

# 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 2023

## Our Focus in Lent

Pastor Jay Weidner  
Laurium, Michigan

*Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

*Hebrews 12:1-2*

**I**N MARCH OF 2013, I wrote a newsletter article expressing the idea that Lent has wrongly devolved into a season of introspection and often, morose self-denial. While there remains a justification for proper self-evaluation in light of the Sacrament of the Altar (1 Corinthians 11:28-29) and certainly the confession of sins (James 5:16), there is no mandate in Scripture to continually dwell on one's failings and certainly no indication of there being a season of the Church Year set aside for doing so. Assuredly, one can speak of Lent as a devotional time in preparation for Easter. Yet, that devotion must be directed toward an Easter that has already occurred. As St. Peter writes:

*For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.*

*1 Peter 3:18*

The emphasis here is on "once." The Christ has completed His work. He Himself says, "It is finished (John 19:30)." A morbid fascination with our sinfulness is not pious, it is self-defeating. As Hebrews tells us, during Lent and

always, we are to look to Jesus. Look to Jesus for what? Joy. What is that joy? Our salvation. He endured the suffering of the cross and its degradation to save us through His death and resurrection. He counted that awful happening as joy and we should, too. Also, as St. Peter writes elsewhere, we need to dwell on Christ and not our sin because God, by His Spirit, is at work within us to bear the fruit He has appointed through Christ. It is not our effort:

*For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

*2 Peter 1:8-11*

We were purged from our old sins (past tense). Now our hearts and minds are fully set on Jesus. One day, by God's grace, we will see Him in heaven, and He will greet us with joy unspeakable. It is good to renew our devotional life during Lent, but let our focus be upon Jesus and His amazing grace! Blessings upon all of you during this Lenten season. May the joy of Lent fill our hearts as we live day by day in the resurrection of our Lord by His Spirit. Thank you for supporting us as we work in that same joy.

*God's peace.*

**T**HE WORD OF GOD WAS made flesh by the dispensation of the virgin, to abolish death and make man live; for we were imprisoned by sin, being born in sinfulness and living under death. But God the Father was very merciful: He sent His creative Word, who in coming to deliver us came to the very place and spot in which we had lost life, and broke the bonds of our fetters. And His light appeared and made the darkness of the prison disappear, and hallowed our birth and destroyed death, loosing those same fetters in which we were enchained. And He manifested the resurrection, Himself becoming the first begotten of the dead (Revelation 1:5), and in Himself raising up man that was fallen, lifting him up far above the heaven to the right hand of the glory of the Father: even as God promised by the prophet, saying: And I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen (Amos 9:11); that is, the flesh that was from David. And this our Lord Jesus Christ truly fulfilled, when He gloriously achieved our redemption, that He might truly raise us up, setting us free unto the Father.

*St. Irenaeus (ca. 130-202)*

# Let This Mind Be in You

Pastor Dennis Hannu  
Wolf Lake, Minnesota

**O**UR MINDS ARE SHAPED BY many things, some good and some not so good. We are shaped by our upbringings, our culture, our church background, peer pressure, and so on. It is very hard for us to separate ourselves from those things. They may be positive influences in our lives, shaping us to be good citizens in our country and a good influence on others around us. Of course the opposite can be true as well; if we have been subjected to a lot of negative influences, our minds may be bent in that direction. We find that whatever the case may be, our minds are hopelessly selfish. We may be so driven in our ambitions that we lose sight of other people, or we are so bent in the other direction that we can't seem to get our minds off of ourselves. Either way, our minds need to be reshaped, and the only way that is possible is through the Gospel.

Paul gives us an entirely different perspective in *Philippians 2:1-11*: *If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Our culture would like us to believe that with enough contemplation and focus we can shape our minds to where we want them. The Scripture says we need a new mind, an

entirely different way of thinking, a new way of forming opinions, a new attitude. *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.* When we examine the life of Christ as Paul describes it in this passage we find an entirely different way of thinking and living. Jesus laid aside everything that was rightfully His to take on flesh, humbling Himself even to point of a criminal's death on the cross. He did this for the joy that was set before Him, which was us. He didn't selfishly hold unto His equality with God but instead emptied Himself in order to become the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world. For this reason God has given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

*Let this mind be in you,  
which was also in  
CHRIST JESUS*

We have this confession on our lips and heart. We find consolation, comfort of love, fellowship of the Spirit, compassion and mercy in Christ Jesus. Our minds are reshaped by the work of this One who comes and makes all things new. Our concern is no longer for ourselves but for the welfare of others. We are now identified by this One whose name is above every name. Christ has set us free to embrace the Gospel and to lay aside our lives for the sake of others. We, on account of Christ, are able now to suffer for others, to place others above ourselves. We have the mind of Christ, as *1 Corinthians 2:16* says: *For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.* Let this mind be in you.

