

# 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 2025

## March!

Pastor Jay Weidner  
Laurium, Michigan

Like so many things we encounter in daily life (days of the week, for example), the month of March is named for a pagan god. The original name of the month was Martius and was dedicated to the Roman god of war, Mars. It was from early times the first month of the 10-month year and was understood as the time when the winter weather abated and the time for campaigning in war would begin. After 153 BC it became the third of 12 months which started with 2 winter months January and February. March was the first month of the year in Russia until the 15th century and Great Britain used March 25 for New Year, including the colonies that would eventually comprise the USA, until 1752. Iran and Ethiopia still celebrate New Year in March. We celebrate the beginning of spring in March and in many places March marks a return to more seasonable weather and the end of the hardships of winter.

## Lent



Out of the kindness of our Lord and the triumph of the Gospel throughout the world the pagan emphasis on March lost its place so that few people even know of its existence and in its place Christianity placed the emphasis on a season for reflection upon the Passion of Jesus. We call that season

Lent, derived from the Latin word for spring and we commemorate it as a season for fasting and prayer as we encounter for six weeks the texts of the Scripture that indicate the depth that God was willing to go in sending His Beloved Son to suffer and die for us and purchase our redemption through His blood. What started out as a time of pagan observance has become for us a most beautiful time to reflect upon the triumph of God over the darkness that had beset the ancient world and the liberation He provided from that darkness in the Light of the World, the Resurrected Son, Jesus the Christ.

One important aspect of the ancient understanding remains. It is the time for a renewed campaign. Time to march. In our world there is a powerful movement afoot to restore the fortunes of paganism and steal the light of the Gospel from the world. Christians must be vitally aware of this trend and vigilant to confront it everywhere. We need to educate ourselves in the ways that this neo-pagan movement is being reintroduced in the world and rise up to combat it in every forum with the truth of the Gospel, following through with the instruction of Ephesians 6:13: Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Knowing our struggle is not with flesh and blood: For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. (Ephesians 6:12) We, by God's grace, are doing our part to fight the good fight of faith and teaching God's Word so that the Light of Christ may continue to shine bright in this Lenten season and always. We thank you for your support in this work and ask that you continue to do so in prayer and financially as we carry out our calling in ministering to the people of God.

*God's peace.*



*For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.  
For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts,  
to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure  
in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*

*2 Corinthians 4:5-7*

# Our Church Is a Blessing

Garrett Kandoll  
Seguin, Texas

Dear Congregations of the Apostolic Lutheran Church,

Praise the Lord for the wonderful church God has called each of us to: The Apostolic Lutheran Church of America! There is a lot of division going around in the world, but God calls us to remain united. We, the Apostolic Lutheran Church, should be known for our unity. ***And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. (Mark 3:24)***

Let us be far from division within our own hearts, families and congregational church bodies. The ALC is a gift! Yes, there are many people who have left the church and those who have been hurt by the church, but I want to point out that, despite the misjudgments, God is in control and has used the ALC to be a wonderful blessing to many people. *Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you. (2 Corinthians 13:11)*

This world is changing fast. With the growth of technology, the (former) President almost being assassinated twice, and with numerous wars going on, perhaps now more than ever we need to come together as individual congregations that make up one church body. The ALC is an individual church body among many Visible Churches and together all Christians make up the Body of Christ, the Invisible Church. Praise the Lord for the wide net He casts to call His people.

*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. (Ephesians 4:4-6)*



The Apostolic Lutheran Church was founded by Finnish migrants in the 1800s who were justified to form a new church body in a land new to them. They wrote:

“This form of joint congregational system among this migrant group has been our intent, to not depart from that common congregation and the spirit of adopted children, which the Finnish speaking Zion promotes, but as the church in Finland has not arranged for anything here, we are obligated to legalize our church functions according to the time in which we live. We trust the church in Finland and the Lord’s Zion would be in agreement with us in this matter of the Lord. ‘May the

grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all.’ Amen.”

They formed our church and named it after the confession of faith, not of their own, but that of the ancient Christian Church, the disciples of the apostles, the apostles and the Lord Jesus Himself.

