to the end of Saul's life.

Jesus says: *Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.* (Matthew 5:43-44) We can be so thankful for the example that David showed us in loving our enemies. I am thankful that David did the right thing; we can, too, with God's help. We must pray to Him and He has promised to hear us. Remember, Jesus loves you. ~

Jesus—Full of Grace and Truth

W. Torola

from Greetings of Peace, February 1978

John the Evangelist, when writing about Jesus, says that He was full of grace and truth (John 1:14). Whenever Jesus met a penitent sinner, He was always ready to proclaim the forgiveness of sins unto him. "Be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee" was the content of His proclamation to a penitent sinner. Though His graceful attitude to sinners raised a flood of protests by the self-righteous world, He still proclaimed, *I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.* (Mark 2:17) Even when He was faced with the most bitter ridicule and hatred, He with no fear proclaimed even to the most wretched being, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." He really was the full and overflowing fountain of grace and mercy to penitent sinners, from where even the greatest of them was granted to draw as much as they needed. All ties were opened, burdens unloaded and the most defiled spots of sin were cleansed. Nothing was left to hinder the freedom in company of Jesus. The words of Jesus, "If the Son makes you free, ye shall be free indeed (John 8:36)," were fulfilled unto them. A feeling of salvation and unlimited joy filled the hearts and souls of the pardoned sinners. A ray of God's eternal love had touched the hearts of fallen sinners of the earth.

A dark night of sin had changed to the brightness of day, and a cold winter of unbelief to the warm summer of faith.

Oh, the blessedness a poor sinner enjoys at the fountain of eternal grace and mercy! Why would not we also draw while the fountain is flowing over its brinks?

But Jesus was full of truth also. Nothing did He pass by in silence that was not harmonious with the truth of His Gospel. "To this end was I born into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth (John 18:37)," Jesus said to Pilate. Whoever was in contact with Jesus was always given to hear clear, forward truth about the condition of his soul, and exhortation to repentance, were he a self-righteous or an ungodly person. He did not hide the truth even in the midst of His own disciples. As soon as they slipped aside from the way of the truth of the Gospel, He was always ready to straighten them out, yea, even in time of need, to reprimand them. He really was a Shepherd whose sheep were His own sheep. He took shepherdly care of them. He was ready to defend and guard them against the wolves sneaking in darkness, looking for a chance to harm them. He defended them to His life and blood.

What a blessedness to be in the flock of such a Shepherd and to be shepherded by Him! Think of it: He never will be changed but always remains the same—yesterday, today and forever. The same bright light of grace and truth still beams from Him. Not even a fool will be lost when following Jesus. He does not walk in darkness who is granted to follow the footprints of Jesus. The bright spotlight of grace and truth enlightens the homeward way, even through the darkest valleys of temptations and trials. Encourage, therefore, your heart unto faith, you tempted and tried traveling companion. You do not need to be afraid that you will be lost when the Good Shepherd is carrying you in the hands of His grace and leading you with the light of His truth. ~



Small Town Preachers

Pastor Andy Kandoll
Champion, Michigan

...Who will go for us? (Isaiah 6:8)

We need people who will move where the snow is deep, the winters long, the summers short, the bugs fierce, the work hard, the pay low, the hours long, the church small, the people few, the results slow, the fruits everlasting, the rewards eternal. We need men and women and families who will struggle and endure and grow.

In every small town there are three distinct business opportunities:

1. The small cafe and store.
2. Handyman work—small carpentry, plumbing, wiring, clearing, etc.
3. Natural or organic farming—raising meat, and eggs and milk, and fresh fruit and vegetables.

The church is at a place of opportunity. The pastors are few, women fill many pulpits, visiting is forgotten, prayer is left off, real Bible preaching is rare, people are seeking, life is uncertain, economies are difficult, the mission is now, the harvest is ripe.