*God's peace.*



*Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer. From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy. I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah.*

*Psalm 61:1-4*

**O**HOW I LOVE THIS WORD! First the psalmist asks God to hear and attend unto his prayer. Beloved, it is His promise. He says that His ear is not heavy that He cannot hear, neither His hand shortened that He cannot save. He promises that He will hear our prayers. He may not always answer them the way we would like, but He always answers what is best for us. The psalmist continues, *When my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.* Lead us, O Father, heart and soul, to the Rock of Ages.

He is our shelter and our strong tower from the enemy. We can take refuge in Him to be safe from our three-fold enemy. He says, *I will abide in thy tabernacle forever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings.* What a beautiful place for the wayfarers on the road to heaven to rest and rejoice. The covert of His wings. The hiding place for travelers. Come to this precious place of rest, dear soul, and His wings will shelter you from every storm, every enemy. There we find strength for every trial, and for all the temptations that Satan tempts us with. Thank You, Jesus, for spreading Your wings wide on Golgotha for us all!

*Paul Coponen; Chassell, Michigan  
Submitted by Ralph & Barbara Somero; New Ipswich, New Hampshire*



# How Huge Is Unbelief

I am sending this article, which my great-grandfather submitted to the 1941 *Rauhan Sana*, for consideration to be printed in the *Christian Monthly*. My Aunt Jenny Traffie, his granddaughter, sent it to me many years ago and I found it among our things. I could read it quite well in Finnish, but I didn't trust myself to translate it, so I asked Larry Salo if he would be so kind as to do it for us. He is well versed in the Finnish language. He made a trip to Finland this fall, so he had a "refresher course" speaking Finn for a month.

*God's peace.*

*Edith Bisila, with Don; Circle Pines, Minnesota*

**U**NBELIEF IS SO HUGE OR important that it denies the existence of God and Jesus, God's Son. Oh, oh how huge and terrible is unbelief! Many may say that they are not deniers of God's existence, even though they're in unbelief. Oh, oh how from the same mouth spouts blessing and cursing. The apostle relates, brothers and sisters, it should not be so. All things that are not of belief, they are sin. And the payment for sin is eternal death and hell, where flame horribly burns and the enemy troubles you eternally.

How huge or important is living faith in God? It is so important that it secures the freedom of salvation and everlasting life. And with this salvation, a person is able, while yet here in the time of grace, to enjoy the knowledge of the Lord Jesus, the power of His resurrection, His suffering, in which is seen the punishment for our sin payment resulting in Jesus being delivered all the way into hell, as we read in another portion of Scripture. There Noah's preaching is strengthened as the innocent Jesus steps up to God's judgment throne. Now arises the question of His personal status: Have You loved God over and above all things from Your heart, soul, mind and power? Answer: I have. The Father God Judge states: He is to live eternally. He received from His Father His everlasting life.

And to you, man, Jesus says, "All that I have received from My Father, I give you (disciples)." Thus, His disciples can innocently stand at God's judgment throne. How so? Because Jesus gave His disciples everything that He had received from His Father, His own perfection, without sin. Oh, how unsearchable indeed is God's wisdom and understanding in His judgments, since the disciple can stand innocently, without sin at the judgment throne. And how is this so? It is due to God's own works of grace. By grace are you saved and not of your own works. It is a gift from God. Such a great gift can one in living faith possess already in this time of grace. Amen, Amen, this is certainly true.

For what purpose is Amen said so often when speaking of this salvation matter? Because it is an unmovable truth in heavenly matters. Salvation is the most important matter and must be of the highest concern when compared to anything else. In that is the question of life, death and judgment. Thus, when Jesus is in your life, death is a great victory. Jesus helps when no other can help. Even best friends cannot help. Even now, we cannot provide salvation for our brother, for our salvation is so precious, and thus it gets left eternally undone by us sinful souls.

