

# 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 2020

## The Exodus of Jesus

Pastor Nicholas Kandoll  
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*And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only. And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.*

Matthew 17:1-9

**T**RANSFIGURATION SUNDAY MARKS THE END of Epiphany. During Epiphany our focus is drawn to the revelation of

Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, and really the world. On the Mount of Transfiguration, we see the culmination of it all. Jesus reveals His heavenly glory to Peter, James and John; and through their witness, to us. Jesus is transfigured before their eyes and even His clothing is changed to a very bright white.

Moses and Elijah appear and begin to talk to Jesus. In Luke's gospel, the subject of discussion is recorded: *and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.* (Luke 9:31) The Greek word that's translated as decease is *exodon*. Literally translated, it means *exodus*. Moses and Elijah are representative of the law and the prophets. It's really a perfect picture, isn't it? You have the

glorified Christ speaking to Moses and Elijah about His upcoming exodus. The law and the prophets testify not only of Christ but of His finished work on the cross!

Peter speaks up and wants to build tents to worship Moses, Elijah and Jesus. We see this wasn't a good idea because immediately after he speaks, they are overshadowed by a cloud. God speaks, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.*

What's interesting is that Peter had just refused to listen to Jesus and rebuked Him just six days earlier. *And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.* (Mark 8:31-33)

We suffer from the same condition Peter does. Sin! We're completely self-centered. We pursue our own comfort and

have a hard time listening to things we don't want to hear. We attempt to manipulate God, thinking if we pull the right string, we will get what we want. We try to get God to submit to our will. This type of thinking is exactly what Jesus rebuked Peter for. We think we know better than God. As Christians, we are called not to be self-centered, but to be focused on the good of our neighbor. We're not to pursue our own comfort and ease but to set it aside and proclaim the gospel.

When God told Peter to listen to Jesus, what was Jesus talking about? His Exodus. This is the Good News, my friends. Though we live with our fallen nature and struggle with sin, God is constantly at work to point us to the cross—the cross where Jesus died to deliver us from all of our sin.

God's peace.



Transfiguration of Jesus Carl Heinrich Bloch  
Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

# The Gospel Is the Power of God

Paul Kretzmann

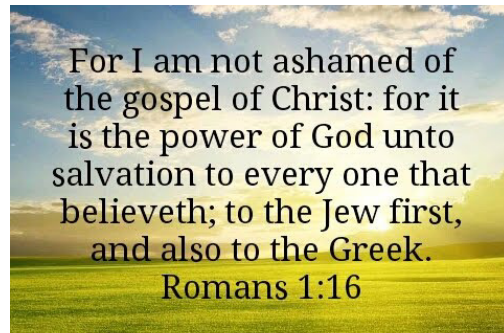
***For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.***

**Romans 1:16-17**

**I**N NO WAY IS PAUL ASHAMED of the Gospel, the glorious message of salvation. For he knows and confesses that a power of God it is unto salvation. What no human doctrine, no worldly philosophy is able to accomplish, the simple message of Jesus Christ brings about. It is not merely accompanied by the power of God under certain circumstances, but it is in itself, at all times, a power of God. Herein it serves the highest, the most wonderful purpose: it brings salvation to every one that believes. In delivering sinners from sin, death, and damnation, it brings and transmits to them life and salvation. The power is there always, whether the Gospel-truth is accepted or not; "but a man can experience and enjoy this power only when he accepts it by faith." Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand. (1 Corinthians 15:1)

Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. (James 1:21)

And this power and glory of the Gospel is intended for every one, for the Jew first, but for the Greek as well. To the Jewish people God had revealed Himself first, in their midst the Savior had lived, a continual living manifestation of the Gospel, a revelation of the merciful power of God. But the glad tidings were not confined to the Jews: Jews and Greeks were alike in need of the message of salvation. For neither Law and the works of the Law, on the one hand, nor wisdom and culture, on the other, can deliver mankind from the misery of sin and its consequences. Salvation is possible only through the power of the Gospel.



