

# 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.

June 2015

## Do Not Be Anxious

Pastor Nathan Juntunen  
Esco, Minnesota

*Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.*

Matthew 6:34

**H**AVING REBELLED against God by his first transgression, man slips from the realm of the limitless to the realm determined by a tyrannical limit: death. Our entire life is bounded by this limit, though the knowledge of it is almost always suppressed. It therefore forces upon us a certain measure of anxiety. This is our plague. We are anxious. Sometimes we do not know why; we cannot discern the source of our anxiety. But this we know—we are an anxious lot.

Jesus' teaching about anxiety is therefore most astonishing, for it is incredibly simple: "Do not be anxious." *Take therefore no thought for the morrow...* A vexing thought, indeed! In one word Jesus distills the entire weight of the Old Testament Law and the expectation of God transmitted through every prophet who has ever walked this green earth. Do not be anxious?!! How is the world supposed to keep turning without a bit of anxiety? (It has been said that love

makes the world go 'round, but I think it could more truthfully be spoken about anxiety.) Jesus' teaching about anxiety is deliciously similar to His teaching about judgment: "Do not judge." Both teachings taken together illustrate for us the nature of Jesus' commands: They are simply impossible to fulfill. I am a worry-wart, and beyond that, I am an incurable judge. I am confirmed in these two states by the word of Christ Himself (see for reference Paul's discussion concerning the effect of the Law in Romans 7:7ff). I am not only a judge of others, mind you, but a judge of myself. Therefore, to find myself face to face with Jesus bidding me to deny anxiety and forego judgment leaves me with all the more anxiety and all the more propensity to judge; now to judge even Him! The weight is too much, the demand too stringent; I cannot survive...

Precisely the point... Jesus would later say: *Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.* (Matthew 21:44) It is not a pretty sight for the Old Adam when he comes into contact with the Living Lord. He must die or he must crucify him. He cannot have it both ways. We cannot survive an encounter with the real Christ; it provokes my old anxious and judgmental nature to its limit. He pushes me to the very boundary of existence and invites me to the other side. To venture to the other side—to go to God and lodge myself in the eternal One requires one thing: I must die. Not the "little death" of physical separation from spirit, but the "big death" of my ego, desires, self-will and pride.

But it is God's will that we should die, so we may be raised to an unlikely form of life. We, in Christ Jesus, live an "impossible" life, because we are freed from anxiety in Him who took our anxieties upon Himself at Calvary. He bore our burdens, it is written. Those burdens were not only the sins piled up through the ages until His coming nor only the ones from the generations since—they are the burdens of our sin, death and our incurable habits of worry and judgment. When Jesus bids us to live a life free from anxiety and judgment, He is really calling us back to Himself. He is calling us back to the unity with God that we shared before our epic Fall, back to His singular and perfect will, a will that none should perish but that all would share eternal life, a non-anxious life.

Through faith in Him we have already achieved what He demands. We have peace with God through faith in the Lord Jesus (Romans 5:1). Having believed, we are set free from the limit that provoked our anxiety. We are free from judgment, free from death. Jesus comes, therefore, not as an academic professor who counsels strict adherence to a code. Rather, He comes as One willing to die for our freedom from the code. He comes as One chosen to deliver us from the anxiety of the code. Therefore we do not worry. Not because we have decided not to worry, but because HE has shouldered the burden of our worry and HE alone has the power to set our hearts at rest. ~



# To the Graduate

Waino Aili  
June 1964 CM

*How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!*

Proverbs 16:16

**J**UNE IS GRADUATION MONTH for many young people. The student who has completed the necessary requirements of his school receives the honor of being a graduate. Acquiring a diploma, certificate or degree is an achievement that brings joy to the recipient.

High school students will have various plans. Some will go into colleges, universities or trade schools. Others will begin working at various jobs or will enter the armed services. Some of the girls will become housewives. Graduates of colleges, business schools or trade schools will seek employment in their particular fields.

For all of the graduates, plans are subject to change. High school graduates can seldom plan their education and careers without changes. The graduates from advanced schools face adjustments and possible setbacks as they apply their education to the actual work in a competitive world.

