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Christian Monthly

July 2006

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Philippians 3:3

Beautiful Saviour! King of Creation!
Son of God and Son of Man!
Truly I'd love thee, Truly I'd serve thee,
Light of my soul, my joy, my crown.

Fair are the meadows, fair are the woodlands,
Robed in flow'rs of blooming spring;
Jesus is fairer, Jesus is purer;
He makes our sorrowing spirit sing.

*"Beautiful Saviour!"
Author Unknown*

Miracles?

Yes!

The book of Jonah has been scoffed at and ridiculed more than any other book in the Bible, not only by atheists and ungodly unbelievers but also by those who profess to believe other miracles in the Bible, yet ridicule the miracle found in this particular book. They claim that it is impossible for a human being to be swallowed by a great fish, which our Lord Jesus says was a whale (Matthew 12:40), and be cast out of it and live after being in its belly for three days. *With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible. (Mark 10:27)*

Is this more astonishing than the raising from the dead of Lazarus, or the son of the widow of Nain? Is it more miraculous than our Lord's rising from the tomb on the third day?

In 1947, I read a news article about an incident similar to Jonah's. It occurred in approximately the same area of the Mediterranean Sea where Jonah was cast into the water. The article related that a fishing boat was caught in a terrific storm, and one of the fishermen was washed overboard. The boat reached the harbor safely, but the storm raged on. On the third day, the waves washed ashore a huge, dead whale. When it was opened up, the missing fisherman was found in its belly. He was unconscious, barely alive, but was rushed to a hospital. There he was revived.

A reporter interviewed him, and this is what the fisherman said: "When I was thrown down hard by a huge wave washing over the ship, my head must have hit something because I was knocked unconscious. When I regained consciousness, it was hard for me to breathe. I did not know where I was, for it was so dark that I could not see a thing, and everything around me was wet and clammy, but soft. I decided to try to cut a hole through, thinking that maybe I could get more air, for I felt faint. I began to hack away with my knife. The effort was too great for me in my weakened condition so I lost consciousness again. I remember no more until I woke up here in the hospital."

Did God want to prove to skeptics by this incident that He can still perform miracles if He wants to, just as He did in former days?

Be that as it may, let us take a closer look at the story of Jonah. Why did God allow his prophet to go through such a

terrible ordeal? First, because Jonah was disobedient to Him. Second, because He wanted to give the people of Nineveh the opportunity to repent and be saved, thus revealing that He is a gracious and merciful God. Third, because He wanted to foreshadow the Saviour of mankind, who would have to suffer and die, and be raised from the dead on the third day in order to save lost and condemned mankind.

The first reason, disobedience, was the first sin that man committed. It caused the Fall, and therefore condemnation of all men. As Paul stated, *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. (Romans 5:12, 15, 19)*

"By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

Disobedience is the original sin from whence all other sins emerged. It is disobedience to the will and way of God as revealed in his holy Word that is the cause of all the unrest, sin, violence, atrocities, and wars in the world today. If man would only obey our Lord -- who gave us the "golden rule" to live by, asking us to do unto to others that which we want others to do unto us -- what a wonderful world this would be.

But, because man will not obey God, Paul wrote, *Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them. (Romans 1:28-32)*

What a terrible indictment this is, and what horror and chaos disobedience sponsors! Is it any wonder that *we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness? (II Peter 3:13)* To you, dear children of God, Jesus says, *When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. (Luke 21:28)*

The second reason is that God wants to teach us that, though He is holy and righteous, a God who abhors sin, He is, nevertheless, also merciful and gracious, showing love and compassion for sinful man. Through his Word and his servants, He awakens man to the realization of his sins so that man may repent and seek the grace of God through the forgiveness of his sins, thereby becoming pure in heart. Then he comes to know God as He truly is, *full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)*

Therefore, after God had taught Jonah the lesson of obedience, He commanded him to go to Nineveh and do that which He had told him to do in the first place. Jonah walked through that great city and cried, *Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. (Jonah 3:4)*

We can readily imagine the effect upon the people as each day the time was shortened while the prophet trod the streets proclaiming the message of God. It was not an eloquent sermon, but a very effective one, for, from the mighty King down to the lowliest slave, all put on sackcloth and sat in ashes, which were an outward expression of mourning and repentance. God, who looks into the hearts of men, must have seen that they were sincere, for He had compassion on them.

