

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 2019

If We Walk in the Light

Pastor Nicholas Kandoll
New York Mills, Minnesota

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 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. My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

1 John 1:1-2:2

I'VE OFTEN PONDERED THESE WORDS of John and even heard someone say that they contain a contradiction. John says, *If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth.* Not even one verse later he says, *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.* At face value this certainly seems like a contradiction. We think walking in darkness is the same as sinning, but John is actually showing us something else. *If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with him*

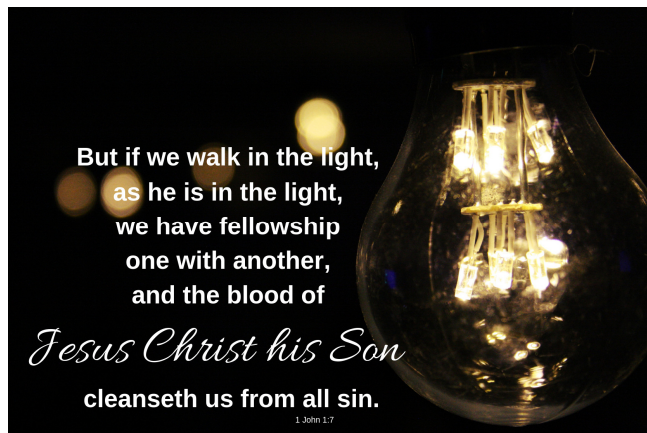
and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If walking in darkness was simply sinning, then why would the one who walks in the light still need to be cleansed from sin? There would be no need for that!

The interpretation hinges on what it means to walk in light/ darkness. John uses similar language in the first chapter of his gospel. *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God,*

whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 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. (John 1:1-12)

To walk in darkness isn't simply to sin or even to live a life of sin, it's to live a life without Christ and apart from the light. If you say you have fellowship with Him, but live a Christ-less life, you are lying. However, if you say you have fellowship with Him and live a life united to Him, then the blood of Christ cleanses you from all sin. Now we see it, just like all the commands in God's Word, John calls us to be obedient, to strive to do that which is good and sin not! But, he knows that we are fallen and sin is a part of our nature, so he points us to Jesus who is the propitiation for the sins of the world. Propitiation means atoning sacrifice. John is telling us that when we struggle with sin we are to look to the One who by His death on the cross paid our sin debt.

God's peace.





Behold Your God!

John Ruotsala

Foreign Mission Administrator

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH is a wonderful book. Many of my favorite verses are recorded there.

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. (Isaiah 1:18)

Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. (Isaiah 6:3)

Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. (Isaiah 12:2-3) Read all of chapter 12.

Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? ... But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:1, 4-6)

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. (Isaiah 55:1)

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD... (Isaiah 61:1-2)

Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool... (Isaiah 66:1)

The book of Isaiah has 66 chapters, as the entire Bible has 66 books. Also, there are 39 chapters before chapter 40, just like the Old Testament has 39 books. Those first 39 chapters are written in prophecy style similar to the Old Testament in general. Starting with chapter 40, Isaiah becomes the book of comfort, like the New Testament. Also, starting with chapter 40, there are 27 books, just like the New Testament has 27 books. Our God is surely a God of order!

As we look into chapter 40, please read verses 1-11 and preferably the entire chapter, in Jesus' name! We will not look at this portion from a historical perspective, but rather from the perspective of how these verses apply to the hearts of men today.

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Our God is a God who wants to comfort us when we need comforting. When we are in times of mourning, times of hardship, times of financial distress, times of hunger, or in some other season, God wants to comfort us! Notice the words "my people" and "your God." Such a God we have that He personally wants to care for us! He is our Father.

Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins.

Jerusalem was the center of the church and God's people in those days. Where is the center of Christianity today? It is the church, which is in the hearts of His people who are believing in the complete redemptive work of the Lord Jesus. God wants to speak to our hearts; He wants to speak to our families, communities, and villages through His Word and through His believers.