Things do change. Circumstances can divert the best of intentions. Rapid advancements, new discoveries and revolutionary methods are bringing changes in education, the sciences, medicine, therapies, philosophy and engineering, etc., and are causing some promising fields of yesterday to be obsolete today. Sound, ancient customs are being discarded. The pace is terrific. Insecurity haunts many lives.

Is there help? Yes! The answer is Jesus Christ. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. He has the answers for this life and victory for the life to come.

For the graduate without a Savior, the zeal of youth, the fervor of success, and the challenging adventures

ahead will break down barriers and help to cope with changes for a while, but the handwriting on the wall is inevitable and will finally carry out its prophetic message of doom and failure.

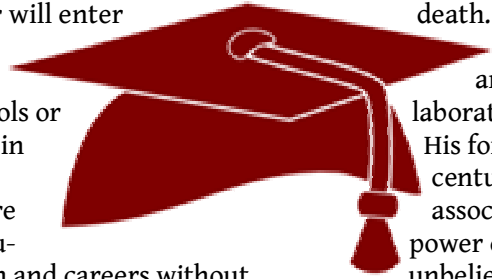
Blessed is the graduate who has found peace with God. Divine wisdom brings success to the knowledge he has acquired. The Lord, Master and Teacher has all the answers of the universe, life and eternity. He bled and died at Calvary to open the eyes of His scholars that they might learn the meaning of life and be secure in the hour of death. Jesus Christ is Savior—the foundation that

will never be moved—seven times tested and proved to be true by the flames in the laboratories of eternity.

His formula has not changed throughout the centuries. He placed it in the hearts of all His associates so that they would not forget it. The power of the Gospel lifts souls out of sin and unbelief. Blessed is the soul who has repented and received the remission of sins in the cleansing blood of Jesus. Judgment Day will not banish him into everlasting failure and despair, for he has been schooled by the Holy Spirit to triumph on that day.

Dear graduate, you have studied well to receive a diploma and a congratulatory remark by an official of the school or by a leading citizen. We share your pleasant moment of success. The Lord bless you.

It is our profound prayer that on the great day of the Lord you will receive, with all the saints, an imperishable crown and hear the gracious words, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* Strive, young heart, to be in this graduating class, robed in white, with a glorious song of victory upon your lips. O may we all be in this class! In the name of Jesus. Amen.



# The Festival of Pentecost

Martin Luther



**T**HE FESTIVAL we call *Pentecost* had its origin as follows: When God was about to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt, He permitted them to celebrate the Feast of the Passover on the night of their departure; and commanded them on every annual recurrence of the season to observe the same feast in commemoration of their liberation from bondage and their departure from Egypt. Fifty days later, in their journey through the wilderness, they arrived at Mount Sinai. There God gave them the Law, through Moses;

and there they were commanded to observe annually, in commemoration of that giving of the Law, the fiftieth day after the Feast of the Passover. Hence the name "Feast of Pentecost," the word *Pentecost* coming from the Greek *Pentecoste*, or "fiftieth day." Our Saxons, rather more in conformity to the Greek, use the word *Pfingsten*. So we have it here of Luke: "When the day of Pentecost was now come," or "fully come"—when the Jews had properly commemorated the giving of the Law of God on Mount Sinai—the Holy Spirit came, in accordance with Christ's promise, and gave them a new law. We now celebrate this feast, not because of the old historical event, but because of the new one—the sending of the Holy Spirit. It is in order, then, to give a little instruction concerning the difference between our Pentecost and that of the Jews.





## Literal Law and Spiritual Law

The occasion of the Jews' observance was the giving of the literal Law; but it is ours to celebrate the giving of the spiritual law. To present the point more clearly, we cite Paul's distinction of the two covenants. *Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. (2 Corinthians 3:6)* And these two covenants respectively relate to two kinds of people.

First, there is the written Law commanded of God and composed of written words. It is styled "written" or "literal" because it goes no farther and does not enter the heart, nor are there any resulting works other than hypocritical and extorted ones. Consisting only of letters—a written Law—it is wholly dead. Its province being to kill, it ruled a dead people. With dead hearts men could not sincerely observe the commandments of God. Were every individual left to do as he pleased, being uninfluenced by fear, not one would be found choosing to be controlled by the Law.

