

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.

September 2019

The Spirit and the Flesh

Martin Luther

THIS LETTER [ROMANS] IS TRULY the most important piece in the New Testament. It is purest Gospel. It is well worth a Christian's while not only to memorize it word for word but also to occupy himself with it daily, as though it were the daily bread of the soul. It is impossible to read or to meditate on this letter too much or too well. The more one deals with it, the more precious it becomes and the better it tastes. Therefore I want to carry out my service and, with this preface, provide an introduction to the letter, insofar as God gives me the ability, so that every one can gain the fullest possible understanding of it. Up to now it has been darkened by glosses [explanatory notes and comments which accompany a text] and by many a useless comment, but **it is in itself a bright light, almost bright enough to illumine the entire Scripture...**



In chapter 5, St. Paul comes to the fruits and works of faith, namely: joy, peace, love for God and for all people; in addition: assurance, steadfastness, confidence, courage, and hope in sorrow and suffering. All of these follow where faith is genuine, because of the overflowing good will that God has shown in Christ: He had Him die for us before we could ask Him for it, yes, even while we were still His enemies. Thus we have established that faith, without any good works, makes just. It does not follow from that, however, that we should not do good works; rather it means that morally upright works do not remain lacking. About such works the "works-holy" people know nothing; they invent for themselves their own works in which are neither peace nor joy nor assurance nor love nor hope nor steadfastness nor any kind of genuine Christian works or faith.

Next St. Paul makes a digression, a pleasant little side-trip, and relates where both sin and justice, death and life come from. He opposes these two: Adam and Christ. What he wants to say is that Christ, a second Adam, had to come in order to make us heirs of His justice through a new spiritual birth in faith, just as the old Adam made us heirs of sin through the old fleshy birth.

St. Paul proves, by this reasoning, that a person cannot help himself by his works to get from sin to justice any more than he can prevent his own physical birth. St. Paul also proves that the divine law, which should have been well-suited, if anything was, for helping people to obtain justice, not only was no help at all when it did come, but it even increased sin. Evil human nature, consequently, becomes more hostile to it; the more the law forbids it to indulge its own desires, the more it wants to. Thus the law makes Christ all the more necessary and demands more grace to help human nature.

In chapter 6, St. Paul takes up the special work of faith, the struggle which the spirit wages against the flesh to kill off those sins and desires that remain after a person has been made just. He teaches us that faith doesn't so free us from sin that we can be idle, lazy and self-assured, as though there were no more sin in us. Sin is there, but, because of faith that struggles against it, God does not reckon sin as deserving damnation. Therefore we have in our own selves a lifetime of work cut out for us; we have to tame our body, kill its lusts, force its members to obey the spirit and not the lusts. We must do this so that we may conform to the death and resurrection of Christ and complete our Baptism, which signifies a death to sin and a new life of grace. Our aim is to be completely clean from sin and then to rise bodily with Christ and live forever.

St. Paul says that we can accomplish all this because we are in grace and not in the law. He explains that to be "outside the law" is not the same as having no law and being able to do what you please. No, being "under the law" means living without grace, surrounded by the works of the law. Then surely sin reigns by means of the law, since no one is naturally well-disposed toward the law. That very condition, however, is the greatest sin. But grace makes the law lovable to us, so there is then no sin any more, and the law is no longer against us but one with us.

This is true freedom from sin and from the law; St. Paul writes about this for the rest of the chapter. He says it is a freedom only to do good with eagerness and to live a good life without the coercion of the law. This freedom is, therefore, a spiritual freedom which does not suspend the

law but which supplies what the law demands, namely eagerness and love. These silence the law so that it has no further cause to drive people on and make demands of them. It's as though you owed something to a moneylender and couldn't pay him. You could be rid of him in one of two ways: either he would take nothing from you and would tear up his account book, or a pious man would pay for you and give you what you needed to satisfy your debt. That's exactly how Christ freed us from the law. Therefore our freedom is not a wild, fleshy freedom that has no obligation to do anything. On the contrary, it is a freedom that does a great deal, indeed everything, yet is free of the law's demands and debts.

