

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 2017

One and the Same

Pastor Nathan Juntunen
Esko, Minnesota

Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

John 7:16

MANY ARE NOT CONTENT WITH JESUS. They seek the true God behind His back. The first audiences of His sermons balked at His audacious offer of forgiveness: “Who can forgive sins but God alone?!” When Peter was confronted with the prophecy of this world’s rejection and abuse of Messiah, he was equally nonplussed: “Lord, this shall never happen to you.” Philip, reflecting the black ignorance that has fallen on the world, blurts out: “Show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” Jesus’ entire identity was a virtual mystery: “Some say you are a prophet, others say ‘Elijah’ or one of the prophets of old...” Always and forever man struggles with the incarnate God. Blindness, ignorance, arrogance, and gracelessness deprive men of their only prize. Face to face with Him, we, as a race, often find ourselves living out the famous question of John the Baptist in the throes of despair: “Are you the coming one, or should we look for someone else?”

All of this demonstrates man’s complete incapacity for the “sincere pursuit of truth” in which he believes himself to be engaged. We are not of the truth, by nature, and therefore when the truth appears in history as a person, we, of course, cannot bear it. As a matter of course we must doubt the reality: “There must be some mistake. Surely the truth should manifest itself more directly, or more spectacularly, or more attractively, or more...” These are the ramblings and protests of the fallen mind. Jesus is unflinching, however, in relation to His divine claim. If one is to know God, one must embrace His teaching. And, as the Scripture above clearly states, that

teaching is of one substance with the intent of God the Father. God is not one thing and Jesus another. God the Father is not some great, threatening cosmic meany and Jesus the Son, some kind of soft and coddling intermediary. John, the beloved apostle, states it thus: “No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.” One cannot find the god behind the back of Jesus, for that god simply does not exist. One has the Father only inasmuch as he has the Son. One believes in God only inasmuch as he believes in the Son. One must reckon with the audacious, gracious, suffering, bleeding, weeping, sweating, sleeping, dying, rising Christ if one is to be in the truth. One must content himself with this Man if one is to know God.

Shall we, indeed, look for someone else? Must we demand of God that He deliver fit answers to our “rightful” queries? Do we find ourselves rehearsing the classic struggle of our ancient forbears and their persistent doubts? Was Philip’s “insight” keen — Is there, perhaps, something behind His back? Jesus assures us: there is nothing back there. God’s will is singular and plain: He loves this world to death. He does not change. He is not one thing yesterday and another today. He is not loving and kind and merciful on the surface and yet raging underneath. His favor does not

vacillate with the changing fortunes of our world. His “teaching” is not simply doctrines and solutions. It is God in this world: Immanuel; God with us—to the death, God with us in death and in life, God with us and for us on all sides, God abiding in us and we in Him. Herein lies the secret of our peace: He is telling the truth and practices no bait-and-switch so common to our commerce. “My teaching is not mine...” for He and the Father are one. ~

*Jesus answered and said unto them,
Go and shew John again
those things which ye do hear and see:*

The blind receive their sight,

*and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed,
and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up,
and the poor have the gospel preached to them.*

*And blessed is he,
whosoever shall not be offended in me.
Matthew 11:4-6*



Didymus

Pastor Elmer Yliniemi; Frazee, Minnesota
May 2009 CM

But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

John 20:24-25

SCRIPTURE TELLS US THAT THOMAS was a twin three different times; “Didymus” is a Greek word meaning twin. We are not told in Scripture who his twin was. His response in the text above has led to the common term “Doubting Thomas.” He has gone down in history as a doubter and skeptic and one who needed proof before he could be satisfied. However, the story of Thomas can be very comforting to us. Thomas is really a picture of us. At times of disillusionment, we are often troubled by doubts; in that sense, perhaps you and I are the twins of Thomas.

Just before our text, we read that it was the first day of the week and Jesus had risen from the grave. The disciples were in fear, behind locked doors. They had seen their Lord and Master die on the cross and they could only think in terms of their own physical world. Jesus had told them in many ways and many times that He would rise from the dead, yet they did not even anticipate the possibility of His resurrection. Suddenly Jesus stood in their midst and said, “Peace be unto you.”