What is this most comforting message that we should CRY out? The message is that your sins are forgiven, your sins are pardoned; you have received of the Lord's hand double for all your sins! Not only is our sin forgiven, it is forgotten! Not only is our guilt removed, the power of sin over us can be removed! There is no more comforting message than that our sins are forgiven by and through the name and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ!

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. You remember John the Baptist. He was a messenger, a crier to point the way to Jesus. We too can be messengers! We can point to Jesus! Proclaim Him loudly to all! Let them know that there is a better way, which is life in Christ Jesus. He is the Way the Truth and the Life!

Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain. God is the God of the mountains, which can be the good times in our lives, and He is the God of the valleys, which are the bad times in our lives. He is in control in all situations, and He can lift up and bring us down (humble us), if that is what is needed.

And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it. The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever. Our God is so mighty and powerful. He created all things. He is over all and above all. We are but grass; we pass away quickly. The Word of God shall stand forever! His Word is the Eternal Truth. His Word is true, yesterday, today and forever.

O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold your God! He is all powerful, and He is able and willing to save! Lift up your voice and proclaim Him! Cry out; be a witness!

Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young. As mighty and strong as our Lord is, He is also so tender and loving. Jesus paid it all; He is the Great Shepherd. He will reach down, pick us up, and carry us when we need to be carried! Do you hear His voice? Follow the Good Shepherd. At the end of life He will carry all who believe in Him by faith all the way to our final resting place in heaven above.

Please read verse 12, and the rest of the chapter. It shows God's mighty power so clearly. Dear readers, ***Behold your God,*** and wait on HIM!

But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint. (Isaiah 40:31)

May God bless you!

Love Your Enemies

Pastor Phil Wilson
Hockinson, Washington

Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake...

But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also.

Luke 6:22, 27-29

THE RABBINICAL TEACHING at the time [of Jesus] was that it was not necessary for Jewish people to be kind to Gentiles because the Gentiles hated them. But what were the teachings of Jesus? *Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you.* The common teaching was, as a Jewish person, you do not have to be kind to Gentiles, because they hate you; but, if a Gentile is kind to you, then you should reciprocate with kindness or love or mercy.

We understand how difficult this would have been for these people to learn this. *Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Bless them that curse you...* To bless is to bring God's kindness, God's benevolence, God's joy on somebody. It is a call on God to give His divine blessing on somebody. If we read verses 27-29 together, in the context of verse 22, who are your "enemies"? Are your enemies those who you might get into a little bit of a heated discussion with, who you might not agree with on every single fine aspect of theology or social issues? I don't believe those are our "enemies".

Our enemies are those who stand against us in that they stand against Christ. We are hated, we are persecuted, we are reviled, we are separated from companies because of our testimony, our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Those are our true enemies. If we think about it, that is where it gets very difficult, and it's easier for us to distance ourselves from those who are against Christ. It's very easy for us to take the easy road... we think: "I don't have to worry about those Muslims, or those Hindus, or the sticks and stone worshippers. I'll just stay away from them, and I don't have to worry about them. It's a little bit easier maybe to have compassion or love for them if I don't have to deal with them so closely," as these people were seated listening to Jesus and there was a good Jewish person who had been raised in the synagogue and was boasting of his own righteousness seated right next to somebody who did not believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

So how is it for us, then? Can we just discount these verses? No. If we are able to love our enemies, bless them that curse us, be kind to those who smite, offer the other cheek, offer our coat, etc., as these teachings of Jesus say, if we are able to do these things, it is because of Christ in us, the hope of glory. If we cannot find ourselves doing this, then it's our own sinfulness. Jesus says, "Apart from Me, you can do nothing." The Apostle Paul sort of turns that around and says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me," saying the same thing but reversing the order. So if we abide in Christ, as Jesus teaches in the fifteenth chapter of John, we can do all things, and without Him we can do nothing, how is it for us to love our enemies, bless them that curse us, etc?

Apart from Christ it is impossible. But in Christ then, we have this ability, this power, this strength to do things which are contrary to our own will. If we go on through this text, we see the proper flow of these attributes of a believer, a follower of Jesus. The clear understanding is that we would recognize who we are in the sight of God.