In chapter 7, St. Paul confirms the foregoing by an analogy drawn from married life. When a man dies, the wife is free; the one is free and clear of the other. It is not the case that the woman may not or should not marry another man; rather she is now for the first time free to marry someone else. She could not do this before she was free of her first husband. In the same way, our conscience is bound to the law so long as our condition is that of the sinful old man. But when the old man is killed by the spirit, then the conscience is free, and conscience and law are quit of each other. Not that conscience should now do nothing; rather, it should now for the first time truly cling to its second husband, Christ, and bring forth the fruit of life.

Next St. Paul sketches further the nature of sin and the law. It is the law that makes sin really active and powerful, because the old man gets more and more hostile to the law since he can't pay the debt demanded by the law. Sin is his very nature; of himself he can't do otherwise. And so the law is his death and torture. Now the law is not itself evil; it is our evil nature that cannot tolerate that the good law should demand good from it. It's like the case of a sick person, who cannot tolerate that you demand that he run and jump around and do other things that a healthy person does.

St. Paul concludes here that, if we understand the law properly and comprehend it in the best possible way, then we will see that its sole function is to remind us of our sins, to kill us by our sins, and to make us deserving of eternal wrath. Conscience learns and experiences all this in detail when it comes face to face with the law. It follows, then, that we must have something else, over and above the law, which can make a person virtuous and cause him to be saved. Those, however, who do not understand the law rightly are blind; they go their way boldly and think they are satisfying the law with works. They don't know how much the law demands, namely, a free, willing, eager heart. That is the reason that they don't see Moses rightly before their eyes. [In both Jewish and Christian teaching, Moses was commonly held to be the author of the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. Cf. the involved imagery of Moses' face and the veil over it in 2 Corinthians 3:7-18.] For them he is covered and concealed by the veil.

Then St. Paul shows how spirit and flesh struggle with each other in one person. He gives himself as an example, so that we may learn how to kill sin in ourselves. He gives both spirit and flesh the name "law," so that, just as it is in the nature of divine law to drive a person on and make demands of him, so too the flesh drives and demands and rages against the spirit and wants to have its own way. Likewise the spirit drives and demands against the flesh and wants to have its own way. This feud lasts in us for as long as we live, in one person more, in another less, depending on whether spirit or flesh is stronger. Yet the whole human being is both: spirit and flesh. The human being fights with himself until he becomes completely spiritual.

In chapter 8, St. Paul comforts fighters such as these and tells them that this flesh will not bring them condemnation. He goes on to show what the nature of flesh and spirit are. Spirit, he says, comes from Christ, who has given us His Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit makes us spiritual and restrains the flesh. The Holy Spirit assures us that we are God's children no matter how furiously sin may rage within us, so long as we follow the Spirit and struggle against sin in order to kill it. Because nothing is so effective in deadening the flesh as the cross and suffering, Paul comforts us in our suffering. He says that the Spirit, [cf. previous note about the meaning of "spirit"] love and all creatures will stand by us; the Spirit in us groans and all creatures long with us that we be freed from the flesh and from sin. Thus we see that these three chapters, 6, 7 and 8, all deal with the one work of faith, which is to kill the old Adam and to constrain the flesh...



We find in this letter, then, the richest possible teaching about what a Christian should know: the meaning of law, Gospel, sin, punishment, grace, faith, justice, Christ, God, good works, love, hope and the cross. We learn how we are to act toward everyone, toward the virtuous and sinful, toward the

strong and the weak, friend and foe, and toward ourselves. Paul bases everything firmly on Scripture and proves his points with examples from his own experience and from the Prophets, so that nothing more could be desired. Therefore it seems that St. Paul, in writing this letter, wanted to compose a summary of the whole of Christian and evangelical teaching which would also be an introduction to the whole Old Testament. Without doubt, whoever takes this letter to heart possesses the light and power of the Old Testament. Therefore each and every Christian should make this letter the habitual and constant object of his study. God grant us His grace to do so. Amen.