Just how the Gospel is a divine saving power Paul now explains, namely, since the righteousness of God is revealed in it. Righteousness, the state of being righteous, which is a condition of salvation, is lacking in every member of the human family since the Fall. But now righteousness, the state or condition in which a person is acceptable before God, has God on his side, is revealed, is made known in the Gospel. It is the righteousness of God, not merely a righteousness which has its source in God and comes from God, but a righteousness valid before God, one which finds full recognition in His sight, *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) It is not a righteousness which has its seat in man, the result of man's own efforts, but a righteousness which is imputed to man by God, and therefore has full standing in His sight.

This righteousness is revealed, uncovered. It is present, has been present from eternity, in Jesus Christ, whose vicarious, active obedience has brought about a merciful judgment of God. But this fact would remain unknown to man without the revelation of the Gospel, and therefore the righteousness which was gained through the merits of Christ is revealed and offered to all men in the Gospel. It is being revealed out of faith into faith: it is a righteousness out of faith, it becomes our full possession as a consequence of faith; and it is a righteousness into faith, it is expressly intended for faith, it can be obtained only by faith. As soon as a person accepts the Gospel of Jesus Christ, he becomes a partaker of the righteousness which is ready for him in the Gospel; a person must simply take what God gives him, and he has the possession and enjoyment of the great blessing upon which life and salvation depend. And in order to show that the doctrine which he here teaches is in full accordance with the writings of the Old Covenant, St. Paul quotes the word of a prophet, Habakkuk 2:4: The just will live by faith, in consequence of, through faith; he will never see destruction, but will be in full enjoyment of the highest form of life, in and with God, forever. And so Paul has given a summary of his Gospel; he has stated, in these two sentences, the theme or thesis of his letter to the Romans. ~

***Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.***

**Romans 3:28**

**T**HE ARTICLE OF JUSTIFICATION is the master and prince, the lord and ruler and judge of all areas of doctrine. It preserves and governs the entire teaching of the church and directs our conscience before God. Without this article the world is in total death and darkness, for there is no error so small, so insignificant and isolated that it does not completely please the mind of man and mislead us, if we are cut off from thinking and meditating on this article. Therefore, because the world is so obtuse and insensitive, it is necessary to deal with this doctrine constantly and have the greatest understanding of it. Especially if we wish to advise the churches, we will fear no evil, if we give the greatest labor and diligence in teaching particularly this article. For when the mind has been strengthened and confirmed in this sure knowledge, then it can stand firm in all things. Therefore, this is not some small or unimportant matter, particularly for those who wish to stand on the battle line and contend against the devil, sin, and death and teach the churches.

Martin Luther



# Sons of the Free Woman

C.O. Rosenius

*The son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman.*

**Galatians 4:30b**

**T**HOUSANDS OF OTHERWISE RATHER ENLIGHTENED human beings do not know that there are two different spiritual kingdoms in Christendom. First there is the kingdom of law where a man has everything according to his own merits, according to the words of the apostle: “to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt” (Romans 4:4). Christ wanted to show us this when He said that those who had worked all the day, and borne the burden and heat of the day in the vineyard, did not get any grace, but only according to merit, only the penny a day agreed upon, as they “worked” (Swedish: held to the deeds). The Scripture calls such people servants, bondservants, the sons of the bondwoman, who only get what they deserve.

Secondly, there is the kingdom of grace, where nothing goes according to our merit. No, those belonging to it have a perpetual grace—at moments better or worse the same state of grace because they have a Surety. He has secured for them that they are not judged according to the law, and that no sins are imputed to them. As it says in Romans 4: “But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” As also David says, “Blessed is the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works” and “to whom the Lord will not impute sin.” These are in the Scripture called children, sons, and the sons of the freewoman, who will “abide in the house” (John 8:35) and have the inheritance.

By these words about servants and children in the house, most especially in the important and symbolical house of Abraham, Paul has pointed out a thing full of instruction. Still many have not reflected upon it. God has put a striking picture of His institutions of grace in the midst of our families. Is it not true, that the dear children in the house live under such an order of grace in the fact that they never become indebted, no matter how much they use every day and how little they work? They have all they need freely and at no cost. They get their food and drink, their clothes, their care, their bed, their training. And still, though they maybe do not earn anything at all, but only consume, they never become indebted. No, at long last, when for years they have enjoyed all this good, they shall also have the inheritance. And the servants in the house work hard and faithfully, and maybe produce all that the house lives on. But with them an account is kept. If during the year they have taken out more than their wages agreed upon, then they are finally in debt. And it is quite out of the question that they would inherit the

house. Once more let it be said, the children never become indebted for all they use without earning anything. Is not this something strange?

