

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 2021

Love Elevates the Other

Pastor Orval Wirkkala
Castle Rock, Washington

If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

Philippians 2:1-4

I ONCE HEARD A PASTOR make this comment concerning the above portion of Scripture: "If we consider our spouse more important than ourselves, they will know that they are important to us." That is how he explained the last part of the third verse, in which it is written, *but in lowliness of mind let each esteem the other better than themselves.*

As I thought of what he had said and of its significance in our relationships with one another, the words of Apostle John came to mind as to the definition and foundation of love: *He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. (1 John 4:8-11)*

Our Creator sent His Son into the world to reveal His seeking, forgiving and accepting heart of love toward us. He wishes through His Son for us to know and experience this forgiving and accepting love as it was revealed through the Christ on the cross. God views His new creation through Christ and desires that all would come to this knowledge of acceptance in Christ. As it is written: *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. (2 Corinthians 5:19)*

Do we understand what this means for us today and for all the peoples of the earth? Have we come to experience the full impact of the meaning of how God has received us in Christ? That He is fully satisfied in us because of the work of

His Son in doing the will of His Father through the cross? Do we know how pleased He is in us through His Son? He is waiting for us to accept this gift through repentance toward Him (turning away from self and turning toward Him) and faith in Christ (acceptance of forgiveness through Christ's offering of Himself).

When we come to know, understand and experience the love of God in His forgiveness and acceptance, we come to experience our true worth in the sight of God. Because we know that we are important to Him, we live in the experience of that relationship of being accepted in Christ, but even more so, we are received and welcomed by Him on a continual basis. For God always looks upon us as who we are in His Son, of whom He testified: *And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. (Matthew 3:17)*

**Let nothing be done through strife or
vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let
each esteem other better than themselves.**

- Philippians 2:3 (KJV) -



And if God welcomes us into this fellowship, how can we then not welcome and accept all others even as we have been welcomed and accepted? Therefore, when we are in Christ, we consider others more important than ourselves and we exhibit this through our desires, motives and actions.

May God bless you in Christ today and always!

Lift Up Your Heads

Pastor Jason Salmi
Vancouver, Washington

TO SAY THAT THE WORLD in which we live is confused and troubled would be to understate the matter. To somehow convince ourselves that it's never been this bad before would be to seriously overstate it. Knowing things have been bad in the past, however, can prove to be small comfort when we see evil triumphing around us. Isn't the promise of God that "for those who love (Him) all things work together for good..." (Rom. 8:28) Doesn't that mean things should just continue to get better and better for Christians?

To help put that promise into context, we need to look just a little earlier in Paul's letter to the Roman church when he wrote, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us." (Rom. 8:18) Now Paul, by the time he wrote those words, was a man well acquainted with suffering. What he calls "the sufferings of this present time," to which he and the other Christians were witnesses, he meant real suffering.

Christian persecution had begun under the direction of the ruling Jewish religious party, the Sanhedrin. With their permission, a young and zealous Paul (then known as Saul) had applied himself earnestly to the task of eradicating Christianity. He personally oversaw and approved of the arrest and sometimes execution of Christians. He was eventually confronted and converted by the resurrected Jesus, but many others still carried on that same work after him. And Paul then became a target for them because of his faith. He personally was whipped, beaten with rods, stoned, shipwrecked and more. (2 Cor. 11:24-27) The suffering that he experienced because of his confession that Jesus Christ is Lord was extreme. And yet there was something that gave him the strength to endure it all.

And Paul was not alone. Countless other Christians were cast out of the synagogues and temple, lost their livelihoods as they were rejected by others, or were martyred as they were thrown into the Roman arenas with wild animals. And yet they also were able to endure it, confessing Christ even to the point of death. How surprising then, as he is reflecting on the misery that he and others continued to experience, that Paul should write, "What then shall we say to these things?" (like beatings, stonings, being torn by wild animals). His reply to that question is simple. "If

God is for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31) He has just said that the whole world, as it were, is against Christians. And there is no promise of being delivered from them, in fact they will continue. (Rom. 8:36) Yet the fact that God is on the side of the Christian means that the victory will ultimately go to them, though it will not always look that way in this life.