Preface to the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans, Excerpts

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On My Heart Imprint Thine Image

On my heart imprint Thine image, Blessed Jesus, King of Grace,
That life's riches, cares, and pleasures Have no power Thee to efface.

This the superscription be: Jesus, crucified for me,
Is my Life, my hope's Foundation, And my Glory and Salvation.

Thomas Hansen Kingo, 1634-1703

Three Broken Ladders

Pastor Bryan Wolfmueller



REMEMBER THE TOWER OF BABEL, humanity coming together to build a tower up to heaven? The project continues. Our sinful flesh is constantly working and striving up into heaven.

Lutheran theologian Adolph Koberle talks about these attempts of man to ascend to heaven as the three ladders. These three ladders are moralism, mysticism, and speculation.

The first ladder is **moralism**. Moralism is the ladder of the will. The moralist tries to get to heaven by works, efforts and the living of the good life. Human pride often thinks that it has

climbed the ladder of moralism into heaven. Time after time the question, "Why will you be in heaven?" is answered by the ladder of moralism. "I've lived a good life, I've been a good person." This is perhaps what most people think of religion, and even of the church, that the Christian life is trying to be good enough for God. Lord have mercy! Good enough for God! No, the ladder of moralism is not high enough to reach heaven. The top of that ladder will only reach the peak of pride or the clouds of despair. No, no one is saved by ascending the ladder of moralism.

The second ladder is **mysticism**. Mysticism is the ladder of emotions. The mystic thinks that heaven can be reached by an emotional experience. If we sing the song enough times, if we sit in profound silence, if we discipline our soul, we can feel God, experience God, somehow climb the ladder of the emotions into the bliss of heaven. But this ladder, like the ladder of moralism, is woefully short. Searching the depths of the human soul for the flower of divinity, it finds instead the horror and the depth of sin clinging not just to our flesh but to our very soul. Mysticism, if it is honest, finds that we are sinners, and that we cannot change that on our own. Mysticism, if it is not honest, becomes inflated with its idolatrous pride that thinks "God lives in me." No one is saved by ascending the ladder of mysticism.

The third ladder is **speculation**, or rationalism. Speculation is the ladder of the mind. This ladder attempts to climb into heaven by obtaining perfect knowledge, as if salvation is a matter of knowing about God. But what do we know of God that He has not told us? So inquiry into the nature of God apart for His Word is like looking into deep darkness, and the ladder of the mind tumbles into this despair, often into the prideful despair of atheism and unbelief. No, no one is saved by ascending the ladder of speculation.

Koberle summarizes the three ladders and their results: "Moralism, mysticism, speculation, these are the three ladders on which men continually seek to climb up to God, with a persistent purpose that it seems nothing can check; a storming of heaven that is just as pathetic in its unceasing efforts as it is in its final futility." [*The Quest for Holiness*, 2]

Our sinful flesh is doomed. It cannot escape the idea that it can earn and deserve something from God, but, at the same time, it can never accomplish any work that actually does earn or deserve God's favor. These ladders are like treadmills,

they occupy us, but don't get us anywhere, and, in fact, they will eventually kill us. There's irony in there, that the tools we think are saving us are the instruments of our own destruction. Salvation is not the result of man's efforts.

Salvation is the gift of God. We are saved not because we've gotten up to heaven, but because Jesus has come down to us. We are saved not because we've climbed a man-made ladder into heaven, but because Jesus was lifted off the earth on a cross. Our salvation is not the result of our doing, feeling or thinking, it is the result of Jesus' suffering, dying and rising.

Christianity is not about man climbing up to God. The exact opposite is true. Christianity is about God coming down to man, coming to our weakness, coming to our sin, coming to our punishment and death, to take our place under the wrath of God so that we might have life eternal.

