

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.

March 2014

Hope in God

Pastor Orval Wirkkala
Kingston, Minnesota



ISAIAH WROTE OF THE MESSIAH 700 years before Jesus' birth in Bethlehem that there shall come forth a rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. He was referring to the promise for the forgiveness of sins that was proclaimed in the book of Genesis (3:15). The angels proclaimed this event by bringing forth one of the greatest news flashes ever: *Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:10-11)*

Isaiah the prophet was appointed to proclaim to the people that Light which would one day pierce the dark skies of the night in the future. In Isaiah's time, God's chosen Jewish nation often went away from their Creator, Redeemer, Provider and Sustainer and consequently their Lord would call them back to Himself. During those times of darkness, Isaiah spoke the word of hope and called the people to place their trust and hope in the God of Israel and not in men.

God has worked in the past, is working today, and will work tomorrow. We can learn and apply how God worked in the lives of those who have gone before us, to the end that we may live in hope. The testimony of the Scriptures declare Jesus Christ and the forgiveness of sins through which He brought hope into the world.

As Apostle Paul winds down the book of Romans, he encourages the Jew and Gentile believers to know that they are now one in Jesus Christ and there is no longer any division between them. They have been brought into one body through the cross of Christ and he calls upon them to live in that reality. He begins by concluding the discussion of chapter 14 which concerns the non-essentials of faith, pointing out that the strong should bear patiently the infirmities of the weak, those who have not yet come to a mature understanding of

biblical faith and therefore are still hanging on to the old ways. They essentially believe that salvation is by Christ alone, but there are strings attached also. He begins...

We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God. Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Romans 15:1-13

This inclusion of both Jews and Gentiles had been prophesied by the Holy Spirit through the written Word already in the Old Testament. Paul used Scripture to ground his argument of the oneness that now existed as the result of the promise to the Jew first and then to the Gentile. He points out the patience and consolation of God and calls them to learn from the examples in the Old Testament. God's promises were fulfilled in Christ, and the fact that they rejected Him did

not affect God's promise but the effect of the promise was contingent upon their repentance. To the Gentiles the prophecy of being shown mercy by God was now in effect as Paul reached back to the Old Testament Scriptures to establish his argument. On this basis, Paul prays not only that *the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing*, but also that *ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost*.

Let us think about faith and hope as we consider this important word "hope."

Faith means to trust God, believing God for our future (Hebrews 11:1-3). We are trusting our life/our soul to the hands of God, for the future that He has in store for us.

Paul had written about that which God has done for us in Christ, which is the root cause for our joy and peace (Romans 4:18-25; 5:1-11).

We think of hope as our desire, something we would like to see happen, but in biblical language hope refers to the future promises of God, which have not yet taken place, but will happen. Our hope is like the anchor of the soul, for we believe God for our future.

HOPE IS THE CERTAINTY OF THE FUTURE promises of God. Hope is faith looking forward. Do we believe that Abraham Lincoln was our President during the Civil War? Yes, we do, for we believe in those things that have already taken place, and we trust that those events happened. In this sense, we tend to think about faith in the sense of looking backward and hope as trusting in the future.

Even though faith and hope may be distinguished from each other, they are very closely related. Faith is what gives substance to our hope.

How do we know that the future promises of God will come to pass? Because we trust God, for people of faith are those who trust God. It is because of the faithfulness of God that we have assurance for the future. Because we have faith, there is hope. Without faith, there is no hope. People have hope today, but not all are putting their hope in God, which means they have a hope that is not biblical and it is a hope that will leave them disappointed.

Here are some examples:

- Jehoshaphat's hope in God: 2 Chronicles 20:1-13
- David's lack of hope in God: 1 Samuel 27:1
- Apostle Paul's hope in God: 2 Timothy 1:12
- Habakkuk's hope in God: *Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock*

shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. (Habakkuk 3:17-19)

Here is one more illustration from our current day, written by my brother Allan Wirkkala:

Without hope we would tend to become despondent and uncaring about our and others' lives... I also know that God has a purpose in daily events and we are lacking in understanding and do not really need to know everything. The greatest hope my wife and I have is in our Creator and His Son providing us a sure salvation and hope of eternal life through the love in action that was displayed on the cross of Calvary. As the 23rd Psalm tells us, we walk through the "Valley of the shadow of Death." Laurel was able to attend services 2 weeks past which was a good experience for all of us. Bottom line is eternal death and separation need not be feared ever again, and we both recognize that a temporal separation is only brief. We do have our "earthly moments" but God is faithful and provides relief even then. I go through various battles in my mind but they do not last and joy comes again in time... For God's children there is no eternal death as it has been conquered by our Lord and Savior.