Unquestionably, human nature is conscious of the fact that while it prefers to follow its own inclinations it is impelled to do otherwise; for it reasons: "If I observe not God's commandments, He will punish me, casting me into hell." Thus our nature is conscious of obeying unwillingly and contrary to desire. Because of the punishment that men fear, they soon become enemies to God; they feel themselves sinners, unable to stand before God, and consequently not acceptable to Him. Indeed, they would rather there were no God. Such enmity to God remains persistently in the heart, however beautifully nature may adorn itself outwardly. We see, therefore, how the Law, so long as it consists merely of written words, can make no one righteous, can enter no heart. Upon this topic we have elsewhere preached and written at length.

The other law is spiritual; not written with ink and pen, nor uttered by lips as Moses read from the tables of stone. We learn from the historical record of the event that the Holy Spirit descended from heaven and filled all the assembled multitude, and they appeared with parting, fiery tongues and preached so unlike they were wont to do that all men were filled with amazement. The Spirit came pouring into their hearts, making them different beings, making them creatures who loved and willingly obeyed God. This change was simply the manifestation of the Spirit Himself, His work in the heart. He wrote in those hearts His pure and fiery flame restoring them to life and causing them to respond with fiery tongues and efficient hands. They became new creatures, aware of possessing altogether different minds and different tendencies. Then all was life and light; understanding, will and heart burned and delighted in whatever was acceptable to God. Such is the true distinction between the written Law of God and the spiritual. Herein we perceive what is the work of the Holy Spirit.



## The Office of the Holy Spirit

Observe here, the Holy Spirit descends and fills the hearts of the disciples sitting in fear and sorrow. He renders their tongues fiery and cloven, and inflames them with love unto boldness in preaching Christ—unto free and fearless utterance. Plainly, then, it is not the office of the Spirit to write books or to institute laws. He writes in the hearts of men, creating a new heart, so that man may rejoice before God, filled with love for Him and ready, in consequence, to serve His fellows gladly.

What are the means and process the Spirit employs to change and renew the heart? It is through preaching Jesus Christ the Lord, as Christ Himself says (John 15:26): "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall bear witness of Me." As we have often heard, the Gospel is the message God would have preached world-wide, declaring to every individual that since no man can through the Law be made righteous, but must rather become more unrighteous, God sent His own beloved Son to shed His blood and die for our sins, from which sins we could not be released by our own effort.

It is not enough simply that Christ be preached; the Word must be believed. Therefore, God sends the Holy Spirit to impress the preaching upon the heart—to make it inhere and live therein. Unquestionably, Christ accomplished all—took away our sins and overcame every obstacle, enabling us to become, through Him, lords over all things. But the treasure lies in a heap; it is not everywhere distributed and applied. Before we can enjoy it, the Holy Spirit comes and communicates it to the heart, enabling us to believe and say, "I, too, am one who shall have the blessing." To everyone who hears is grace offered through the Gospel; to grace is he called, as Christ says (Matthew 11:28), "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden," etc.

Now, with the belief that God has come to our rescue and given us this priceless blessing, inevitably the human heart must be filled with joy and with gratitude to God, and must exultingly cry: "Dear Father, since it is Thy will to manifest toward me inexpressible love and fidelity, I will love Thee sincerely, and willingly do what is pleasing to Thee."

The believing heart never sees God with jealous eye. It does not fear being cast into hell as it did before the Holy Spirit came, when it was conscious of no love, no goodness, no faithfulness, on God's part, but only wrath and displeasure. But once let the Holy Spirit impress the heart with the fact of God's good will and graciousness towards it, and the resulting joy and confidence will impel it to do and suffer for God's sake whatever necessity demands.

Let us learn to recognize the Holy Spirit—to know that His mission is to present to us the priceless Christ and all His blessings; to reveal them to us through the Gospel and apply them to the heart, making them ours. ~

# Go Ye Into All the World

Gwen Wilson  
Ridgefield, Washington

Dear Children,

Hello! How are you? I am well as are most of my family, but some are having sickness. Sickness is not always easy to avoid. Maybe some of you have been sick or are dealing with something at this time. I pray for wellness. I want to share with you from the Bible where the disciples were instructed to go into all the world and preach the Gospel. That is also for us who are of God's kingdom today.

**A**T THE END OF MARK AND LUKE, and in the 1st chapter of Acts, Jesus led His disciples out to a certain mountain where He talked with them, instructing them to preach the Gospel to all the world. Then He was taken up to His Father in heaven.