Then said I, Here am I; send me. (Isaiah 6:8)

Fall Services Tapiola, MI

The Tapiola Apostolic Lutheran Church will be hosting regional fall services on August 17-18-19. Pastor Paul Seppala from New Hampshire will be the guest speaker. A warm welcome is extended to all. Please pray the Lord will bless our gathering before His Holy Word.

*Cal Niemela, on behalf of
the Tapiola Congregation*

Drugs, Alcohol, Pornography and Abuse

The Miserable World of Sin

David Olson

Rindge, New Hampshire

We as a church are invaded by this miserable world of sin. I attended a Drug Awareness meeting at our church, and before I write another word, if you have never yet taken drugs—



Don't. Don't. Don't. Once you are addicted to some drugs, it is almost impossible to get out. The horror stories we heard are most terrible. Some drugs are so addictive that you can become an addict after only one experience with them. After that, your entire life is spent anticipating the next hit. Formerly honest, respectable people will descend to the lowest conduct to get it.

We heard of people whose brains have been so damaged by drugs that they are like Swiss cheese, full of holes. The highs they experience get lower and lower. Their lives become more and more miserable. The scariest thing of all is that they do not even have enough mental capacity left to want to get out of that condition. Their entire focus is just on their next hit.

We heard that possibly one out of a hundred heroin addicts are able to kick the habit. Their teeth are rotten stumps in their gums. Some have holes burned into their heart valves by drugs, but still their main worry is where their next hit is coming from. What a terrible, miserable state to be in.

Do not experiment with these substances. They only bring a life of suffering, misery and woe and, after that, a long eternity of more suffering, misery and woe. If you have not done drugs yet, please don't. It is not worth it. You pay a terrible price for the tiny high you may experience in the beginning.

God would, indeed, be willing and able to take away addictions and wash away their sin in the blood of Jesus, but He never hears a plea for help from the addict whose only thought is about his next hit. If you are already hooked on drugs, may God place into your heart a small desire to be free. And may you, with that small desire for freedom, begin to plead with God for His grace and mercy and help. Pray something like this: "Dear heavenly Father, the enemy is near me. He is big and I am little. He will do with me as he pleases, but You, dear Father, are bigger and stronger than my enemy. You are able to subdue him and drive him away. Help me, dear Father. I need Your help. Left to myself, I will perish. With You I can be saved." Pray to God today, and tomorrow, and the next day, and every day and every time you feel the enemy approaching. Trust in Him

to help you and deliver you from sin and from addictions, unto eternal life. He wants us to trust Him. He is able. He will not turn away from the pleading sinner. Trust Him. He is the ultimate and only help. We have been taught in Sunday School already, in the first commandment, to "fear, love and TRUST in God above all things." Do it.

Jesus taught us in the parable of the unjust judge *...that men ought always to pray, and not to faint. (Luke 18:1)* He also taught us, in the case of the friend who came at midnight for three loaves of bread, to be persistent in prayer. If it seems that God does not hear, continue to ask and pray anyway. Jesus says, *I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. (Luke 11:8)* Importunity in this verse means persistence.

It is also important to be careful in the other three addictions mentioned in the title of this article, but, in the interest of brevity, I will mention just one more thought. From the fall of Adam, gross sexual indecency continues to follow us men even unto this day. We men need to be vigilant, and more vigilant, because the enemy is very close to us, as one old-timer said, "right inside the same skin." When we see or feel the enemy approaching, we really need to begin immediately to cry unto God for help, for truly that enemy is big and we are little. Let us not satisfy our lusts, but already in the beginning of our temptation let us start to cry to God. He is willing and able to help, and, as in the case of all sin, He is the ultimate and only real help. I have experienced that it is quite distasteful and unsatisfying to try to nip temptation in the bud, but it is so necessary; otherwise, the flesh will have free rein and a free run into sin and, in the end, certain damnation.

The Bible says God has provided a way of escape. If it has gone that far that we have already fallen, there is still an escape in forgiveness in the name and blood of Jesus. But there is also a warning here. Do not fulfill your lusts with the thought that I will do it now and ask forgiveness later. No, no, no. God may never call you to repentance later. You may never feel a need for forgiveness later. God may never again extend His grace and mercy to you. We need to honestly ask for His help in the beginning. Let us not trifle with the grace of God. Samuel said that obedience is better than sacrifice (1 Samuel 15:22).