The ALC has a vibrant history and a beautiful foundation. We all have been called to this particular point in history, to learn and to build off this foundation laid before us.

We are called to be learners (2 Timothy 2:15). This is what “theologian” means - one who learns or studies God. We are all theologians, and no one graduates from this or is greater than the other (Galatians 3:28). God has placed a love for Him and for one another within all our hearts as His children (1 John 4:19-20). Therefore, it is our desire to be patient and loving with one another and to learn as much about God as possible as little children (Matthew 18:1-6). We are called to discover the ALC doctrine that has been handed down to us. None of us planted this church but we are all here and are called to work together to water and care for that which God has planted before us and handed down to us.

*Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set. (Proverbs 22:28) Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. (Romans 14:19)*

I want to encourage each of you to consider the fact that God has called you to the Apostolic Lutheran Church, that you would be an active participant and member of your congregation, encourage others to participate in the life of the church, as well as to speak positively about the ALC, its teachings and its wonderful impact on the world. Each of us ought also to pray, knowing that although we water, it is God who makes all things new and who makes them flourish. (1 Corinthians 3:6-8)

A military analogy: I never served in the military, but I can imagine the bond that veterans have, especially a special one between those who have served in the same branch and a bond even stronger for those who served together. I picture that like the Church. Perhaps when we are in heaven, among all God's children throughout time, there will be a special bond between us all who served together in this particular time in history. We are brothers and sisters in Christ, called to serve together.

I am confident that, with God’s help, we can restore current fractured relationships, past broken relationships, past church splits and can always be a collection of churches where anyone is welcome to come and learn our Christ-centered teaching. May we all strive to be good stewards of and to uphold the marvelous church God has called each of us to: the Apostolic Lutheran Church which is a tremendous blessing to us.

*Your brother always in the Lord.*

**And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.**

**Ephesians 4:11-13**



# Angels

Pastor Ryan Kandoll  
Plymouth, Minnesota



The writer of Hebrews considers all of Scripture regarding angels and tells us their purpose: *Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation? (Hebrews 1:14)* If you're like me, you probably go most of your life without considering the angels very often. This is because some of the works that these heavenly beings perform go unnoticed but when the results of their actions are noticed, they might seem natural because the angels

themselves are unseen. We are told that the whole world was made out of the unseen (immaterial): *Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. (Hebrews 11:3)* The Bible has examples of people who were unable to discern what they saw going on in the natural world until their eyes were opened to see also what was happening in the supernatural involving angels at work on their behalf, or sometimes like in the case of Balaam (with his talking donkey) working against them. Hebrews chapter 1 talks about how the angels are more powerful than humans and for a little while Jesus was made a little lower than them, but now is exalted high above them. Chapter 2 goes on a bit more about this dominion and also how God loves and cares for us more than the angels. Although they are much more powerful than we are, they serve the Lord and they serve His people and one day we will rule over them (1 Corinthians 6:3). Angels join us in our worship. One of the church fathers, Origen, figured that since Psalm 34:7 says that angels encamp and protect those who fear the Lord, then it also stands to reason that when we are gathered together to worship the Lord that they would also worship with us. This makes sense considering that over and over again in the Bible we're told about how often angels worship the Lord. We join in the worship of heaven when we sing along with the angels during our communion service: "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty; Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory; Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord! Hosanna in the Highest!" This is an ancient hymn that is often called the Sanctus because Christianity started when Latin was the most spoken and written language and in Latin the word holy is "Sanctus." But the hymn is actually much older than even the first century Christians who sang it in Latin. The first part of it is how the angels sing before the throne of God in Isaiah 6:3 and Revelation 4:8. "Hosanna in the highest!" is what the crowd cried to Jesus at His triumphal entry (Matthew 21:9), which is from Psalm 118:25.

1 Corinthians 11 talks about head coverings for women. (The head coverings themselves seem to be a reference to something in that specific ancient culture that when worn was a sign of a woman's modesty and the headship of her husband; we do not have a modern day equivalent.) In verse 6, Paul talks about how women ought to wear them on account of the angels who are watching. This implies that they are in our services worshiping with us.