Jesus had told them to stay in Jerusalem until God sent the power of His Holy Spirit upon them. You may have heard of Pentecost. This was the day the disciples received the Holy Spirit like little tongues of fire on their heads, told in *Acts, chapter 2*.



*Pentecost by Anthony van Dyck*

Now the disciples were given power from God to go out and do His work, preaching the Gospel, healing, baptizing, casting out demons, and above all showing love, ALL in the name of Jesus. We who are called to be children of God are to preach the Gospel, too. You may ask, "What is the GOSPEL?" The Gospel is the Good News that Jesus came to this earth to die for our sins, so through believing in Him we can live eternally with Him. Jesus came as the payment for our sins.

After the disciples had received power from on high, they all began to speak in other languages spoken at that time and in that place. The people around them were amazed to hear these men speak the language they

understood. Many thought the disciples were drunk as it sounded strange to hear so many different languages. Truly it must have sounded strange, but God was using these disciples to begin their ministry. All at once every man heard the Gospel. No man did not hear and it all began as it was supposed to at Jerusalem. Not one person that day of Pentecost could say they did not hear, and many believed on Jesus' name that day. But there were those who would not believe, and it is the same today.

Many people out in the mission fields across this earth are bringing the Gospel to those who have not heard. We must all remember that people in our own land also need to hear the Good News of Jesus, maybe people who live very near to us. There may be people in our own churches who do not have Jesus living in their hearts and do not have true peace. Another of our missions can happen even in the quietness of prayer. God's people have the privilege to pray to God and ask Him to lead our loved ones, friends, neighbors, teachers and classmates to know Jesus. We can ask Him to talk to certain ones.

I pray for myself and also for you that we would not be ashamed to preach the Good News even if someone gets angry at us for doing it. We must stand strong for Jesus if we say we believe in Him. Jesus said He will help us. We can say with confidence in our time of need: *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. (Philippians 4:13)*

The disciples preached to governors, kings, high priests, princes and rulers. They were always traveling by boat to places where the Gospel had not been heard.

I praise God that the disciples stayed the course and brought the Good News to so many. Because of that, we now have the same Good News to share. We are so fortunate, too, as we have Bibles that carry this saving message of Jesus Christ. The people in the disciples' day did not have any Bibles, and for hundreds of years people all over this land did not have a Bible to hold and read. We are living in a blessed season of time.

I pray that all children of God who possess the peace of Jesus will live as He would have them live and serve Him with reverent fear. I also pray that people who have not heard will get to hear. The peace of God passes all understanding. Who can know the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counselor? God knows ALL things.

Children, put your trust in God and keep on believing in His Son Jesus. He will NOT disappoint you or ever leave you, as you can read in the verses below.

I will leave you with three verses from St. Matthew 28:18-20: *And Jesus came and spake unto them (the disciples), saying, **All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.***

God's peace to you.

# Training a Child

Pastor Rod Johnson  
Laurium, Michigan

**A**NNUALLY, IN JUNE, WE AS a nation celebrate Father's Day and in our congregation we conduct the rite of confirmation for our youth. Both of these traditions are significant blessings which we share with one another in families and in the fellowship of the Church. Both are an important part of bringing up children in the training and admonition of the Lord.



As fathers, we have a tremendous responsibility to the children that the Lord has given us. We not only have the duty of providing for their physical needs such as food and clothing, but more so the guidance and instruction that is vital that they may live godly lives and serve both God and

their fellow man. It is said, "A lesson is not really taught until it is learned!" This requires a continual process of teaching and re-teaching the Word of the Lord, values, character, discipline, responsibility and a host of other things. It can sometimes be a difficult and tiring thing for which we need to remember that it is written in the Word of the Lord, *Be not weary in well doing. (2 Thessalonians 3:13)*

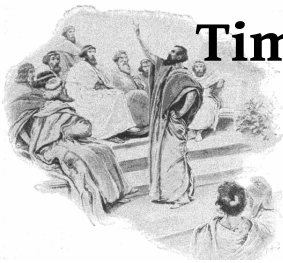
The requirement of "not provoking your children to wrath" requires patient, fair, consistent discipline administered in love. This goes along with frequent expressions

in word and deed of love for one's children, filled with praise and encouragement. Also along with this, an example of godliness must be set, as the psalmist has written, *I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way... I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. (Psalm 101:2)*

When a parent spends time (both quantity and quality time) with their children, it pays great rewards. Recently, a father told me of his child coming to him and saying, "I am proud of you, Dad. You got up early to help me with my homework and I appreciated that!" When this kind of thing happens, everyone feels good about it, and it binds hearts and lives together. My response was, "It doesn't get any better than that!" And it truly doesn't. For this is what this article is all about: our relationships with one another and with God in the fellowship of His people.

