

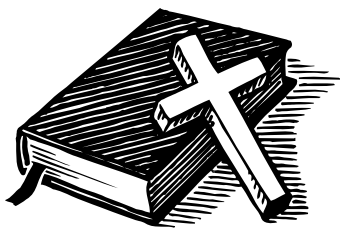
# Christian MONTHLY

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.

FEBRUARY 2010



## THE GOSPEL

**T**he term "gospel" is commonly used with reference to any of the first four books of the New Testament, and the definition of the word "gospel" is "good news" or "glad tidings." However, with our limited comprehension we only have a measured revelation of God's wondrous grace portrayed in the Gospel. So profound is the magnitude of the Gospel that words cannot begin to adequately describe the greatness of it. Let us therefore attempt, by God's grace, to focus briefly and simply on that which we have seen, which we have experienced, and which we, as God's children, believe concerning the Gospel.

First we must recognize that Christ and the Gospel are one. They cannot be separated. We read in the Scriptures that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was from the beginning and dwelt with God in heaven. As He Himself stated in *John 17:5*: *And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.* Thus we conclude, from this passage in Scripture and from those recorded in the book of Genesis, that God, with His Son, had from the beginning prepared a way for sinful man to be reconciled to his creator. A sacrifice would have to be offered for the atonement

of man's sin. He became that perfect and only acceptable sacrifice on the cross of Calvary and He would be glorified in the power of His resurrection, being victorious over death, hell and the power of the devil. This is the Good News borne by the angel to the shepherds of old and to all of mankind yet today. Herein lies the Gospel of salvation for all who believe.

We see the fulfillment of God's promise as recorded in the prophecy of *Isaiah 1:18*, *Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*

We read in the Scriptures of the wonder-working power of the Gospel, which is the preaching of Jesus Christ, as recorded on

### **We read in the Scriptures of the wonder-working power of the Gospel...**

the day of Pentecost, in Paul's conversion, and throughout the New Testament. We have seen its power manifested in our day when repentant hearts have sought forgiveness for their sins and received the Gospel message which proclaims God's grace—the very essence of which is the forgiveness of sins in the holy name and precious atoning blood of Jesus. How wonderful it is to see this great miracle of God performed through the power of the Gospel, greater still to experience it in our own hearts. To this wonderful and indescribable work of God through the Gospel He adds still another marvel, and this is faith to believe these miracles are true in me and in you. If in our hearts we believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6), then we too, like faithful Abraham, will have our faith accounted unto us for righteousness. Only then are we able to witness of God's great love and say with the apostle Paul, *for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. (2 Timothy 1:12)* Again he states: *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. (Romans 1:16-17)*

May our dear heavenly Father continue to impart the wonderful, resounding words of His Gospel unto the hearts of men everywhere as the angel of old testifies even today, *Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:10-11)*

May you and your loved ones be blessed from above with all spiritual blessings!

*Pastor Ken Storm  
Tapiola, Michigan*

## **FAITH AND WORKS**

*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. (Ephesians 2:8-9)*

**J**ames has written much about works in his epistle. *Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. (James 2:17-26)*

The people asked Jesus, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" Jesus said to believe on Him whom the Father hath sent (John 6:28-29). We see clearly by the Word of God that one is not saved by works. When we have a living faith, then works will follow, as James has written.

There are so many ways that we can serve the Lord as His children. We can glorify God as Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount. *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)* This means we have left the ways of darkness and now walk in the light. We are His witnesses to tell others about the love of God through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. *That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate. (1 Timothy 6:18)*

In Titus we are told: *But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine. (Titus 2:1)* He continues later: *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee. (Titus 2:14-15)*

Paul explains the message we are to share:

*But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,*

*Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour. (Titus 3:4-6)*

Jesus tells us why this work is so important. *Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest. (Matthew 9:37-38)* Also in the gospel of John, Jesus says, *Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. (John 4:35-36)* The benefit of this work is that souls are saved from death and the wrath that is to come. *Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins. (James 5:20)*

Another way that we can show our faith is to help those who are in need. Jesus said, *For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger,*

**We have left  
the ways of darkness  
and now walk in the light.**

*and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. (Matthew 25:35-36) Apostle John warns us about not giving when there is a need. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. (1 John 3:17-18)*

*We are called to comfort one another. Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. (2 Corinthians 1:3-4) Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. (Galatians 6:2) As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. (Galatians 6:10)*

*These fruits and works will not save us. They indicate that we are of the household of faith. If our salvation is of works, then it is not of faith. Our justification before God is through Jesus only. 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 2:8-10)*