Hope is the certainty of the future promises of God.

Hope

Dear Father, we pray for these Your people, and desire that they might be filled with the knowledge of Your will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that they might walk worthy of You, Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of You; that they would be strengthened with all might, according to Your glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness. We give thanks unto You, Father, who have caused us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; Who have delivered us from the power of darkness and have translated us into the kingdom of your dear Son, in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins. Help us all to continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, which we have heard, and may our joy in this hope of glory be increased day by day. ~



O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee. Psalm 25:20-21

If at our first attempt truly to live the life of fully and always waiting on God we begin to discover how much that perfect integrity is wanting, this will just be one of the blessings which the waiting was meant to work. A soul cannot seek close fellowship with God, or attain the abiding consciousness of waiting on Him all the day, without a very honest and entire surrender to all His will.

Andrew Murray

Who the Great Man Is

from Solitude Sweetened by James Meikle
Cancalle Bay, June 19, 1758

HE THAT BEARS A COMMISSION from his king, that is, a peer, a privy counselor, or a minister of state, that is accounted a great man. Now, if being near the throne and conversant with the king makes a man great, clothes him with renown, procures him reverence and respect, loads him with popular applause, and encumbers him with splendor and pomp; with how much more divine and durable honor is the saint aggrandized, who, though alone from the world, dwells with God; and though not known among the busy crowd, resides about the throne! The high and lofty One who inhabits eternity gives His royal assent to their petitions, and will not say them nay; yea, *The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.* (Psalm 25:14) This is greatness indeed, to be in favor with Him who is a terror to kings.



Lord High Treasurer
William Cecil

How are the humble saints exalted in their privileges above the grandees of the world! The King eternal is not only their Friend, but Father; and the Prince of the kings of the earth is not only their Benefactor, but their Brother, which relation is secured for eternity. Again, His gifts are according to His divine dignity. None of the kings of the earth can bestow on their dearest friends, and most faithful servants, crowns and kingdoms. They may indeed divide their own among them at their death, in some countries, but in no country can they secure the donation, when dead, or perpetuate the conveyance. But His favors, who lives for ever to see them bestowed, are crowns and kingdoms, a crown that fadeth not away (1 Peter 5:4), and a kingdom that cannot be moved (Hebrews 12:28). Yea, His gifts enrich the soul, and measure with their existence.

Monarchs may cause their favorites' names to be registered in the list of their privy counselors, and other honorary rolls, but cannot prevent their being buried in oblivion; but the names of all the saints are written in the Lamb's book of life, and shall be confessed before an assembled world. It is more to know God than to be acquainted with kings, to be known of God than to be commended to the ends of the earth.

Now, what thinkest thou, O poor despised saint of God, that dwellest in a cottage which the great men would not stoop to step into, to be so high in the favor of heaven that a divine guard of heavenly angels are set about thy house, that no ill can come near thy dwelling? Yea, the sacred retinue, though unseen, attends the saint wherever he goes, who walks unobserved through the world. Did the royal life-guards of the young princes, the rising heirs of heaven, appear in the shining

livery of Him who is the Father of lights, they would terrify the inhabitants of the earth; but there is a greater wonder, that even the Sovereign of eternity should descend to be the watchman of His people, and keep their going out and preserve their coming in, so that neither the moon by night nor the sun by day shall smite them (Psalm 121)! And what comfort and security is this, that the eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath, the everlasting arms (Deuteronomy 33:27)! Such, O saint, is thy renowned state, thine excellent glory, who perhaps are kept at short allowance of food and raiment both, with a young and needy family sitting heavy on thy mind; but God careth both for thee and them. What then, though thou hast crosses of every kind to meet with, bitter draughts of every composition to drink, since it is well with thy better part? Yea, afflictions capacitate thee for felicity, and enlarge thy soul for bliss. But I dare appeal to thine own breast, O child of God, under all thy troubles, falsifying friends, loss of relations, or any other grief, if thou wouldst change thy calamity with the flourishing condition of the wicked?

My life, then, is a paradox; I am mean, but great; miserable, yet happy; poor, but possessing all things; a beggar, and a prince...