Thomas was not with the other apostles when this took place. Scripture doesn’t tell us why he was not with the others. When the other disciples tried to convince Thomas that they had seen the Lord, Thomas responds by saying, *Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.*

Thomas, along with the other disciples had been ordained by Jesus Christ to preach, heal the sick and cast out devils (Mark 3:13-19). Earlier when Jesus was on His way to raise Lazarus from the dead, Thomas was ready to risk his life and die with Jesus. His faith appeared very strong.

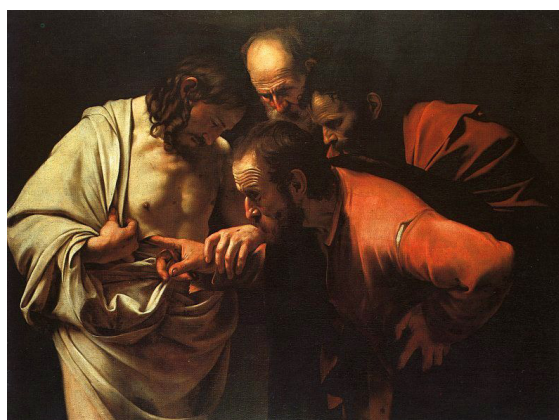
The death of Jesus was so deeply impressed on his mind that it was impossible for Thomas to believe that He could be alive again. Perhaps it was his despair that kept him from joining the other disciples the evening of the resurrection. Often when we go into depression or go through some great tragedy or sorrow we shut ourselves off from the fellowship of others who could encourage us. Thomas was struggling with all that he had believed. The death of his vision and expectations had caused him to doubt and his cry was for strength. He said if I am going to believe that Jesus is alive, He will have to do something to make it possible (verse 25). He wanted to believe but he needed power from beyond himself provided by God.

Even though Jesus saw the disciples’ lack of faith, He comes to them with “Peace be unto you.” Jesus does not crush the weak or quench the smallest hope. *A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.* (Matthew 12:20) Like Jesus, we need to minister to the weak and not judge our brother nor put a stumbling block in our brother’s way (Romans 14:13).

The other disciples did not lock Thomas out of their fellowship because of his doubt. They loved him back in by their eagerness to share their faith in the risen Lord. Thomas wanted his faith to be renewed. He couldn’t live off the faith of the other disciples.

Jesus saw more deeply into the heart of Thomas than Thomas himself. *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins.* (Jeremiah 17:9-10)

He singled out Thomas and said, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side...



Jesus honored the questions of Thomas and appeared before him one week later. Jesus understood the doubts and fears of Thomas. He reaches out to help you and me who are like Thomas. He doesn’t rebuke but comes with a word of peace. He singled out Thomas and said, *Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.* (John 20:27) After which Thomas said, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus answers, *Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.* (John 20:29)

When Jesus died He said, “It is finished.” It was a shout of victory! He had come from glory to our world to redeem you and me from our sin. He arose from the dead, victorious over death, and returned to the Father. He sent the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, to live and dwell among us so we can have fellowship and communion with Him.

Thomas saw and he believed. We are blessed when we see the living Savior with “eyes of faith” even when we may be troubled by doubts.

Jesus reached out to meet the need of Thomas. He reaches out to meet our every need. He has promised to never leave us or forsake us. This is a promise given to us by God. HE does not lie. He reaches out with His grace and shows us His hands and side. He tells us, “I have purchased you with my blood. You, too, can believe all your sins are forgiven and washed in the precious blood of Jesus.”

May your faith be strengthened by the power of His resurrection. Jesus is alive and lives forever. Because He lives we, too, can live forever! ~

Fatherhood

Pastor Nicholas Kandoll
New York Mills, Minnesota

My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.

Proverbs 3:11-12

GOD HAS REVEALED HIMSELF to us as our Heavenly Father. In the above quote from Proverbs, Solomon, giving advice to his son, compares the loving discipline of God to that of a father.

As children, it is very easy to take our parents for granted, or to misunderstand their motives. Punishment is often associated with anger rather than love. It is important to remember that we are called to honor our parents at all times, not based on how good we think they are, but because of the position that God has given them.

Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. (Exodus 20:12)

Martin Luther says this about the commandment:

To this estate of fatherhood and motherhood God has given the special distinction above all estates that are beneath it that He not simply commands us to love our parents, but to honor them. For with respect to brothers, sisters, and our neighbors in general He commands nothing higher than that we love them, so that He separates and distinguishes father and mother above all other persons upon earth, and places them at His side.

-Large Catechism 105

When we teach our kids to honor their father and mother, we teach them to honor God, because it is God who gave them their father and mother, just as it is God who gave them His only Son, Jesus Christ, to forgive all of their sins.

Charles Francis Adams, grandson of President John Adams and son of President John Quincy Adams, was a state senator, a US Congressman and an ambassador. After a day spent fishing with his son, Henry Brooks, he wrote this in his diary:

"Went fishing with my son today—a day wasted."

It could be that they didn't catch any fish that day, or that Charles had important projects to do and fishing was a waste of time in comparison. The interesting thing about this, though, is that Charles wasn't the only one to make a diary entry that day. His son, Henry, wrote this in his diary that same day:

"Went fishing with my father today—the most glorious day of my life."

This account is both sad and encouraging at the same time. It is sad that Charles didn't realize that the fishing trip was not a wasted day, but rather a very productive day, creating lifelong memories with his son. But it is encouraging that the very same day was so special to Henry.

It's an important lesson to consider: As fathers, the things that don't seem so important to us can be oh-so-important to our children. These are my thoughts as my first year as a father has come to a close.

God's peace.



And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

Hebrews 12:5-13

In the book of Genesis, chapter 3, regarding the fall of man, after Adam and Eve had eaten of the forbidden fruit, the Scripture says **the eyes of them both were opened**, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. (Genesis 3:7) Their eyes were opened. They knew that they had sinned.

When Jesus blessed and broke the bread for the disciples on the road to Emmaus, their eyes were opened to know that there was a remedy for their sin. *And it came to pass, as [Jesus] sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.* (Luke 24:30-31)

What a wonderful thing, to know according to God's Word, according to His righteous Law, that we are sinners. We are undone. But then the wonderful message follows: the Lord does not remember your sin. It has been blotted out. It has been taken away by the work of Jesus.

Jesus is now before them, and their eyes were opened, and they saw Him, the Lamb of God which took away their sins, and your sins, and mine.

Pastor Phil Wilson
Hockinson, Washington

On the Road to Emmaus

Gwen Wilson
Ridgefield, Washington

Dear Children, far and near,

I thank God this day that each of you believe in Him and His Son Jesus, and I pray that He will bless you because of that. We are still in the Easter season, when we remember Jesus' death and resurrection.

So many things happened during that time. I would like to share something that happened after Jesus arose, found in *St. Luke 24:13-53*. I never tire of hearing this. I hope that we as Christians would never tire of God's Word. It is life.

Jesus died and had arisen the third day just as He said. That very day two of His followers left Jerusalem where the crucifixion had taken place. They were walking toward a town called Emmaus, about seven miles away. Something very special happened on the road.

The two disciples were talking of the sad events that had just taken place, in that their Lord was taken away from them. As they were talking together, Jesus Himself appeared and walked with them, but they did not recognize Him. The Bible says: *But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. (Luke 24:16)*

Jesus asked them what they were talking about and why they were so sad.

And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?

And he said unto them, What things?

And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. (Verses 18-20)



Children, do you see what was happening? Cleopas did not know he was talking to the very Jesus whom he was so sad about. He was telling Jesus all about Jesus' own death. Jesus already knew everything, but He pretended not to. Jesus listened patiently and said, *O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? (Verses 25-26)*

Then Jesus explained to them all the Old Testament Scriptures about Himself. After Jesus told the disciples all these things, they still did not know that they were with Him.

Late in the day, they reached Emmaus. Jesus acted like He was going to go farther, but the disciples asked Him to stay there with them, so He did. While they were eating, Jesus took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples. *And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. (Verse 31)*

Imagine that! The disciples finally learned that they were with their beloved friend Jesus, and He so quickly disappeared that they can't even talk more.