*Pastor Don Salo  
New York Mills, Minnesota*

But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle. **Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father,** which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, Comfort your hearts, and **stablish you in every good word and work.**

2 Thessalonians 2:13-17

## WE ARE MEMBERS OF ONE BODY

*For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. (Romans 12:4-8)*

**F**irst, if we examine this simile, we shall find that all the members perform certain functions of the body because they are members of it; and no member has its place through its own efforts or its own merits. It was born a member, before the exercise of office was possible. It acts by virtue of being a member; it does not become a member by virtue of its action. It derives existence and all its powers from the body, regardless of its own exertions. The body, however, exercises its members as occasion requires. The eye has not attained its place because of its power of seeing, not because it has merited its office as an organ of sight for the body. In the very beginning it derived its existence and its peculiar function of sight from the body. It cannot, therefore, boast in the slightest degree that by its independent power of seeing it has deserved its place as an eye. It has the honor and right of its position solely through its birth, not because of any effort on its part.

Similarly, no Christian can boast that his own efforts have made him a member of Christ, with other Christians, in the common faith, nor can he by any work constitute himself a Christian. He performs good works by virtue of having become a Christian, in the new birth, through faith, regardless of any merit of his own. Clearly, then, good works do not make Christians, but Christians bring forth good works. The fruit does not make the tree, but the tree produces the fruit. Seeing does not make the eye, but the eye produces vision. In short, cause ever precedes effect; effect does not produce cause, but cause produces effect. Now, if good works do not make a Christian, do

not secure the grace of God and blot out our sins, they do not merit heaven. No one but a Christian can enjoy heaven. One cannot secure it by his works, but by being a member of Christ; an experience effected through faith in the Word of God.

In the second place, the simile teaches that each member of the body is content with the other members, and rejoices in its powers, not being solicitous as to whether any be superior to itself. For instance, the nose is inferior in office to the eye, yet in the relation they sustain to each other the former is not envious of the latter; rather, it rejoices in the superior function the eye performs. On the other hand, the eye does not despise the nose; it rejoices in all the powers of the other members. As Paul says elsewhere, *And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour... (1 Corinthians 12:23)* Thus we see that hand and eye, regardless of their superior office, labor carefully to clothe and adorn the less honorable members. They make the best use of their own distinction to remove the dishonor and shame of the inferior members.

However unequal the capacities and distinction of the individual members of the body, they are equal in that they are all part of the same body. The eye cannot claim any better right to a place in the body than the least distinguished member. Nor can it boast greater authority over the body than any other member enjoys. And thus it does not essay to do. It grants all members equal participation in the body. Likewise, all Christians, whether strong in faith or weak, perfect or defective, share equally in Christ and are equal in Christendom. Each may appropriate the whole Christ unto himself. I may boast as much in Christ as Peter may boast. Nor do I envy Peter because he is a more distinguished member of the Christian Church than I. I am glad of it. On the other hand, he does not despise me for being a less honored member. I am a part of the same body to which he belongs, and I possess Christ as well as he does.

In the third place, according to the simile each member of the body conducts itself in a manner to profit the others—the whole body. The eye prepares the way for hand and foot. The foot, in its carriage of the body, safeguards the eye. Each member ever cares for and serves the others. More beautiful figures of love and good works are not to be found than those

derived from the body with its members. In the members we daily bear about with us, and with which we are continually familiar, God has described the law of love in a living, forcible manner. Upon the principle there illustrated the Christian should act, conducting himself in a way to profit not himself but others, and having a sincere interest in them. Under such conditions, schisms and sects could not spring up among us.

But we are blind; we neither see nor read the beautiful lesson taught us in our own bodies. We proceed to invent good works as a means of improving our condition and bringing ourselves into a saved state. This error is attributable to our lack of faith and of heart knowledge of Christ. Hence we are restless in soul, seeking to be liberated from sin and to become righteous. The heart in its ignorance of the sufficiency of common faith, engages in these abnormal, special works. There is where foolish individuals begin to disregard faith and love, imagining such works true ways to heaven. One takes up one thing, and another something else, and so it goes, until there is nothing but sects. One sect condemns and rejects the other. Each, exalting itself beyond measure, claims superiority.

In the fourth place, *And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. (1 Corinthians 12:26)* In short, no member lives and acts for itself; all obey and serve one another, and the more honored members serve most. Each seems to say, "I desire not to be otherwise than as I am. I am satisfied to be a member of the same body with the others, and to have equal rights and honors therein. It is unnecessary for me to exert myself to share in that body, for I am already a member of it, and content. My efforts I direct to serving the body—all the members, my beloved brothers and partners. I assume no peculiarities. I would not cause discord and conflict."