Now thou art great (for the saints, since they live near God, are the greatest men in the world) and perhaps knowest it not; but, let thy greatness kindle thy gratitude, not increase thy pride. To keep the saints humble, divers afflictions are allotted them in this life; as a royal father, fearing lest his son, the young prince, under his present grandeur and prospect of the crown, may swell beyond himself, deals so hardly with him that oft he fears the king intends to disinherit him; yet so many bright displays of paternal affection assure him it shall not be so; and the truth is, it is out of love, that he may not mount the throne with unsubdued passions or sway the scepter in thoughtless folly. So it fares with the saints, who should know, in the celestial promotion, that it comes neither from the east, nor from the west, not from works of righteousness which we have done, but it is God alone that exalteth. My life, then, is a paradox; I am mean, but great; miserable, yet happy; poor, but possessing all things; a beggar, and a prince; but eternity shall unriddle it, taking away the one part and illustrating the other. ~



The Good Samaritan
by Ferdinand Hodler

It Was on a Mountain

Gwen Wilson
Ridgefield, Washington

Dear Children far and near,

Hello to each of you. I want to tell you a little about myself. Maybe you have wondered! I am one of 20 children, I have a wonderful husband (Pastor Phil), and we have been blessed with 6 children (5 boys, 1 girl), 3 lovely daughters-in-law, and 7 grand boys. My cup runs over.



Recently as I listened to a sermon, the preacher mentioned how several times in the Bible things happened up on mountain tops. It was a place that was away from the business of life and a quiet place to commune with God. Let's look at some of them in the Bible and I will only touch on them. You can read the whole stories on your own or with your parents.

On the **mountains of Ararat** Noah's ark came to rest, far away from the valley. Noah and his family (just 8 people) and all the animals came out of the ark and would begin their lives again. First Noah and his family gave thanks to God for taking care of them. It was up here that they were to gaze upon the first rainbow, God's promise to never bring a flood of water on the earth again. —Genesis 8:1-9:17

God told Abraham was to take his only son Isaac up on **Mount Moriah** and offer him as a sacrifice. You children probably remember the outcome. Yes, the angel of the Lord spoke just as Abraham raised his knife to slay his son and said, *Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.* —Genesis 22:1-14

Later on **Mount Moriah** Solomon built a temple. —2 Chronicles 3:1



Mount Horeb, also called Mount Sinai

On **Mount Zion** King David built his city, later known as Jerusalem. —Isaiah 8:18

On a hill near **Mount Horeb**, Moses, his brother Aaron, and Hur went up to watch a battle going on between the Israelites and the Amalekites. Moses had his staff with him and as long as he held it up the Israelites

were winning. When his arms got tired, he sat on a large stone. Aaron and Hur held his arms up for him until the sun went down, and the Israelites won the battle. —Exodus 17:8-16

On **Mount Sinai** (also known as Mount Horeb), Moses met with God and was given the Ten Commandments, not once but twice. —Exodus 19:16–20:21; 24:1-18; 32:1-20; 34:1-35

At the foot of **Mount Carmel** the prophet Elijah challenged the false prophets of Baal to see whose God, when called upon, would answer first and burn up the animal laid on the altar for a sacrifice. Of course it was Elijah's God whose power was seen that day. All 400 prophets of Baal were killed at Elijah's command. He then went up to the top of Mount Carmel to talk to God. —1 Kings 18

Queen Jezebel found out about the prophets being killed and she set out to kill Elijah. Elijah retreated to **Horeb** to the mount of God, and God found him in a "still small voice" there and told him where to go next. God was protecting him. —1 Kings 19:1-21

The devil took Jesus up to a **high mountain** to tempt Him, showing Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. He said he would give them and all their glory to Jesus if Jesus would fall down and worship him. Jesus answered and said unto him, *Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* —Luke 4:5-8

On the **Mount of Olives** Jesus taught His disciples. —Matthew 24:3

On a **high mountain**, the Bible says, Jesus went with Peter, James and John and He was transfigured (a supernatural change) before them. —Mark 9:2-9

Up **on the mountain** Jesus would often go and meet with His Father—God—and be in quiet communion with Him. —Mark 6:46; Luke 6:12

Up the **hill called Calvary** Jesus was made to carry the cross on which He was crucified to save the world from sin. —Luke 23:32