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the wrath of God so that we might have life eternal.***

With this understand of the three broken ladders we can diagnose the false teaching that we see all around us. When, for example, we hear a preacher telling us that we have to do something to be saved, we can say, "That's the ladder of moralism. That's wrong." When we see a church trying to get their members wrapped up in an ecstatic emotional experience, we can say, "That's the ladder of mysticism, I'd better stay away." When we read that science has proven that God does not exist, we can say, "That's rationalism. No one is saved that way."

A couple of years ago I was sitting with Mohammed, the President of the Colorado Muslim Association. He wanted to talk about how Islam and Christianity were very similar, how we both believe in a creator, in being good, etc. I, though, was thinking about law and Gospel, and the three ladders.

"Mohammed," I said, "I think Christianity and Islam are the exact opposite."

"How so?"

"Well," I continued, "You say that the whole universe and everything in it exists to serve Allah, right?"

"Yes, that's true."

"Well the Bible teaches and we Christians believe that God serves us, died for us, so that we might have life." (You can see how I'm thinking about the three ladders, right. I continued...) "Jesus said, 'I came not to be served, but to serve, and to give my life for many.'"

Mohammed looked at me for a moment, and then said (I'll never forget this), "Yeah, that's different."

Indeed! The Gospel is totally different from every man-made religion. It is the good news that Jesus has done everything for our life and salvation. Let us, then, jump down off the ladders we are tempted to climb, and rejoice that Jesus has come down to us, to serve us with His mercy and forgiveness and give to us eternal life. Amen.

Seven Things the Lord Hates

Gwen Wilson
Ridgefield, Washington

Dear Children,

Hello to each of you. I pray all is well with you and that you are having a good day. I was pondering what to write, and thinking that so many things are not teachings from the Lord and turn people's minds from the truth. This is something that we want to guard our hearts from and be in prayer to God to keep our hearts and minds on HIS truths. Let's look at a short passage from Proverbs 6:16-22.

These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination (a thing that causes disgust or hatred) unto him:

1. A proud look

This person thinks their way is better than God's way. This heart will be full of themselves and not willing to follow God.

We must pray to recognize pride that is becoming very unhealthy in our lives and pray to be delivered from it. We will have to do this again and again as we have to fight against our flesh.

Proverbs 8:13: *The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth (a bad habit of disobedience and being disagreeable), do I hate.*

2. A lying tongue

I think we can all say we know what this is and that we have told a lie or two in our life. Some people live their lives telling lies, things that are NOT true but sound good. Lying can be such a trap. When one lie is told and people believe the lie, the liar is easily led to tell another. Soon a bad habit is formed.

The devil is the father of lies. He told Adam and Eve that they would not die if they ate of the tree in the middle of the Garden, but that their eyes would be opened to know good from evil.

Colossians 3:9-10: *Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds (repented); And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him (God) that created him.*

So many people out in the world are telling lies and I pray that the Lord keeps each one of you children from believing them. I pray that you stand strong for TRUTH!

3. Hands that shed innocent blood

The devil is totally behind any of the innocent who die at the hands of cruel men. Oh, how God hates this. The devil is all wicked; there can be no good found in him at all.

There is hope for those who think they are doing the right thing in killing. The devil has deceived them. Do you remember Saul who watched as Stephen was put to death by throwing stones at him? Saul thought he was doing the Lord's work by killing Christians and putting them in jail. God brought Saul to repentance and made him a new man, and gave him a new heart. God changed his name to Paul and made him a preacher. This beautiful change was God's will and He can do this with anyone He chooses.

4. A heart that devises wicked imaginations

This is a mind and heart that thinks of wicked imaginations or plans. This is sin.

Remember King Herod who made an evil plan to kill baby Jesus. He tried to trick the wise men into thinking that he was

interested in worshiping the Messiah. We know he was NOT but was thinking crafty thoughts that were only of the devil.

5. Feet that are swift in running into mischief

Some people pursue a life of sinful doings and even make a living out of it. They think only of that which is wrong, and are quick to find more mischief than to turn away from it to do good.