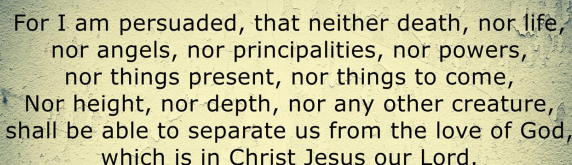
And the surety that God is on our side and that He will complete that which He has promised (namely to bring us into eternal glory) is the fact that God "...did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all..." (Rom. 8:32) We do not have a God who is distant from us and unfamiliar with our suffering, but One who is near. The Bible rightly refers to Jesus as Emmanuel, the God who is with us. Our Lord saw fit to save us by the only means possible. Since we could not possibly climb up to Him, He climbed down to us instead. He took on a body of flesh like ours, and in so doing God identified with us and every facet of our suffering. But He didn't merely identify with us in a bodily form; He identified with us in our sin. Indeed, He took our sin upon Himself and then bore it to the cross so that He could take our punishment for us. And in so doing, He showed a love for us that is beyond measure.

So Paul could look at Christ and what He did for us through love and confidently say that, "...in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us." (Rom. 8:37) Because, if the God who is for us is also the One who will go to that length to save us, then He will surely bring us into glory with Him someday.

We are given no promise that things will go easily for us in this life. By God's grace they may, but that is guaranteed to no one. Instead God promises that, regardless of the trials that may face us in this life, He loves us and has given us the ultimate display of that love when He sent His Son to secure us for Himself. So if you look around and see that world seems

confused and troubled and you find yourself facing trials because of your faith, lift up your head and your heart and believe the promise that you have been given that, "...neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate (you) from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 8:38-39)

May the peace of God be with you now and always.



For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life,
nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers,
nor things present, nor things to come,
Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature,
shall be able to separate us from the love of God,
which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:38-39

New Address for the Book Concern and *Christian Monthly*

Effective immediately, the new mailing address for the Book Concern and *Christian Monthly* is as follows:

Apostolic Lutheran Book Concern
PO Box 104
Hayti, SD 57241
NEW phone: 360-601-5117

Please note that the June edition of the *Christian Monthly* may arrive a little later than normal and that all Book Concern orders placed in May will have a shipping delay. Thank you.

Anders Sundqvist, Business Manager

The Coming of the King of Glory — Psalm 24

Paul Kretzmann

THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM. — A psalm of David, another hymn of the Messiah and His kingdom, to prepare the believers of the Old Testament for His coming and to inspire the believers of the New Testament with the proper regard for their King.

V. 1. The earth is the Lord's, the entire visible creation belongs to Jehovah, as the product of His almighty power, **and the fullness thereof**, what fills up its contents, everything it contains, is in His power; **the world and they that dwell therein**, not only the inanimate creatures, but all the living creatures which inhabit the world. All this is in His absolute, unlimited power, it belongs to His Kingdom of Power. **V. 2. For He hath founded it upon the seas**, He set the foundation of the earth in the midst of the mighty ocean, **and established it upon the floods**, giving it a firm base when He separated the water from the dry land and called the latter earth. This is the largest and most extensive kingdom of Jehovah, that which includes all created beings. But the description now narrows down to a smaller kingdom. **V. 3. Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord**, the mountain of Jehovah, or Zion, the place of His presence in the midst of His people and type of His holy congregation? **Or who shall stand in His Holy Place?** the place of His holiness, where He revealed Himself to the members of His Church; for at that time only such persons were permitted to enter the inner courts as were members of the Jewish Church. **V. 4. He that hath clean hands**, which were Levitically pure and unstained with crimes, **and a pure heart**, whose love to Jehovah is without hypocrisy; **who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity**, in any form of idolatrous behavior, **nor sworn deceitfully**, in false oaths.