We do not worship angels or pray to them. The first

commandment tells us not to have any other gods. "You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only." Several times in the Bible we have accounts of people bowing to worship angels, and they are told not to because the angels themselves are fellow servants of God and not to be worshiped, as in Revelation 22:8-9. We also have a direct commandment not to worship them in Colossians 2:28. Demons (or the devil's angels which are fallen angels like the devil himself) like to be worshiped. This is usually accomplished through idol worship (Deuteronomy 32:17, Psalm 106:37, 1 Corinthians 10:18-21). Remember our enemy lies, steals, kills and destroys. So it is no wonder that they would want to steal worship from God. Below are some of the things angels have done and do for us with some Scripture references to angels.

A little more about how the angels worship, praise and serve the Lord in heaven: Psalm 103:20, 148:2

Angels pray to the Lord on behalf of people: Zachariah 1:12, Matthew 18:10,

Instructed Zachariah the prophet how to prophesy: Zechariah 1:14-17

They proclaim messages to people about God and His plans: Matthew 28:5, Luke 1:11-19, 24:23, and John 20:12

There are many references to angels in the book of Acts. A few significant ones:

Angels helped the apostles escape prison: Acts 5 & 12

Guided Peter to Cornelius: Acts 10 & 11

Guided Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch: Acts 8

Paul warns us not to listen if angels tell us something different than what the Bible teaches (Galatians 1:8). This warning implies the possibility of one telling us something in line with what the Bible teaches or a demon coming to confuse us.

Angels instructed and guided Joseph and Mary in regards to the birth and protection of Jesus: Matthew 1-2 and Luke 1-2

Angels minister to (or serve) believers: Mark 1:13, Luke 22:43

Guided people in their visions of the Lord and prophecy: Zechariah 3-6

Two angels saved Lot and his family: Genesis 19

They fought battles: Exodus 23:20-23, 32:34, 33:2, 2 Kings 6:15-17, 2 Chronicles 32:21, Psalm 78:49

They guard and protect people: Psalm 91:11, Daniel 6:22, Matthew 4:6, Luke 4:10

Guided people on godly errands: Genesis 24:7, 24:40, Psalm 91:11-12

They will come with our Lord Jesus when He ushers in His kingdom and help Him execute judgment: Matthew 13, 16, 24, 25; Mark 8:38, 13:27-32, Luke 9:26, 2 Thessalonians 1:7, most of the book of Revelation

They carry us to heaven or hell when we die: Luke 16:22

It's possible that they may have visited people and appeared to be human as referenced in Hebrews 13:2. Some theologians figure this is talking about actual heavenly angelic beings; others figure it's talking about human evangelists and preachers who proclaim the message of God.

*God's peace.*

# What Is LENT?

Gwen Wilson  
Ridgefield, Washington

Dear Young and Old alike,

Hello to you all. I do pray this finds you well. It is that time of year when much sickness has been going around and still is.

We are in that season called Lent. This year it begins on Ash Wednesday, March 5th, and ends on April 17th.

Let's look into it and I hope I do it justice.

**T**HIS SEASON OF LENT is not in the Bible, but it was started in the fourth century AD, which are the years counted after Jesus' birth to the present day.

Lent is a representation of Jesus' 40 days of fasting and temptation in the wilderness. The Lenten season then is set for 40 days before Easter.

Lent is a time of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving (giving money, food or goods to those in need). During Lent many give up food, pleasures, etc. One thing that is practiced in certain denominations, is not eating meat on Fridays in the 40-day period.

I think it is safe to say that fasting, praying and almsgiving during Lent is not really practiced in our congregations. I'll be the first to admit that. It would be good to pay more attention to those things. It sure wouldn't hurt.

We see the first day of Lent is Ash Wednesday. This is the first day to begin the contemplation of the 40 days. It is a day when many churches hold a service (as we do, but we don't apply the ashes) and the priest or pastor has the congregants come forward and ashes are put on their foreheads in the shape of a cross, while the pastor says, "Dust you are, and to dust you will return." The ashes remind each person that they are going to die.