We are all sinners and are guilty of sinning. Over and over we stumble along the way and need God to save us from slipping. I pray that we who call ourselves Christians would ask God to give us clear minds and steady hearts to turn and run away from mischief and sin.

6. A false witness that speaks lies

This is simply one who speaks a false testimony against another. This action not only brings great harm to the liar but also to the one who is being lied about falsely. God hates this for sure.

7. He that sows discord among the brethren

This is making trouble and using wicked means to ruin relationships among our loved ones, our church families, among friends, and making people disagree or be mean to each other. Oh, how God hates this.

We must pray to be peaceful, obedient, loving servants to God first and to one another on this walk of faith.

The seven things that God hates should shake us in our shoes and cause our hearts to quake. I pray that we would humble ourselves before God in prayer and plead for His leading hand to keep us on the straight and narrow path that leads to Him.



Proverbs 6:20-22: *My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.* Verses 20-22 are so comforting. Oh, that we as God's children would seek to keep the commandments of God.

Verse 21 talks of binding and tying. That means to tie or fasten tightly. I like that picture. It doesn't mean to sloppily or lazily keep God's commandments. We are so prone to wander and keep the commandments only some of the way. Tying them about the throat is keeping the words we speak of good quality. Let no evil words come from your lips.

Verse 22 is just so beautiful. Wherever we go, God's Word is capable of leading us. Even when we sleep, it keeps us. God never sleeps and is ever watching. When we wake, the Word will speak to us. It will be in your mind to rise with a thankful heart and desire to serve God and His Son Jesus another day.

We must take one day at a time and continually ask God to lead us in HIS will, not our own. I pray that you will not be weakened by the tricks and lies of Satan but will be ever stronger day by day in serving our Lord. Also that you will *put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles (tricks) of the devil.* (Ephesians 6:1) ~

Ye Shall Be Free Indeed

Pastor Nicholas Kandoll
New York Mills, Minnesota

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

John 8:31-36

THERE WAS A BANNER AT THE CONVENTION last summer [in Tri-Cities Washington] with the theme verse on it that read "Amazing Grace" and had verse 36 from our text on it. *If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*

Grace is defined as God's unmerited favor. The Scriptures tell us that He saves us by this grace through faith. In other words, God saves us by giving us faith without our merit or worthiness. The reason grace is so amazing is because without it we would be doomed.

This is something that the Pharisees could not seem to wrap their minds around. They thought they were acceptable to God because of their relationship to Abraham. They did not think that they needed the forgiveness that Jesus offered. They did not understand that they were slaves to sin. They were blind to their sin and they were also blind to the grace of God.

We cannot free ourselves from the bondage of sin and death. We can only be set free by Jesus! This was brought out over and over again at the convention. It was a blessed time because the proclamation of Jesus Christ and His victory over sin, death, and the grave rang out! There were over fourteen hundred people there! I was also amazed by how it seemed to affect the nearby establishments and businesses. They all knew something was going on.

The Lord is good because He doesn't hoard His grace. He is no respecter of persons! Thanks be to God that He has seen fit to shed His grace into our hearts, giving us faith to believe in Jesus who sets us free.

God's peace.



Back to School Bible Verses

Dear Students, here are some Bible verses to carry with you as you head back to school. May the Holy Spirit guide and protect you, and may you always remember to Whom you belong. You are not your own; you are the Lord's possession. You were bought with a price of infinite value, the blood of the Son of God!

*My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man. **Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.***

Proverbs 3:1-6

*Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. **And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.***

Colossians 3:12-17

*Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. **Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.***

Philippians 4:4-8

*But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: **that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.***

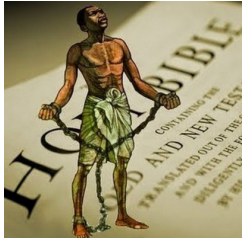
1 Peter 4:7-11

The True Liberty of the Gospel

Paul Kretzmann

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.