When the Church undertakes the responsibility to train up the young in the way of the Lord, a foundation of knowledge is laid. *Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. (Psalm 119:105)* The purpose is to teach children the way of salvation, and also to set the wisdom of God's truth before them as a guide for their lives.

Our confirmation camp program provides the opportunity for our confirmands to hear the word of instruction from several pastors, and get acquainted with them in an informal setting, along with developing friendships with other young people. All of these have proven effective in equipping the saints, preparing them for their witness in life as ones who worship and faithfully serve the Lord. ~



## Time After Pentecost—The Church Age

Pastor Charles Jousma  
Laurium, Michigan

**H**AVE WE STOPPED TO CONSIDER the Church calendar? Right now we are in the season referred to as the Time after Pentecost. Every season in the Church calendar reflects a given time that we find in the Scripture. The Time after Pentecost spoken of in the Scripture is the very same time period we now live. With news of war and rumors of war, we often find ourselves given over to thoughts that our current age is far from godly. Yet, the age in which we live is the very same age in which the apostles lived. It is the Church Age.

What does it mean to live in the Church Age? It means that we actually have positions of power on earth, that—as Christians—we have something that can overturn the world. In Acts 17:6, the believers are referred to as "these that have turned the world upside down." Then why do we act as those who are powerless in the world? Jesus Himself tells us in *John 14:12: Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.* He's not saying that we are going to do a mightier act than He did, but that we will do more. Jesus was going to His Father, but we are here. We are left here not as orphans, as Jesus goes on to say, but He will come to us. When He comes, He will give us the Holy Spirit, which brings us to Pentecost, and our current age, the Time after Pentecost.

We should be encouraged that we do not live in a godless age, but we live in a time when God dwells in us. We do not pray to a God who is far off, but one at hand, who has given us to do "greater works than these." As we encounter the very apparent ravages of the fall of man, remember that we have the restoration within us. That is what empowers us in this age, that we may take a lesson from the namesake of our federation, the apostles, and go into the world boldly, truly believing that God is the one in power. This means we will find ourselves even in positions of peril, but never bound for destruction, because we are that new creation. We are raised with Jesus, and His resurrection is forever. Just as Jesus will never die again, neither will we. This is the Time after Pentecost, the Church Age. ~



# He Was Made Sin for Us

C. O. Rosenius

"Day by Day," Volume 1

*For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*  
2 Corinthians 5:21

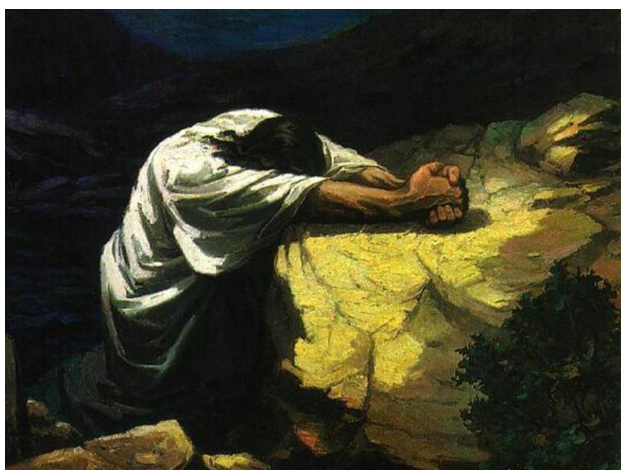
**O**H, WHAT A MIGHTY WORD! The word here is not sin offering, but *sin*, "made to be *sin*". And this means that He was so covered with the sins of all the world that He could be called sheer sin.