*Genesis 3:19: In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*

The practice of Lent traditions is not to be taken lightly or done for self-improvement or for a good works reason. It should be a time of pondering what Jesus has done for us. As Christians we should think on those things daily.

Lent is a time to remember Jesus fasting in the desert, a time for self-discipline, and setting our hearts in preparation for Easter. This all sounds great on paper and is more easily said than done, but it's a good reminder to stop and look at our lives and see all that Jesus has done for us and is still doing, to look at all the times we needed His help and He has helped us. He has promised to be there for His children and we are reminded over and over in God's Word by God the Father and Jesus the Son themselves, to obey God's commandments and do His will.

If any of you are not so sure of believing in your Creator God and His Son, I pray that you will take a few moments to stop and seek Him for your life. He will not disappoint you and He has eternal, forever life awaiting all who believe in Him. He is the only one who can offer that.

So however you spend Lent, I pray that the One who we would do this for will get all the glory.

It should never be about us, lest we would boast. Let our only boast be in that Christ came and died for us to save us from our sins.

God bless you all in your walk and I pray Christ is your life. He loves you most.

*God's peace.*



## Name of Jesus

Name of Jesus, softly stealing  
O'er a world of strife and shame,  
Thou canst bring us heav'nly healing,  
O Thou all-restoring Name.  
Name of Jesus, Heav'n of gladness,  
Cause our doubts and fears to cease;  
Soothe away the aching sadness;  
Name of Jesus, give us peace.  
Amen.

*Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. (Acts 4:10-12)*

# No Other Name

Paul Kretzmann

*Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people and elders of Israel, if we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole, be it known unto you all and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the Stone which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the Head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.*

Acts 4:8-12

**I**N THE CASE OF PETER it was now fulfilled what Jesus had promised, in Luke 12:12. He was filled with the Holy Ghost; the Holy Ghost took charge of his mind and his mouth and directed the action of both. The question of the council had been with reference to the name and authority by which the apostles were acting. Solemnly, emphatically, and boldly addressing them as rulers of the people and elders, Peter makes a confession of his faith and of his ministry. He does not overlook the sneering “you” of the question, but states: If, as is the case, we, upon whom you heap mockery, are examined on account, about, the good deed shown to the sick man.

Note the fine bit of oratorical irony in the statement. It reproves the rulers of the Jews for making a crime of acts of kindness and beneficence. Since the members of the council wanted to know in what manner, by what means, or “in whom” this man had been thoroughly healed, it should be known, not only to them all, but also to the entire nation of Israel, that this man was standing, was presented, before them in full health in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth whom they had crucified, but whom God had raised from the

dead. This was the answer of Peter, a statement which needed no proof; for the judges could not deny that the miracle had actually been performed with the man standing before them.

And as for refuting the claim of Peter as to the manner of the miracle, they could not with any degree of probability adduce any other power or name through which such a deed might have been done. And the candidness of Peter is equaled only by his boldness. For he deliberately pushes his advantage farther by holding before the eyes of his judges the passage Psalm 118:22, which Jesus, but a short time before, had quoted to a committee of the same Sanhedrin (Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 21:17).

The rulers of the Jews were like men that tried to build a house, and foolishly rejected the only stone which was available for the corner of the foundation upon which the whole building was to rest. Jesus was the Stone ordained by God as the foundation of His Church. But the Jews had rejected Christ, and thus spoken the judgment upon themselves. In spite of all that Jesus was and will remain the Corner-stone, the very Foundation of the holy temple which He is rearing to Himself.

And not only that, but, as Peter joyfully cries out: In none other is there salvation, for there is also none other name under heaven that is given among men in which we must be saved. The salvation earned by Jesus is complete, and it is the only salvation to be found anywhere. His name, the Word of redemption, is given, is proclaimed in the midst of men, in all the world, and whoever will be saved

must turn to this one Source and Author of everlasting life.