On a **mountain near Bethany** Jesus met with the eleven disciples for the last time on this earth. He instructed them to continue to preach the Good News beginning at Jerusalem. After He had spoken a cloud covered Him and He was taken up to heaven to sit at the right hand of God. —Matthew 28:16-20; Luke 24:50-51

The Bible says, Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. —Matthew 5:14

There are many more mountain top accounts. I hope you can look into these more. You may even know most of these accounts and that is very good. Keep on reading the Word of God and believing in Him. One day He will give all of His children *hind's feet* (like a deer) *in high places* (heaven) (Habakkuk 3:19). ~

People in the Hedges

Ryan Kandoll

Intern at Kingston, Minnesota ALC

LAST SUNDAY EVENING I PREACHED FROM Luke 15 on the story of the prodigal son. I can relate to the prodigal son in the story. I was brought to Sunday School as a young boy and heard the Word of God, but in later years I rebelled and thought it would be more fun and fulfilling to live according to my sinful desires. In the story of the prodigal son, the young man had hit bottom and his friends had left him before "he came to himself" and said, *I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.* (Luke 15:18-19)



The Prodigal Son
by Albert Anker

Here is where my story is a little different. I was far removed from church and most of my family, but I still had friends and would occasionally have interactions with Christians. It's people that are in this state that Pastor Orval Wirkkala refers to as the "people in the hedges" taken from Luke 14:23. They are people who are outside of fellowship from the church and from God.

I think many of us want to reach out to people in that lost or wayward state, and we wonder what we can do.

Some of us have, out of fear, preached against sin and warned of hell and tried to convince them to repent. Sometimes this is effective, but often times it only drives a wedge in the relationship. Other times we have been at a complete loss as to what to say or do.

When I was in that wayward state, although the words and actions of the Christians I met were always kind and encouraging, I usually left from my interaction with Christians feeling convicted of my sin. There were several instances where I heard the Word of God and it cut me. One of those times was when another sinner at a party quoted Revelation 3:16, "because thou art lukewarm... I will spew thee out of my mouth." In this instance the words scared me, but ultimately it was the love of God that led me to repentance (Romans 2:4).

The best thing we can do to reach those in the hedges is to speak the Word of God (quote Scripture) and show them kindness. After this we have to let God do the work in their hearts. We cannot take responsibility for the outcome ourselves. After all, one plants, another waters, and another harvests, but it is God who makes things grow (John 4:37, 1 Corinthians 3:6). Then when one of these people in the hedges comes to faith we can celebrate with the Father (like in the parable) that He has found His lost son. ~

The All-Sufficient Word

Shane Juuti

Gimlet, Alberta, Canada

THERE ARE A COUPLE OF QUESTIONS that we, as Christians, need to answer for ourselves, and believe the answers so completely that we can live by them with confidence. The first question we need to answer is this: Is the Word of God inerrant? Is the Word of God the only truth, with no errors?

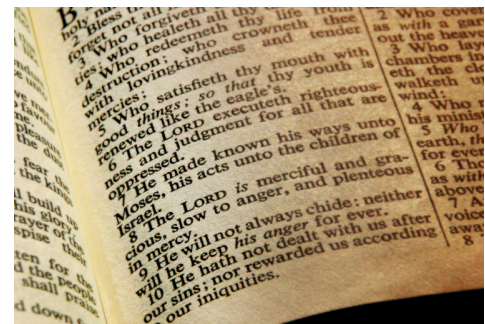
If we do believe this to be true, let's ask ourselves this second question: Do we believe that the Word of God is sufficient for us? Is the Bible enough for us to live by, or do we need to add to it from man's understanding in order to deal with certain situations?

In John 14:26, we read, *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

How many of us trust these words, and live accordingly? Do we read the Bible believing that it is the truth of Christ, from God? Do we trust that the Holy Spirit can, and will, bring these truths to our minds when it is best and necessary for each of us? Can we trust that it is only the Holy Spirit that reveals and teaches the truths of Scripture, and that we can have more confidence in the Word than in any study Bible (that may be some man's idea of what a portion of Scripture means)?

If we are struggling with certain verses, let us look into other ones. Scripture can always be backed up with Scripture. If we have the Holy Spirit, we can trust that it will reveal what is meant by a portion of the Word when we need it. Do we need self-help books to aid us? Or is the best and only self-help book we really need the Holy Bible? Is the Word of God really hard to understand, or is it too clear, and our flesh doesn't want to listen?