Oh, if men would sincerely grieve over their sins today, and repent of them, they would come to know that Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. If the simple sermon that Jonah preached bore such fruit that 60,000 souls were saved from destruction, the sermon that Jesus instructed his servants on earth to preach in his name -- repentance and the forgiveness of sins -- has borne a thousand times more fruit when men have truly become penitent.

We learn from this study that it is not the fault of the Gospel that is preached, nor because of the lack of eloquent preachers that there are few repentances today, but the fault lies in the unbelief of the people. God has given them over to a reprobate mind, which means to abandon, condemn, or foreordain to damnation.

Therefore you, who know that you are not right with God, who know your sins, and are sorry because of them, tarry no longer. Put on your sackcloth and sit in your ashes; that is, repent and ask forgiveness. You shall hear the simple message of absolution proclaimed by a servant of God: *Believe all your sins forgiven in Jesus' name and in his precious, atoning blood.* Then God will give you the strength to believe, and will account your faith in Jesus for righteousness. You shall receive the peace of a good conscience, the joy of salvation, and the Holy Spirit. Believe this, act accordingly, and you shall experience how one becomes a child of God and an heir to his eternal home.

Now for the third lesson, or reason. Jesus took two miracles from the Old Testament to illustrate two of the most vital things for which He came into this world. *As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.* (John 3:14-15) The brazen serpent was a type of Jesus, who was lifted up on the cross of Calvary. Those who were bitten by the poisonous, fiery serpents in the wilderness were healed when they obeyed and believed what Moses told them to do. (Numbers 21:6-9) Jesus tells us that this same miracle will happen spiritually to those who obey and believe what He has told them to do, and this is what He says, *The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.* (Mark 1:15)

"Repent ye, and believe the gospel."

All who have been bitten by the fiery serpent of sin, and who repent and look with the eyes of faith on the crucified Saviour (believing that He allowed his body to be broken on the cross for their sins and shed his holy blood for the forgiveness of their sins), shall be healed. They are the ones who ask for forgiveness and believe their sins forgiven in his name and atoning blood.

The second miracle Jesus related was as follows. *He answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days*

and three nights in the heart of the earth. (Matthew 12:39-40) With these words, Jesus referred to his resurrection.

Now I wish to ask you: which was the greater miracle for God to perform? -- to cause the whale to cast up Jonah, or to raise his Son from the dead? If you ridicule the first miracle, how can you believe in the second one? And if you do not believe that Christ was raised from the dead, then Paul wrote to you: *And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. (I Corinthians 15:17)*

Thanks to God that Jesus died on the cross for our sins; that He paid our sin debt completely. He shed his life's blood to the very last drop to redeem us all from the condemnation of our sins. He reconciled us to God by providing for us, through his perfect obedience, the forgiveness of our sins. We thank God that Jesus arose from the dead for our justification, and brought to us the glorious and lively hope of eternal life by his victory over death, hell, and the Devil.

Surely, if darkness enveloped Jonah in the belly of the whale, and he was in great distress, greater darkness shall envelop those who have to go to death without Christ. Eternal misery shall be their portion in hell. Therefore, I plead with you to flee from the destruction that is before you before it is too late. The soul of our Lord was in great torment in his own suffering, insomuch that He said to his disciples, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.* And again later, he prayed, *O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. (Matthew 26:38-39, 42)*

May the will of God be done in us so that we, believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, may now have newness of life; and, in the world to come, eternal life through Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. To Him belong all honor, praise, and glory, now and ever henceforth. Amen.

May we bow our heads in reverent gratitude *for his wonderful works to the children of men! (Psalm 107:31)* We can be infinitely thankful that He has preserved us in the faith.

Andrew Mickelsen

Quotations from President George W. Bush on Freedom and Prayer

"Freedom is not America's gift to the world, freedom is the almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world."

"The cause we serve is right, because it is the cause of all mankind. The momentum of freedom in our world is unmistakable--and it is not carried forward by our power alone. We can trust in that greater power who guides the unfolding of the years. And in all that is to come, we can know that his purposes are just and true."