Observe, this is the way all true, righteous Christians do, as we have frequently said. They who conduct themselves otherwise cannot be true Christians; they are worse—more pernicious—than heathen. They cannot refrain from instigating sects; from assuming some peculiarity, some special doctrine, wherein they proudly exalt themselves above other men. Thus they lure to themselves the hearts of the unlearned. Against this class Paul here, as everywhere, faithfully warns us.

See, then, that you become a member of Christ. This is to be accomplished through faith alone, regardless of works. And having become a member, if God has appointed you a duty according to your capacity, abide in it. Let no one allure you away from it. Esteem not yourself better than others, but serve them rejoicing in their works and their offices as you do in your own, even if they are less important. Faith renders you equal with others, and others equal with you.

*Martin Luther*



## Winter

**S**ee, how rude winter's icy hand  
Has stripped the trees, and sealed the ground!  
But spring shall soon his rage withstand,  
And spread new beauties all around.

My soul, a sharper winter mourns,  
Barren and fruitless I remain;  
When will the gentle spring return,  
And bid my graces grow again?

**J**esus, my glorious Sun arise!  
'Tis Thine, the frozen heart to move  
O hush these storms and clear my skies,  
And let me feel Thy vital love!

Dear Lord, regard my feeble cry,  
I faint and droop till Thou appear;  
Wilt Thou permit Thy plant to die?  
Must it be winter all the year?

**B**e still, my soul, and wait His hour,  
With humble prayer, and patient faith;  
Till He reveals His gracious pow'r,  
Repose on what His promise faith.

He, by whose all-commanding Word,  
Seasons this changing course maintain;  
In every change a pledge affords,  
That none shall seek His face in vain.

*John Newton*

## Dear Children far and near,

Hello again! I hope you had a nice Christmas. Christmas is a special time, when we are again reminded of the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Without Him coming to this earth as a Baby, we would have no hope of a forever life in heaven where all is peace. We thank God for sending His only Son to die for us. Let's look at some of the events leading up to Jesus' birth.

### **THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND**

You may be wondering what this means. This is what John the Baptist was telling the people long ago.

I'm sure you children have read about the angel visiting Zachariah in the temple while he was doing his priestly duty there one day. The angel told him that his wife Elizabeth would have a baby boy, even though she was old. They had no children, and, because Zachariah did not believe the angel's words, his voice was taken away until this baby was born.

The baby was to be named John, as the angel said, and his purpose when he grew up was to help get the people's hearts ready for this One who was to come after him, who he called the kingdom of heaven.

The same angel then came to the virgin Mary and told her she would have a baby boy also. Mary was a young woman who was not married yet, but God told her the Holy Spirit would make this possible. Mary said to the angel, "Let this be done to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

Mary wanted to leave her family for a time to go and visit Elizabeth, who was her cousin. This she did and, as soon as she greeted Elizabeth, Elizabeth's baby (who we know is John), leaped for joy in his mother's tummy. Baby John was so small, but he was happy to hear that his Savior Jesus was coming. This may be a little hard for you children to fully understand, but Jesus was to be the Savior for the whole world—even His mother Mary and His cousin John.

At the set time, little John was born and was being loved and cared for by his aged parents who were so happy to have a child. A few months after John was born, Jesus was born in another part of the land and He was being loved and cared for by His parents who were full of wonder at this special birth.

The two boys grew up to be men and the Bible tells us that John lived in the wilderness and ate locusts (grasshoppers) and wild honey and wore clothes made from camel hair. I picture him to be a rough-looking man. He went out to the country around preaching to the people about this one, Jesus, who was coming, who would save them from their sins; and he was baptizing those who repented and believed.

While John was preaching, Jesus was at home serving His father and mother in their home. God wanted John to preach about this Mighty One who could save to help the people have hearts ready to believe and receive Him.

Jesus came to the banks of the Jordan River where John was baptizing; Jesus came also to be baptized by John. John was amazed at Jesus' request as he felt unworthy to do it, but Jesus told him it must be done to fulfill all righteousness.

The "kingdom that was at hand" was Jesus. Now He has come and the people will begin to hear about His Father's business, His purpose for coming to the earth. Many will believe, many will not; and it is the same today.

I pray that we who believe in Him will hold Him dear to our hearts and keep believing in this precious one Jesus who loves us so much that He would die for us. We thank God for loving us so much that He sent His ONLY Son as a payment for our sins. We can only say "Thank You!" and bless His name.

