

# 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 2016

## Justified by Faith

Pastor Nicholas Kandoll  
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*After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.*

Genesis 15:1-6

**I** WAS BLESSED TO ATTEND the annual convention in Spartanburg, South Carolina. It was wonderful to see family and friends; the fellowship was truly amazing.

The theme for the convention was taken out of Proverbs 29:18: *Where there is no vision, the people perish.* It was taught that the vision isn't a vision that comes in a dream, but the vision is the message given to the prophet of God, who would then speak to the people. In short, the vision that keeps us from perishing is the Word of the Lord. It is God's Word that saves us.

In our text the Word of the Lord comes to Abram and tells him that his offspring will be as innumerable as the stars in the sky. Abraham believes God and this belief is counted to him as righteousness. This defies our human reasoning. The attitude that we must do something to be saved is ingrained in us all; the old Adam in us seeks to justify himself. In fact, because of this, many denominations have a formula for salvation. They say, "You have to do this, this, and this, in order to be saved."

But what was preached at our convention, and reiterated by several speakers, is that we are justified, i.e. made righteous, by faith alone in Christ Jesus. Paul tells us in Romans that "faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." This is why Abraham is often referred to as "Righteous Abraham" or "Faithful Abraham" or even "The Father of Faith." When the Word of the Lord came to him he believed it, and that faith was credited to him as righteousness. So it is for every one of us. We hear the Word of God and

it works saving faith in the heart of the sinner. David writes: "The Word of the Lord endures forever," and this is, in one sense, the essence of the Gospel. God's mercy is poured out through His Word which endures forever. And by faith in that Word, we too, by the grace of God, will endure forever as well. Praise be to God!

God's peace.

*Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.*

Galatians 3:6-9

*For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.*

Romans 4:13-25

# The Birds and the Flowers

Martin Luther

*Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.*

Matthew 6:26-29

**G**OD GIVES US THE WOOL that He grows on the sheep, but it is not at once cloth. We must labor and make it into cloth. When it is cloth, it does not at once become a coat; the tailor must first work with the cloth before it is a coat. So God does with all things. He cares for us, but we must toil and work. We have plenty of examples of this before our eyes, and God relates especially two here that should really make us blush with shame, namely, those of the birds and the lilies in the field.

Pointing to the birds He says: "Behold the birds of the heavens: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them." As if the Lord would say: You have never yet seen a bird with a sickle with which it harvested and gathered into barns; yea, the birds do not labor like we and still they are nourished. By this the Lord does not however teach that we are to be idle, but He tries by this example to take all anxiety from us. For a bird cannot do the work of a farmer as we do, yet it is not free from labor, but it does the work for which it was created, namely, it bears its young, feeds them and sings to our Lord God a little song for the privilege of doing this. Had God imposed more labor upon it, then it would have done more. Early in the morning it rises, sits upon a twig and sings a song it has learned, while it knows not where to obtain its food, and yet it is not worried as to where to get its breakfast. Later, when it is hungry, it flies away and seeks a grain of corn where God stored one away for it, of which it never thought while singing, when it had cause enough to be anxious about its food. Ay, shame on you now, that the little birds are more pious and believing than you; they are happy and sing with joy and know not whether they have anything to eat.

This parable is constantly taught to our great and burning shame, that we cannot do as much as the birds. A Christian should be ashamed before a little bird that knows an art it never acquired from a teacher. When in the spring of the year, while the birds sing the most beautifully, you say to one: How canst thou sing so joyfully, thou hast not yet any grain in thy barn? It would thus mock you. It is a powerful example and should truly give offense to us and stir us to trust God more than we do. Therefore He concludes with a penetrating passage, and asks: "Are ye not of much more value than they?" Is it not a great shame that the Lord makes and presents to us the birds as our teachers, that we should first learn from them? Shame on thee, thou loathsome, infamous unbelief! The birds do what they are required to do,

but we not. In Genesis 1:28 we have a command that we are to be lords over all God's creatures, and the birds are here our lords in teaching us wisdom. Away with godless unbelief! God makes us to be fools and places the birds before us to be our teachers and rule us, in that they only point out how we serve mammon and forsake the true and faithful God.