Cleopas and the other disciple were so excited that they hurried back to Jerusalem to tell the others. They explained all that had happened on the way, how Jesus talked with them, and ate with them, and how He disappeared when they finally realized who He was.

While they were telling all this, Jesus Himself stood in the room with them. He said four words to take away their fear and to reassure them: *Peace be unto you. (Verse 36)* Even after Jesus spoke, the disciples had scared looks on their faces as they thought they were seeing a ghost. Jesus spoke again: "Why are you troubled and why do thoughts (of a spirit) arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see Me have." He showed them His hands and feet. The disciples were excited, but Jesus could tell they still doubted, so He asked them if they had any food. They gave Him some fish and honeycomb, and He ate some. He wanted them to see that He really was there with them in the flesh.

Jesus loved the disciples so much, and He wanted them to know that He needed to suffer and rise again. They were seeing that and they were once again in their Lord's presence. Jesus told them to go from that day preaching

repentance and remission of sins to all the world. They were to begin this preaching at Jerusalem.

He told them, "You are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you, but stay in the city of Jerusalem until you are filled with power from on high."

He led them out as far as Bethany, and lifted up His hands and blessed them. While He was blessing them, He was taken up from the ground and a cloud hid Him from the disciples' sight.

What a sight that would've been! When the disciples stood looking upward and the cloud went away, their friend Jesus really was gone. *And they worshipped him, and*

returned to Jerusalem with great joy: And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen. (Verses 52-53)

We are Jesus' disciples also, and we are commissioned to preach and teach the same thing. We can't see Jesus in person, but we can see Him through faith in the testimony of Him according to the Word by those who serve Him. We can talk to Him anytime, anywhere through prayer. We see the goodness of Jesus all around, and we thank Him with all our hearts that He died for us. He died for us because He dearly LOVES us. May God keep you all in His care. ~



A Letter from Heaven to the Graduate

Pastor Orval Wirkkala
Kingston, Minnesota

There is excitement in the air as graduations take place across our nation, the United States of America. Speeches are made; past accomplishments are celebrated, appreciation is given, and future hopes and dreams are charted. But suppose our Triune God was giving the speech at the commencement exercises. What would He say? I have considered this and prayerfully written from the Scriptures what He would say to our dear graduates.

MY DEAR CHILD, I am thankful for you and I joy in you. I have great pleasure in your being. I pour out My favor on you through My Son Jesus in the Holy Spirit. I am love, and therefore I love you, dear child.

I have blessed you with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places. I made a decision for you for Myself before the foundation of the world, that you should be holy and blameless before Me through Jesus, in love. You were lost and I found you. I adopted you, because that is what I wanted to do, so that My name would be made great through you in Christ Jesus. My desire is that you would know the blessings of My grace and mercy, the forgiveness of your sins, a blessed and fruitful life in a sinful and fallen world, and eternity with Me and all who are Mine.

You have reached a milestone in your life and are looking ahead with hope and excitement. You know that the foundation of your life, received through your parents and family, your church and godly friends, is built upon My Son, the Solid Rock revealed in the Bible. You know the plans and future I have for you are of hope and expectation, a future which ultimately will be in heaven with Me.

In your early years of Sunday School you learned about who I am, that I am for you and not against you. From the First Commandment comes this beautiful affirmation of My love: "I am the Lord your God. You shall have no other gods before Me." I love you and want us to have an exclusive relationship of love and truth through My Son Jesus.

My dear child, I love you so much that I do not want anything to come between us. Because I love you, I warn you against things that would cause your devotion to Me to be divided, so we would no longer be one in My love and truth.

Dear child, if you lack wisdom, ask Me for it, and I will give it to you, for I give generously and never rebuke anyone who asks. But remember to ask in faith and don't doubt Me, for when you doubt, you will be like a wave in the sea, driven and tossed by the wind.

I have left a wonderful book of wisdom called Proverbs to teach you, along with the rest of My Word, how to live your life. Please remember that My wisdom is lived out by applying My knowledge to your everyday life. I have given a ready made reading plan for Proverbs, as there are 31 chapters in this book. Once you get into a rhythm of reading the chapter of Proverbs that corresponds with the date, you will find that you look forward to hearing of wisdom from Me daily. This will help you discern what is good from what is evil. Stand on the things I say, dear one, and you will have a blessed life that will also be a blessing to others. Stand firm on those things I share from My love letter to you, the Bible.