May God help and protect us from the enemy of our souls. Let us still continue in the warfare. There is only a short time left. In Jesus' name. Amen. ~

I have all the time I need to do all that is God's will. I have time for God-given opportunities that are placed in my path. Lord, give me wisdom to pick and choose, to know just what is of or from You! Thank You, Jesus!

Joy Bergstedt
Chisago City, Minnesota

The Christian Walk

Shane Juuti
Gimlet, Alberta, Canada

Dear brothers and sisters in faith, I pray that this short portion of Scripture will bring you joy in the simplicity of how our walk should be.

And he (Jesus) sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him. And whersoever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he will shew you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us. (Mark 14:13-15)



A beautiful picture of a Christian's walk can be easily overlooked in the great depth of this Scripture. The man bearing the pitcher of water gives much insight into our Christian walk. Here is a man, it would appear, who was simply going about his daily tasks. Unbeknownst to him, Christ was using him in a powerful, most important way: to lead someone to the house where the Passover was to be eaten. All he was doing was carrying a pitcher of water.

The Passover is the natural picture of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross that we also remember in Holy Communion; we spiritually partake of this when in repentance we come and have the blood of Christ struck on our hearts. We see that the room was all prepared. The man with the pitcher no doubt knew this, but the text gives no indication that he had done anything to prepare it.

Spiritually, the disciples show how Christ works in hearts to direct people to find this prepared room.

Again, the man with the pitcher had no idea Christ had sent someone to look for him or that he was doing something to lead someone to his master's house.

Let's take example from this man. He knew the room, and the feast was prepared. He didn't worry about trying to get the right people to come. Christ was giving those ones the directions they needed. He was simply going about his life but, on the spiritual side, visible for all to see, was the fact that he was bearing the living water of the simple Gospel message. So, when we are to sow the seed on all ground, why was he not splashing water on all he met? Because it shows the subtle difference between the seed of the Word, and the living water of the Gospel. His walk showed that he believed the Gospel of the forgiveness of his sin for himself, and people could observe that he was forgiving also. This type of walk sows the seed of the Word on every type of heart we come in contact with, and has the power to draw people. We know that splashing water on people, no matter how hot and thirsty they appear to us, causes anger or, at the very least, annoyance. If someone asks though, they are most thankful for even a small drink of water. If we start telling people about the truth of forgiveness it very often causes contention, but if a heart is thirsting for forgiveness it is most thankful for the Gospel message.

It is a difficult task for us as humans to simply walk with the love of Christ showing in the forgiveness we have for others, trusting that God prepares everything else. The feast is prepared; He sends the ones who are seeking. He will have us in exactly the right place at the proper time to lead them there, and He will provide the right words to speak if He decides to use us.

May God grant the peace to trust that it is so simple to each and every one of us. Amen. ~

Many of us Christians have become extremely skillful in arranging our lives so as to admit the truth of Christianity without being embarrassed by its implications. We arrange things so that we can get on well enough without Divine aid, while at the same time ostensibly seeking it.

We boast in the Lord but watch carefully that we never get caught depending on Him.

Pseudo faith always arranges a way out to serve in case God fails it. Real faith knows only one way and gladly allows itself to be stripped of any second way or makeshift substitutes. For true faith, it is either God or total collapse.

A.W. Tozer

Christian Monthly Vol. LXVIII—No. 7

Subscription Rate: 1 Year

US: \$12 (Washington residents add your local sales tax)

Canada: \$18 (US money order only) Foreign: \$25

Send articles for publication to:

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CHRISTIAN MONTHLY

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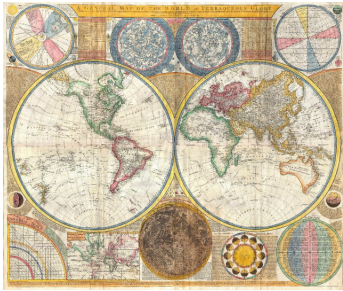
The *Christian Monthly* (ISSN 0009-5494) is published monthly for \$12 per year by the Apostolic Lutheran Book Concern, 19113 NE 144th Street, Brush Prairie, WA 98606. Periodical permit paid in Brush Prairie, Washington.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: PO Box 2126, Battle Ground, WA 98604

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It's Between Me and God Tell the Whole World!