*God's peace to all of you,  
Gwen Wilson*



## LITTLE LAMB

Little lamb, who made thee? Dost thou know who made thee?  
Gave thee life, and bade thee feed By the stream and o'er the mead;  
Gave thee clothing of delight, Softest clothing, woolly bright;  
Gave thee such a tender voice, Making all the vales rejoice?  
Little lamb, who made thee? Dost thou know who made thee?

Little lamb, I'll tell thee; Little lamb, I'll tell thee;  
He is calléd by thy name For He calls Himself a Lamb.  
He is meek and He is mild, He became a little child.  
I a child, and thee a lamb, We are calléd by His name.  
Little lamb, God bless thee! Little lamb, God bless thee!

*William Blake*

## THE REBELLION OF KORAH

*Now Korah...took men: And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown: And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD? And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face: And he spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, Even to morrow the LORD will shew who are his, and who is holy. (Numbers 16:1-5)*

**T**he Korahites were given an exceedingly important position by God. Moses questioned them thus: *Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them? (Numbers 16:9)* 1 Chronicles 9:19 makes known that the Korahites were set over the work of the service, keepers of the very gates of the tabernacle, and their fathers were keepers of the very entry.

Moses was very wroth and distressed over the murmurings and rebellion of these men. He prayed that they would be spared (Numbers 16:22), but God did not have mercy on those who would challenge Moses' God-given authority and change His order of worship. He warned his people: *Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins. (Numbers 16:26)* This warning applies to us today as well. We are to avoid teachings that aren't supported by Scripture and not promote those who rebel against or challenge scriptural teachings—or we could be consumed by sin ourselves. *Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. (Romans 16:17)*

We see the consequences unto the men of Korah as recorded in Numbers 16:32-35 in that the earth swallowed them

up, and fire consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense. Their prayers, or incense, were not acceptable to God due to rebellious hearts.

Reading on in Numbers: *But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the LORD... And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them as in a moment. And they fell upon their faces. (Numbers 16:41, 44-45)* We see then that the sympathizers were killed by a plague. *Now they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, beside them that died about the matter of Korah. (Numbers 16:49)*

How can this rebellion of Korah speak to us today?

The Korahites' position as keepers of the service, keepers of the tabernacle and keepers of the entry can be compared unto those in leadership positions of the church today who are responsible for who enters our pulpits to preach (entry of the tabernacle) and for overseeing and making sure that we are hearing Christ's correct teaching and doctrine (keepers of the service). It's their charge to see that the commission of Christ to preach repentance and remission of sins in His name is preached as He instructed. Preaching no doctrine is the same as proclaiming wrong doctrine (a sin of omission). Doctrine, we know, is the teachings of Christ, which cannot be omitted. *Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. (2 John 1:9)*

It is notable that the sympathizers of Korah were given a plague of disease that killed them. Remember Korah and his followers wanted to change God's order of worship and His way of salvation as was later established by Christ in the New Testament. *For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. (Romans 10:3)* If we sympathize with those who omit or change Christ's teachings and go about to accept or even establish another order of grace and worship, we can be given to the disease of complacency that can lead to spiritual death. We see that the sympathizers of Korah that died of the plague exceeded by far

in number the Korah rebellers (14,700 sympathizers, 250 rebels). God will be worshipped in the manner He puts forth only. *...the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. (John 4:23-24)*

Just as the Old Testament ceremonial worship was to be done exactly as God ordered, Christ's scriptural and doctrinal way of salvation is to be proclaimed without alteration so that life comes forth and not death. Scriptural salvation is not to be found through prayer, baptism, or in secret chambers. It's to be found where there is a messenger of the Gospel. It speaks to us through our brothers or sisters who proclaim the oral message of forgiveness to us through the name and blood of Jesus. *...Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven... For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. (Matthew 18:18, 20)*

The correct teachings of Christ need to always go forth that souls would yet be saved, the backslidden would be exhorted and reminded to repent, and the truth would be preserved for our children. It's vital that spiritual complacency would not set in by allowing a lifeless gospel, or gospel of the intellect to go forth—which is really a perversion or “another gospel” which Apostle Paul warns about in *Galatians 1:9, As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.* “Let him be accursed” is emphasized twice in this portion of Galatians regarding the preaching of another gospel.

May God give our church leaders courage to speak the truth with obedience and a desire to be led of the Holy Spirit so that His Word would go forth unto the feeding of His congregation and saving of souls. May our leaders be as those faithful men committed to the Gospel who Apostle Paul speaks of in *2 Timothy 2:2, And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*

*In God's peace,  
James Kurtti, with sister Phebe (Kurtti) Johnson  
Reedley, California; Astoria, Oregon*



## GOD IS LOVE

*Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. (1 John 4:7-8)*

**R**oses fade; chocolates go to the waistline; pretty cards end up as kindling. Yet, roses, chocolates, and cards often seem to be the sum and substance of love, especially during this month of February. Now, please don't use these statements as an excuse for not remembering your special loved one. However, if these February gifts are your only expression of love during the entire year, forget about it! Giving a box of chocolates once a year doesn't make you a champion lover!