Each morning when you arise, My dear child, consider putting on My armor, one piece at a time. Beginning with

your heart and mind turned heavenward in a spirit of prayer, first wrap around yourself the belt of truth onto which all other parts of My armor will be fastened. Reading My Word is like putting on the belt of truth each day. Vow to walk in truth as you begin each new day in Me.

Then consider putting on the breastplate, which means you are covered by the righteousness of My Son, Jesus Christ. Do not forget, dear child, that My Son was tempted in all points by sin, but He never sinned. Through believing in Him, His perfection is your perfection. Never forget that, for your existence is based on this truth. That is why I invite you to first put on the belt of truth, for your beliefs and convictions must be connected to My Word of Truth, the Bible.

As you go through life, you may be tempted to believe that your identity is based on your accomplishments, outward appearance or popularity. That is not how I place value upon you, for you are priceless in My sight because I created you in My image. Even though you fell into sin with the entire human race, My Son has given you a new identity by dying in your place for your sin, experiencing death for you, and rising on Easter morning. You died in Him and were also raised in Him. You now exist in Him, and through Him you are a new creation. Never, never forget that! You do not belong to the world, to the Deceiver, or to your own estimation of yourself.

As you slip into the shoes of peace, know they will keep your feet firmly planted on My promises. They will not only keep you from slipping, but they will also give you a sense of peace as you live in the peace that I give and the world can never take away. I am your Peace and your Stability.

Grasp the shield of faith in your hand to ward off the darts of accusation that the devil will throw to try to take away your peace. The Deceiver does not want to you believe that forgiveness is a gift, but something that you earn or deserve. That is not right, for I have given you the greatest gift ever. My Son took your sin and guilt and gave you forgiveness and life through the Gospel. Always believe and never doubt it!

Place the helmet on your head so you will be protected from the ungodly thoughts that tend to creep into your mind. By thinking on the things of Me, your mind will be protected as well as disciplined to grow more like the mind of Christ.

Before you face the new day, pick up one of the offensive weapons of your armor, My Word. With this sword of the Spirit you will be able to address any questions that come before you. You will ward off any attack that might come against you. As you begin the day, do so with the other offensive weapon—prayer—by being in a spirit of prayer.

Having put on My entire armor, you are prepared to walk in My truth in love and to demonstrate through your attitudes, words and actions who you are in My Son, Jesus Christ. May your love abound more and more in the knowledge of Me and in all judgment; that you approve things that are excellent; that you may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruit of righteousness by Jesus Christ, to My glory and praise.

We love you. We are in you and you in us, dear child.

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit

The Good Samaritan

Martin Luther

He (Jesus) said unto him (the lawyer), What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

Luke 10:26-28

HOW IS IT POSSIBLE FOR US to love God, as long as His will displeases us? For if I love God, I love also His will. Now, when God sends us sickness, poverty, shame and disgrace, that is His will. But what do we do under such circumstances? We thunder, scold and growl, and bear it with great impatience. And this is the least part, for what would we do if we had to forsake body and life for God and Christ's sake? Then we would act quite differently. Yet, in the meantime, I act like this Pharisee and lawyer does. I lead a fine outward life, honor and serve God, fast, pray, and appear very pious and holy. But God does not want this. He wants us to accept His will with joy and love, and this we are too tardy in doing.

Therefore, what the Lord says to this lawyer, He says to us all; namely, that we have not yet fulfilled the Law, and still He requires us to do it. His will is that we should love Him with all our hearts. This no man can do, and the conclusion is that we are all sinners, and especially those who walk in a beautiful outward show. Therefore, it is safer that we go and confess that we all are sinners than that we have respect to our works and cling to our beautiful, glittering lives.

The foregoing is the first part of our Gospel lesson, and it is a sermon on the Law. The second part now follows, and it preaches the Gospel, how and whence we are to receive power to fulfill the Law.