Why beholdest thou (Why are you looking at) *the mote* (the speck, the little piece of sawdust) *that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam* (the plank, the 4x8 that's sticking in your own eye)? How can you teach others if your life is one of hypocrisy? The harshest words Jesus had were to the hypocrites. In the 23rd chapter of Matthew: "Woe unto you, hypocrites..." over and over again He spoke to those who taught one thing and lived in the contrary. *Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote (or the speck) that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye... Cast out this hate for your enemies. Cast out the cursing that you would have towards them. Cast out all of those evil thoughts that you have towards those who you perceive to be against you... cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.* How much more obvious could that teaching of Jesus be? You can just picture somebody with a big beam sticking in his own eye and he's trying to pull out the little speck that's in his brother's eye...

Luther's writing on this parable is—not to compare him to Jesus, not at all—is almost as colorful as Jesus' parable:

Therefore a Christian should train himself differently. When he sees the mote in his neighbor's eye, he should first, before he judges, step to the mirror and examine himself closely. There he will find such great beams that one could make pig troughs out of them, so that he would be obliged to say, "What shall this be?" (What's the meaning of this?) My neighbor grieves me once in a quarter, a half, a whole year, and I have grown so old and have never kept my God's commandments; yay, I transgress them every hour and moment. How can I be such a desperate scoundrel? My sins are an immense oak tree, and that poor splinter, the dust in my brother's eye I suffer to excite me more than my great beam? But it must not be. I must first see how I may become rid of my sin. There I will have so much to do that I may well forget the tiny splinter; for I am disobedient to God, to my government, to my father and mother, to my master and I continue herein and do not stop sinning, and yet I want to be unmerciful against my neighbor and not overlook a single word? Oh no, Christians must not act thus. (Martin Luther)

May God be gracious unto us that we would not compare ourselves with or against our neighbor, but that any judgment would be according to His Word and that the judgment of the Word would begin in our own hearts, that we would see first of all that we are sinners in need of God's grace. And like Jesus spoke of that woman, "Her sins they are many..." not to discount the sins of anyone, but as we have appreciated God's mercy, likewise would we pray that it would be extended unto our brother. ~

The Grave Could Not Hold Him

Gwen Wilson
Ridgefield, Washington

Dear Children far and near,

Hello to all of you. I hope you are well. Last time we went through the account of Jesus teaching, loving, and doing the work of His Father and men wanting and succeeding in putting Him to death. We now go forward to the third day after He was hung on the cross and witness the miracle that happened because Jesus said it would, that He would rise again. Let's look in *St Luke, chapter 24*.

JESUS WAS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS. His body was wrapped in linen cloth with spices, and laid in a tomb. Certain women who loved Him followed along to see where He was buried. They went home and prepared more spices and ointments, which they planned to bring back to the tomb after the Sabbath. They wanted to be sure Jesus' body was properly cared for in their custom for burial. How their hearts grieved as they did their last acts of kindness for their Lord.

Jesus had said, *Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father. (John 10:17-18)* Because Jesus said this, the chief priests and Pharisees asked Pilate to order the tomb to be watched. This was to make sure none of Jesus' friends would come and take Him out of the tomb and tell people, "See, He said He would rise in three days." Soldiers were even set to watch the tomb.

We call this day Good Friday, and as the day came to a close, the people who were just following to watch, the soldiers and all of Jesus' family and friends left for the night. I can imagine that Jesus' friends did not sleep much that night. They would have had so much on their minds.

They rested the next day, the Sabbath, according to God's command, but on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James and other women hurried to the tomb. They found the stone was rolled away.

And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. (Luke 24:3)

The women were puzzled at seeing the empty tomb. As they stood looking in wonder, two men appeared in shining clothes – angels. The women were afraid and bowed their faces to the ground. The shining men spoke, saying, "Why do you seek the living among the dead?"

He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. (Luke 24:6-7) **The grave could not hold Him.**

And they remembered his words, And returned from the sepulcher (tomb), and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. (Luke 24:8-9)

The disciples listened to the excited women telling what they had just witnessed, and they acted as though the women had made up a story and did not believe them!