The true members of the Jewish Church are a type of the Church of the New Testament, to which all men belong whose hearts have been purified by faith in the Redeemer, whose hands are kept clean from sin and every form of vileness for love of Him, whose souls are in no way concerned with the idolatrous vanities of the present world. Men to whom this description applies are welcome on the mount of Jehovah, they are eagerly sought by Him in the place of His holiness.

V. 5. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, namely, the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ, imputed to all believers and assuring them of their salvation, **and righteousness from the God of his salvation**. It is by this

process of granting righteousness to one hearer of the Word after another that a generation, a people, is gathered whose chief aim in life is to learn more of Jehovah, their God. **V. 6. This is the generation of them that seek Him, that seek thy face, O Jacob**, desiring to follow the God of Jacob, to do His bidding, to enter into an ever more perfect communion with Him, for in inquiring for Jacob, patriarch of the true religion, they inquire for Him who inspired it, the eternal God of their salvation. **Selah**. Thus the Kingdom of Grace, the Church of Jesus Christ, is briefly, but fittingly described.

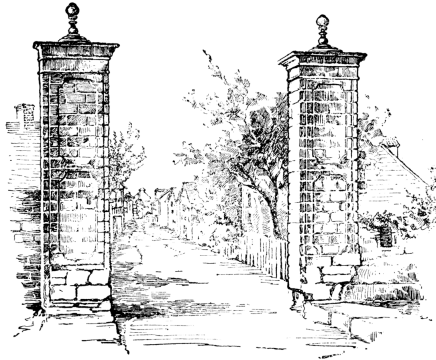
THE WELCOME OF THE KING. — V. 7. Lift up your heads. O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in. The picture is that of a mighty host moving forward to take possession of Mount Zion, with a great King, who wants to enter the city, the congregation of the saints, at its head. The challenging cry rings out that the gates of Zion, of the spiritual Temple of the Lord, should lift up their heads, their lintels, widen

out, make room for the entering of this great King. Doors of eternity they are called, because they were in existence since the first man accepted the promise of the Messiah, and will remain throughout eternity, in spite of all attempts on the part of the portals of hell to overthrow them.

A solo voice now asks, **v. 8. Who is this King of Glory?** And the chorus joyfully answers: **The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle**. The Messiah is the almighty God, mighty, invincible in war, clothed with everlasting glory and majesty. He is here represented as coming to His people as One to whom the victory over all enemies is assured from the outset, who will overwhelm all His foes.

Once more the challenge rings out, **v. 9. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in**. The Messiah is eager to enter into the hearts of all those who will accept His love and mercy.

A single voice: **v. 10. Who is this King of Glory?** And the chorus answers, in joyful exultation: **The Lord of hosts, the great Jehovah Sabaoth, He is the King of Glory. Selah**. May every heart be opened to Him in joyful welcome in order that He may enter in and abide throughout eternity, in the majesty of His greatness and in the beauty of His love. ~



Grace Abounding!

But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. (Romans 5:20)

HE DOES NOT say "did abound," but *did much more abound*; for it was not remission from punishment only that He gave us, but that from sins, and life also. As if any were not merely to free a man with a fever from his disease, but to give him also beauty, and strength, and rank; or again, were not to give one an hungered nourishment only, but were to put him in possession of great riches, and were to set him in the highest authority.

Chrysostom



The Holy Spirit Given on Pentecost

Gwen Wilson
Ridgefield, Washington

Dear Children,

As I begin this page, I so often wonder about the children who read this page, and more importantly, how all of you are doing. I surely do hope that you are doing just fine. If you're having a bad day for whatever reason, I hope that you will feel better soon. The Bible says in *1 Peter 5:7: Casting all your care upon him (JESUS); for he careth for you.* Jesus would like it if we would always tell Him our troubles and ask Him to help us through them. Jesus is never too tired to listen.

I WAS THINKING ABOUT THE events after Easter. Pentecost, the 50th day after Easter, was the first big event and it was a very important one.