How does this lawyer act now after the Lord had thus turned him away? He desires to justify himself and says to the Lord: *And who is my neighbour?* (Luke 10:29) He does not ask, "Who is my God?" as though he would say, "I owe God nothing; with God I am in good standing." The Lord tells him a very beautiful parable by which He shows that we are all neighbors among one another, both he who does another a kindness, as well as he who is in need of a kindness.

This Samaritan, of course, is our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, who has shown His love toward God and His neighbor: toward God, in that He was obedient to Him, came down from heaven and became man, and thus fulfilled the will of His Father; toward His neighbor, in that He immediately after His baptism began to preach, to do wonders, to heal the sick. In short, He did no work that centered in Himself alone, but all His acts centered in His neighbor. But all this He did because He knew that this pleased God and was His Father's will. When He entered upon that high mission to prove that He loved God with all His heart, He laid down His bodily life with all He had. This is the Samaritan who came uninvited, and

fulfilled the Law with His whole heart. Only He fulfilled the Law, and no one can deprive Him of this honor; He alone merits it, and well maintains it all alone. Now this would be no special comfort for us; but that He has compassion on the poor wounded man, takes him under His care, binds his wounds, takes him into the inn and waits on him, this avails for us.

The man who here lies half dead, wounded and stripped of his clothing is Adam and all mankind. The murderers are the devils who robbed and wounded us, and left us lying half dead. We still struggle a little for life; but we cannot help ourselves to our feet, and if we were left thus lying we would have to die by reason of our great anguish and lack of nourishment.



But the Samaritan who has fulfilled the Law and is perfectly healthy and sound, comes and does more than both priest and Levite. He binds up the sores of the wounded man, pours in oil and wine, lifts Him upon His own beast, and brings him into the inn, takes good care of him, and when He departs He carefully commends him to the host, and besides leaves him a sufficient supply of money, while neither the priest nor Levite would do one of these kind acts. The priest signifies the dear sainted fathers before Moses; the Levite the priesthood of the Old Testament. All these however have accomplished nothing by their works, and have passed by on the other side like this priest and Levite. These

were the preachers of the Law, and showed what the world was, namely, full of deadly sins, and it lay there half dead, and could not help itself, notwithstanding all its powers, reason and free will.

But Christ, the true Samaritan, takes the poor man to Himself as His own, goes to him and binds up his wounds, cares for him and pours in oil and wine; this is the whole Gospel from beginning to end. You know very well that oil softens, thus also the sweet, loving preaching of the Gospel gives me a soft, mild heart toward God and my neighbor, so that I risk my bodily life for the sake of Christ my Lord and His Gospel, if God and necessity require it. But wine is sharp and signifies the holy cross that immediately follows. A Christian need not look for his cross; it is always on his back, as St. Paul says, *Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.* (2 Timothy 3:12) The stable or inn is Christianity, here in this world, where we must remain for a short time. The host is the preacher of the Word of God and of the Gospel, who is to pursue and care for us.

Now here we have the substance of the Gospel. The kingdom of Christ is a kingdom of mercy and grace, in which there is nothing but a continual carrying of the lost. Christ carries our infirmities and sicknesses; He takes our sins upon Himself and has patience when we fail. We still always lay about His neck, and yet He does not become weary of carrying us, which should be the greatest comfort for us when we are in conflict with sin. ~

Come and See

Lois Matson
Yacolt, Washington

Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, **Come and see.** They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone. (John 1:35-42)

Come and see. John the Baptist called Jesus the Lamb of God, and two of John's disciples heard his exclamation. They followed Jesus and asked where He was staying. They were invited to come and see, with their own eyes, where Jesus was dwelling, and they stayed with Him that day.

One of the disciples—Andrew—went and found his brother Simon Peter and said, “We have found the Messiah, the Anointed One!” By the revelation of the Holy Spirit Andrew had come to the amazing conclusion that Jesus was the Messiah.

The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, **Come and see.** Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man. (John 1:43-51)

Come and see. The very next day, Jesus said to Philip, “Follow Me.” Philip went to Nathanael and invited him to come and see, with his own eyes, the One of whom Moses and

the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth. By the revelation of the Holy Spirit, Philip knew that Jesus of Nazareth was the One! And though Nathanael thought that nothing good could come from Nazareth, he was shown that Jesus was the Son of God, the King of Israel.