Then Peter ran to the tomb, stooped down and looked in. Just as the women had said, the body was gone. Peter noticed something interesting: the linen clothes that Jesus had been wrapped in were still there. His mind started wondering what had happened.

That same day two of the disciples decided to go to a town called Emmaus. As they walked, they talked of Jesus' crucifixion and were very sad.

Suddenly Jesus appeared and walked with them. He asked them why they were so sad. Thinking He must be a stranger, they asked Him if He had heard of the awful things they witnessed a few days ago. Jesus pretended He did not know and asked, "What things?" They told Him about Jesus dying on the cross, and they did not know they were telling Jesus these things. Jesus listened and then told them all the things that the Old Testament prophets had written about His suffering and death.

Near evening, the two men reached their destination. Jesus pretended that He was going further, but they urged Him not to walk any more but to spend the night with them. Of course Jesus did.



Supper at Emmaus Matthias Stom
Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

They sat down to eat. Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to the two men. At this moment they learned that this was Jesus because they realized this act of breaking bread was familiar to them, and then Jesus suddenly vanished! They were excited and talked of their hearts feeling something special as Jesus talked to them on the road, but at the time they had not known it was their very Lord!

They couldn't wait to tell this good news to the other disciples and immediately headed back to Jerusalem. They were telling their news when Jesus suddenly appeared.

Jesus could see they were terrified and He calmed them, saying, "Peace be unto you." The apostles did not feel peaceful as they thought they were seeing a ghost. Jesus asked them why they were afraid and having bad thoughts. He held out His hands and showed them His feet. *Behold my hands and my feet, that is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. (Luke 24:39)*

Jesus could see they were doubtful and asked if there was any food. They offered Him a piece of broiled fish and some honeycomb. He took them and ate. He wanted them to see He really was not a ghost.

Jesus talked about the things He had taught them from the books of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms that spoke of Him, the things that been fulfilled. He helped their minds so that they would be able to understand the Scriptures. I picture Him talking to them so kindly.

And He said to them, *Thus it is written, and thus it behoved (was necessary for) Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be*

preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. (Luke 24:46-49)

This was a lot for these disciples to think about. Jesus led them out as far as Bethany and as they stood there together, Jesus raised His hands. While He was blessing them, He was lifted from the ground and carried out of sight into heaven.

He completed His Father's work and went back to His Father. He is there now reigning with God. He looks down on us and sees all we do, think or say. He hears our prayers, our cries, our joys and sadness. God NEVER sleeps and is always there for us. He would want that the whole world could be saved and will show mercy unto all who believe in Jesus.

Children, one day our Jesus is going to come to take His children to heaven to live with Him, FOREVER! Only God knows what that day is. Jesus doesn't even know when He will be sent back to take those who love Him to live in heaven. It is hard for us to comprehend how much God loves us but just know that He does and keep believing in Jesus.

May is Mother's Day month and I want to wish all mothers a blessed, happy day. ~

Abide in the Vine

Pastor Jason Salmi
Vancouver, Washington



THE SIGNS THAT SPRING IS NEAR are already all around us. Looking out of my office window, I can see buds on the branches of many of the trees. Soon those buds will open up, because all that they need to live is flowing to them from their tree. Without their tree, they could not live. Indeed, all that those buds need, in order to grow and thrive is (relatively) far from them. For each little bud, the water and nutrients which are vital for life are found down in the soil. Though this distance may be measured in mere feet, or even inches, for the bud, it may as well be a million miles. They cannot access it on their own.

But, not only is the distance separating them from what they need too great for them to bridge, even if they were to be in contact with the earth, they still would have no means in themselves of drawing out the water and minerals that they need to live.

Put simply, no bud survives unless it is attached to a branch. And no branch can live without being connected to the trunk and the roots of the plant. Their survival is completely and thoroughly dependent.

