

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.

May 2016

Even So Send I You

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ON THE EVENING OF RESURRECTION SUNDAY, ten of Jesus' disciples were huddled behind closed doors. They wondered what was going to become of them, now that their Teacher was crucified, dead and buried. Some of them had gone to His tomb and heard what Mary had experienced. They had seen that His body was not there, but they did not yet understand what the Old Testament Scriptures had prophesied and that which Jesus had told them about His resurrection from the dead.

Suddenly Jesus stood in their midst and spoke these words: "Peace be unto you." He showed them His hands and side, and seeing the Lord, they were glad. He spoke words of peace to them again, but added to His greeting of peace: *Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.* (John 20:21)



He gave them a mission, empowered them by breathing on them the Holy Spirit, and gave them a message. *And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.* (John 20:22-23)

Our culture is increasingly less tolerant of the message that is able to free them from the guilt and power of sin. May we not huddle in fear, but may we be reminded that

He is our peace. We have a mission, He has empowered us and He has a message for all to hear and believe: "Your sins are forgiven through the suffering and death of Jesus the Christ, who was dead but now lives forever!"

Jesus had told them that trouble was coming, but they had not understood. They had closed and barred the door, and were quaking in fear. Jesus had done all He said He would do, but they did not understand.

We spend a lot of our time fearing death; we look for many ways to extend our years. We live in the Easter vigil, on Saturday. We know that He rose from the dead, but we often act as if we are not sure that He rose from the dead.

He is risen! Death is defeated; it has no power over us. Death is ended, and now we have life. We are living in the New Day. It is a constant reality for us. When the grave was empty, it was our grave; we can no longer be found in death. In Him we cannot die, so why do we fear that which cannot happen?

Jesus comes to where the disciples are hiding and tells them: "Peace be unto you." Don't be afraid, but be at peace. He showed them the marks in His body. The disciples were happy after He talked with them and showed them His wounds. He said He was sending them as He had been sent, but how did they receive that instruction? Being afraid, they must have struggled. After all, they were still in the room 8 days later.

The early Church was very successful. It did not have structures and buildings to maintain, for it had the concept that the Church was in the market place, in the field, in the community. The emphasis was not to get people to join the Church; it was in showing people "This is the Church." The Church is where the name of Jesus Christ is proclaimed in the world.

Other religions have been around for years, and they are more visible than before. Christians are being killed, but that is not the moment of their tragedy, it is the moment of their triumph. The Holy Spirit has been given which empowers us to get out into the world to bring the Gospel of reconciliation to the lost.

1. We have the assurance of peace because of His completed work. (John 20:19; 14:27; 16:33; 1 John 5:4-5; Romans 5:1-2)

After He had spoken the Word to them, He gave them a sign by showing them His hands and side. We hear the Word of Christ in the Gospel and we are then reminded of this message in the Sacrament on the Sundays that we partake of His body and His blood, which was given and shed for you (1 Corinthians 11:23-26). The peace He has won for us and that we possess in Him is meant to be sent into the world as He speaks next of His example which they/we are to follow.

2. He provides a model: *Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. (John 20:21)*

He tells us how this sending is to be done: we need to lay aside self. There is no authentic mission without our identification with those we are trying to reach.

Jesus did not stay in the safety of heaven but left the place of His glory, entered our world, took on our nature, bore our sorrows and sins, and took our death. He identified with us without losing His identity. In becoming human He did not cease to be divine.

Authentic mission enters other people's lives, understands their worldview, and experiences their alienation and pain. We state and commend our faith only so far as we put ourselves in loving sympathy with the doubters, into their pain, into their questions, into their loneliness as those who have lost their way.

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3. He empowers us with His Spirit. *And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. (John 20:22)*

Without the Spirit, we have no power. He reproves people of sin, of righteousness and of judgment (John 16). Jesus gave His disciples the Holy Spirit by breathing on them. How does that line up with the coming of the Spirit? In the beginning humans were brought to life through the breath of God, and now Jesus breathed on His disciples and in so doing recreated them. They had been told to wait for the Spirit in Jerusalem, so that promise and the Day of Pentecost are connected. Today we do not have to wait for that day, for it will come when we believe. The Bible records the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (prophesied by the Prophet Joel) 50 days after Jesus' resurrection and 10 days after His ascension. After He gifted them with the Spirit, He instructed them what to preach.