But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. (John 20:24-29)

Thomas was not there when Jesus first came to the disciples after His resurrection. When they told Thomas they had seen the Lord, he insisted he would not believe unless he saw the wounds in Jesus' hands and side. Eight days later, Jesus came again to His disciples, and invited Thomas to come and see (and touch!) the print of the nails in His hands and the hole in His side, pierced by a Roman spear. Thomas believed and exclaimed, “My Lord and my God!”



And though we have not seen Jesus with our own eyes, by the revelation of the Holy Spirit we believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the Anointed One, the Son of God, the King of Israel. We believe that He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. We say with Thomas, “My Lord and My God!”

Jesus Himself said ... *blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.*

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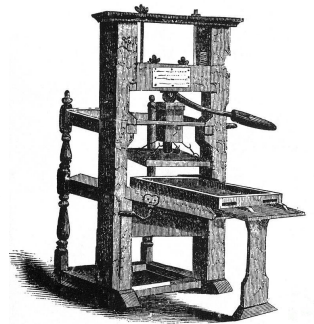
The Invention of the Printing Press: The Reformation #1

[Editor's Note: This is the first in a series of articles celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. On October 31, 1517, Dr. Martin Luther, a professor at the University of Wittenburg, published the *Ninety-Five Theses* and lit a fire that burns to this day.]

IN THE MIDDLE AGES, there were many versions of parts of the Bible in the vernaculars and a few complete translations late in that period. The absence of printing and the smaller number of people who could read limited the demand and the use. Portions were put into the Slavonian dialects in the ninth to eleventh centuries; into Spanish in the twelfth century. There was a complete French Bible in the thirteenth century, and a complete Italian translation probably in the thirteenth century by Jacopo da Voragine, and certainly in the fifteenth century, by Nicholas de Nardo. The Scandinavian countries had Bibles in their own languages in the fifteenth century. There were very early translations of portions into German dialects before Luther's New Testament in 1522, and his complete Bible in 1534. The first complete Bible in a language that can be called English was John Wycliffe's in 1380, revised in 1388. The Protestant Reformation gave a real impulse to Bible translation.

Johan Gutenberg, called the inventor of printing, was born in Mainz, Germany, about 1397. In the autumn of 1439, with partners, he founded a company that practiced a secret art invented by Gutenberg. This appears to have been the beginning of typography. From 1450 onward, Gutenberg worked at perfecting the type apparatus of his 42-line Latin Bible, the printing of which he finished in 1455. It was printed on a mechanism adapted from a winepress, and used movable type. His 42-line Bible is usually found in two volumes on 1,282 pages of folio size. There still exist forty-seven known copies, of which twelve are printed on vellum and thirty-five on paper. The three-volume copy in the Library of Congress, Washington, DC, has been called the most beautiful copy on vellum.

The American People's Encyclopedia, Grolier, Inc.



With the advent of the printing press, the Word of God and Luther's writings were distributed at a pace not possible a century before. Prior to this time, it was as though the Word of God remained in a sheath. It was through Luther's dedication that the Bible was unsheathed, and its life-giving effect was felt throughout many lands.

*the late Rev. Alvin C. Holmgren
Oct 2005 CM*



Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

John 13:3-5

We must understand by the term "feet washing" a disposition which not only willingly serves others in a humble spirit, but which is also ready to forgive the failings of the brethren, as St. Paul says: "Bear ye one another's burdens." For it is simply a fact that in the wide world we will never find a Christian so blameless and perfect as to be entirely free from every fault and blemish...

If we have not the faults which we notice in our brother, let us thank God that it is so; but at the same time we must not forget that we may have other failings which need patience and assistance from others. On the other hand, our neighbors have gifts with which they can help us in our infirmities; and even if they should be unable to help us even in the least, they are still our neighbors, whom we should treat with Christian love, as God has commanded us...

Let harmony and friendship prevail among us as much as possible; to this end let us exercise the spirit of humility. What a pleasant, quiet, Christian life we could lead, if we would only be ready ever to wash each other's feet!

Martin Luther