Those buds and branches are a beautiful visual analogy of the life of the Christian. Jesus used this picture as He taught His disciples about the source of their life. The Gospel of John records His words for us:

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

John 15:1-5

Jesus' words help us to understand that there is more to life than meets the eye. From our vantage point, once we are no longer dependent on our parents for our physical needs, all of us appear to be independent people, going about our lives. But, while that may be true in some respects, it is not ultimately true.

We are all thoroughly dependent upon God for the things that we need. This is the case regarding our basic needs of food, water, shelter, even air, as God is the Creator and Sustainer of all things. But life is more than just those things. More important that all of those things is spiritual life. And for us on our own, that may as well be a million miles away.

Jesus is the only source of that life. Apart from Him, no person has any true life in them... but those who abide in Him, have all that they need and more.

Dear Saints, abide in the Lord Jesus Christ. Seek Him continually in those places that He has promised to be found, in His Word and Sacrament. He has promised to sustain you, not only in this life, but for eternity.

Praise the Lord.

Jesus and His Mother

Albert Barnes

And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. (Luke 2:51)

Was subject unto them. Performed the duty of a faithful and obedient child, and not improbably was engaged in the trade of Joseph, that of a carpenter. Every Jew was required to learn some trade, and there is every reason to think that our Savior followed that of His reputed father. And from this we learn—

1. That obedience to parents is a duty. Jesus has set an example in this that all children should follow. Though He was the Son of God, and on proper occasions was engaged in the great work of redemption, yet He was also the son of Mary, and He loved and obeyed His mother, and was subject to her.

2. It is no dishonor to be a mechanic, or to be brought up in an obscure employment. Jesus has conferred honor on virtuous industry, and no man should be ashamed of industrious parents, though poor, or of a condition of life that is far from ease and affluence. Industry is honorable, and virtuous poverty should not be regarded as a matter of reproach. The only thing to be ashamed of, in regard to this matter, is when men are idle, or when children are too proud to hear or speak of the occupation of their parents, or to follow the same occupation.

And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. (John 2:1-5)

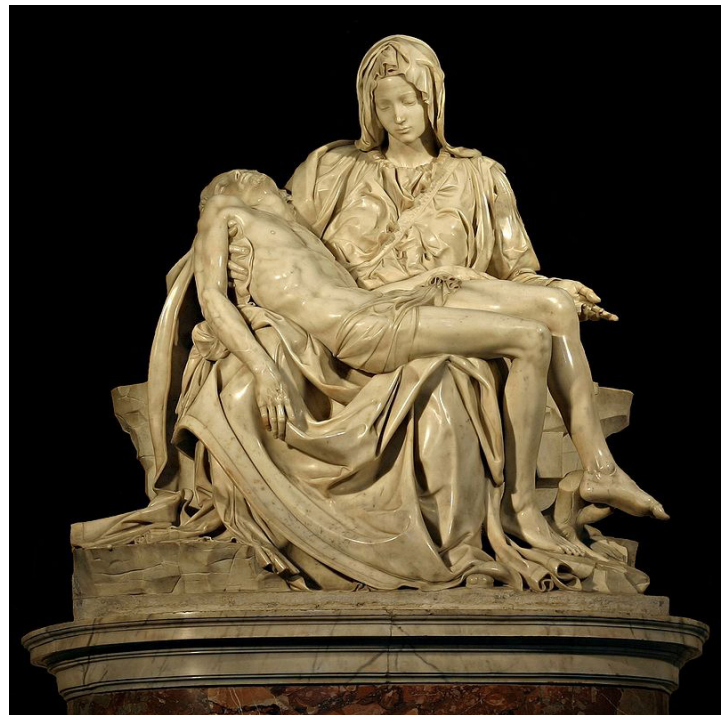
Woman. This term, as used here, seems to imply reproof, as if she was interfering in that which did not properly concern her; but it is evident that no such reproof or disrespect was intended by the use of the term *woman* instead of *mother*. It is the same term by which He tenderly addressed Mary Magdalene after His resurrection, and His mother when He was on the cross.