4. He gives us the message to share. *Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained. (John 20:23)*

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 5:18-21)

We have peace, He has given us His example, He has given us the Holy Spirit and He gives us the message. The world has changed, but the heart and desire of God for His world has not changed.

The atheists used to hide, but now they openly say the things they believe. The political power of the Church is broken, which it never was intended to have. Now the Church will be able to get out, to emerge into the world that began on resurrection morning.

Wherever you find people who wish to be free of the guilt and power of sin, preach the Gospel to them. It is time for us to be counted as Christian, it is time for us to get out into the world. This is our Day, and no one can take it from us. It is our Day, and every person that we encounter ought to know that Christ has redeemed them from their sin. We are the privileged vessels who are here to tell them the Good News.

It does not matter if one hates Him, He still loves them. If they mock Him, He still loves them. And if one comes to Him, He will be glad to receive that one.

We encounter this world, engage the world with its problems. We cannot ignore them, for they are coming to our doorstep. In the same way that God sent His Son, we are being sent. May we be faithful to the call. May we get out of our world, and into the world and lives of others. May we seek to connect with others.

"Being sent" has many applications, depending upon one's stage of life. Not all are called to serve in a public mission, but all are called to serve in their family, in their vocation and among the Church family.

Lord, you want all and you have sent us to deliver Your message to all. Love reached down for us, came to us and indwells us by your Spirit. Lord, please deepen our comprehension and knowledge of Love. Give us the ability to love people as You do, and by the power of Love draw souls to Yourself through Christ. Lord, we humbly pray, for Your glory's sake. Amen.

“Hope is one of the Theological virtues. This means that a continual looking forward to the eternal world is not (as some modern people think) a form of escapism or wishful thinking, but one of the things a Christian is meant to do. It does not mean we are to leave the present world as it is. If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next.

C.S. Lewis

The Way of Salvation

Mark Sunnarborg
Rhineland, Wisconsin

"In today's Church you never hear preaching on the way of salvation as the Church believes and as it is recorded in God's Word."

THE STATEMENT ABOVE WAS MADE by someone with whom I work. The concern upon my coworker's heart was that the preaching of the way of salvation is necessary in order for men to be justified before a righteous God in heaven. I also believe the way of salvation needs to be preached in the Church, so that the lost may hear and be drawn unto repentance and faith. When a saved person hears the correct way of salvation preached, he or she is not discouraged but encouraged that the way of salvation has not changed. It is the same yesterday, today and forever, and this causes rejoicing.

I believe that man is called of God through the preaching of His Word. I believe that hearing is necessary for living faith to be planted in the heart, and this faith is what justifies man before a righteous God. I believe that godly sorrow works repentance, and the preaching of the forgiveness of sins to penitent sinners frees one from the bondage of sin. I believe that man cannot be converted or put away sin by going straight to God in prayer. Why? Because man has access to the Father only through the Son (Jesus Christ). The Church believes Jesus is come in the flesh as recorded in 1 John 4:3: *And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.* Luke 10:22: *All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.* Jesus lives in the cleansed vessels, which are God's children, and confession of sins is to the father confessor and, yes, God alone forgives sins. I believe God has given His Church power to preach repentance and the remission of sins in Jesus' name for the sake of His shed blood (Matthew 18:18).

Are we able to possess righteousness? Let us consider what the Word of God says in Romans 7:18: *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.* No good thing dwells within man thus we do not possess righteousness but, as recorded in 2 Corinthians 5:21, we become the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ. *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.* It is hard for us to

believe what God has done, that the work of reconciling us to Himself is a perfect work in and through the shed blood of His Son, that Jesus took our sin upon Himself and willingly went to the cross, died, was buried, descended into hell, arose from the grave on the third day, and now sits at the right hand of God our Father; all this to make full and final payment for the sins of the whole world, that we may be God's righteousness in Him (Jesus).

I believe the way of salvation is not only what one does to become a child of God, or not only what one believes, but it is the complete transforming work of God in our hearts and lives, so that we would become His righteousness. I believe we are the prize that God sought in purchasing mankind back to Himself with the life of His Son making full payment for our redemption.

I believe man must be a partaker of this salvation here in the time of grace. I believe when Jesus returns it will be too late and the day of grace will have ended.