And what is the reason why the children are never indebted? The reason is only that one never keeps any account with them. “Why, they are the children!” you say. “Who would keep an account with the children as long as they live on their father’s bread, or on the footing of a child?”

That is the secret of the kingdom of God! No account is ever kept with the children! Our debt or freedom from debt only depends on whether we are servants or children, “the sons of the bondwoman” or of the “free woman.” In your own family circle is the true picture of the kingdom of grace, the picture the Scripture so often uses. As it is with your children, so it also is with those who are in Christ and live as the children of God. No account is kept with them. They are the people to whom God does not impute any sin. They live of grace because of the merit of their first-born Brother. Therefore they are in a perpetual grace of adoption.

Oh, is it true, is it possible that there is such a kingdom of grace on earth? Yes, it is true! The Scripture cannot fail, even if our unsteady hearts, soaked with legalism, cannot accept this blessed comforting thought. But as truly as the Scripture does not lie, this is the case with all the faithful: God does not impute any sin to them to condemnation. They are the lovable children of God. They enjoy the same grace with God at their worse moments as at their better moments—both when they rejoice at the power they have to do something good, and when they are alarmed at their sins and foolishness, so that they “roar by reason of the disquietness of their heart” (Psalm 38:8). They enjoy the same grace when they see and taste how sweet the Lord is, and also when they are fed with wormwood and gall during a long draught. If it were not so, but we were more well-pleasing to God only at the moments we receive grace to be more pious and holy—why, then righteousness would be of our works, and Christ would be dead in vain! Then we would be in a kingdom of works having overcome the grace, and not in a kingdom of grace having overcome the works. I do not deny that this seems a great foolishness to our reason. Everything within us—our feeling, reason, conscience—is so filled up with legalism that we are all the time drawn down into our imaginations. But should we in earnest believe what we feel according to our nature and how things seem to us? Why, that would be to depart from faith! No, the kingdom of grace where no sin is imputed is the sum of all the merits of Christ and of all the witness of the Scripture to them. Eternal thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift! (2 Corinthians 9:15) ~



**W**HAT SHALL I SAY OF A CHARIOT? This, too, increases the load of the horse by which it is drawn, but at the same time renders capable of being drawn a load which without it could not be moved. Load is added to load, yet the whole is lighter. See also how the Chariot of the Gospel comes to the weighty load of the Law, and helps to carry it on to perfection while decreasing the difficulty. *He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth: his word runneth very swiftly. (Psalm 147:15)*

Bernard of Clairvaux

# Who Is Jesus to You?

Gwen Wilson  
Ridgefield, Washington

Dear Children,

Hello! I pray all is well with each of you. I am sure some of you have had difficult days recently, but I want you to know Jesus cares. There is nothing we go through here on earth, that Jesus does not see or feel. He knew everything about us long ago.

Jesus came into this world as a baby. Why? To save mankind and give us everlasting life one day, if we believe in Him.

Before that, where was Jesus? He was ruling with His Father God, sitting at God's right hand. He IS and always WAS. Jesus and His Father God are ONE. *The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. (Psalm 110:1)*

God had always given Jesus the place of ruling authority at His right. He gave this place to Jesus who would have authority to rule everything and everyone that God made. Jesus would rule perfectly and would be knowledgeable of every detail. He is all-knowing, all-seeing.

We cannot with our human eyes or minds fully understand the power and majesty of God and His Son. We can by the power of the Holy Spirit say that we believe in Jesus, and that is wonderful in itself. Dear children, when you confess with your mouth that you believe, that is the work of the Holy Spirit in your heart, guiding you in God's way. That is a precious gift from God Himself.