"[Prayer] teaches us to trust; to accept that God's plan unfolds in his time, not our own."

"Prayer and religion sustain me. I receive calmness in the storms of the presidency. I love the fact that people pray for me and my family all around the country. Somebody asked me one time, how do you know? I said I just feel it."

In honor of Independence Day and our late President, Ronald Reagan, we include these quotations made by him during his presidency:

"I have a very special old Bible. And alongside a verse in the second book of Chronicles, there are some words, handwritten, very faded by now. And believe me, the person who wrote these words was an authority. Her name was Nelle Wilson Reagan. She was my mother. And she wrote about that verse, 'A most wonderful verse for the healing of nations.'"

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. (II Chronicles 7:14)

"We Americans are blessed in so many ways. We're a nation under God, a living and loving God. But Thomas Jefferson warned us, 'I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just.' We cannot expect Him to protect us in crisis if we turn away from Him in our everyday living. But, you know, He told us what to do in II Chronicles, the foregoing Bible verse. Let us reach out to Him."

"I know at all times, all of us -- I do -- feel perhaps in our prayers we ask for too much. And then there are other times when we feel that something isn't important enough to bother God with it. Maybe we should let Him decide those things."

"I've always believed that we were, each of us, put here for a reason, that there is a plan, somehow a divine plan for all of us. I know now that whatever days are left to me belong to Him.

"I also believe this blessed land was set apart in a very special way, a country created by men and women who came here, not in the search of gold, but in search of God. They would be free people, living under the law with faith in their Maker and their future."

*"Ronald Reagan, The Wisdom and Humor
of the Great Communicator"*

*Let thy mercies come also unto me, O Lord, even thy salvation,
according to thy word.
So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me: for I
trust in thy word.
And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth; for I have hoped
in thy judgments.
So shall I keep thy law continually for ever and ever.
And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts.
I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be
ashamed.
And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved.
My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have
loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes.
Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me
to hope.
This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me.
The proud have had me greatly in derision: yet have I not declined from
thy law.*

Psalm 119:41-51

The Armour of God

The words, *Put on the whole armour of God (Ephesians 6:11)*, speak to us of serious conflict. They indicate that, although we have been called into the service of the Prince of Peace, we must prepare ourselves for war.

In this warfare, we must ceaselessly deal with the wiles of the Devil. *The devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. (Revelation 12:12)* Satan not only *as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour (I Peter 5:8)*, but also *Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. (II Corinthians 11:14)*

That is why Apostle Paul wrote that *we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. (Ephesians 6:12)*

Our loins are to be girded with truth, and we are to have on the breastplate of righteousness. These are absolute essentials for spiritual warfare. They speak to us of Christ our Lord, the one who was successful in every conflict with Satan. He never succeeded in tempting Jesus, for Jesus overcame Satan's every temptation by using the Word. If we are to overcome this enemy, we must remember that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal. *For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.) (II Corinthians 10:3-4)*

Communion with the Lord in prayer and reading of his Word are of vital importance to our spiritual health and success in this warfare. We must always commune with the one who leads us in this daily conflict so that we will hear his voice; that we will know his lead; and, by his grace, we will abide in his will.

Jesus told his disciples, *I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. (John 9:4)* And, *Men ought always to pray, and not to faint. (Luke 18:1)*

Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. (Jude 1:21)

*Pastor Alvin Holmgren
Seattle, Washington*

Children's Page

Dear Children,

As we see God's handiwork in nature all around us, we know how good and faithful He is, and how much He cares for us.

Today I would like to share the part in the Bible that talks about armour. Soldiers put on armor to fight in battles, and the Christian must put on armour also, to be strong in fighting against the Devil. You can find this text in Ephesians 6:1-18.

The Christian's Armour

These first nine verses are very good to read, so I will include them here:

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.

And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

Finally brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles (tricks) of the devil.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world (those who rule, but do not follow the Word of God), against spiritual wickedness in high places (where the Word of God is treated with no respect).

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand (stay strong) in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts (as putting out a fire) of the wicked (the bad things that the Devil or those who serve him, would want to tell you or tempt you to do).

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

We are encouraged to have our whole body, heart, mind, mouth, feet, and hands, doing, thinking, reading, and speaking that which is right, and that would please God and bring praise and honor to his name.