Now follows the other example of the flowers of the field by which the Lord encourages us not to worry about our raiment: "And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto the measure of his life? And why are ye anxious concerning raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin: yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith!" As if to say, your life is not yours, nor is your body. You cannot make it one cubit longer or shorter; neither be anxious as to how you are to clothe yourself. Behold the flowers of the field how they are adorned, neither do they anything to that end; they neither spin nor work, yet they are beautifully clothed.

By this illustration the Lord again does not wish to have us cease to sew and work, but we should labor, spin and sew, and not be overanxious and worry. The evil we have is our toil; will we in addition worry, then we do like the fools, for it is enough that each day has its own evil. It seems to me this is disdain that is commanded, that the flowers stand there and make us blush and become our teachers. Thank you, flowers, you, who are to be devoured by the cows! God has exalted you very highly that you become our masters and teachers. Shame, that this earth bears us! Is it an honor for us? I do not know. We must here

confess that the most insignificant flower that the cattle tread under foot should become our teacher, are we not fine people? I think so. Now Christ places alongside of this the richest and most powerful king, Solomon, who was clothed in the most costly manner in purple and gold, whose glory was not to be compared with that of the flowers, 1 Kings 10. Is it not remarkable that the adornment of the flowers in the field should be esteemed higher than all the precious stones, gold and silver?

However, we are so blind that we do not see what God designs thereby and what He means. The flower stands there that we should see it, it strikes us and says: If thou hadst the adornment of the whole world even then thou wouldst not be equal to me, who stand here and am not the least worried whence this adornment comes to me. I do not however concern myself about that, here I stand alone and do nothing and although thou art beautifully adorned, thou art still sickly and servest impotent mammon; I however am fresh and beautiful and serve the true and righteous God. Behold, what a loathsome, vicious thing is unbelief!

These are two fine and powerful examples of the birds and the lilies. The birds teach us a lesson as to our daily food; the flowers as to our raiment. And in the whole New Testa-





ment our shame is nowhere so disclosed and held to view, as just in this Gospel. But they are few who understand it. From these examples and parables the Lord now concludes: "Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Be not therefore anxious for the

morrow; for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

Now the sum of this Gospel is: Christians should not worry about what they are to eat; God provides for them before they think of their need, but they are to labor, that is commanded them. May God grant us grace that someday we may also even put it into practice! May the Gospel remain not only in our ears and on our tongues, but come into our hearts and break forth fresh into loving deeds! ~

## The 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm—Jehovah, the Good Shepherd

Paul Kretzmann

**A** PSALM OF DAVID, A HYMN written by David by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, an expression not only of David's personal faith and trust, but of the confidence which all believers have in the goodness, love and grace of God and of their Savior Jesus Christ, brought out all the more strongly since it is spoken in the name of each individual Christian.

V. 1. **The Lord**, Jehovah, the God of grace and faithfulness, the Redeemer of mankind, not only God the Father, Genesis 48:15; 49:24, but also God the Son, Jesus Christ in particular, **is my Shepherd**, to whom every believer stands in the relation of the most intimate fellowship, by whom and in whom he lives, through whose mighty power the life of his soul is sustained; **I shall not want**, being supplied with all gifts and blessings for this world and for the world to come.

V. 2. **He maketh me to lie down in green pastures**, where the meadows are lush with young, vigorous grass, where the best spiritual food is found in rich abundance; **He leadeth me beside the still waters**, where the refreshing streams of His grace flow softly and gently, not with the boisterous threats of the Law, but with the coaxing beauty of the Gospel. The Good Shepherd gives food and drink, rest and peace, the fullness of His gifts of love, both for this world and for the world to come.

V. 3. **He restoreth my soul**, reviving, quickening, relieving it, when the spirits droop with weariness on account of the misery of sin and the afflictions of this world; **He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness**, walking ahead after the manner of Oriental shepherds and choosing such roads as are straight and even, where there is no danger of stumbling and falling, even if they often seem strange to the sheep themselves, **for His name's sake**, to reveal and make known His faithfulness and mercy, not because of any merit or worthiness in us. These wonderful blessings of the Lord awaken and nourish the true confidence of faith in the hearts of the believers, as the next words show.