By faith mankind is justified before a righteous God. John 14:1-6: *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.* 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. Being restored to the Father happens through His Son, and the Spirit testifies of this. We may rejoice and be glad in salvation which is by faith.

"Hallowed be Thy Name" is the heart's cry of the child that walks by faith and of one that knows the way of salvation. I believe in simple, childlike faith, and that without faith it is impossible to please God. In His timing and according to His will, He opens our understanding.

How does one know for sure what they believe or if their pastor is preaching the truth, if they have not the Spirit of God dwelling within them? I believe the Spirit testifies within each of God's children what is truth, and if one has not the Spirit of God dwelling within them, they are not His child.

Father, may Thy Word testify of the true way of salvation, of what it is to walk by faith, and may the testimony of the Holy Spirit dwell within us and lead us unto all truth. Amen.

Holy Scripture is the greatest and the Divine Book, full of consolations for all trials; for about faith it teaches differently from what reason can see; about hope differently from what reason can think; about love differently from what reason can expect. More than this. It teaches these virtues to shine forth in days of adversity, for it points to the existence of another life beyond this miserable one.

Martin Luther

Jesus Sits at the Right Hand of God

Gwen Wilson
Ridgefield, Washington

Dear Children,

How are the children today? I hope you are well and having a good day. I enjoyed my day as the sun was shining and I was able to be outside with two of my grandchildren. We have had the wettest winter in 70 years, on this west coast, so a delightful sunny day is a wonderful treat.

Let's spend a little more time on the events of Easter morning and 40 days later. Go to **St. Mark, chapter 16**.

AFTER JESUS WAS CRUCIFIED, His body was laid in a tomb. A large stone was rolled across the entrance, so no one could go in to steal His body in the night and claim He had risen from the dead. Soldiers were even put by the door to guard it.

V. 1: *When the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.*

These friends of Jesus had come to the grave very early in the morning, at the rising of the sun. As they walked to the grave they wondered how they were going to roll the stone away.

V. 4: *And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.*

When they entered the tomb they saw a young man clothed in white and sitting near where Jesus was laid, and this made them very afraid.

Vv. 6-7: *And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. (St. Luke 24:7: Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.)*

These friends of Jesus trembled and were amazed at what they had just seen and heard. They were so afraid that they did not say a word to anyone on the way, but hurried to find the eleven disciples. Upon hearing the women, the disciples mourned and cried as they did not believe them. Jesus did not stay in the tomb and the women were the first to find out, and they believed.

Jesus also met two of the disciples on the road to Emmaus. The disciples were still mourning the loss of their dear friend Jesus and were talking of His death as they walked. Jesus appeared and walked with them and asked them why they were so sad. They then asked Jesus if He had heard of the terrible thing that took place in their town recently. Jesus pretended to not know and asked them to tell Him. Jesus listens to them talk of His own crucifixion and then He speaks of several Scriptures that spoke of many things all the way back to Moses. When Jesus ate with them, the disciples' eyes were opened and they discovered they were really talking to their friend Jesus. Immediately Jesus vanished out of their sight. How happy they were!

Another time Jesus appeared to the eleven disciples as they were sitting down to eat. As they ate Jesus rebuked them for not believing what the women had told them about Him being risen from the dead.

Over a period of forty days after His resurrection Jesus appeared to His friends and disciples.

V. 15: *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*

On Jesus' last visit with His disciples, He told them He wanted them to preach repentance and the remission of sins to all the nations, beginning with Jerusalem. They were to stay there until they were given power (the Holy Spirit) from on high (St. Luke 24: 47-49).

St Luke 24:50-53: *And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.*



Jesus came to earth and did His Father's will in dying for all the sins of mankind so that we might be saved and have eternal life if we believe. He then returned to God His Father in heaven and now sits at His right hand.

The disciples were happy, but they were probably also sad not to have their friend Jesus with them to walk with them. They were to go on their own now, but they were not really on their own: God was with them, just as He is with you and me today. It will always be this way until He comes to take us all to that beautiful heaven where He went that day so many years ago.

Serve the Lord, give thanks to Him always and praise His name. He is worthy of much praise!

God's peace.