John 8:31-38



Bondage and liberty: Many of the Jews had indeed come to faith, but their minds were still held in the bondage of a carnal understanding. Their idea of discipleship was that of an external adherence to Christ, of professing allegiance to Him as their Leader. They were caught in the meshes of the same delusion which to this day holds the minds of so many so-called Christians captive. The continuing or remaining in the Word of Christ is the characteristic of the true disciples of Christ, the adhering strictly to the Word which He has left for our instruction in the gospels and epistles. There we find Jesus revealed, and through the understanding of Jesus as the Christ we have true knowledge, the knowledge of the truth; and that knowledge is the only factor which will give us true liberty. Without

Christ, all men are servants, slaves of sin (Romans 6:17-20). But in Christ there is deliverance from sin, true freedom. Only those men are truly free that have accepted the salvation of Jesus; only they have a will which is interested in good works and able to perform them. That is the wonderful liberty of the Christian of which Luther wrote in such powerful words.

But the Jews thought the Lord spoke of the liberty of the body from the tyranny of an earthly despot. They resented the inference as though they had ever been in bondage: Children of Abraham we are, and to no man have we ever been in bondage, in slavery. They forgot, for the moment, that they were subject to the Romans; they forgot also that their fathers had been in the power of the Egyptian, Babylonian, Syrian, and Roman conquerors. Since Abraham had received the promise of a descendant that should rule all nations, the Jews proudly called themselves children of kings. They resented even the idea as though they needed to be emancipated, to be set free. This answer of the Jews shows that they had quickly extinguished the small flame of faith which had been kindled in their hearts. Their Jewish pride would not accept such a statement from Jesus. The pride of the human heart has driven many a person away from the church to which he professed allegiance, because he resented the plain talk of the Bible regarding the depravity of the human heart.

True liberty: In a very solemn manner, Jesus here proceeds to explain His statement regarding slavery or bondage. Every doer of sin is a slave of sin. He that commits a sin thereby places himself in its power, is bound and held captive absolutely. And therefore these Jews are servants, slaves, in the spiritual sense. But such a slave has no part and right in the house, he has only duties to perform; he is not his own master and cannot speak of freedom. The servants of sin may now be outward members of the kingdom, of the Church, but they will in the end be obliged to leave, they will be thrust out from the place where they have usurped the rights of children. It is only the Son of God that is able to bring freedom, emancipation from sin and its service. He has earned freedom from sin for all men by paying the price, the redemption for their sin, His holy blood.

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That is the only true freedom, which the Son has thus earned and is offering to the whole world, which He wants also these Jews to accept. Jesus was very well aware that they were descendants of Abraham according to the flesh, that they could trace their ancestry back to the great patriarch. But they had little of their ancestor's manner in them, for they were even now seeking

to kill Him, because His Word would not enter into their hearts and minds. The unbelievers are filled with spiteful anger against the true believers, but incidentally shut up their hearts tightly against every form of Gospel influence. While Jesus was making it a practice to speak what He had seen in the bosom of His Father from eternity, all the wonderful things which pertained to the salvation of mankind, the Jews were getting ready and setting their hearts to do what they learned from him who was their father in truth, in a spiritual sense, the devil. They were acting in a perfectly consistent manner. It was a bit of impressive irony which should have opened the eyes of the Jews. ~

On the Lord's Prayer

Let us therefore, brethren beloved, pray as God our Teacher has taught us. It is a loving and friendly prayer to beseech God with His own word, to come up to His ears in the prayer of Christ. Let the Father acknowledge the words of His Son when we make our prayer, and let Him also who dwells within in our breast Himself dwell in our voice. And since we have Him as an Advocate with the Father for our sins, let us, when as sinners we petition on behalf of our sins, put forward the words of our Advocate. For since He says, that "whatsoever we shall ask of the Father in His name, He will give us," how much more effectually do we obtain what we ask in Christ's name, if we ask for it in His own prayer!

