

# 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.**

October 2015

## The Fruit of Faith

Martin Luther

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us...*

**Romans 12:1-6**

**T**HIS EPISTLE LESSON TREATS NOT OF FAITH, but of the fruit of faith — love, unity, patience, self-denial, etc. Among this fruit, the apostle considers first the discipline of the body — the mortification of evil lusts. He handles the subject here in a manner wholly unlike his method in other epistles. In Galatians he speaks of crucifying the flesh with its lusts; in Hebrews and Colossians, of putting off the old man and mortifying the members on earth. Here he mentions presenting the body as a sacrifice; he dignifies it by the loftiest and most sacred terms. Why does he so?

First, by making the terms glorious, he would the more emphatically urge us to yield this fruit of faith. The whole world regards the priest's office — his service and his dignity — as representing the acme of nobility and exaltation; and so it truly does. Now, if one would be a priest and exalted before God, let him set about this work of offering up his body to God; in other words, let him be humble, let him be nothing in the eyes of the world.

I will let every man decide for himself the difference between the outward priesthood of dazzling character and the internal, spiritual priesthood. The first is confined to a very few individuals; the second, Christians commonly share. One was ordained of men, independently of the Word of God; the other was established through the Word, irrespective of human devices. In that, the skin is besmeared with material oil; in this, the heart is internally anointed with the Holy Spirit. That applauds and extols its works; this proclaims and magnifies the grace of God, and His glory. That does not offer up the body with its lusts, but rather fosters the evil desires of the flesh;

this sacrifices the body and mortifies its lusts. The former permits the offering up to itself of gold and property, of honor, of idleness and pleasure, and of all manner of lust on earth; the latter foregoes these things and accepts only the reverse of homage. That again sacrifices Christ in its awful perversions; this, satisfied with the atonement once made by Christ, offers up itself with Him and in Him, by making similar sacrifices. In fact, the two priesthoods accord about as well as Christ and Barabbas, as light and darkness, as God and the world. As little as smearing and shaving were factors in Christ's priesthood, so little will they thus procure for anyone the Christian priesthood. Yet Christ, with all His Christians, is priest. *Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. (Psalm 110:4)* The Christian



**Martin Luther posting his 95 theses in 1517.**  
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**Blessed Reformation Day**

**October 31, 2015**

priesthood will not admit of appointment. The priest is not made. He must be born a priest; must inherit his office. I refer to the new birth — the birth of water and the Spirit. Thus all Christians become priests, children of God and co-heirs with Christ the Most High Priest.

**M**EN UNIVERSALLY CONSIDER THE TITLE of priest glorious and honorable; it is acceptable to everyone. But the duties and the sacrifice of the office are rarely accepted. Men seem to be averse to these latter. The Christian priesthood costs life, property, honor, friends and all

worldly things. It cost Christ the same on the holy cross. No man readily chooses death instead of life, and accepts pain instead of pleasure, loss instead of gain, shame rather than honor, enemies rather than friends, according to the example Christ set for us on the cross. And further, all this is to be endured, not for profit to one's self, but for the benefit of his neighbor and for the honor and glory of God. For so Christ offered up His body. This priesthood is a glorious one. ~

## Is Christ Your All in All?

Billy Kyllonen

Submitted by Alvar Helmes; Battle Ground, Washington

**W**HILE STAYING WITH A VERY NICE FAMILY in Southern California, I went out for a morning jog. I knew there was a McDonald's nearby, so my plan was to jog there and eat breakfast, then jog back. I was about to take a \$5 bill, but I thought twice and decided I better take an extra dollar just in case. So I stuffed \$6 in my pocket and hit the road. When I got to McDonald's, I was surprised that my \$6 was not enough to purchase a breakfast meal! I was 54 cents short. What's the world coming to? Thankfully, the woman taking the order was a manager and she gave me the meal for \$6.

Many people are counting on this type of scenario to unfold when they are judged by God. We think that we have stored up enough good deeds to outweigh any wrong we've done and buy our ticket into heaven. Not only that, but for the most part, our intentions are generally good, even if the outcome was not. Surely, God understands that. And even if the scales don't tip our way, we can always appeal to God's goodness or His forgiveness to make up for that small area we are lacking.

A humanist will tell you that man is basically good and any problems that arise can be solved without religion. A Christian will say the opposite, that man is basically bad, but not only are we bad, we are completely bad and we are in desperate need of God's forgiveness. But many people fall somewhere in the middle. They think that they are basically good, but any problems that arise will be covered by God's goodness.

What does the Bible say?