“On the name of Christ I cannot believe in any other pay but that I hear the merit of Christ preached and accept this. Therefore by believing on the name of Christ and not by trust in our works we are saved. For the word ‘name’ in this place means the reason by which and on account of which salvation comes. Therefore, to glorify and confess the name of Christ is as much as trusting in Him who alone is and is called Christ, as the cause of my salvation and my treasure, by which I am saved.” (Apologia. Mueller, 105).



*Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ*

2 Corinthians 10:5

**S**INCE IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES Christ is called a mystery upon which all heretics dash their heads, we admonish all Christians not to arrogantly indulge their reason in crafty investigations about such mysteries. With the beloved apostles, they should simply believe. They should close the eyes of their reason and bring their understanding into captivity to the

obedience of Christ [2 Corinthians 10:5], and rejoice without ceasing in the fact that our flesh and blood is placed so high at the right hand of God's majesty and almighty power. In this way we will certainly find constant consolation in every difficulty and remain well guarded against deadly error.

Formula of Concord



# The Name of Jesus

Pastor Dennis Hannu  
Wolf Lake, Minnesota



**And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.**

**Luke 2:21**

There is a lot that a name conveys about

someone, even in our world today. The mere mention of someone's name can evoke a lot of emotion. Our names in the modern world don't always have a great deal of meaning as they did in the ancient world or as they do in the Scriptures, but nevertheless they identify who we are. If we mention someone's name in conversation there immediately arises in our minds the character of the person and to whom they may belong. For instance, if I say the name of someone's spouse, their husband or wife very often come to mind or if I mention someone's child their parents come to mind. We are identified by our names in our communities and churches. It is often jokingly said among us Apostolic Lutheran's "Whose boy are you?" Our names are important to us because they identify who we are and to whom we belong. None of us could imagine being nameless. We all want identity.

The name given to our Savior eight days after His birth at His circumcision ceremony was Jesus. The angel Gabriel had instructed Mary to give Him this name. The name Jesus means the Savior, as we read in Matthew 1:21: And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. The name Jesus comes from the Greek form of the Hebrew name for Joshua. This name is the name above all names for there is no other name under heaven whereby man can be saved. Peter says in the book of Acts 4:10-12: Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in

any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

You notice that Peter says "by the name of Jesus Christ" for this is what identifies the man Jesus from Nazareth. He is the Christ, He is the Anointed One of God, He is the promised Messiah of the Old Testament. In the gospel of John, Andrew announces this to Peter: John 1:40-42: One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

So when we mention Jesus in our conversations with each other or in a sermon we immediately recognize Who we are talking about. His name conveys the whole message of salvation to the believer. It is as John writes; that we believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing we have life through His name. The name of Jesus is exalted above every name. Philippians 2:9-11: 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.

What a miracle it is that this day we confess the name of Jesus Christ and acknowledge Him as Lord. We are now counted as the sons of God through His name: John 1:12- 13: But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

I mentioned earlier that our name gives us identity in this world as individuals but the name of Jesus gives us identity here and into eternity. Paul writes often in his letters about us being in Christ and this is what brings us our real identity. It is being found in Him that brings us real worth and value in this age and the one to come. He became human and identified Himself with us in order that we the fallen race of Adam would be restored and be identified with Him. All of this in a name, that as we have already stated, is the only name that brings with it life and salvation. This name given to this child at His circumcision ceremony is truly the name that changed the world, or maybe better said, that brought the world to its new beginning.

*God's peace.*

*For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off. The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever. (Psalm 37:28-29)*

**C**ONTEMPLATING GOD'S GLORY and seeing him face to face we shall be enabled to praise him forever, without wearying, without any of the pain of iniquity, without any of the perversion of sin. So shall we praise God, no longer sighing for him but united with him for whom we have sighed even to the end, albeit joyful in our hope. For we shall be in that city where God is our good, God is our light, God is our bread, God is our life. Whatever is good for us, whatever we miss as we trudge along our pilgrim way, we shall find in him. (En. Ps. 37:28)

*Augustine*

# Bigger than Life

Lois Matson  
Yacolt, Washington



When I was a child, my parents had a double-sided hand mirror. On the flat side, the reflected image was life-sized, but the other polished surface was concave, and that reflection was larger-than-life. It was always great fun to put your face very close to the mirror and see your huge eye staring back at you. You could

see minute details that weren't visible without assistance.