*Cara Mae Helmes, 1999
Battle Ground, Washington*

Tell the whole world
if you love God.
God will show you
the way if you trust in
Him and keep God's Word
in your heart. Never take

God's Word out of your heart. Keep God and He promises to guide you. Some day you will enter God's kingdom and stay with our King forever and forever. God will take everything away that you can't have in your new life. God wants me to study His Word. Jesus wants me to keep His Word in my heart by learning my Bible verses.

God, I hear you healed the blind. God, will you heal my right eye so I can see with it? God, will you heal all the blind people to see again?

God, I hear that you heal the deaf. God, will you make deaf people hear?

God, I hear that you healed the crippled and made them walk. God, will you make the crippled people walk again? God, will you heal my best friend, Andrea, who is in a wheel chair? God will tell Andrea, "You have faith but are weak in your legs. I will heal your bones, Andrea. I will heal your hands to work again."

God, will you heal Jonas? Jonas has bad cuts on his feet, legs, arms and hands.

God, will you heal my Mom? My Mom has a bad cough that makes pain in her neck and back. I don't want her to faint again.

God, I want the power of Christ to live in my heart. God, I read all of Psalm 23 in prayer.

God, I believe you died for me so I can have my sins forgiven.

God, will you keep the devil from my heart? God, will you push the devil out of my heart and never let him enter my heart? Do not let the devil tell me wrong things.

God, will you be with us when our family goes to Bend, OR in August?

God, will you come into my heart and take my sin away? God, I will put my faith in you, I will put my trust in you.

God, will you show what Uncle Bill can do for Johnny? God, will you keep your eye open and watch over and guide Bill and Johnny?

BE LOVING! Our verse in the Bible says, "Let us love one another." Do you show love to your brothers and sisters? Do you ever tell your parents that you love them?

BE HELPFUL! Be helpful! It makes Jesus very happy when we help others.

BE GENEROUS! Be generous! How could we be friends if I were selfish? Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." I love Jesus and I wouldn't want Him to be unhappy because I thought only of myself.

BE FORGIVING! The Bible says, "Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven." Be forgiving—I guess I haven't been very forgiving.

BE PATIENT! From the Bible we learn: "Be patient toward all men." Jesus wants me to be patient.

BE CHEERFUL! The Bible says to remove sorrow from thy heart. Let's try to always be cheerful.

BE HONEST! Are you honest? Sometimes it is hard to tell the truth. Remember that the Bible says to be honest.

BE THANKFUL! "Thank you God, for my lunch. I know that every good thing is given to me. In Jesus' name, Amen." The Bible says "be thankful." Many people forget to thank God for all the things He gives them each day. Do you remember to say "thank you" to God for your food? Do you ever take time to think about all the things God gives you? See how many you can name right now. Then bow your head and say, "Thank you, God."

BE CAREFUL! It is for our own good if we wait for the light to turn green. We might be hit by a car. Besides, it's a rule and we have to obey rules. Be careful—we must be careful to follow the rules at home, at school, on the street, or wherever we go. We must be careful always to do what is good. Jesus will help us to do good if we let Him. I want to be careful to do what Jesus wants me to do. Do you love Jesus and want to do what He says in the Bible?

BE FRIENDLY! A man must be friendly so he can have friends. Jesus has friends for you if you just ask Him to help you find them.

BE REVERENT! Matthew 21:13—"My house shall be called the house of prayer..." The Bible says to be reverent. Can you think of some ways you can be reverent in the church services? How do you usually act? What are some things you should do in church? ~