As Bishop Herselb says of this text:

**He was made to be *sin itself* so that God did not consider Him anything else than sheer sin. So as to say, God made Him to be a block of sin, a lump of sin... in order that all God's punishment, all wrath, all the cruelty of hell, all the right the devil had over us, because of sin, would be concentrated on Him as on a centre; because all sins had been gathered in Him and their abode, room and place was in Him.**

Or as Luther says:

**When the merciful Father threw the sins of all of us upon Him, He said: 'You will be what all human beings have been and are, from the beginning of time to its end. You will be the sinner who took the apple in paradise. You will be David, who committed adultery and murder. You will be Paul, who persecuted, blasphemed and was injurious, etc. In brief, you will be what all human beings are, as if you alone had done the sins of all of them. Therefore now think of how you will pay and make good for them.'**



When thus the Mediator bore the sins of the world, all the curse of the Law also came over Him, that is, all the wrath of God, the disgrace and agony that the sins of all the world deserved. This fight started in the garden and it was so hard that it pressed the unheard-of sweat of blood from the strong Hero under prayer and tears as if from a weak, fainting sinner. God's law of imputing is no joke, but in deadly earnest. When God had once thrown the sin on Him, He could not even complain to God that He was

innocent, but He had to stand before the Father as a great sinner and taste all the curse of the Law.

This was completed in the death on the cross which comprised all the curse of the Law. Here, finally, Death had its battle with Life. Death is a mighty lord over all the world because he overcomes kings and princes and all men. With all his power, he now laid himself on Christ and wanted to overcome and devour Him, too. It even seemed that he succeeded therein, when, with strong crying and tears, the Lord gave up the ghost.

But, as in Him there was life eternal, so also, when He let Himself be overcome and killed, this eternal life turned back, overcame and killed death. By this innocent death of Christ for the sins of the world, the whole of the great victory was won, and thereby the head of the serpent was bruised. The Law had taken all its claim on mankind. Sin had been completely punished and atoned for. Death had been overcome by Life, and thereby the devil lost his prey. The accuser had been cast out and judged, and by the blood of the covenant the prisoners were sent forth out of the pit (Zechariah 9:11). For now an eternal pardon, life, freedom and righteousness had been earned for all, and angels and blessed multitudes sang the song of victory: *Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. (Revelation 5:13)* This is the glorious victory of which it is written: *Death is swallowed up in victory. 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 15:54-57)*

Thus by the glorious victory of Christ all the world has now been redeemed in Christ—as truly and as completely as it was fallen and lost in Adam. And undeservedly, it gets eternal life by Christ even as it had inherited sin and death by Adam. The Adamitic inheritance is something we feel within ourselves and the world at each moment. But the inheritance from Christ we do not see and feel. It is only preached by the Gospel and believed by us, but the Lord God sees Christ and His excellence. Therefore, as truly as you see the world sunk down in sin so equally truly does God see all human beings completely atoned for, justified and sanctified in Christ, yes, and as lovely as when in the beginning He saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good.

If the world had not been restored thus before the eyes of God, then Christ would not have performed His office of atonement completely. Now there remains nothing else for our salvation and eternal bliss than the commandment of the Gospel: Kiss the Son! Come back, ye lost children. *Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow... (Isaiah 1:18)* And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. *(Revelation 22:17)* He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. *(Mark 16:16)* ~

# Children of Light

Lois Matson  
Yacolt, Washington

*But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. **Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.** Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.*

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

**T**HE DAY OF THE LORD is coming, children of Light! On the last day, when the Father's perfect time is come, the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel. God's trumpet will sound, and the dead in Christ will rise to meet Him in the air. Then the believers who are living on earth will be caught up together with them, to live forever with the Lord. The Apostle says: "Comfort one another with these words!"

Do these words bring you comfort, dear friend?

The thought of Christ's return can strike fear into hearts of people who dwell in darkness and do not know the peace of God, who have not been brought into His kingdom of Light. Paul explains that the Day of the Lord will come suddenly, like a thief in the night. Some people delude themselves, saying, "It's all good! There is peace and safety here!" But like labor pains coming on a pregnant woman, there will be no escape. Christ will return, and sudden destruction will come upon those who do not believe that Jesus is the Savior of the world, the Son of God who has redeemed all of mankind from the power of darkness and sin.