What have I to do with thee? This expression is sometimes used to denote indignation or contempt. But it is not probable that it denoted either in this place; if it did, it was a mild reproof of Mary for attempting to control or direct Him in His power of working miracles. Most of the ancients supposed this to be the intention of Jesus. The words sound to us harsh, but they might have been spoken in a tender manner, and not have been intended as a reproof. It is clear that He did not intend to refuse to provide wine, but only to delay it a little; and the design was, therefore, to compose the anxiety of Mary, and to prevent her being solicitous about it. It may, then, be thus expressed: "My mother, be not anxious. To you and to Me this should not be a matter of solicitude. The proper time of My interfering has not yet come. When that is come I will furnish a supply, and in the meantime neither you nor I should be solicitous." Thus understood, it is far from being a harsh reproof, but it was a mild exhortation for her to dismiss her fears and to put proper trust in Him.

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home. (John 19:25-27)

Behold thy son! This refers to John, not to Jesus Himself. Behold, My beloved disciple shall be to you a son, and provide for you, and discharge toward you the duties of an affectionate child. Mary was poor. It would even seem that now she had no home. Jesus, in His dying moments, filled with tender regard for His mother, secured for her an adopted son, obtained for her a home, and consoled her grief by the prospect of attention from him who was the most beloved of all the apostles. What an example of filial attention! What a model to all children! And how lovely appears the dying Savior, thus remembering His afflicted mother, and making her welfare one of His last cares on the cross, even when making atonement for the sins of the world!

Behold thy mother! One who is to be to thee as a mother. The fact that she was the mother of Jesus would secure the kindness of John, and the fact that she was now entrusted to him demanded of him affectionate regard and tender care.



Pieta Michelangelo
Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home. John seems to have been in better circumstances than the other apostles (see John 18:16). Tradition says that she continued to live with him in Judea till the time of her death, which occurred about fifteen years after the death of Christ. ~

The Light of the World

Lois Matson
Yacolt, Washington

IN THE BEGINNING, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was empty and dark, and the Spirit of God moved above the waters. Suddenly, the voice of God rang out in the darkness: "Light!" And light sprang into existence. God saw that the light was good, and He separated light and darkness. God called the light "day" and the darkness "night," and the evening and the morning were the first day.

Hundreds of years before Jesus was born, the prophet Isaiah wrote about the Light of the world:

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. (Isaiah 9:2)

Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. (Isaiah 60:1-3)

Light is a peculiar thing. Light makes it possible to see, and light makes things visible. Light travels quickly, much faster than our eyes can follow. When you turn on a light switch, the darkness doesn't slowly dissipate; the darkness seems to be instantly gone as soon as the light is turned on.

Jesus said:

I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. (John 8:12)

If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him. (John 11:9-10)

Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. (John 12:35-36)

And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God. (John 3:19-21)

Light and darkness can't exist in the same place at the same time. If you light even a tiny candle in the darkness, suddenly it isn't dark any more. The darkness has fled away from the light of the candle flame.

Jesus is the True Light of the world, and He makes the darkness flee away. He shines in the world, lighting every place that He touches. The Apostle John wrote about Jesus:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. (John 1:1-9)

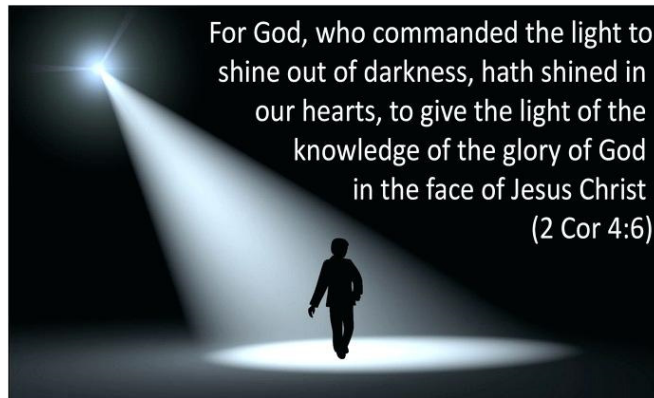
Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is

true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes. (1 John 2:8-11)

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 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. (1 John 1:5-7)

God made the light shine at the beginning of the creation, and He makes the Light shine today so people will know of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ. We are clay jars with treasure inside—the shining Light of the Good News of Christ's glory—to show that the excellent power is of God and not of us.