But Jesus, who was truly God and man, was the only one who was able to accomplish that, which God desired to occur because men had fallen into sin. Jesus—man fulfilled the Law and suffered the punishment for the sins of all. He rose from the grave by God's glorifying power. And this is how He has cleared the way from the mother's womb through the bosom of the grave, all the way into the bright and glorious air of heaven. Amen. Amen.

*Your least brother, Jacob Kujala  
July 1941 Rauhan Sana*

*Translated by Larry Salo, Greer, SC in December 2022*



## Resting in the Joy of Jesus

Jesus, I am resting, resting in the joy of what Thou art;  
I am finding out the greatness of Thy loving heart.  
Thou hast bid me gaze upon Thee, as Thy beauty fills my soul,  
For by Thy transforming power, Thou hast made me whole.

O how great Thy lovingkindness, vaster, broader than the sea!  
O how marvelous Thy goodness lavished all on me!  
Yes, I rest in Thee, Beloved, know what wealth of grace is Thine,  
Know Thy certainty of promise and have made it mine.

Simply trusting Thee, Lord Jesus, I behold Thee as Thou art,  
And Thy love, so pure, so changeless, satisfies my heart;  
Satisfies its deepest longings, meets, supplies its ev'ry need,  
Compasseth me round with blessings: Thine is love indeed.

Ever lift Thy face upon me as I work and wait for Thee;  
Resting 'neath Thy smile, Lord Jesus, earth's dark shadows flee.  
Brightness of my Father's glory, sunshine of my Father's face,  
Keep me ever trusting, resting, fill me with Thy grace.

Jesus, I am resting, resting in the joy of what Thou art;  
I am finding out the greatness of Thy loving heart.

*Jean Sophia Pigott*

Born in Ireland in 1845, Jean Sophia Pigott was a poet and hymn writer. Her brother Thomas, a missionary in China, was killed in the 1901 Boxer Rebellion, an uprising at the Sheo Yang Mission against foreigners and Christians.

# Lent

Gwen Wilson  
Ridgefield, Washington

Dear Children,

Hello again to each of you. I do pray this finds you well. We are doing well here.

We're enjoying a couple days of clear blue skies and sunshine, although it is very cold. We often get this type of weather close to February, and even a little snow in February. It changes from year to year. Spring is just around the corner, and we look forward to that. Spring is lovely here. At least, I think so. I so enjoy seeing all the new life coming from the ground, on the trees and the return of birds.

I was wondering what to write about, and as I've not written about Lent before, and it is that time of year on the Bible calendar, that is my topic.

Maybe you have all heard of Lent, and some of you may know what it is, but maybe some of you aren't so familiar with it.

Let's see what the definition says: "A period of fasting and regret for one's sins that is observed on the forty weekdays from Ash Wednesday to Easter."

Fasting is not eating some kinds of food (such as meat) or drink, especially as a religious observance.

Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent, February 22<sup>nd</sup> this year, and is a holy day of prayer and fasting in many Western Christian Denominations.

We all know what happened at Easter. These forty days are the remembrance of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness, just before beginning His ministry. I'll tell you the account, but you can read it for yourself in Matthew 4:1-11.

## The Temptation of Jesus

Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting for forty days and forty nights, He was hungry.

And the tempter came and said to Jesus, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

Then the devil took Him to the holy city and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to Him, "If you are the Son of God throw yourself down, for it is written, He will command His angels concerning you, On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone."

Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, You shall not tempt the Lord your God."

Again the devil took Him up into an exceeding (very) high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and said unto Him, "All these things will I give you, if you will fall down and worship me."

THEN said Jesus unto him, "Get thee hence (go away), Satan: for it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve."



*Christ in the Wilderness* by Ivan Kramskoy

Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered unto Him (attended to His needs).

We all know that Jesus' ministry lasted three years before He was put to death, but in the period of Lent these forty days represent the forty days of temptation. The modern-day Church has set that as a special time to prepare one's heart for the solemn yet joyous occasion of Easter.

I will be honest to say I have never put much thought to the time of fasting and prayer, and I think it is safe to say that most of us haven't. I'm sure in one way or another folks do some kind of remembrance and set aside physical food and drink for a time.