First of all, *Psalm 24:3-4* asks the question, *Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart...* Do you have clean hands and a pure heart?

Well, we are told in *Romans 3:23* that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. I think anyone reading this is honest enough to admit that this is true. But Paul takes it even further in the same chapter when he says, *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. (Romans 3:10-12)* See that word "unprofitable?" That means we are worthless. Our good works amount to nothing.

As Isaiah says, *But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. (Isaiah 64:6)* Even our good deeds are like filthy rags? Yes. Even in our best, shining moments, our awesome deeds are tainted by impure motives. We don't have anything to brag about to a God who demands perfection.

Just take a look in the mirror of God's Law and ask yourself not just how many of His commands you have broken, but how often you have done so.

If you and I are really truthful with ourselves, and give ourselves an honest evaluation, we would realize that we don't just have a basically good track record with a handful or so of sins that we need Jesus to make up for. The real truth is that there is a massive mountain of sin between us and God, and we are desperately in need of a divine intervention to remove that mountain and make it possible for us to get to God.

**T**HAT'S WHAT JESUS DID AT THE CROSS. He wasn't just making up for a few screw-ups here and there. He was paying the bill in full for every last sin. His death was the substitute for yours. He paid it all with His own blood.

As a Christian, I don't think that I have to "do my best and let God do the rest." I trust that Jesus did it all, and I only do my best because I love Him and want to live a life that honors Him.

How about you? Is Christ your all in all, or is He just the helping hand that tips the scales for you?



*Golgotha* Englebert Fisen  
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# The Life of All Died on The Cross

Mark Sunnarborg  
Rhineland, Wisconsin

**A**S WE CONSIDER THE ONE WHO is the giver of life, we understand that Jesus is all that this life needs. Jesus died on the cross, was laid in the grave, was raised the third day and sits on the right hand of God. Because He lives, we also have life and this life is found only in Him. This life lives within His children, and the life we now have is not ours. It belongs to the One who is life Himself: Christ Jesus. *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)* What a wonderful day and time is ours as God by His grace grants us to live by faith, the faith of the One who died for us. Thanks be to our Father in heaven; hallowed be His name.

Father, I cannot thank You enough for You have placed within me great joy and a peace that I cannot explain. Thank You that You have placed this life within me and that I am willing to share it with others, for there is no shame in the life I now have in Christ Jesus. Father, help others find and know what it is to possess this life, for there is no greater joy than to know you have been granted life. This life is eternal, forever, never to end.

This life is just a beginning; remember it is as the first day of the rest of your life. Live today without any shame of who you are: crucified with Christ, raised with Christ, and an heir to a mansion more glorious than anything this world has to offer. Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Our hearts and lives should never stop praising God, for He alone has granted us life and this life is more abundant, full of grace and truth.

*He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. (Matthew 10:39)* We either live this life or this life has been stolen from us and we are living a life of deception.

After Adam and Eve ate that which God had forbidden them to eat, they lived a life of deception, deceived by Satan. This is recorded in *Genesis 3:4-6: And the serpent said unto the woman (Eve), Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one*

*wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.* Because of this Adam and Eve now lived a life of deception, fallen out of the grace of God, needing to be redeemed or cleansed from this disobedience. They could see that they were naked and were ashamed. Because of this deception, Adam and Eve made coverings of fig leaves to hide their nakedness.

As we look at life, it consists of one of two things: we walk in the truth or we are living a life of deception, a life that has been deceived. Jesus said: *The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. (John 10:10)* Jesus Himself came for this reason, that the life we now live would not be that of deception or a lie, but that this life would be complete in Him. *And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. (John 6:35)*

*1 Corinthians 1:18: For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.* The power of preaching the cross speaks of the blood that was shed to cleanse mankind from all unrighteousness. I pray this power reign in your life now and forever. Paul records this for all of us: *For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. (1 Corinthians 1:22-25)* Jesus is life. He is the power and wisdom of God revealed unto each of us.

Keep faith and a clean conscience as you look to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of your faith. You are washed and cleansed in His blood, shed for the remission of sins. Those who reject this living way are invited to become partakers of life so they too may have life more abundant.

Come to the fountain for cleansing. Wash your robe white in the blood that was shed for the remission of all your sins. Today is the day of grace; tomorrow it may be too late. If Jesus is calling, do not delay, but come. Come without money or price for Jesus gave Himself so you can have life. ~

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When the Word of God strikes the heart, it is like a thunderbolt which overthrows even the most strongly fortified place by its force... Saul hated the gospel with such an obstinate heart that he was like an immovable rock. Yet he is shattered by the hammer of the Word. For God kills and brings to life. He brings down to Sheol and raises up (1 Samuel 2:6).