Jesus sees where you are at this moment, what you're doing, thinking, your hopes, your hurts. There is nothing He does not know about you. He knows about your physical body for you were created in His image, and He knows everything about your life from birth to death. Whatever you experience whether it be joy, sadness, contentment, courage, weakness, Jesus has already been there with you. This may seem hard to understand, but it is true.

We often doubt whether God and Jesus are near, and we doubt our God-given gifts. (I was just pondering this morning and asking myself, "What ARE my gifts?") Do you understand the things you are especially good at? These are given of God; there is no other explanation for them. I encourage you to use your gifts to His glory. I've known people who have some great gifts, but they don't use them because they're afraid to use them to their self-glory. Yes, this could be a problem, BUT Jesus can help. Take it to the Lord.

Jesus is everything to me, but I will be honest in saying I don't always let Him have full control. If I stop to think about how much He loves me and cares for me, I am ashamed to think I could do anything on my own. I only have to look at all the troubles He has brought me through and the many blessings of safely guiding me and giving me a wonderful family, faith in my heart, and the great hope of seeing Him

one day. Just think of this: not only do we believers get to see Him, but we will LIVE again. This life is just a stepping stone to the FOREVER life we GET to have in heaven.

Jesus left the perfection of heaven to come to earth:

- to be conceived in the young virgin Mary's womb
  - to be greeted with a leap by John in his old mother Elizabeth's womb, when Mary tells the good news
  - to have Joseph as Mary's chosen husband to raise her baby
  - to be born in a rude barn
  - to have the earthly king Herod seeking to kill Him right from the start
  - to begin His Father God's work at twelve years old, hearing and teaching the learned men
  - to have John the Baptist prepare the way for Him to begin his full ministry at thirty years old
  - to come bringing the best news to a chosen people who would not receive Him, and from His chosen people to us, the Gentiles
- to heal the broken-hearted, the crippled, the demon-possessed, the blind; to raise the dead, and to perform many other miracles
- to choose twelve disciples to carry God's Word around the world after He was gone
- to be hated and loved in every town, village, and city, even to this very day
- to be ridiculed, spit upon, hit with hands, and then to die the cruelest death on the cross
- to be laid in an unused tomb and mourned by so few
- to rise again the third day, having conquered death, hell and the devil
- 1 Peter 3:18: *For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just (righteous) for the unjust (sinner), that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh (died on the cross), but quickened (made alive) by the Spirit.*
- to turn Sauls into Pauls for the sake of spreading the Gospel

HE CAME THAT WE MIGHT HAVE LIFE. He gave ALL for us. He is with each of His children today including you. He will never forget you and will walk by you every day. He will be there for you more than anyone else in your life. Your parents love you and your friends care for you, and you love them, but Jesus loves you SO much more.

So, children, when you are happy, thank God for that; when you are sad, tell Jesus. You have the privilege of talking to God and Jesus whenever you want. They are ready at all times to hear you. I pray that God and Jesus will be first in your life always. I pray you can freely tell others who Jesus is to you.

God and Jesus control the whole world, and they have great pleasure in loving and caring for those who believe. God bless you and keep you.

God's peace.

Who Is Jesus ???



# The Doctrine of Faith and Good Works

Martin Luther

*Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? 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. And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.*

*Matthew 11:2-10*

**A**S WE HAVE SAID TOUCHING the other Gospels, that we should learn from them the two doctrines of faith and love, or accepting and bestowing good works, so we should do here, extol faith and exercise love. Faith receives the good works of Christ, love bestows good works on our neighbor.

In the first place, our faith is strengthened and increased when Christ is held forth to us in His own natural works, namely, that He associates only with the blind, the deaf, the lame, the lepers, the dead and the poor; that is, in pure love and kindness toward all who are in need and in misery, so that finally Christ is nothing else than consolation and a refuge for all the distressed and troubled in conscience. Here is necessary faith that trusts in the Gospel and relies upon it, never doubting that Christ is just as He is presented to us in this Gospel, and does not think of Him otherwise. Nor let any one persuade us to believe otherwise. Then surely we learn Christ as we believe and as this Gospel speaks of Him. For as you believe, so you will have it. And blessed is he, who finds here no occasion of stumbling in Christ.