This is something that needs prayer to be done in the right way, and I know our God will help if one so desires to be more Lent minded. We can go from here with pressing on in serving our Lord, thanking Him for sending His only Son.

Jesus strongly defended His Father God against the devil with the Holy Word. We can, too. The WORD is a powerful tool. I encourage each of you to stand up for your faith, and tell old Satan to get away from you if he tempts you in any way. Flee from him. The devil has many things in our world at this time to try to sway us from the right way. Don't listen to him. He has nothing good to offer. He hates the name of Jesus, but to us who believe the name of Jesus is life and peace.

God be with you all today and everyday. I pray that Jesus will always be your life. HE LOVES YOU!

*God's peace.*

# The Genuine Article

Pastor Jason Salmi  
Vancouver, Washington

**Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.**

**John 14:5-7**

**J**ESUS SAID THAT HE IS the only Way, and Truth, and Life, and that no one comes to God the Father any other way than through Him. Given then, that the stakes are nothing less than eternal presence with God, or an eternity cast away from Him, this is the most important news that the world needs to hear. Everyone needs to hear that Jesus is the Way to salvation. Yet, even as this news is spread, some of it is unreliable.

Unfortunately, there are many who use the name of Jesus, yet speak of someone other than the Jesus of whom the Bible speaks. And this shouldn't surprise us. The Bible told us that this was going to happen. Jesus Himself said, *Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. (Matthew 24:4-5)* He also warned, *Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. (Matthew 7:15)* In other words, the world will be subject to hearing the news of "counterfeit Jesuses."

One of the great challenges is that these pretenders, as well as false teachings about the Lord, are not only widespread but they are very appealing. After all, one of the things that is true about our fallen nature is that we are easily deceived. And this is especially true when we are presented with something that we are prone to desire. So

false teachings of Jesus often take advantage of this natural weakness. For instance, some preach of a Jesus who is always waiting to give you what you want (i.e., health, wealth and a long life), just as long as you can drum up a great enough level of belief that this is true. Alternatively, since we are also prone to thinking that God must require something from us in order to be saved, others will present us with a Jesus who will save us... just so long as we go through the right steps and jump through the right hoops.

The variety of false teachings about Jesus is as endlessly varied as the human imagination is capable of conjuring them. Which is why we need a sure-fire way of spotting them (and teaching others to do the same). It's said that, as they train their agents to spot counterfeit currency, the United States Secret Service never actually shows new recruits a counterfeit bill. Instead, they are given nothing but the genuine article. They handle and study real money so extensively, that the moment they actually come into contact with a fake, the differences are unmistakable. That's exactly what we as Christians are to do. And this is what we teach others to do. We study and "handle" the genuine Jesus so much that we can spot a fake from a mile away. This means that we read the Bible, which is the only place that we can learn the truth about Him. And we place ourselves under Gospel-centered, biblically sound pastors and teachers who proclaim Him constantly. Who point us to the One (the only One) who is our Way, and our Truth, and our Life.

Dear Christian, rejoice that God has made Himself known to us in the Bible, and specifically in Jesus, who loves us and gave Himself up for us so that we can be assured of having eternal life. ~

## Confession

***If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.***

**1 John 1:6-10**

**W**E ARE TO CONFESS BEFORE God that we are guilty of all sin, even of those which we do not know. However, we should confess those sins which we know and feel in our hearts and which burden our consciences, to a trusted Christian (confessor). The confession of sins to a confessor is a precious gift of God and a privilege which every Christian should use according to his needs and the demands of his conscience.

Confession should never be taught in an exacting spirit. Neither should it be taught as a condition for salvation, but rather, as a gift of God's mercy. The only condition for salvation is scriptural faith in Jesus. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life (John 6:47).*

If a believer's conscience is burdened with sins he has committed and acknowledged before, these sins may still be a hindrance to his faith. If the believer feels an inner need and urge to confess these sins to a trusted Christian, this is the voice of the Holy Spirit to which he should be obedient. Confession of sins to a confessor is not a meritorious work and the believer is not made righteous by this act, for he is already righteous in Christ. He confesses his sins in order to restore peace of conscience through absolution, and so that he may be able to freely appropriate the Gospel. He is not to think that only those sins which he confessed are forgiven, for absolution means that all his sins are forgiven, even those which he may not be aware of.