Cyprian

Angels in the Life of Our Lord

Lois Matson
Yacolt, Washington

ANGELS ARE CREATED HEAVENLY BEINGS who serve as God's messengers. Angels rejoiced at the creation of the world (Job 38:7), and they appeared at significant times in the life of our Lord.

The angel Gabriel came to tell Mary that she would bear a Son, the Son of the Highest: *And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. (Luke 1:26-31)*

An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream, assuring him that the child Mary carried was conceived of the Holy Ghost (Matthew 1:18-21).

An angel announced the good news of Jesus' birth to the shepherds near Bethlehem, and the heavenly host appeared and praised God (Luke 2: 8-14).

After Jesus was baptized He was tempted of Satan in the wilderness, and angels came and ministered to our Lord: *And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from*



Angels Ministering to Christ in the Wilderness
Cole Thomas

Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness. And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him. (Mark 1:9-13)

An angel strengthened Jesus when He prayed on the Mount of Olives: *And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him. And when*

he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. (Luke 22:39-43)

An angel rolled the stone away from the tomb at the resurrection of our Lord: *In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. (Matthew 28:1-6)*

Two angels spoke to the disciples after the ascension of our Lord: *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 1:9-11)*

When Jesus told the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin, He said the angels rejoice over one sinner who repents. *I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance... Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. (Luke 15:7, 10)*

Angels will attend the Lord at His second coming: *When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory... (Matthew 25:31)*

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words. (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18)

Even so, come, Lord Jesus. ~

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Christ in the House of Martha and Mary
Johannes Vermeer

That Good Part

Pastor Chuck Bylkas
South Range, Michigan

*Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: **But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.** (Luke 10:38-42)*

One of the great blessings that I receive from attending our annual church convention is the opportunity to enjoy Christian fellowship with many brothers and sisters in Christ. Although many of the visits are brief, there is always that moment of joy when we see someone that we have not seen for a while. In many instances, we even continue conversations that seem unhindered by time or distance. God has blessed us with a special bond that is only made stronger every time we gather together. It is the Word of God that brings about this bond that we call fellowship.

In the Gospel of Luke, we hear that Mary understands the importance of God's Word. Martha was so concerned about making preparations to receive the honored guest, that she neglected her honored guest, "...that good part..." Mary discovered the one thing that is needful; sitting at Jesus' feet and hearing His Word.

It is that encounter with Christ in the Word that brings us to a proper understanding of who we are and of who God is. It is that encounter that leads us to repentance and kindles faith in our hearts. When we sit at the feet of Jesus and hear His Word every Sunday, we hear those gracious words of forgiveness and life. Those feet, along with His hands were pierced for us. His head was wounded for us. Jesus Christ suffered, was crucified, died and rose for us, so that by His blood, we would be brought into true fellowship with Him and with one another. The finished work of Christ is the very center of the Holy Scriptures, and it is that message that makes our fellowship so sweet. There is only One who has the words of eternal Life. *Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. (John 6:58)*

As the hymn writer has said so well,

*"Til we meet, 'til we meet, 'Til we meet at Jesus' feet,
'Til we meet, 'til we meet, God be with you, 'til we meet again."*

Yours in Christ.



Our Sun and Shield

For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. (Psalm 84:11)

These are a few more of the myriad of things our Lord is to us and for us. Other places speak of Him being our refuge and strength, our helper, our defender, our stronghold, our righteousness, our hope, and the list goes on and on. Isn't it amazing? Here we see that He is our sun—that is, our light of life. Do we walk in this light? Do we find Him in the Word, which is our lamp and light? And this light shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

He is also our shield—that is, our protection from the enemy and all his wicked darts. It is the shield of faith that does this, and He is our faith. We live and walk by the faith of the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us. He gives us grace and glory, the salvation that we are so undeserving of. We receive the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. And He does not withhold any good thing from those who follow Him, but gives us hope and peace and eternal life. Will we follow Him? Let us deny ourselves, and take up our cross daily, and follow Him!

Paul Coponen; Chassell, Michigan

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