V. 4. **Yea**, even when conditions are not so favorable, **though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death**, where darkness and terror surround the believer, where the cry of wild beasts from the mountain caverns tends to take the confidence out of the heart of the sheep, when misfortune and trouble harass them, **I will fear no evil**, said in the proper defiance of faith, the believer trusting not in his own power, but in that of the upholding might of Jehovah's strength. **For Thou art with me**, even in the darkest night of

tribulation, even in the peril of death; **Thy rod and Thy staff**, the protecting and sustaining power of Jehovah's mercy in the means of grace, **they comfort me**, offering the right consolation in every trouble affecting both body and soul. That is the second great fact upon which the believer places his trust.

V. 5. **Thou preparest a table before me**, a joyful and rich festival meal, **in the presence of mine enemies**, not a bulwark or fort, for they were helpless in the presence of the almighty Shepherd and the full power of Jehovah is assured in the protection of His believers, the idea of full security in spite of all adversaries, of refreshing and satisfying joys after all afflictions. **Thous anointest my head with oil**, this act preceding the festival meal of old and assuring the guest of the most cordial welcome on the part of the host; **my cup runneth over**, with more than a full measure of spiritual blessings and joys.

V. 6. **Surely goodness and mercy**, the greatest good fortune in the possession of the grace of Jehovah, **shall follow me all the days of my life**, in everything pertaining to both body and soul the way of the Lord is always gracious and merciful, is always the best; **and I will dwell in the house of the Lord**, in the midst of the church of Jehovah, as a member of the congregation of saints, **forever**, here in time, in the Kingdom of Grace, and hereafter in eternity, in the Kingdom of Glory; for the home of everlasting glory awaits all true believers above, John 14:2; Revelation 21:1-5; It is theirs even now, by faith. ~



**In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.**

John 14:2

**And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.**

Revelation 21:1-5

## Original Sin:

*the tendency to sin inborn in all human beings, inherited from Adam in consequence of the Fall.*

After God's beautiful creation was finished, He put the man He had made in the Garden of Eden. They had a special close relationship. God would come and walk in the Garden with Adam. God gave Adam a command: "You can freely eat the fruit of every tree in the Garden, except the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The day you eat that fruit you will die." God created a woman for Adam so that he didn't have to be alone and they lived together in Eden.

Satan was a sly snake. He came to Eve and tempted her to disobey God's command. She listened to the devil and ate the forbidden fruit. She gave Adam some and he ate it. God's perfect world wasn't perfect any more! Sin had come into the world with one act of disobedience.



Because they had sinned, God fulfilled His promise. Adam and Eve died that day. They began to die *physically*, though their hearts continued to beat for many years, and they died *spiritually*. Their souls had been killed by their disobedience to God's command. This sin affected all of creation: the earth now brought forth thorns and thistles; death and disease permeated plants, animals and humans; and, worst of all, man's close relationship to God had been severed. God drove them out of the Garden and set an angel guard with a flaming sword to keep the way to the tree of life.

**E**VERY PERSON BORN SINCE THAT DAY has inherited Adam and Eve's sinful nature. Because of Adam's sin, this nature has been passed from parent to child through all the generations. This is *original sin*. God, through His Word and Spirit, breathes into man the breath of life and replaces his dead, stony heart with a heart of flesh. God gives people faith to believe in the completed work of Christ. Only by faith in Christ can a person be made righteous. Only through faith in Christ can a person be restored to a loving relationship with the Father.

Have you ever made an imprint of a coin, flower, or your hand, in clay or plaster? The clay bears the exact image of the object you used to imprint the clay. If you look at the imprint, you can tell what kind of coin was used, or you can see your handprint exactly as your hand really is.

### Jesus—the Exact Imprint of the Father

Long ago, God spoke through the prophets, but now He has spoken to us by His Son. Jesus is the radiance of the glory of God, and He is the exact imprint of God's nature. God has shown us exactly what He is like, and He has spoken to us, by His Son. We see who God is by seeing who Jesus is.

Once when Jesus was with His disciples, Philip asked Jesus to show them the Father and they would be satisfied. Jesus said to Philip, "Have I been with you so long, Philip, and you still don't know me? Whoever has seen Me has seen the Father! How can you say, 'Show us the Father?!' I am in the Father and the Father is in Me."