Jesus, the Light of the World has shined into our hearts, making the darkness inside us flee away. ~



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
(2 Cor 4:6)

Christian Monthly Vol. LXXV—No. 5

Subscription Rate: 1 Year

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

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

Send **articles for publication** to:

Lois Matson, Editor
Email: cm@apostoliclutheran.org
Phone: (360) 904-6951
Postal Mail to:
CHRISTIAN MONTHLY
PO Box 2126
Battle Ground, WA 98604 USA

Address **subscriptions, payments, and Book Concern orders** to:

Anders & Clara Sundqvist, Managers
THE BOOK CONCERN
PO Box 2126
Battle Ground, WA 98604 USA
Phone: (360) 896-7344
Email: books@apostoliclutheran.org

Apostolic Lutheran Church of America

www.apostoliclutheran.org

Western Mission: western@apostoliclutheran.org

Eastern Mission: eastern@apostoliclutheran.org

Foreign Mission: foreign@apostoliclutheran.org

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

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

General Disclaimer: The material in the *Christian Monthly* is reviewed for scriptural soundness and to ensure that it does not conflict with the teachings of the ALCA. Publication does not imply that other material by included authors has been so approved.



HAVE YOU MOVED? Please notify the Book Concern of address changes. We must pay return postage on undelivered mail.

Alive in Christ

Pastor Evan Goegelein

But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

1 Corinthians 2:9-16

ONE OF THE ARTICLES OF FAITH that is often overlooked in popular Christianity today is the article on original sin. Most denominations will recognize such a thing as original sin, that Adam and Eve sinned and that sin is passed on to us, but what are the effects of that sin? Hear what Paul writes to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians, chapter 2: “But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them because they are spiritually appraised.” This picture that Saint Paul paints for us is that of a dead corpse. Natural man, that is, a man before regeneration, can do as much to react to God as a dead person can react to your voice. You speak to a dead corpse: “Get up!” and it does nothing. It’s a dead corpse. And so it is when you tell someone apart from faith to do something to please God. He just can’t do it.

This should be our basis for preaching the Gospel. Our role in evangelism is not to manipulate or convince someone to do something, but rather to see them as the Scripture says they are: dead in their sins. And the only way to bring life to this dead corpse is to preach the Word of God, the Law in its sternness and the Gospel in its sweetness, for as Romans 10 says, “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” So by preaching repentance and forgiveness, they too may be given faith by the Holy Spirit through His Word and be brought alive in Christ.

Lord, give us the courage to speak forth Your Word, so that the dead may be alive in You through the work of Your Holy Spirit. Amen.

Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

Romans 8:12-17

THIS, THEN, IS THE GRACE of God through Jesus Christ our Lord—that we are reconciled to God through the Mediator and receive the Holy Spirit so that we may be changed from enemies into sons, *for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.* (Romans 8:14)

It would take too long to say all that would be truly worthy of this Mediator. Indeed, men cannot speak properly of such matters. For who can unfold in cogent enough fashion this statement, that *the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us*, (John 1:14) so that we should then believe in “the only Son of God the Father Almighty, born of the Holy Spirit and Mary the Virgin.” Yet it is indeed true that the Word was made flesh, the flesh being assumed by the Divinity, not the Divinity being changed into flesh. Of course, by the term “flesh” we ought here to understand “man,” an expression in which the part signifies the whole, just as it is said, *Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified*, (Romans 3:20) which is to say, no *man* shall be justified. Yet certainly we must say that in that assumption nothing was lacking that belongs to human nature.

Christ Jesus, Son of God, is thus both God and man. He was God before all ages; he is man in this age of ours. He is God because he is the Word of God, for *the Word was God*. (John 1:1) Yet he is man also, since in the unity of his Person a rational soul and body is joined to the Word.

Augustine