Here you must with all diligence beware of taking offense. Who stumbles at Christ? All that teach you to do works, instead of teaching you to believe. Those who hold forth Christ to you as a law-maker and a judge, and refuse to let Christ be a helper and a comforter, torment you by putting works before and in the way of God in order to atone for your sins and to merit grace. Such are the teachings of the pope, priests, monks and their high schools, who with their masses and religious ceremonies cause you to open your eyes and mouth in astonishment, leading you to another Christ, and withholding from you the real Christ. For if you desire to believe rightly and to possess Christ truly, then you must reject all works that you intend to place before and in the way of God. They are only stumbling blocks, leading you away from Christ and from God. Before God no works are acceptable but Christ's own works. Let these plead for you before God, and do no other work before Him than to believe that Christ is doing His works for you and is placing them before God in your behalf.

In order to keep your faith pure, do nothing else than stand still, enjoy its blessings, accept Christ's works, and let Him bestow His love upon you. You must be blind, lame, deaf, dead, leprous and poor, otherwise you will stumble at Christ. That Gospel which suffers Christ to be seen and to be doing good only among the needy, will not belie you.

This means to acknowledge Christ aright and to embrace Him. This is true and Christian believing. But those who intend to atone for sins and to become pious by their own works, will miss the present Christ and look for another, or at least they will believe that He should do otherwise, that first of all He should come and accept their works and consider them pious. These are, like the Jews, lost forever. There is no help for them.

In the second place, Christ teaches us rightly to apply the works and shows us what good works are. All other work, except faith, we should apply to our neighbor. For God demands of us no other work that we should do for Him than to exercise faith in Christ. With that He is satisfied, and with that we give honor to Him, as to one who is merciful, long-suffering, wise, kind, truthful and the like. After this think of nothing else than to do to your neighbor as Christ has done to you, and let all your works together with all your life be

***In order to keep your faith pure, do nothing else than stand still, enjoy its blessings, accept Christ's works, and let Him bestow His love upon you.***

applied to your neighbor. Look for the poor, sick and all kinds of needy, help them and let your life's energy here appear, so that they may enjoy your kindness, helping whoever needs you, as much as you possibly can with your life, property and honor. Whoever points you to other good works than these, avoid him as a wolf and as Satan, because he wants to put a stumbling block in your way, as David says, "In the way wherein I walk have they hidden a snare for me (Psalm 142:3)."

But this is done by the perverted, misguided people of the Papists, who with their religious ceremonies set aside such Christian works, and teach the people to serve God only and not also mankind. They establish convents, masses, vigils, become religious, do this and that. And these poor, blind people call that serving God, which they have chosen themselves. But know that to serve God is nothing else than to serve your neighbor and do good to him in love, be it a child, wife, servant, enemy, friend; without making any difference, whoever needs your help in body or soul, and wherever you can help in temporal or spiritual matters. This is serving God and doing good works. O, Lord God, how do we fools live in this world, neglecting to do such works, though in all parts of the world we find the needy, on whom we could bestow our good works; but no one looks after them nor cares for them. But look to your own life. If you do not find yourself among the needy and the poor, where the Gospel shows us

Christ, then you may know that your faith is not right, and that you have not yet tasted of Christ's benevolence and work for you.

Therefore, behold what an important saying it is, "Blessed is he, whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me." We stumble in two respects. In faith, because we expect to become pious Christians in a different way than through Christ, and go our way blindly, not acknowledging Christ. In love we stumble, because we are not mindful of the poor and needy, do not look after them, and yet we think we satisfy the demands of faith with other works than these. Thus we come under the judgment of Christ, who says: "For I was hungry, and ye did not give me to eat, I was thirsty, and

yet ye gave me no drink, (Matthew 25:42)." Again: "Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me (Matthew 25:45)."