After Jesus arose from the grave, He was alive just as He was before. He then spent 40 more days with His disciples, teaching them about God's kingdom and helping them understand the Scriptures.

I'm sure the disciples were very happy to have Jesus with them again, because after He died, they felt afraid and helpless. They were too used to Jesus being there for them and were having a hard time believing.

After the 40 days were over, Jesus gave His disciples some last instructions. One of the last is found in *Luke 24:49: And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry (stay) ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued (filled) with power from on high.* Jesus also told the disciples in *Acts 1:5: For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence (from now).*

After Jesus had said that, He led the disciples out as far as Bethany. He lifted up His hands and blessed the disciples and then He was lifted up to heaven.

Something interesting took place after Jesus was taken up into heaven. The disciples used to be twelve in number, but you remember that Judas took his life so now there were only eleven. There were Peter, James, John, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James (the son of Alphaeus), Simon Zelotes and another Judas (the brother of James). They needed someone to make them twelve again, in place of Judas the betrayer. It is recorded in one of the Psalms how Judas the betrayer would die and that another should take his place.

Two men, Joseph (Barsabas) Justus and Matthias, accompanied the disciples and Jesus from the time that Jesus was baptized by John until Jesus went to heaven. They were true followers and wanted to learn. These two were with the eleven and it was discussed that one should be chosen as a witness to the very happenings of the resurrection.

Acts 1:24-26: And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles. Have your parents explain "giving their lots," which was a way a voting.

The disciples then went to Jerusalem filled with joy and they preached about Jesus. They did not know what the power from on high was, but they waited as instructed. We read in *Acts 2:1-4: And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they (the disciples) were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues (tapering flame) like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues (languages), as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

That "power from on high" that Jesus promised in *Luke 24:49 (above)* was the Holy Spirit—God's power, given to us by God ONLY. God's Holy Spirit helps each of us to know right from wrong. It helps us to be strong when we tell unbelievers about God and Jesus. If we believe in Jesus, it's because the Holy Spirit is giving us that power to believe. The Holy Spirit is inside our hearts and is very close to us. It is truly a gift given freely to us. It's a beautiful thing. Thank God for it. I can write to you because of the Holy Spirit living in me!



Pentecost is the "day" that the disciples received the Holy Ghost. They were given the power to believe in Jesus without Him having to be there, and to go on preaching all they had learned from Jesus.

I pray that all of you who believe in Jesus will keep on doing just that, and know that He has a special place prepared for you up in heaven. Jesus loves you dearly. He loves each of us so much that He stretched out His hands on the cross and died. What a wonderful Savior and Friend we have. May God watch over each of you wherever you are and keep you in His care.

God's peace.

Ascension of Our Lord

Pastor Dennis Hannu
Wolf Lake, Minnesota

The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

Acts 1:1-11

FORTY DAYS AFTER Jesus' glorious resurrection, He ascended into heaven. During those forty days He showed to His disciples, by eating and drinking with them, that He was indeed fully alive. He also was teaching them of the things concerning the kingdom of God. It is not hard to see why the disciples would ask the question, "Lord, at this time are you going to restore again the kingdom to Israel?" Jesus' ascension changes the scope of their question. They are still thinking in terms of an earthly kingdom perhaps, but Jesus tells them to wait in Jerusalem until they are empowered with the Holy Spirit and then they will bear witness of Him in Jerusalem, in all Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth, quite literally the world. After telling them this, while they were looking at Him, He ascended up in to the sky and a cloud blocked their eyes from seeing Him.

The ascension of Jesus accomplishes the final act of redemption as He appears in the presence of God for us, as is shown in Hebrews 9:22-28: *And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the*

holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

Jesus' appearance in heaven is a victorious appearance, as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world brings the news into the heavenly realm that the battle is over and the victory is won. Everything is accomplished and the human race has been restored. They have been restored through the death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ. His blood has fully cleansed the heavenly sanctuary and has washed us completely clean. We, like the apostles of old, are simply to bear witness to this good news, what we refer to as the Gospel.