Paul realizes this is a fearful thought to those who live in darkness, and he continues: "But you, brothers, are not in darkness. This Day won't surprise you!" Then these

blessed words from the pen of the Apostle: *Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.*

Believers in Christ are transformed from darkness to light, from night to day, from death to Life. We give thanks to the Father who has made us fit to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. The Father has rescued us from the power of darkness, from Satan's realm, and has delivered us to the kingdom of His beloved Son. By the blood of Jesus, we have been redeemed and our sins have been forgiven (Colossians

1:12-14). Our heavenly Father has done this great work! He has translated us to His own kingdom of Light, and we share in the inheritance with the saints of light.

Because we are children of Light, we watch and wait, being aware of our surroundings and the temptations that can overwhelm us. We wear the breastplate of faith and love, and, on our heads, the helmet of the hope of salvation. God has not destined us to suffer His anger, but we receive salvation from our Lord Jesus, the Anointed One of God. He died and rose again to purchase us from sin, so that we can live with Him forever.

With Dr. Luther we say: We believe in the resurrection of the dead, and the Life everlasting. Whether we live or die, we are His, children of Light who will live with Him eternally. It's only a matter of time until the time comes, the archangel speaks, the trumpet sounds, and the Lord Himself descends to take us home. Be comforted by these words, children of Light. ~



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## The Fourth Watch of the Night

Pastor Jay Weidner  
Laurium, Michigan

***And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. (Matthew 14:25)***

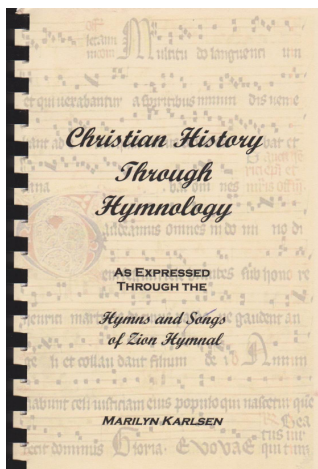
The fourth watch of the night was the last watch of the night beginning at 3 a.m. and ending at 6 a.m. Having recently preached on this text, I was later struck by an analogy to life illustrated in the watches of the night.

**A**S I LOOK UPON MANY OF our congregations, I see that they have aged. In many of them it appears that the older members outnumber the younger, in some cases substantially. The aging baby boomers and their parents have definitely entered the watches of the night and many are in the fourth watch. The fourth watch is often long and filled with a longing for day, yet the eyes also grow heavy and there is a desire for rest. Many of the older members of our congregations have worked hard through the day and find it hard to keep watch through the night; they're tired and need rest.

Yet in spite of their desire for sleep, their eyes are set on the sunrise, the dawning of the new day for them. In the struggle between these two poles steps Jesus. Jesus reorients their focus away from both their slumber and the coming dawn. Jesus places their focus upon Him. He shows them the way to go and delivers them. He keeps them precisely where He wants them and keeps their eyes fixed on Him, "the Author and Finisher" of their faith.

Years ago the major work of the church was youth ministry; now we need to be equally prepared to minister to those who are in the later watches of the night. It is necessary for us to help them to see the Jesus who comes walking toward them on the water, the Jesus who still directs their lives, the same One who gives them strength even when their bodies fail. It is now the ministry to the elders that will equip the church for the future. This is the step we must now take: ministry to the aging must stand alongside youth ministry as we work to edify the entire body of Christ.

May God give us the grace to meet this new challenge and take up His sacred calling to minister to all His children as we ourselves seek rest while waiting for the new daybreak. ~



**H**ave you ever thought about the history of the hymns we sing? This 275-page book explores the histories of over 600 hymns in the *Hymns and Songs of Zion* from the earliest centuries to more recently written hymns.

This is an excerpt from the Introduction: "With this book, I hope to share with other hymn-lovers the richness that I have found in learning about the backgrounds of our hymns. I hope the words take on a deeper meaning so hymn singing will be a richer experience that enhances our lives as well as worship services."

Read *Christian History Through Hymnology*, by Marilyn Karlsen. Appreciate our hymn heritage that illustrates the multi-generational faithfulness with which the Christian Church has been blessed. To order, mail check or money order for \$17 US (\$15, plus \$2 postage) to: Marilyn Karlsen 17614 NE 167th Ave, Brush Prairie, WA 98606 Phone: (360) 892-4392 Email: [marvin.and.marilyn@gmail.com](mailto:marvin.and.marilyn@gmail.com).