*Principles of the Doctrine of Christ*

# Jesus, Our Redeemer

Retired Pastor Ron Holmgren; Battle Ground, Washington  
June 2004 CM

**A**RARE OCCURRENCE is happening at the gate of the village of Bethlehem. A man called Boaz has called another man aside to talk with him. He then asks ten of the elders of the town to join them. It must be of great importance. The subject of the conversation is about some land and possessions of a man who is dead. The land, and all that was his, can be purchased by his nearest relative. Boaz tells that relative about the prospect, and the man is, at first, ready to redeem it and take possession.

However, there is one thing that changes his mind: he refuses to buy the inheritance when he hears Boaz tell him about a girl named Ruth. With the purchase comes Ruth, who is a widow. Not only that, she is a Moabite, not an Israelite. Whoever redeems the land must take this girl as well.



This presents a great problem for the man. He says, *I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance.* (Ruth 4:6) So, with that, Boaz is now able and willing to redeem the land and also the girl, Ruth. They agree, and seal the deal with a very simple, yet solemn token of the agreement. The shoe of the man is given to Boaz, who then tells all present that he will buy everything, including the girl, Ruth. The ten elders witness their exchange, and the redemption occurs.

This is a touching story of love. Boaz knew about Ruth; in fact, he was willing to do anything to win her for himself. He was a rich man who needed nothing, yet when he fell in love with Ruth, his heart was moved to care for her for life.

What a picture this is of Jesus and His bride. We are His “purchased possession” (Ephesians 1:14) and have a sure future. The nearest kinsman could not and would not redeem us because it would be a mar on him. This is the Law, which could not take us to heaven because “it was weak through the flesh” (Romans 8:3). This man looked on us in our weakness and sins and declared us unfit. As with Ruth, he would have nothing to do with us, either. We would be left to live out our miserable lives as beggars; then die with no hope of an everlasting future.

But who is this Boaz? He steps up and declares His love for us. He is even willing to risk being marred as long as He can have us for Himself: *his visage was so marred more than any man.* (Isaiah 52:14) Jesus declares His willingness to pay to have us. It was not silver or gold, but His very lifeblood that He gave in exchange for our redemption.

Earlier in the book of Ruth, we read how Boaz came to know Ruth. Her mother-in-law counseled her to go near to him in the fields he owned and to the threshing floor where he would be. James also tells us to *Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.* (James 4:8)

So, if you feel that you have no hope, and have felt the rejection that the Law has for you because of your sins, look up and see the face of the one who loves you with an undying love. We know where He is found. He walks among His own. *For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* (Matthew 18:20) Walk with Him as He tells you of all you now possess in Him. When we doubt and wonder how sure our salvation is, we can go to the witnesses to be reassured by their testimony that He has truly paid our debts in full.

***But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe.*** (Romans 3:21-22)

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***Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.***

1 Timothy 4:12-13

**L**ET ALL THE FAITHFUL, whether men or women, when early in the morning they rise from their sleep and before they undertake any tasks, wash their hands and pray to God; and so they may go to their duties. But if any instruction in God’s Word is held that day, everyone ought to attend it willingly, recollecting that he will hear God speaking through the instructor and that prayer in the church enables him to avoid the day’s evil; any godly man ought to count it a great loss if he does not attend the place of instruction, especially if he can read.

If a specially gifted teacher should come, let none of you delay to attend the place where the instruction is given, for grace will be given to the speaker to utter things profitable to all, and thou wilt hear new things, and thou wilt be profited by what the Holy Spirit will give thee through the instructor; so thy faith will be strengthened by what thou hearest, and in that place thou wilt learn thy duties at home; therefore let everyone be zealous to go to the church, the place where the Holy Spirit abounds.

But if on any day there is no instruction, let everyone at home take the Bible and read sufficiently in passages that he finds profitable.

Hippolytus c. 235 A.D.

# Our Sabbath Rest

Lois Matson  
Yacolt, Washington

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and **he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.** And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that **in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.**

Genesis 2:1-3

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But **the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God:** in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

Exodus 20:8-11

**I**SN'T IT INTERESTING that the Lord "rested" on the seventh day after creation! Our Infinite and Almighty God wasn't tired from all the work He had done in creation, but still, He set aside the seventh day—the Sabbath—as holy, and He rested. His creation was complete. Our human bodies need rest, though, and we set aside one day a week to worship our Creator, to hear His Word, and to rest from our labors.