Ascension (1775) John Singleton Copley
Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

In light of this virus that is ravaging our world, physically and economically, this glorious news of the ascended Lord Jesus needs to be announced. The old things are passed away and everything has been made new. God has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ. The ascended Lord Jesus still reigns and is calling out to the world through His body (the Church), and through His Holy Word, the message of His accomplished work.

2 Corinthians 5:17-21: *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the*

world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Dear reader, this is for you! Jesus did this work for you! Look to Him today! Trust Him today! He is the same yesterday, today, and forever! He loves you! The circumstances of our world change nothing about our Lord Jesus Christ! We are just strangers in a foreign land passing through it with the most glorious news to tell.

God's peace.

The Sixth Commandment

Excerpts, The Large Catechism

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

These commandments now that follow are easily understood from the explanation of the preceding; for they are all to the effect that we be careful to avoid doing any kind of injury to our neighbor. But they are arranged in fine order. In the first place, they treat of his own person. Then they proceed to the person nearest him, or the closest possession next after his body, namely, his wife, who is one flesh and blood with him, so that we cannot inflict a higher injury upon him in any good that is his. Therefore it is explicitly forbidden here to bring any disgrace upon him in respect to his wife.

And it really aims at adultery, because among the Jews it was ordained and commanded that every one must be married. Therefore also the young were early provided for [married], so that the virgin state was held in small esteem, neither were public prostitution and lewdness tolerated (as now). Therefore adultery was the most common form of unchastity among them.

But because among us there is such a shameful mess and the very dregs of all vice and lewdness, this commandment is directed also against all manner of unchastity, whatever it may be called; and not only is the external act forbidden, but also every kind of cause, incitement, and means, so that the heart, the lips, and the whole body may be chaste and afford no opportunity, help, or persuasion to in chastity.

And not only this, but that we also make resistance, afford protection and rescue wherever there is danger and need; and again, that we give help and counsel, so as to maintain our neighbor's honor. For whenever you omit this when you could make resistance, or connive at it as if it did not concern you, you are as truly guilty as the one perpetrating the deed.

Thus, to state it in the briefest manner, there is required this much, that every one both live chastely himself and help his neighbor do the same, so that God by this commandment wishes to hedge round about and protect as with a rampart every spouse that no one trespass against them.

But since this commandment is aimed directly at the state of matrimony and gives occasion to speak of the same, you must well understand and mark, first, how gloriously God honors and extols this estate, inasmuch as by His commandment He both sanctions and guards it. He has sanctioned it in the Fourth Commandment: Honor thy father and thy mother; but here He has (as we said) hedged it about and protected it.

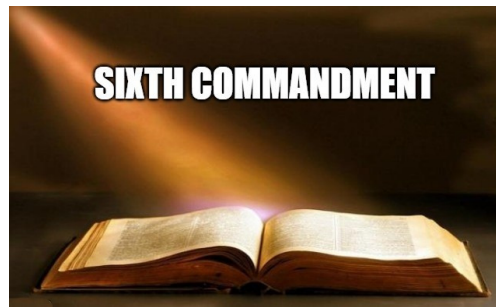
Therefore He also wishes us to honor it, and to maintain and conduct it as a divine and blessed estate; because, in the first place, He has instituted it before all others, and therefore created man and woman separately (as is evident), not for lewdness, but that they should legitimately live together, be fruitful, beget children, and nourish and train them to the honor of God.

Therefore God has also most richly blessed this estate above all others, and, in addition, has bestowed on it and

wrapped up in it everything in the world, to the end that this estate might be well and richly provided for. Married life is therefore no jest or presumption; but it is an excellent thing and a matter of divine seriousness. For it is of the highest importance to Him that persons be raised who may serve the world and promote the knowledge of God, godly living, and all virtues, to fight against wickedness and the devil.