On Faith, and Coming to Christ

Martin Luther

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

John 6:44-51

THIS GOSPEL TEACHES EXCLUSIVELY of the Christian faith, and awakens that faith in us; John simply instructs us how to trust in Christ the Lord. This faith alone, based upon the sure promises of God, must save us, as our text clearly explains. And in the light of it all, they must become fools who have taught us other ways to become godly. All that human ingenuity can devise, be it as holy and luminous as it may, must tumble to the ground if man be saved in God's way—in a way different from that which man himself plans. Man may forever do as he will, he can never enter heaven unless God takes the first step with His Word, which offers him divine grace and enlightens his heart so as to get upon the right way.

This right way, however, is the Lord Jesus Christ. Whoever desires to seek another way, as the great multitudes venture to do by means of their own works, has already missed the right way; for Paul says: *...if righteousness come by the law, that is, through the works of the Law, then Christ is dead in vain. (Galatians 2:21)* Therefore man must fall upon this Gospel and be broken to pieces and in deep consciousness lie prostrate, like a man that is powerless, unable to move hand or foot. He must only lie motionless and cry: Almighty God, merciful Father, now help me! I cannot help myself. Christ, my Lord, do help, for with only my own effort all is lost! Therefore, we must either fall upon this stone, Christ, in all our inability and helplessness, rejecting our own merits, and be broken to pieces, or He will forever crush us by His severe sentence and judgment. It is better that we fall upon Him than that He should fall upon us. For this reason the Lord says in this Gospel: *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.*

He must surely perish whom the Father does not draw. Thus it is decreed that whoever does not come to this Son must be condemned forever. The Son is given to us only to the end that He may save us; besides Him, nothing saves us, either in heaven or on earth. If He does not help us, then nothing will. Peter says: *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. (Acts 4:12)*

Where, in the light of this, are our theologians and professors who taught us that we become pious through our many good works? Here the great master Aristotle is put to shame, who proclaimed that reason strives for the best and always follows after the good. Christ says to this: No, if the Father comes not first and draws men, they must forever perish.

Here all men must confess their incapacity and inability to do the good. Should one imagine he is able to do anything good of his own strength he does no less than make Christ the Lord a liar; he would rudely and defiantly come to the Father and in all rashness ascend to heaven. Therefore, where the pure and plain Word of God goes, it breaks into pieces everything that is exalted of man, it makes valleys of all their mountains, and all their hills it makes low, as the prophet Isaiah (40:4) says. Every heart that hears this Word must lose faith in itself, else it will not be able to come to Christ...

Hence, a person who is thus smitten in his heart, by God, to confess that he, on account of his sins, must be condemned, is like the righteous man whom with the first words of this Gospel God wounds, and because of that wound fixes upon him the cord of His divine grace, by which He draws him, so that he must seek help and counsel for his soul. Before he could not obtain any help from God, nor did he ever desire it; but now he finds the first comfort and promise of God, which Luke 11:10 records: *For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.* From such promises will he ever continue to gain courage as long as he lives, and will ever win greater confidence in God. As soon as he hears that grace is the work of God alone, he will desire it of God as from the hand of his gracious Father, who wishes to draw him. Now, if he is drawn by God to Christ, he will certainly experience what the Lord says: *I will raise him up at the last day*, for he has laid hold upon the Word of God and trusts God...

Then He offers us grace; He tells us that He will not utterly condemn and reject us, but will receive us in His beloved Son...

This knowledge must come from God the Father; He must lay the first stone of the foundation in us, else we will never do anything. But this is accomplished in the following way: God sends us preachers, whom He has taught, to preach to us His will. First He instructs us that our entire lives and characters, however beautiful and holy they may be, are before Him as nothing, yea, are as abomination, and displeasing; this is called a preaching of the Law. Then He offers us grace; He tells us that He will not utterly condemn and reject us, but will receive us in His beloved Son, and not merely receive us, but make us heirs of His kingdom, lords over all that is in heaven and upon earth. This is called preaching grace or preaching

the Gospel. But God is the origin of all; He first awakens preachers and constrains them to preach. This is the meaning of St. Paul's words when he says: *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Romans 10:17)* This truth the words of the Lord in today's Gospel also declares, when Christ says: *It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.*

Now, under the first preaching, the preaching of the Law, namely, that we with all our works are condemned, man is restless and fearful before God, and knows not what to do with his life and deeds. He suffers from an accusing and timid conscience, and if relief from some source were not to come quickly he would have to despair forever. Therefore, we must not long delay with the other preaching; we must preach the Gospel to him and lead him to Christ as the one whom the Father has given to us to be our Mediator, that we should be saved solely through Him, out of pure grace and mercy, without any works or merit

on our part. The heart rejoices at this word and runs to such grace as a thirsty deer to the water.