I know some of you children are young and may not understand all that you read in the Scripture today, but I pray that you will learn it better each day as you grow older, and that you will keep it in your heart all the days of your life.

I'm a lot older than most of you young ones who read this "Children's Page," but I am still learning myself. We never stop learning. The Bible has so much in it that we will find new things all the time. It's the best book to read, and I am so thankful that we have it.

I ask each of you who read this: Do you have on the armour of God? As Christians, we must be sure to have the whole armour on, as we can not leave off any piece. I pray that we will all take a moment to think about our armour. Is there anything missing?

*In God's peace,
Gwen Wilson*

We love him, because he first loved us.

I John 4:19

Revealed Unto Babes

In God's Word, we see that Jesus sorrowed much over the children' of Israel's unbelief toward Him, and over the self-righteousness that ruled the scribes and Pharisees. This self-righteousness is, also, not far from the Christian. Therefore, it is written in the Scriptures, *Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. (I Corinthians 10:12)* It is important that we, his people, walk in humility, and not let a proud spirit rule our hearts.

It is written, *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. (Matthew 11:25-26)* The question today is: Of what was Jesus speaking, and why was He thankful?

He was not speaking about these things being hidden from those who are wise and have much education, or that the babes, or humble people, to whom these things are revealed are unlearned or ignorant. The great difference He is speaking of is the living faith that is possessed by the believer versus those "wise" who go about to establish their own righteousness, and do not believe in the Son of God. Those who are so wise in themselves ought to remember what God said to Job. *Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.*

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.

Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?

Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? (Job 38:2-7)

Many things could be hidden from the wise and prudent of this world, but one thing that seems to be hidden from so many is how a sinner is justified before God. The way of salvation is often hidden from the wise of this world but revealed to those who are humble, and who realize their own sinfulness.

It is written: *For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. (I Corinthians 1:26-29)*

Why was Jesus thankful? He gives the reason when He said, *Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.* These are amazing words from our Lord and Saviour, but when this is pleasing to the Father, so it is, and must be. This is his will and his way, which we cannot change. Through faith and the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, we accept God's will. Salvation is in God's hands.

Jesus continued, *All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. (Matthew 11:27)*

Jesus also said, *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. (John 6:44)*

May God help all of us so that we may always say, *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. (Psalm 119:105)* May we believe his Word, and not let our human reasoning or understanding rule in the matters of salvation.

*God's peace,
Pastor Arne Nordahl
Vancouver, Washington*

*In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed:
deliver me in thy righteousness.*

*Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be thou my
strong rock, for an house of defence to save me. For thou art my
rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and
guide me.*

Psalm 31:1-3

Confirmation

"1. The act of confirming. 2. That which confirms; proof. 3. A religious rite in which a person is admitted to all the privileges of a church." This dictionary definition of the word *confirmation* is very direct and easy to understand. By it, a person can see the reason for the tradition the Lutheran Church has held for so many generations. We instruct our young people in the doctrines of the Church. Then they have the opportunity to confess them as their own, and thereby join the Church congregation with its privileges as well as its responsibilities.

As in any organization, order and agreement are vital to the success of the endeavor. Imagine if we all had our own doctrines and beliefs. What would it be like if, for instance, one was a Muslim, another a Buddhist, a Hindu, or an atheist? It's easy to see the need to be in agreement.

But what about within the Christian world view? Is it so important to be one in doctrine? Can't we give a little and take a little just for the sake of not becoming too "narrow?" What about the differences that everyone has in defining those doctrines that are confessed in our church? It seems that there are still many differences. Maybe the problem is how far have we gone from the simple and concise confessions that the early Church fathers had to begin with?

At the time of the Reformation, the need for confessional clarity was as great as ever. Those who were given the task of writing the Church's beliefs, such as the Augsburg Confession, found a way to take the chief teachings of the Word of God and explain how they understood them without clouding them with too many words. It seems that at times when someone tries to explain something more clearly, it can get confusing.

We all must agree that the Bible is the final authority on all matters of the faith and it is true that all other writings are subject to the failures of the authors. However, we have much to be thankful for when the confessions of our church are learned in their simple form.