Therefore I have always taught that this estate should not be despised nor held in disrepute, as is done by the blind world and our false ecclesiastics, but that it be regarded according to God's Word, by which it is adorned and sanctified, so that it is not only placed on an equality with other estates, but that it precedes and surpasses them all, whether they be that of emperor, princes, bishops, or whoever they please. For both ecclesiastical and civil estates must humble themselves and all be found in this estate, as we shall hear.

Therefore it is not a peculiar estate, but the most common and noblest estate, which pervades all Christendom, yea which extends through all the world.



Now, I speak of this in order that the young may be so guided that they conceive a liking for the married estate, and know that it is a blessed estate and pleasing to God. For in this way we might in the course of time bring it about that married life be restored to honor, and that there might be less of the filthy, dissolute, disorderly doings which now run

riot the world over in open prostitution and other shameful vices arising from disregard of married life.

Therefore it is the duty of parents and the government to see to it that our youth be brought up to discipline and respectability, and when they have come to years of maturity, to provide for them [to have them married] in the fear of God and honorably; He would not fail to add His blessing and grace, so that men would have joy and happiness from the same.

Let me now say in conclusion that this commandment demands not only that every one live chastely in thought, word, and deed in his condition, that is, especially in the estate of matrimony, but also that every one love and esteem the spouse given him by God. For where conjugal chastity is to be maintained, man and wife must by all means live together in love and harmony, that one may cherish the other from the heart and with entire fidelity. For that is one of the principal points which enkindle love and desire of chastity, so that, where this is found, chastity will follow as a matter of course without any command.

Therefore also St. Paul so diligently exhorts husband and wife to love and honor one another.

Here you have again a precious, yea, many and great good works, of which you can joyfully boast, against all ecclesiastical estates, chosen without God's Word and commandment. ~

God Is the Subject

Lois Matson
Yacolt, Washington

In our normal English language structure, the subject of the sentence is the one who is **acting**, who is **performing the action** of the verb. The object is the person or thing **being acted upon**, who **receives the action** of the verb. The subject is the actor, the object is the receiver.

Here's a simple example: **The boy threw the ball.** In this sentence, "boy" is the subject, and "ball" is the object. The boy did the action of throwing, and the ball was the object being thrown.

In the Gospel, God is the Subject, and we are the objects. God is the One who acts, and we sinners are the passive recipients of His good grace.

Here are some examples:

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

God is the Subject. God loved the world. God gave His Son. We didn't do anything to receive His gift of everlasting life or His salvation.

But **God**, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, **hath quickened** us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) **And hath raised** us up together, and **made us sit** together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come **he might shew** the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which **God hath before ordained** that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:4-10)

God is the Subject. He has made us alive with Christ, because of His great love for us, even when we were dead in sins. God has raised us up with Christ, seating us in heavenly places, so that in the coming ages He might show us more of the riches of His grace, because of His kindness to us. We were laying there, dead in sins, and we had no power to make ourselves live, or to seat ourselves with Christ. God has created us in Christ Jesus for good works, which He planned beforehand for us. The good works we do are not of our own selves.

Paul writes to his beloved son in the faith, Timothy, about God's wonderful work in us:

For **God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.** Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; **Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling**, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, **who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:** Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that **he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.** (2 Timothy 1:7-12)

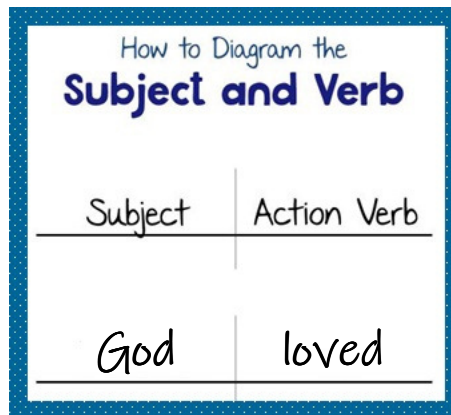
God is the Subject. He has not given us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power and love and a sound mind. He has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, because of His own purpose and grace, given to us in Christ Jesus even before the world was formed. This has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ in the flesh, who has abolished death (thanks be to God!) and has brought life and immortality to

light through His holy Gospel. In the Good News of the Gospel, we can see the Christ Light of eternal life and immortality spilling out for the whole of humankind. Paul had been appointed to preach and teach this Good News, and it brought him much suffering, but still Paul was persuaded that this Christ in Whom he believed was able to protect what was committed to him until the very Last Day.