Martin Luther

## Faith Comes By Hearing

*For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

Romans 10:12-17

# I Am Thankful...

Gwen Wilson  
Ridgefield, Washington

Dear Children,

**H**ELLO TO EACH OF YOU. I am hoping this finds you having a good day. In my part of the country it is starting into our fall season, when the leaves on the trees turn to pretty red and gold and orange. Even now they are falling off of the trees. The crickets are singing their night song which I love to hear, and birds are flying south for the winter. The children are going to back to school soon and our summer time days will get back into more of a routine.

It has been very hot and dry here and there have been many forest fires. There are many men and women working hard right now to put these fires out. It has been a hard time. God is sending some rain on our area even as I type. The rain falling right now is very light but is to come heavy tomorrow and for the next several days; there is to be a little each day. We are thankful for this rain.

I thought I would make a list of things I am thankful for and then you children can fill in the blanks with things you can think of that you are thankful for. We all have much to thank God for.

I am thankful first for God, and His wonderful creation

-for sending His Son Jesus

-for life

-for my faith

-for my family (husband, children and grandchildren)

-for ALL that I have been given for my needs to be taken care of

-for all the blessings God has poured on me even though I have not asked for them all

I could list so much more but that would use up the paper. I will leave some room for you.



-for \_\_\_\_\_

-for \_\_\_\_\_

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***It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High: To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night.***

***Psalm 92:1-2***

***Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.***

***Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities (sins); who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.***

***Psalm 103:1-5***

It is said that when an eagle is wounded or weary, it will fly up to a mountain top or to a very high tree and sit and wait for its strength to be new again.

God is so good to His people and He deserves to be praised all the day long for His loving care and ever so loving heart toward us. I pray that you children will remember to thank God for all that He has given you, not just today but every day. God bless you and keep you as you journey with Him. Remember that He LOVES you SO much.

*God's peace.*

# How Long, O Lord?

Henry Law

*How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? how long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?*

*Psalm 13:1-2*

**D**ISCIPLINE IS NEEDED IN THE school of grace, and therefore it is not withheld. A loving Father orders it—a loving hand applies it. The purport and the issue are increase of grace. Lurking sins are thus detected. Weakness in faith's fabric is repaired. Secret foes are dragged to light and slain. Prayer and dependence and matured experience gain power. Fruits of righteousness are ripened. A shaken tree takes deeper root.

To effect this, tokens of God's presence are withdrawn. The much-loved smile smiles not. The tender whispers are no longer heard. Precious communion fails to cheer. The sighing spirit mourns desertion. It is as a forsaken dwelling. No ray of love illumines the surrounding darkness. Fears whisper, God is for ever gone. Dreary days drag on their dreary length. In the morning there is the wail, "How long?" In the evening it is still, "How long?" The soul is much perplexed. Harassing doubts intrude. Questions arise. What is the purport? When will be the end?

Thus daily sorrow is the daily bread. Thus grief and heaviness pervade the day. The cry is often repeated, "How long? how long?" Affliction deepens because the enemy appears to triumph. It is his joy when saints are sad. He rears his head when they lie low; his cause is crowned when adversity fills their cup. This knowledge aggravates their misery. The cry continues, "How long! how long?" David is here. This is a path which his feet often trod. Each child of God is here. In this darkness they often walk. But above all, the Man of Sorrows is here too. There is no cup of anguish which His lips tasted not. These words anticipate the bitter cry, "My God, my God! why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

*Consider and hear me, O LORD my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death. (Psalm 13:3)*

In every state faith has its sure employ. In darkest night, amid the howling storm, in dreariest solitude, in racking pains, from the whale's belly, in the battlefield, when the foes rush with overwhelming might, when hope seems hopeless, when all remedy is fled, when heaven seems closed, in agonies of death, in jaws of hell, it prays. There is no state which excludes prayer. There is no place without an access to the mercy-seat. Faith never forgets, The Lord is my God. I have a property in Him. Thus it can ever cry, "Consider and hear me, O Lord my God." Relief and comfort are

implored. The present gloom seems as an instant death. A ray of love is sought to give reviving light. The smile of God's countenance is desired to keep the eyes from closing in dark death.

*Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him; and those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved. (Psalm 13:4)*

There is fear lest the enemy shall triumph, and the tottering cause of truth should fill the wicked with malicious joy. Thus David trembled; but his fears were visionary. Opposing foes could not detain him from the throne. Thus Satan seemed about to triumph when Jesus was dragged to trial and uplifted on the cross. Truth seemed about to fall and victory to crown hell's efforts. But how short the hope! The conquering Savior bursts detaining bonds. He rises omnipotent to vanquish all hell's arts and might. In Him His people live. In Him they will prevail. In Him they soon will sit on thrones of glory. In Him they soon will place victorious feet on Satan's neck. Therefore we will trust and not be afraid.

*But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation. (Psalm 13:5)*

God's mercy is sure ground of trust. It cannot fail. It is higher than the highest heavens. It extends throughout all space. Its one delight is to alleviate misery. Under its sheltering wings may we delightedly repose! Joy is ever ready to refresh the soul. But true joy does not grow in the field of earthly things. This fruit hangs not on carnal trees. It is not quaffed from goblets of wealth, and luxury, and worldly pleasures. It lives in heavenly clime. It feeds and feasts on God's salvation. Is it not joy to clasp this boon to the heart, and to know assuredly, By grace am I saved, through faith, and that not of myself; it is the gift of God! By grace am I saved, through the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, and the covering of His glorious righteousness. By grace am I saved, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

*I will sing unto the LORD, because he hath dealt bountifully with me. (Psalm 13:6)*

Joy is not silent. It lifts up the voice. It sends forth the incense of praise. It has a boundless theme. It tells of all God's dealings. They are infinite, even as God Himself. He gives until He can give no more. He spares not His only-begotten Son. He adds His Holy Spirit. Shall He not also freely give us all things? Let us now commence our endless song. Let us now strike the harp which never shall grow tuneless. Let us sing to the Lord, who has dealt bountifully with us. Help us, O God, the Holy Spirit! ~





# Why We Baptize Children

Beth Staudinger  
Leslieville, Alberta

**C**HILDREN SHOW US the perfect example of faith. Jesus Himself gives us that example. That is why we baptize children, because baptism belongs to believers and children are that perfect example of believers.

*And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones **which believe in me**, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. (Matthew 18:2-6)*

It is unbelief—and the sins that go with it—that separates us from God and will judge those who do not believe on the Last Day. Little children have no unbelief in their hearts, and we see in them the perfect example of faith.

*Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end; While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcases fell in the wilderness? And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. (Hebrews 3:10-19)*

We, as adults, who have our sins forgiven and have found our perfect rest in Christ by His cleansing blood are seen by God as perfect, even as all little children are, in whom there is no unbelief. *Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. (Hebrews 4:11)*

It was faith in Christ that saved those before the Great Flood upon the earth, before circumcision or baptism were given as covenants. It was faith that made Abraham acceptable to God, as it is written in *Galatians 3:6: Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.* God gave him the covenant of circumcision.

Salvation is not in the covenant, but by faith in God and the redemptive work of Christ. The covenant of baptism belongs to those who believe, as we see in the example of Philip and the eunuch. *As the Word relates: Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. (Acts 8:35-37)*

May we always remember that these little ones are the ones who set an example of faith to us older ones. May we also believe Jesus' own words that little children are all believers. Those babies who didn't have the opportunity to see the light of day in this world but died before birth would also be saved because there is no unbelief in their hearts either.

*For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book (book of life?) all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee. (Psalm 139:13-18)*

*In His peace.*



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Anders Sundqvist, Business Manager

# Adoption

Lois Matson  
Yacolt, Washington

*Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.*

Galatians 4:1-7



*Saint Joseph and the Christ Child* Guido Reni  
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**T**O ADOPT, ACCORDING to Merriam-Webster, is to take voluntarily (a child of other parents) as one's own child. To adopt in Apostle Paul's day, a father legally declared that someone else's child would from now on be treated and cared for as his own child, with rights of inheritance. Adoption was not breakable; the adopted child was forever a part of the family. A natural-born child could be disowned, but an adopted child could not. The father voluntarily took the child as his own, and this was in force to the end of life.

Enslaved by the Law and in bondage to sin, the children of Adam were under the curse of death. But before the world ever began, God in His mercy had a plan to buy His wayward creation out of slavery. And at the proper time, the plan was carried out: God sent His Son to redeem us; we would be adopted.