Now consider that the passenger mirror on most vehicles contains this fine print: "Objects in mirror are closer than they appear." The reflection in that convex glass may show streets and buildings, too, though it is only a few inches across. Fine detail can't be discerned in such a small reflection.

Of course, you know that your eye remains the same size no matter what mirror you hold in front of it, and the street and buildings didn't shrink just because you can see many city blocks in a tiny mirror. The surface of the looking glass determines the *appearance* of the object reflected in it, but the reality doesn't change.

The point of this thought experiment is double-sided, just like the mirror in my example. We all look at life through our own lens. My lens may be concave, convex, or flat. And this affects what I perceive.

If I look at my sin in a convex lens, it doesn't look so bad. Yeah, I can see a lot of it, but the details are far-off and undetectable. I might come to the conclusion that I'm not such a big sinner after all, and grow prideful.

If I look at my sin in a concave mirror, I am tempted to despair. It looks so black, rises to such a great height, and runs so deep, I begin to cry out: "How can I be saved? This is hopeless!"

If I look at Jesus in a concave lens, I may see a bigger-than life reflection, but that man-Who-is-God can't understand my human weakness and frailty. He's true God, holy and sinless!

And if I look at Jesus in a convex lens, He looks like a mere human. Nothing special made Him stand out from the crowd. He wasn't terribly handsome, wealthy, or well-spoken. We're tempted to think, "That man can't forgive sins... only God can do that!"

But if I look at all this in the flat mirror of the Word of God, everything becomes much more clear. *But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. (James 1:22-25)*

If my sin looks tiny because my eyesight is convex, I must repent because the Scripture tells me it is vast.

*Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. (Psalm 51:1-4)*

If my sin looks large (and it is!) the Scripture says my Savior is larger. Our Great High Priest saves to the uttermost, and that is surely bigger-than-life.

*And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. (Hebrews 7:23-25)*

If my Savior appears too small to save me, I again look to the Word that says there is no Savior besides Him. *Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour. (Isaiah 43:10-11)*

*Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. (Acts 4:10-12)*

The Word of God always reveals the truth. It shows that sin is bad, but not too much for our Bigger-than-Life Savior to forgive. This brings great joy and the peace that passes understanding. God be praised for His unspeakable gift!

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## The Full Picture

Pastor Nicholas Kandoll  
New York Mills, Minnesota



*Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest.*

*And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not: And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast: And there will I nourish thee; for yet there are five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty. And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you. And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither. And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him.*

*Genesis 45:1- 15*

Imagine you were in Joseph's shoes. You are second in command of Egypt, and you stand before your brothers who betrayed you years ago. They are desperate, starving, and unaware that you are their long-lost brother. What would you do? Would you use your power to take revenge? Would you demand their life? A fitting punishment would be to sell them into slavery.

Instead of bitterness or revenge, Joseph responds with grace. He tells them not to worry because their actions, though sinful, were used by God for a greater purpose. Here we see a clear picture of how Jesus treats us. God is in control and His love is not limited by our sin. He takes us in our brokenness and weaves us into His perfect plan. This does not excuse sin or sweep it under the rug, but shows us that God uses sinners to accomplish His will. Joseph points us to Christ, who endured betrayal and suffering to bring life and salvation to the world. Just as Joseph forgave his brothers and provided for their needs, Jesus forgives us and reconciles us with God. As we near the season of Lent and Easter, let us remember that God is always at work—even in the messiness of life. He uses the trials we face to shape us, and He calls us to trust Him, even when we cannot see the full picture.

*God's peace.*

**G**OD, HE SAYS, permits both men and cattle to go about and live in the same manner and form. But God permits this in order to test men, whether they look only at these external things, and whether they are persuaded by these arguments, to which the wicked pay attention without believing otherwise. But the godly are exercised in this way so that they may acquire more faith. They go in the same way as the wicked and the beasts do, but inwardly, in the spirit, they receive comfort and peace.

*Martin Luther*

*And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:7)*