When we look at Jesus, we see that He was sinless and holy, loving and kind. He was gracious and merciful, honest and true. He healed the sick and raised the dead. He loved people with the deepest love. Jesus came to this earth for one purpose: to save mankind from sin. He was deeply grieved by sin. His life was given in service to others.

From these things, we can see who the Father is and what He is like. He is the same as His Son: sinless, holy, loving, kind. Gracious. Merciful. Honest and true. Heals the sick and raises the dead. Loves people with the deepest love. Saves mankind from sin. Is deeply grieved by sin. Gives Himself in service to others.

When we've seen Jesus, we've seen the Father.



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# How a Person Obtains Forgiveness of Sins

Matti Suo

Reprint from January 1977 Rauhan Sana; Translated by Carl Niemitalo

**T**HE HOLY BIBLE AND THE CHILDREN OF GOD, both the former and present with their innumerable experiences, testify that God hears even the prayer of His every child, and takes care of him.

So also the distressed cry of the awakened God hears and has heard, as with Cornelius, Saul and countless others. *For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the LORD behold the earth; To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death. (Psalm 102:19-20)* Numerous times the testimonials of the Holy Scriptures and also the countless experiences of the awakened assure that God hears the cries for help in their prayers. *The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. (Psalm 34:18)* *The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. (Psalm 145:18)*

But that which pertains to the justification of a sinner is a different matter again, where we must stay within the Holy Scriptures. Even though God hears the prayer of one on the outside, yet He does not justify him out there, but rather one must receive the kingdom of God through the Gospel. *Luke 18:17: Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein. Psalm 32:1: Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.*

Jesus says: *For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. (Matthew 18:20)* Where Jesus is, there is the kingdom, and the King in the middle, and the judgment seat where the highest judgment takes place, either binding or loosening. *Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (Matthew 18:18)* According to this guideline, the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit, performs the duty of a judge through the Word, on earth in His congregation. But here is that stone and rock of offense: *1 Peter 2:7: Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, in which the "saints" (self-righteous) and evildoers of the world are offended. Entry into that kingdom must be thru the door, the Lord Jesus. John 10:7: Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. The key by which the door is opened is the forgiveness of sin.*

**Matthew 18:19: Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.**

**Luke 24:47: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.**

**John 20:23: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.**

**Acts 13:38: Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.**

**2 Corinthians 2:10: To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ.**

**James 5:15: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.**

However, God in this manner justifies man on earth, which is even yet a mystery for awakened persons; that is, they are afraid of getting into a man-made doctrine if they receive the kingdom of God through the preached word of the forgiveness of sins, which nevertheless is the only God-arranged method, according to Scriptures.

Jesus says in *Matthew 18:20: For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* There is therefore a kingdom where the King Himself abides, in which kingdom the naked are covered with the righteousness of the King's own. The blind Pharisee knows nothing

about this kingdom and says he is just believing the Word. He will not come to Jesus to receive life. The Pharisee thinks he will get to heaven by searching the Bibles and claims to clarify things together with God alone at the foot of the tree; He will not come near to

Jesus who abides in His kingdom, and therefore he is not believing the Bibles even though he searches them.

God doesn't come down from heaven to preach to you, nor do the angels; neither does He send Lazarus (to preach Moses and the prophets to believe), which would yet remind you of the importance of the shortness of the time of grace, and the endlessness of eternity. Unless God, by His law from His kingdom awakens you, and by His Gospel reveals His love, neither will you believe even though the dead rise from the grave and angels from heaven would come to preach.

God has established His kingdom upon the earth, from which is preached repentance and the forgiveness of sins. That Gospel is to be believed and received in a childlike manner. *Matthew 6:33: But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.* To save a sinner, God doesn't change the method different from the Scriptures. The Bible says "Faith comes by hearing" (Romans 10:17), and it doesn't say that it comes by our reading. For if we would have become Christians by reading, then it would not have required Jesus to send His disciples saying, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. (Mark 16:15)* If a person would have been able by his own reading to guide himself to become a believer, then it would have only been necessary to send Bibles around the whole world, from which everyone could have read themselves to be saved.