Our adoption process was a costly expenditure. Jesus, who was one with the Father, came to earth. The one and only perfect Son who had shared the glories of heaven

with the Father from eternity past took on our fleshly form that hungered, thirsted, grew weary. He was subject to the Law and fulfilled it to the letter. Though He was tempted to sin, He never fell. He was baptized to fulfill all righteousness, not because He needed to be washed, but because we did. He was despised and rejected of men, beaten and scorned, spit upon and mocked. Our sin was laid upon His innocent shoulders. Finally, He was forsaken of the Father as He became sin for us, this One who knew no sin. He carried His cross outside the city of Jerusalem and was put to death. Because He was innocent, though, Death could not hold Him. The third day came and with it, life, eternal life, for Him and for us! It was finished; the adoption was complete.

Because we've been adopted, we are now no longer slaves, but sons. God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, and we have that witness within, testifying that we are the children of God. His Spirit cries, "Abba!" His Spirit recognizes and knows our Father. His Spirit within us calls out, "O Father!" Because we've been adopted and are sons, we are heirs of God through Christ. And we groan inwardly, eagerly waiting for the redemption of our bodies.

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. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. (Romans 8:14-25) ~

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## God's Faithfulness to Us

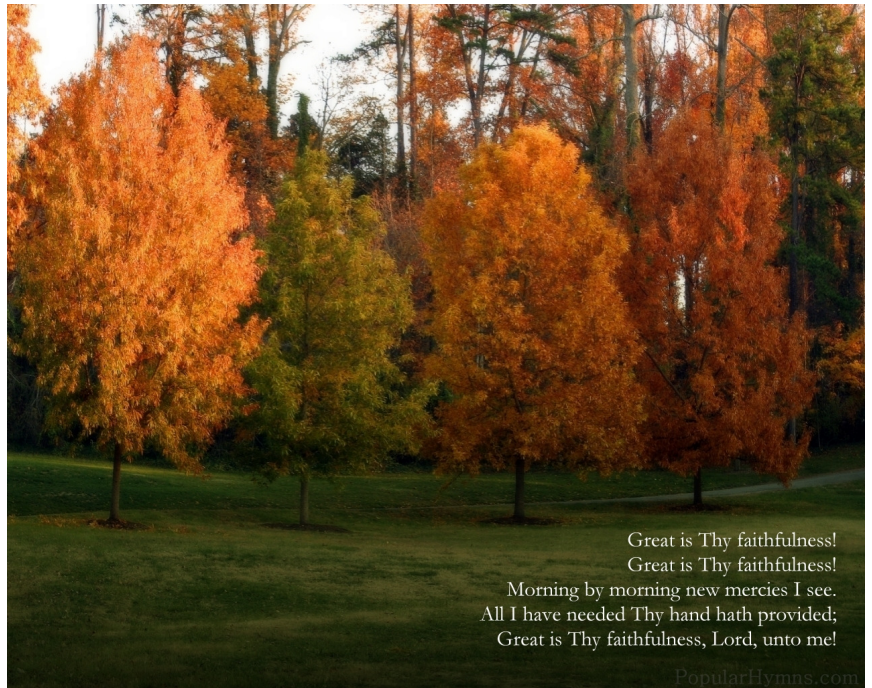
Dave Impola  
Everett, Washington

**L**IFE ON EARTH is but a brief journey. Is our focus in this life only on our faithfulness to God, in serving Him and doing His will? Or is our primary focus on God's faithfulness to us? Without God's faithfulness we are doomed to destruction. We are saved from this destruction only by the redemption of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. (Psalm 32:1-2)*

*Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. (2 Corinthians 1:21-22)*

*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)*



Great is Thy faithfulness!  
Great is Thy faithfulness!  
Morning by morning new mercies I see.  
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided;  
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

PopularHymns.com

Luther writes:

You have often heard me say that the Christian life has two dimensions: the first is faith, and the second is good works. A believer should live a devout life and always do what is right. But the first dimension of the Christian life – faith – is more essential. The second dimension – good works – is never as valuable as faith. People of the world, however adore good works. They regard them to be far higher than faith. Good works have always been valued more highly than faith. Of course, it's true that we should do good works and respect the importance of them. But we should be careful that we don't elevate good works to such an extent that faith in Christ becomes secondary. If we esteem them too highly, good works can become Christianity. Some people value good works so much that they overlook faith in Christ. They preach about and praise their own works instead of God's works. Faith should be first. After faith is preached, then we should teach good works. It is faith – without good works and prior to good works – that takes us to heaven. We come to God through faith alone.

The Lord speaks to us of His faithfulness in these promises: *...I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. (Hebrews 13:5) Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast... (Hebrews 6:19) Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. (James 1:17)*

May God continue to reveal His grace and faithfulness to us so that by the love of Christ we could remain faithful to Him. *For we walk by faith, not by sight. (2 Corinthians 5:7)*

May God's peace rest upon us all. ~