According to the Law, in the Old Testament, the people of Israel worshiped and rested on *Shabbat*, the seventh day. *Shabbat* means "rest." After a week of working, they had a day of rest, going to the synagogue to hear the Word of God.

But, if God instituted the seventh day as the Sabbath, the day of rest, why don't we worship on Saturday, the seventh day?

In the New Testament, Jesus is called the second Adam. In Christ, God ushered in a new creation, and through Christ, we have been brought into His new creation.

After He fulfilled the Law, died and was buried, our Lord was raised on Resurrection Sunday, the first day of the week. And very early in the Church, Christians began to meet on the first day of the week, the Lord's Day.

And upon **the first day of the week**, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow... (Acts 20:7)

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon **the first day of the week** let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. (1 Corinthians 16:1-2)

I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. **I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day**, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last... (Revelation 1:9-11)

Sunday is the Lord's Day, sometimes called the eighth day, because on that day our Sabbath began. Christ our Sabbath Rest walked out of His tomb, alive forevermore! We are not bound by Law, like the Jewish people were, to observe the Sabbath, but we begin our week by observing the Lord's Day as a day of rest and worship.

**Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest...**

**For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.**

Hebrews 4:1-5, 8-12

There remaineth  
therefore a  
**REST**  
to the people of God.

Hebrews 4:9

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## Tune Your Ears for Confession

Submitted by Pastor Phil Wilson  
Hockinson, Washington

On Saturday, December 31, 2022, God delivered our brother in Christ, James Arne Nestingen, from this vale of tears to be with Himself in heaven. Please take a moment to read this excerpt of a reflection on his life, written by Scott Keith, the Executive Director of 1517 and Adjunct Professor of Theology at Concordia University, Irvine.

*Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*

*James 5:16*

**I**F I COULD BE SO bold as to pass on one piece of wisdom that Jim gave to me, it would be this: try to tune your ears to hear a confession when it comes your way. You see, Jim found that people are always confessing their sins. They confess in casual conversations and in serious ones. They confess when sharing stories and when telling jokes. They confess in churches, in living rooms, and on airplanes. They confess intentionally, and when they don't even know they are confessing. Our job is to constantly tune our ears to hear these confessions, not for the purpose of sanctimony or gloating but for absolving.

Christ has put us in this world of sinners and surrounded us with them. They have names, and we know them. They are fathers and mothers, wives and husbands, children and parents, and friends and enemies. And when they confess their sins, God, who is faithful and just forgives their sins and cleanses them from all unrighteousness. How does God do this? He sends preachers into the world. The world needs preachers. You need a preacher! Some will wear collars and are called pastors and priests. The rest we just call fellow Christians. The rest are you and me.

Tune your ear to hear these confessions, and when you do, swoop in with the voice of the gospel, the voice of Christ, the absolution. "In the name of Jesus, I forgive your sins." And they are forgiven in Christ Jesus. Really! This is just one of the many things that Jim taught me, and hopefully, we will all go on teaching the wisdom of this prophet of the Lord to others. ~

We believe, teach, and confess that there is a distinction between man's nature and original sin. This applied not only when he was originally created by God pure and holy and without sin, but it also applies to [our] nature now after the fall. In other words, we distinguish between the nature itself and original sin. This distinction is as great as the distinction between God's work and the devil's work.

God created the body and soul of Adam and Eve before the fall. But He also created our bodies and souls after the fall. Even though they are corrupt, God still acknowledges them as His work, as it is written in *Job 10:8, Thine hands have made me and fashioned me.*

Furthermore, God's Son has received this human nature, but without sin. Therefore, He did not receive a foreign nature, but our own flesh in the unity of His person. In this way He has become our true Brother. *Hebrews 2:14, 17; 4:15* says, *Since the children share in flesh and blood,... He had to be made like His brothers in every respect,... yet without sin.* In the same way, Christ redeemed human nature as His work, sanctifies it, raises it from the dead, and gloriously adorns it as His work. But original sin He has not created, redeemed, or sanctified. He will not raise it, or save it in the elect. In the (blessed) resurrection original sin will be entirely destroyed (1 Corinthians 15:51-57).

*Excerpts for Lent from the Formula of Concord*

***Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.***

*1 Corinthians 15:51-57*