Why is this judgment right, if not for the reason, that we do not unto our neighbor as Christ has done to us? He has bestowed on us needy ones His great, rich, eternal blessings, but we will not bestow our meager service on our neighbors, thus showing that we do not truly believe, and that we have neither accepted nor tasted His blessings. Many will say, "Did we not do wonders in Thy name, did we not speak and cast out devils?" But He will answer them, "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Matthew 7:23)," and why? Because they did not retain their true Christian faith and love. ~

## The Gospel: Christ Is a Gift for You

Be sure, moreover, that you do not make Christ into a Moses, as if Christ did nothing more than teach and provide examples as the other saints do, as if the gospel were simply a textbook of teachings or laws. Therefore you should grasp Christ, his words, works, and sufferings, in a twofold manner. First as an example that is presented to you, which you should follow and imitate. As St. Peter says in 1 Peter 4, 'Christ suffered for us, thereby leaving us an example.' Thus when you see how he prays, fasts, helps people, and shows them love, so also you should do, both for yourself and for your neighbor. However, this is the smallest part of the gospel, on the basis of which it cannot yet even be called gospel. For on this level Christ is of no more help to you than some other saint. His life remains his own and does not as yet contribute anything to you. In short this mode [of understanding Christ as simply an example] does not make Christians but only hypocrites.

You must grasp Christ at a much higher level. Even though this higher level has for a long time been the very best, the preaching of it has been something rare. **The chief article and foundation of the gospel is that before you take Christ as an example, you accept and recognize him as a gift, as a present that God has given you and that is your own.** This means that when you see or hear of Christ doing or suffering something, you do not doubt that Christ himself, with his deeds and suffering, belongs to you. On this you may depend as surely as if you had done it yourself; indeed as if you were Christ himself. See, this is what it means to have a proper grasp of the gospel, that is, of the overwhelming goodness of God, which neither prophet, nor apostle, nor angel was ever able fully to express, and which no heart could adequately fathom or marvel at. This is the great fire of the love of God for us, whereby the heart and conscience become happy, secure, and content. This is what preaching the Christian faith means. This is why such preaching is called gospel, which in German means a joyful, good, and comforting message.

Martin Luther



## He Washed It White As Snow

Gordon Kuusisto  
New Ipswich, New Hampshire

On a cold dark night, I gave a bag of silver away;  
I gave it to Judas so my Savior would be betrayed.  
The girl at the palace asked if Jesus was my Lord  
And as I told her "No" my words cut like a sword.

As I yelled with the others to crucify Him,  
I felt the heavy weight from all of my sin;  
As I began to whip His back and saw that crimson flow  
It was then that I knew He would carry all I owe.

Through even this, my Jesus loved my soul,  
And on that day He died, He washed it white as snow.

As I clothed Him with purple and put a reed in His hand,  
I began to question why I was welcome in His land;  
My sins pressed on thorns in the form of a crown,  
I saw the healing streams of blood begin flowing down.

I pounded in those nails with my heart so hard,  
I look even now and my heart still bears the scars;  
I watched my sins lift that rough and heavy cross  
I then began to see His overwhelming loss.

Through even this, my Jesus loved my soul,  
And on that day He died, He washed it white as snow.

As I sat on Golgotha with my sins yelling out,  
He looked to find His father and He began to shout;  
I stabbed His side with the spearhead of my wrong—  
It was then that I knew I was welcomed in His throng.

Through even this, my Jesus loved my soul,  
And on that day He died, He washed it white as snow.

**Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.**

Isaiah 1:18



# Good News

Lois Matson  
Yacolt, Washington

The word *gospel* is translated from the Greek word *euangélion*, from which we also get our English word *evangelist*. An evangelist is one who proclaims the Gospel, the Good News.

The four gospels—written by the evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—are the New Testament books which contain the narrative of the Gospel, the Good News written in true-story form.

The gospels tell the story of Jesus, the Son of God. He is true God from eternity, and true Man, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a Jewish virgin. Jesus lived a sinless life, perfectly fulfilling His Father's will. He was not accountable to death, because death is the payment for sin. Being delivered up, Jesus suffered a cruel and unjust death, and was raised again the third day, victorious over sin, death and the devil. He returned to His Father in heaven, but He will come again to judge the world on the Last Day.