I ask for your prayers as I begin the task of teaching Confirmation again this year. I look forward to the opportunity to be with the young people, and hope to get to know them better in those two weeks. We will study from the Catechism, which has

been the tradition of the Lutheran Church. They will memorize a lot of the basic teachings so they can publicly confess them. But we will spend most of our time studying the Bible. I pray that our studies will help to create a hunger for the Word of God that will stay with them for life.

Most of all, pray that they all have a living knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is, above all, the chief article of our faith.

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (II Timothy 2:15)

*God's peace,
Pastor Ron Holmgren
Hockinson, Washington*

Be in Subjection unto the Father

Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord. (II Peter 1:2)

The ways of the Lord are past finding out. His way is not necessarily our way. There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. (Proverb 14:12)

The Lord allows trials to come into our lives in order that we would turn to Him for guidance and direction. The Bible says, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. (Hebrews 12:5-11)

I have experienced the chastening of the Lord in small ways, for which I have been thankful. Apostle Paul wrote, We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. (Romans 5:3-5)

We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (I Corinthians 2:12-14)

We have a Heavenly Father who deals with us in a loving way. I love the chorus of the song entitled, "In the Garden," as the author wrote, "And He walks with me, and He talks with me, and He tells me I am his own; and the joy we share as we tarry there, none other has ever known."

Do we walk and talk with the Lord daily? Satan wants to attack us and try to destroy the good work that the Lord has begun in our hearts. In the midst of trials and adversity, may we pray to the heart of the Heavenly Father for strength and deliverance, even as the psalmist, David, did. The Lord never grows tired of our prayers and supplications. In fact, the Lord allows joys and sorrows to come into our lives so that we will look up to Him for strength and guidance. Oh, how merciful and gracious our God is toward us.

I am sure that all God's children, who know the love of God toward them as sinners, can relate to the precious elder speaking brethren who spoke the Gospel of truth, yet complained about the weaknesses in themselves. But they lifted up Jesus Christ as their only means of salvation unto eternal life. This is each of us has to boast about: Jesus Christ, in our lives, helping and caring for us each step of the way.

May we never grow tired of hearing the story of Jesus. Dear Lord, increase our desire and need and love for thee. For that is the only thing that will stand when Christ comes again on the last day to receive us home.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

*God's peace,
Dave Impola
Snohomish, Washington*

Steadfast Faith

And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. (Revelation 6: 12-13)

Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen. (II Peter 3: 17-18)

May we all hang on steadfastly to the faith that we have been given, and not be tossed about on the winds of doctrine that are blowing fiercely all around us. *That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive. (Ephesians 4:14)*

We know that it would take a mighty wind to blow green figs off a tree. Perhaps the green figs depict those who are not grounded and settled, the young and the babes. *For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. (Hebrews 5:13-14)* *If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven. (Colossians 1:23)* *Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men. (I Corinthians 14: 20)*

To our pastors, also, who may be depicted as those stars of heaven, what a great responsibility they have to their congregations. We find in Ezekiel 33, verses 6 and 7, these words: *But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of*

Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.

Let us continue, as Paul encouraged Timothy, *Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck. (I Timothy 1:19)* The keeping of a good conscience is also important, as we find in Revelation 16: 15, where it says, *Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.*

In the keeping of a good conscience, we are taught by the Scripture that says, *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:1-2)*

Let us keep our eyes focused upon Christ and what He has done for us.

*In God's peace,
Beth Staudinger
Leslieville, Alberta, Canada*

Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Hebrews 10:22-25

God Bless Our Men

God bless our men in air, on land, and sea!
Full well we know how dear they are to Thee.
Where'er they go, whatever they may dare,
God ever keep them in thy gracious care.

God guard our men by night as well as day,
For we, at home for them will ever pray
That war and strife and enmity may cease,
And Thou wilt send us everlasting peace.

God guard our men, O, keep them ever near!
Make strong their faith and drive out all their fear;
Give them a vision of thy saving love,
That nothing in this world can ever move.

God guard our men, and though just now they roam,
Grant us our prayers and bring them safely home.
God bless our foes, and cause all eyes to see
That peace, O Christ, can only come from Thee.

E. Sparrow

*All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship
before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name.*

Psalm 86:9