Lord, open the eyes of the blind before the eventide and before the sun of grace sets. *And the doors shall be shut in the streets. (Ecclesiastes 12:4) ~*





# Spiritual Plagiarism

Charles Korhonen  
Tapiola, Michigan

*Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that steal my words every one from his neighbour.*

**Jeremiah 23:30**

**W**EBSTER'S DICTIONARY DESCRIBES "PLAGIARIZE" AS stealing ideas or words of another and passing them off as one's own. God warns against such action, especially when it comes to teaching His Word.

Jeremiah speaks about false prophets, those who are supposed to spiritually feed the people but who, instead, cause division and harm. *Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD. (Jeremiah 23:2)* This wickedness is not only found in the world at large but, sadly, in the living church itself! *For both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the LORD. (Jeremiah 23:11)*

How does this wickedness creep into our churches and why cannot the false prophets themselves or the people who follow them detect this apostasy? The prophet Isaiah points out that some people, who once began in the truth, become dissatisfied with God's Word and begin to search for alternatives: *...Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits. (Isaiah 30:10)* It is much like the situation when the Israelites became dissatisfied with the heavenly manna that God freely provided to them daily on their journey toward the Promised Land. Essentially, dissatisfied people will become so hard of hearing that they will demand that their preachers tell lies that they cannot detect. *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears. (2 Timothy 4:3)*

The prophets, on the other hand, who also began in the truth, begin to search for deeper understandings and more revelation to avoid losing souls to unbelief. Certainly, to the mind this seems to be the correct approach, one filled with good and admirable intentions. However, as our text shows, such prophets blindly spend much of their time studying the teachings of others subsuming their words and ideas into their own faith and believing them to be directly from God to them. Jeremiah warns that this approach to teaching the Word of God will come to naught, *Wherefore their way shall be unto them as slippery ways in the darkness: they shall be driven on, and fall therein: for I will bring evil upon them, even the year of their visitation, saith the LORD. (Jeremiah 23:12)* Clearly, had they stood fast in the Word of God and not included the words of others, souls would truly have been saved. *But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings. (Jeremiah 23:22)*

The apostle Paul provides clarity to all preachers: *I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. (2 Timothy 4:1-2)* In similar manner, the apostle John gives guidance to all listeners: *Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. (1 John 4:1-4)* Following the advice of Paul and John will limit the growth of false prophets and reduce the number of individuals who fall away from living faith because all will be focused on the true Word of God, the Bible. ~

***My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.***

**James 1:2-6**

**D**EAR LORD, LET ME LIVE IN THE PRESENT, not the past. Let me focus on my blessings, not my sorrows. Give me the wisdom to be thankful for the gifts that I do have, and not bitter about the things that I don't have. Let me accept what was, let me give thanks for what is, and let me have faith in what most surely will be: the promise of eternal life with You. Amen.

Dr. C. Freeman

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Anders Sundqvist, Business Manager

# Where Are You?

Lois Matson  
Yacolt, Washington

**T**HE GARDEN IS BEAUTIFUL, but broken. Two people hide among the trees, listening to the footsteps of the LORD God as He walks about in the cool of the day.

The Voice calls to Adam:

**“Where are you?”**

After breaking the command of the LORD with a single bite, the eyes of our first parents are opened and they realize they are naked. And, for the very first time, they are ashamed. They gather fig leaves and sew frantically, scrambling to cover their nakedness with make-shift garments. That forbidden fruit, though.

They hear the Voice of their Creator:

**“Where are you?”**

I’m sure the heaviness weighs on their hearts. Their regret is deep and their sorrow great. If they could, they’d like to go back and change things, make different choices.

You know, and I know—and Adam and Eve knew—that the omniscient LORD knows where they are. Still He calls aloud to Adam. The LORD God wants His children to HEAR His voice, to acknowledge His presence, to submit to His sovereign parenthood.

The Voice of the Parent echoes among the trees:

**“Where ARE you?”**

And Adam answers, “I heard You in the Garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid.”

The LORD questions further, “Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat the fruit which I commanded you not to eat?”

Adam says, “But the woman you gave me...!”

And Eve says, “But the serpent...!”