Let us pray that God will reveal how truly sufficient His Word is for all our needs. May He graciously give us faith to trust the guiding of His Spirit, through the Word, in all things. Our hearts will be filled with God's peace. ~



Christian Tracts

Mark Sunnarborg
Rhineland, Wisconsin

HAVE YOU EVER RECEIVED A so-called "Christian tract" from someone? You read it and feel that it is well written until you get to the end, and read something like I did at the end of the tract: "Do Good People Go to Heaven?" It says, "You can come to Christ now by praying something like this: 'Lord, thank You for taking the punishment for my sins. I know that I could never be fit for heaven without You. So I invite You into my life to be my Lord and Savior.'"

I have received such tracts in the past and have said very little about what I believe is wrong with these tracts. The Gospel must be preached to the seeking soul through the spoken Word of God, for faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word. New birth comes not by prayer. This spoken Word is the preached word of the forgiveness of sins that one may receive faith to believe.

Peter speaking to the Gentiles as recorded in Acts 10:38-44: *How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree (speaking of the blood): Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.*

Also read Acts 8:17-24. Read the conversion of the Apostle Paul in Acts 9; he was sent to Ananias that Ananias would preach to him that he would receive his sight.

I stand with the truth that is founded upon God's Word and with the testimony of the Spirit given me. I pray that this Word and testimony is written upon your hearts and you love His appearing. I pray that those who pass these tracts out would stand in the truth, and that they would stop associating with these beliefs that are not founded upon God's Word.

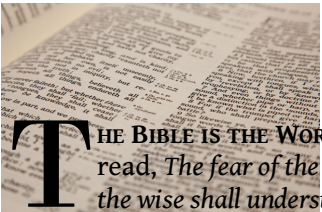
***This Gospel of Christ has been proclaimed to you,
and you are free by the spoken Word.***

Are you walking by faith and are you willing to stand for the truth, even in the eye of the storm, whatever the cost may be? Or do you say nothing even when the Spirit of God is convicting you to stand set apart from the world? Are you ashamed to say something even if you may offend someone? If you are, this is not of faith but comes from unbelief. I ask you, are the friends of this world worth your soul? For if the love of this world is in you then you have not the love of God. I encourage you in the name of Jesus to stand strong for the time is not long and Jesus will come again to receive His faithful.

When you stand in the truth you are free. This Gospel of Christ has been proclaimed to you, and you are free by the spoken Word. In believing this you have faith and the life of greatest joy knowing you are in the best place, the hand of God. ~

The Bible—God's Word to Us

Pastor Timothy Mundiah; Kenya, Africa
Submitted by Alvar Helmes; Battle Ground, Washington

**T**HE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD TO US. Hosea 4:6 says, *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.* In Psalm 111:10 we read, *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom...* And Daniel 12:10 states: *...none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.* Daily, we hear or see many things happening in the world. Consider the list below and add more that you may think of, and ask yourself where the answer to all these can be found.

1. Earthquakes and natural disasters in different place of the world
2. Daily increase of mass unemployment in all countries of the world
3. Robbery, stealing, murder, suicide and abortion [murder of unborn human beings happening all over the world]
4. Homosexuals seeking acceptance and respectability in many parts of the world
5. World finances collapsing and countries crying for the poor economy all over the world
6. Demonstrations for every cause; regular pattern of wars with plans to eliminate other countries from the world map
7. Drug abuse
8. World weather going crazy
9. False teaching cropping into the pulpit and slack educational standards
10. Down-turn of morality and the cult of scruffy appearance
11. Envy, gossiping, downfall of others and hate

We can find our answer in the only Book in the world that is infallible and inerrant in all its parts. It speaks with full authority on all life's issues; the only Holy Book in the world, THE BIBLE. I urge you to daily read your Bible, and let's daily pray asking our heavenly Father for forgiveness, wisdom and His protection. ~

For by *Grace* Are Ye Saved

Pastor Rod Johnson
Laurium, Michigan

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Titus 2:11-14

I LOVE THE MESSAGE OF THIS TEXT, for it puts all things in the perspective of God's gift, will and desire for all of mankind! God's amazing gift of grace provides all things necessary for our salvation. As it is written, *Ephesians 2:8-9: For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. Romans 5:1-2: Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

The primary points of this passage:

1. Grace bringing salvation by: His work alone in Christ Jesus.
2. Grace teaching us denial: Of ungodliness and lust in this world.
3. Grace teaching us how to live: Self-controlled, upright, (soberly, righteously) and godly lives in the present age.
4. Grace teaching us what to look for: The blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.
5. Grace teaching us how it was accomplished: He gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people.
6. Grace teaching us what kind of people we are: A peculiar people, zealous of good works.