The Gospel can be distorted to Law, because we want to **do something**

for our salvation. We want to be the subject, the one who acts. We may think that somehow we can earn our justification, or that somehow we can keep our sanctification.

Let us remember that God is the Author and the Finisher of our faith. God is the One who acts to save us, and we are the recipients of His good graces. ~



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Jesus Christ, and Him Crucified

21 March—Evening

*Johannes Stark; Tr. from Stark's Andachten Kirchentellinsfurth Edition, 1876; Tr. by Ed Haikio
Submitted by Ralph and Barbara Somero; New Ipswich, New Hampshire*

For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

1 Corinthians 2:2

LORD JESUS, I REJOICE in the redemption which You have wrought unto me with Thy death. You are Jesus, my Saviour; You are Christ, my Priest and my Lamb, the reconciliation for my sins. In my behalf were You condemned and slain, for me and in my stead crucified and died. Your fetters are my freedom, Your martyrdom brings me deliverance, Your death is my life. Sacrificed Lamb, write Thy wounds deep within my heart, so I may never forget Thee.

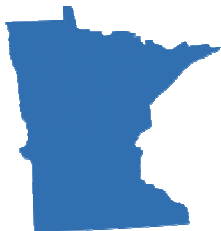
The spirit of vain men is filled with sinful thoughts, their hearts filled with deviation, and Thou comest not in their minds. But Thou, crucified Lamb, will never leave my heart. Your bloody visage will always remain before my eye and mind wherever I may go, remain, rest, and work. I desire to know of none else but Thee, for Thou art all things unto me: my joy, my desire, the rejoicing of my heart. Remain, Thou crucified, in my heart, for so is my soul recovered. Your blood cleanses my heart of the dominance of sin and its punishment. Under Your cross I am safe from all the attacks of Satan; there I receive new strength to sanctify Thee. May my heart and life be sacrificed to Your honor. I would desire that the old man be raised on Your cross with its lusts and desires, so that the new man may be born in just righteousness, and so live with Thee in incorruption. ~

He Lives Always!

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 7:25)

HE LIVES! In these two words alone there is comfort for the soul. He always lives! This third word makes the comfort even more glorious and more certain. However, the soul's comfort becomes complete when I read the entire sentence: *he ever liveth to make intercession for them*. The object of His life, His one great service in the heavenly tabernacle, is the service of intercession for me. He who has atoned for my great sin appeals to His sacrifice in my behalf every time a new sin would accuse me. He who loves me and understands me is my Brother and my Friend. He who always sees me and lovingly follows me every moment of the day makes intercession for me. And in this manner He prays even now, at this very moment. How marvelous! Then I am never forgotten, and never alone. I am always carried on the arms of prayer. And He who prays for me is my Brother as well as the Son of God. The arms that bear me are the everlasting arms.

Fredrik Wisloff



Modified Annual Convention

We are pleased to announce that the Spruce Grove congregation in Wolf Lake, Minnesota, will host a modified Annual Convention this summer with in-person delegate meetings and limited services. Meetings will be held on Friday, June 25, and services will be Saturday and Sunday, June 26-27, 2021. There will be an online option for delegate participation in the meetings and the services will be broadcast online.

Our desire is to return to normal in-person meetings and services, but due to space limitations and governmental health restrictions, we cannot yet hold a full convention.

Please check the ALCA website at www.apostoliclutheran.org for more details in the coming months, and please keep the Spruce Grove congregation in your prayers as they prepare for this event.

On behalf of the Central Board of the Apostolic Lutheran Church of America,

*Gary Bertram, Chairman
David Myllymaki, Secretary*