The Gospel in a nutshell is that God loved all people on earth so much that He gave His only begotten Son to pay their sin-debt to death, so that whoever believes in Him would have eternal life.

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. (John 3:16-17)*

But why is the Gospel called the *Good News*?

Why is it *good*? Why is it *news*? We discussed this in one of my recent classes.

Since Adam and Eve fell into sin in the Garden of Eden, there has been plenty of bad news in the world. The never-ending reverberations of the Fall keep the media in a publishing frenzy, and their customers in a fret over the latest headline, anxious about the threat of impending doom. Conquest. War. Famine. Death. The drum-beat of decay and destruction throbs in steady time under the distraction of our daily lives.

Why is the Gospel *good*?

We hear in the Gospel that God has ACTED to reverse the fall into sin. He sent His Son to redeem the world from the effects of sin and death. Our salvation doesn't depend on our goodness or our ability to perfectly fulfill God's righteous demand. It doesn't even depend on our strength and ability to BELIEVE the Gospel. Faith in God's good work is a gift to us, given by God in the hearing of the Word.

The Gospel is not a self-help program, nor is it a formula for living your best life now. The Gospel is about you needing help from Someone Else. If you are dead in trespasses and sins, only Someone Else—Jesus—can save you. The Gospel makes no guarantee that you'll have a prosperous life here on earth; in fact, Jesus promises that His followers will be hated because of His Name. Better than riches or prosperity, though, the followers of Jesus will have peace for eternity. There will be no more conquest, war, famine, or death in the heavenly realms. There will be no more sin. Imagine that!

This Gospel certainly can be called *good*. Why is it *news*?



When you have heard something incredibly joyful and exciting, you want to proclaim it to the world, to shout it from the housetops. This is why social media is so popular, because you can quickly and easily share pictures and stories, the "news" from your life, with your family and friends.

Like the very best "news" from our daily life, we don't want to keep the Gospel to ourselves. More importantly, we have been given the ministry of reconciliation. We are ambassadors for Christ in this world, and we can carry the message of the Good News about Jesus to every person with whom we come in contact. The evangelist Paul gave Good News to the people in Corinth, and he talked of the ministry of reconciliation:

*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. 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 5:17-21)*

What better news is there than the Gospel?

This Good News is life-giving. It's so very good because it doesn't depend on us, and it's *news* because it's meant to be shared. Don't keep it to yourself! ~

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## Christian Monthly Vol. LXXVI—No. 3

Subscription Rate: 1 Year

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

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

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

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

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## Three Temptations

*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*

*1 John 2:15-16*

**H**UMAN DESIRES ARE TEMPTED ONLY by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life. The devil tempted the Lord by these three.

He was tempted by the lust of the flesh when, while hungry from fasting, He was told, *If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. (Matthew 4:3)* Listen to His answer, and when you face similar temptations, say the same thing: *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. (Matthew 4:4)*

He was also tempted by the lust of the eyes to perform a miracle, when He was told, *Cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. (Matthew 4:6)* Jesus answered: *It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. (Matthew 4:7)*

How else was the Lord tempted? By the *pride of life*. When the devil carried Him up to a high place and said to Him, *All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. (Matthew 4:9)* What answer did the Lord teach us to give by His answer to the devil? *...It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. (Matthew 4:10)*

Holding these things fast, you will not have the strong desires of the world. Because you will not have the desires of the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life will not change you.

For, if you love the world, you cannot love God.

*Augustine: 354-430*

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Submitted by Ralph and Barbara Somero; New Ipswich, New Hampshire

**T**HE CHRISTIAN CHURCH CONSISTS NOT alone in fellowship of outward signs, but it consists especially in inward communion of eternal blessings in the heart, as of the Holy Ghost, of faith, of the fear and love of God; which fellowship nevertheless has outward marks so that it can be recognized, namely, the pure doctrine of the Gospel, and the administration of the Sacraments in accordance with the Gospel of Christ. And this Church alone is called the body of Christ, which Christ renews, sanctifies and governs by His Spirit, as Paul testifies (Ephesians 1:22).

*Defense of the Augsburg Confession*

*Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: **And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.***

*And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. 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. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

*Ephesians 1:15-2:10*