We may then ask, "What else is there that we are to do?" The Lord tells us in the next verse the fulfillment of all things, *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:10)* It is His work (for we are His workmanship) by which we are transformed into His image (created in Christ Jesus) that His will would be accomplished to His honor and glory and the exaltation of His Son Jesus Christ, as Lord. To be transformed into His image cannot be done by our works, not by the keeping of the law, or to minister His Word, or loving our neighbor, or anything else, but only by His work of grace alone.

Yet in love for Him, because He first loved us, as a fruit of the faith He has given to us by grace, we desire to submit ourselves unto His will to do what He sets before us. Praising the Lord for His Grace!

This is what is so amazing about grace! Therefore, let us praise the Lord! ~

Grace, Grace, God's Grace

81

Amazing Grace.

John Newton.

McIntosh. C. M.

Arr. by E. O. Excell.

1. A - maz - ing grace! how sweet the sound, That saved a wretch like me! I
2. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, And grace my fears re - lieved; How
3. Thro' man - y dan - gers, toils and snares, I have al - read - y come; 'Tis
4. When we've been there ten thousand years, Bright shin - ing as the sun, We've
once was lost, but now am found, Was blind, but now I see.
pre - cious did that grace ap - pear The hour I first be - lieved!
grace hath bro't me safe thus far, And grace will lead me home.
no less days to sing God's praise Than when we first be - gun. A - MEN.

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Christ Alone

Pastor Andrew G. Kandoll
Champion, Michigan

Dear Friends in Christ, God's peace!

...Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. (Revelation 2:10) Knowing the difference between "faithful" and "perfect" brings God's peace. Consider these words from Martin Luther in 1516:

The desire of self-justification is the cause of all distresses of the heart, but he who receives Jesus Christ as a Saviour enjoys peace; and not only peace, but purity of heart. All sanctification of the heart is a fruit of faith. For faith is a divine work in us, which changes us and gives us a new birth, emanating from God Himself. It kills the Old Adam in us; and, by the Holy Ghost which is communicated to us, it gives us a new heart and makes us new men. It is not by empty speculations, but by this practical method that we can obtain a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

The first commandment says: *Thou shalt have no other gods before me. (Exodus 20:3)* All the sons of Adam are idolaters and have sinned against the first commandment. There are two kinds of idolatry—one external, the other internal. The external, in which man bows down to wood and stone, to beasts and to the heavenly host. The internal, in which man, fearful of punishment or seeking his own pleasure, does not (outwardly) worship the creature, but serves him in his heart and trusts in him.

What kind of religion is this? You do not bend the knee before riches and honours, but you offer them in your heart, the noblest portion of yourselves... Alas! You worship God in body, but the creature in spirit. This idolatry prevails in every man until he is healed by the free gift of faith that is in Christ Jesus. And how shall this be accomplished?

Listen. Faith in Christ takes away from you all trust in your own wisdom, righteousness and strength; it teaches you that if Christ had not died for you and had not thus saved you, neither you nor any other creature would have been able to do it. Then you learn to despise all these things that are unavailing to you.

Nothing now remains to you but Jesus Christ—Christ alone—Christ all-sufficient for your soul. Hoping for nothing from any creature, you have only Christ, from whom you hope for every thing, and whom you love above every thing.

Now Christ is the one sole, and true, God. When you have Him for your God, you have no other gods.

From History of the Reformation by D'Aubigne, Vol. 1, pp. 209-211

Jesus said in *John 14:6*: *I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.* The Lord Jesus Christ is perfect. We are called to be faithful to Him.

In God's peace and love.

"Solus Christus"

2014 ALCA Convention

The Hockinson congregation invites you to attend the 106th Annual Convention of the Apostolic Lutheran Church of America. Devotional Services will be held Thursday, July 10, through Sunday, July 13, 2014, at the Skyview High School in Vancouver, Washington. Further information such as lodging, etc. is available on the ALCA's website alconvention.com. We will post any further information on that website as it becomes available.

We pray for God's blessings as we organize this event and look forward to this time of fellowship.

Pastor Phil Wilson and the 2014 Convention Committee