Now, when one comes to Christ, to His Gospel, he hears the personal voice of Christ the Lord, which confirms the knowledge God taught him, that God is nothing but a very gracious Savior, who wants to be gracious and merciful to all who call upon Him. Therefore, the Lord adds: *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.*

In these words the soul finds a well-prepared table, at which it satisfies all hunger, for it knows for a certainty that He who speaks these words cannot lie. The soul falls upon the Word, clings to it, trusts in it, and also builds its dwelling-place in the strength of this well-prepared table. This is the feast for which the heavenly Father slayed His oxen and fatlings and invited us all to it. ~

Seasons of Life

Shirley Lampinen
Snohomish, Washington

The "season" of spring has recently begun. For many, it marks a time which they look forward to with much anticipation, having endured a long "season" of winter. Yet spring will only last 93 days and we will enter another "season" called summer.

Have you ever thought of the "seasons" of your life? They are many, each having a special part of our memory as they pass away and we enter into another stage of life.

This morning I was thinking of a different kind of "season" of our lives. God can use us for a time in the lives of others, and then we part ways, remaining friends but not an intricate part of their lives. Perhaps you have been called of God to perform some act beneficial in a person's life, and, when the need has been fulfilled, you find the closeness between you lessens. That is okay. You have done what has been asked of you; you have met a need in a season of their life.

In the book of Exodus, it seems that such an event happened. The children of Israel have departed Egypt after being in bondage for hundreds of years. They have come into the land called Rephidim. Moses, their leader, is spending "from morning until evening" judging matters of importance that are brought before him. He receives a visit from his father-in-law, Jethro, who is the Priest of the land of Midian. Jethro witnesses these proceedings and questions Moses as to why he sits all alone judging. Jethro councils Moses that it is not good for Moses' health to do all of the judging alone and to seek good men to *judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee. If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace.*

(Exodus 18:22-23) Moses listens to his father-in-law and things are much easier for Moses. Then Jethro goes back to his own land called Midian. He had fulfilled a need in a "season" of Moses' life and then departed, never to be mentioned again. That "season" passed and another started in both Moses's and Jethro's lives.

Whatever season of life you are in, whatever need is felt in that season, trust that God will provide for it, often through someone He has sent. A plaque reads: "Angels exist but sometimes they don't have wings and are called friends" (Author unknown). So, when called by God, be an "angel" in the life of another in their "season" of need. May God bless your day with His abiding presence.



The Life-Giving Word

Lois Matson
Yacolt, Washington

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. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Hebrews 4:12-13

Jesus—the life-giving Word of God—lives! He is active and powerful, always doing the will of the Father. He is the very Word that the Father spoke at creation. By Him the world was made, and He continues to sustain His creation.

When the Word of God commands, things happen. At His Word, light exists. Earth, sky and water are formed. Stars and planets spring into being, spinning in their orbits. Grass, herbs and trees grow, bringing forth seed after their own kind. Living creatures are fashioned, flying birds and swimming fish and creeping things, and the crown of God's creation—humans—are made in His own image. God breathed His very own breath into man, and man became a living soul.

The Word of God is sharp. The sharpest earthly sword can cut through bones and flesh, but God's Word is sharper, dividing to soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It discerns the thoughts and intentions of our hearts. Nothing we do or say, nothing we think or feel, is hidden from the Living Word. Everything is naked, open, exposed to the eyes of Him before whom we will stand.

What a terrifying thought! Imagine standing before the Judge of the living and the dead, realizing He knows our deepest intentions. He sees the innermost workings of our minds, the very thoughts that we don't even dare to admit to ourselves. He sees clearly every broken commandment. He beholds the Law, shattered in the dust at our feet. He sees the TRUE STATE of our being.

Who can stand on that Last Day before the Great White Throne of judgment, before the Living Word? Who then can be saved, if He sees into our black hearts?