You and I know—and Adam and Eve knew—that God knows the whole sordid story. God knows the serpent has deceived His children regarding the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God never intended His children to know evil, only good. But the liar was beguiling, the fruit looked yummy and the desire to be as gods was a powerful inducement, and the Fall was complete.



If you’re a parent, you may have witnessed the phenomenon of children trying to escape the consequences of sin. They want to hide their guilt, escape their punishment and avoid disappointing you. They may be angry that you found their error, or they may deflect the blame to another. They might be very sorry and wish they could go back and do things differently.

We try these devices with our heavenly Parent. When sinners hear the Voice of the sovereign LORD of the universe, our guilt presses down. We desperately sew fig leaf garments of our own works, trying to cover the shame of our nakedness. We hide among the trees, denying that we’ve broken God’s eternal Law. We pretend we know nothing of the forbidden fruit. We point fingers at others, hoping to deflect the blame. We are angry at God for finding us in our guilt, for holding us to a standard that we can never reach. We have great sorrow over our sin.

Thanks be to God for His mercy and His great love! He has provided salvation full and free to His rebellious children. In spilling the blood of His own Son, the Father atoned for the sin debt of the world. The Creator poured out His wrath against His disobedient children on His obedient Child, and His obedient Child drank that cup to the last drop.

*But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.*

Romans 5:8-11

*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 3:16-27

The Creator still calls down through the ages to those who would hide from Him:

**“Where are you?”**

The LORD still seeks His disobedient children. He still desires that all people would be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, through faith in the *one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.* (1 Timothy 2:5-6) Trust Him. Repent and believe the Gospel. ~

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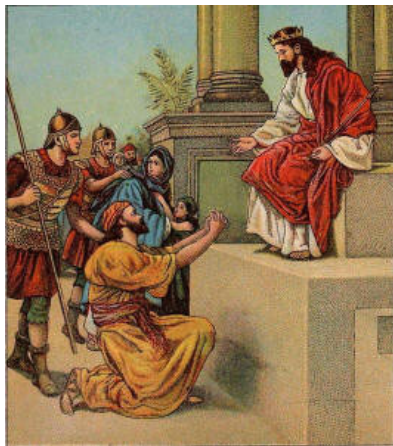
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## The God of Infinite Mercy

Matthew Henry

*Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.*

Matthew 18:23-27



**T**HE GOD OF INFINITE MERCY is very ready, out of pure compassion, to forgive the sins of those that humble themselves before Him (v. 27). The lord of that servant, when he might justly have ruined him, mercifully released him; and, since he could not be satisfied by the payment of the debt, he would be glorified by the pardon of it. The servant's prayer was, Have patience with me; the master's grant is a discharge in full. The pardon of sin is owing to the mercy of God, to His tender mercy (Luke 1:77-78); He was moved with compassion. God's reasons of mercy are fetched from within Himself; He has mercy because He will have mercy. God looked with pity on mankind in general, because miserable, and sent His Son to be a Surety for them; he looks with pity on particular penitents, because sensible of their misery (their hearts broken and contrite), and accepts them in the Beloved. ~

*And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*

**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 2:1-10

## In the Image of God

**T**RUTH IS LOOKED FOR IN GOD'S IMAGE, not vanity. By the love of the truth then be that image, after which we were created, engraven anew, and His Own tribute rendered to our Caesar. For so ye have heard from the Lord's answer, when the Jews tempted Him, as He said, "Why tempt ye Me, ye hypocrites; show Me the tribute money," that is, the impress and superscription of the image. Show me what ye pay, what ye get ready, what is exacted of you. And "they showed Him a denarius;" and "He asked whose image and superscription it had." They answered, "Caesar's." So Caesar looks for his own image. It is not Caesar's will that what he ordered to be made should be lost to him, and it is not surely God's will that what He hath made should be lost to Him. Caesar, my brethren, did not make the money; the masters of the mint make it. The workmen have their orders; he issues his commands to his ministers. His image was stamped upon the money, Caesar's image. And yet he requires what others have stamped. He puts it in his treasures; he will not have it refused him. Christ's coin is man. In him is Christ's image, in him Christ's Name, Christ's gifts, Christ's rules of duty.



St Augustine