NO ONE, of themselves. Lineage doesn't matter. Church attendance doesn't matter. Right living doesn't matter. No one, born into the right family. No one, of our earnest desire and good works. No one, of the good will and works of another. We cannot buy salvation; we cannot earn it. We cannot give it to our children.

Is it hopeless, then? Must we all perish eternally?

NO! NONE must perish eternally. The life-giving Word of God is just that... LIFE-GIVING. It makes alive. God breathes into man the breath of life and man truly becomes a LIVING soul. Martin Luther says: "Christ's Word breaks through and wounds. It takes away every ground of trust and ascribes redemption solely to the blood of Christ; it pricks and wounds the soul. This is a health-bestowing wound, for these weapons kill in order to make alive... It is, however, a fall that is happy and full of consolation, demonstrating the power and success of the Word."

Jesus instructed

His disciples to preach repentance and the remission of sins, beginning at Jerusalem and spreading to the farthest corner of the globe. Jesus wants every one to have

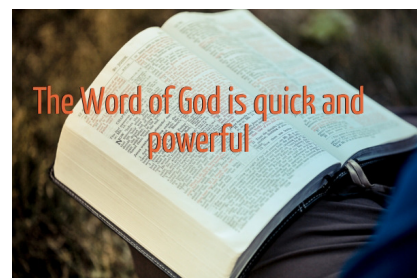
salvation in His name. God's desire is that all would come to repentance and be washed in the blood of the Lamb.

How does this happen? Hear Him and REPENT.

Acknowledge that God is RIGHT and JUST to condemn you. Admit that you are a filthy sinner, a breaker of His holy Law. Beg for His pardon and mercy. He WILL forgive you. Believe Him when He, through the mouth of His servant, says you are washed, you are redeemed, you are forgiven. He will perform the ultimate mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. He will breathe His very own breath into you, and you will LIVE. Believe Him. Receive Him.

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. (John 1:12-13)

The Word makes us new creatures. He will sustain His new creation, just as He has sustained the earth from the time He spoke it into existence. When He's dressed us, by His grace, in His robes of pure righteousness, we will stand before the throne clothed in perfection. We need not fear the probing eyes of the Judge of All; we need not be concerned that He can see into our hearts. God will see only the blood of His Son, and that is enough. ~



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Being Content

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

1 Timothy 6:6-8

WHY IS IT SO HARD to be dependent on God to take care of our everyday and future needs? The Word says, *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper... (Hebrews 13:5-6)*

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

Romans 5:1-5

**“Day by day and with each passing moment, Strength I find to meet my trials here;
Trusting in my Father's wise bestowment, I've no cause for worry or for fear.
He whose heart is kind beyond all measure Gives unto each day what He deems best—
Lovingly, its part of pain and pleasure, Mingling toil with peace and rest.”** ~Carolina Sandell



Pray for me in these matters, that I could echo the sentiments of Apostle Paul having learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. (Philippians 4:11)

God's peace to all.

Dave Impola; Everett, Washington

Humility in Our Faith

We are instructed in Scripture to be humble in spirit. Humility is a necessary virtue of living faith. We see in 1 Peter 5:5: *...be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.* We know that pride is a worldly trait, and that even as believers we can become prideful. In Proverbs 16:5 we are told: *Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord. 1 John 2:16 tells us: 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.*

Jesus Himself told His disciples and followers in Luke 12:1: *Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.* The Pharisees were a powerful sect of the Jews who considered themselves more zealous and righteous than everyone else. By their own strict rules they claimed to be more holy and godly than the rest of the Jews. Yet Christ called them blind guides and fools (Matthew 23:16), because they were only outwardly righteous (self-righteous). He said their influence on others was like leaven, and cautioned His followers to beware of this influence which, because of the flesh, is easily spread.

As believers we can become hypocritical as well. Therefore we need to be careful in our belief and relationships with others. This does not mean we should avoid witnessing to others and speaking of living faith, repentance and forgiveness. We are commanded to preach or spread the Word and to let our light shine unto others. This should be done with humility and love.

Humility prevents hypocrisy, and charity or love is patient and is kind (1 Corinthians 13:4-8). In 1 Peter 3:15 we are told that we should *...sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.*

Greetings of God's peace.

Al Wuori; Tapiola, Michigan