God's Word is quite clear about the nature of true love. *1 Corinthians 13*, the chapter of love, reveals the characteristics of love. This kind of love is born of God and comes forth from the heart of one who knows God. In this chapter, we are told, for example, that:

- Love is patient.
- Love is kind.
- Love envies no one.
- Love is never boastful, conceited, rude, nor selfish.
- Love is neither irritable nor quick to take offense.
- Love keeps no score of wrongs.
- Love does not gloat over another person's sins.
- Love delights in the truth.
- Love can face all things. There is no limit to its faith, its hope, and its endurance.

Finally, love is eternal, never coming to an end, because **God is love**. Roses fade, chocolates are eaten, and cards are put away. However, when we live in **love that is of God**, gifts of love will have meaning when they are given. More importantly, when we live and act within God's love, we are abiding in a very safe and lovely place, indeed. *God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. (1 John 4:16)*

*May God so bless us all!*

*Pastor Earl Kaurala  
Mesa, Arizona*



## LIGHTS FOR JESUS

*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)*

**W**e all have a blessed calling when we are called to be children of God. The reality of this calling is a life that is transformed from the understandings and basic principles of this world to a life that exhibits the person of Jesus Christ. Just thinking about that for a moment is incredible and worthy of a lifetime of contemplation. We are to be Christ to others in this world and no longer just seekers of our own desires.

Now as we look at ourselves in the mirror we see constant reminders of our inadequacy and failings, but in

Christ Jesus we are made perfect. The lives we live now are for the Lord, not just for ourselves anymore! Daily as we read the Word and ask for guidance through prayer, God grants us the ability to be lights. We do not from this point forward live lives apart from God, for we are now His children called to the light. We do have the tendency to struggle because of the constant battle between the flesh and the Spirit, but God is always near.

Recently in our Wednesday night Bible studies we have been looking at the book of Nehemiah. What amazes me about this child of God was his desire always to go back to the Lord when any trouble presented itself. When the leaders from the outside tried to discourage them, Nehemiah prayed for guidance from the Lord. When the people started to complain from within, Nehemiah prayed to the Lord and pointed them to the Lord as well and they repented. How often do we first seek God when we are in trouble or discouraged? I find, for myself, that I often try to fix things or seek advice from others rather than go to God directly in prayer. I pray that the Lord will direct each one of us to seek Him in any situation so that we can be lights unto the world.

**We are to be Christ  
to others in this world...**

When we seek Him we find ourselves looking out for others rather than lashing out at others. When we seek Him we reach out in love and forgiveness rather than in judgment and criticism. When we seek Him we pray for others rather than gossip and tell others about the misdeed of another to hide our own sin. The two sides reveal our natures. God desires for us to live in Him and to serve and minister to others in love.

Good works will be revealed when we are found in Christ; for when we are found in Christ, we recognize that He has won the victory for us through His death on the cross and His resurrection. Through this blessed work we now can live victorious lives. So in order to let our lights shine before men we need to live in Christ, for when we live outside of Jesus we act in accordance with this world and our own fleshly desires.

Who makes the most profound impact on your life, a person directed by the Spirit or a person directed by the flesh? When we are transformed through the person of Jesus Christ we are compelled through the Holy Spirit and the Word to be lights unto this world. If we desire to glorify God, we need to look no further than Jesus Christ. We are always asking, "What should I do?" The clear answer is: look to Jesus Christ in all things and call on Him in every situation in life, not forgetting we are in communication with Him through His Word.

The time has come for us to live in victory and share boldly the message of the Gospel with others, to exhibit the full measure of His love and grace with others as He so graciously did with us! Let your light shine in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father in heaven!

*May the Lord bless you richly,  
Pastor Charles Bergstedt  
Plymouth, Minnesota*

Death is not extinguishing the light from the Christian; it is putting out the lamp because the dawn has come.

*~ Unknown*

Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, **I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.**

*John 8:12*

## LOVE DIVINE

**I** bless You, O heavenly Father, Father of my Lord Jesus Christ, for having condescended to remember me, a poor creature. Thanks to You, O Father of mercies, God of all consolation, who with Your comfort refreshes me, who am not worthy of it. I bless You always and glorify You with Your only-begotten Son and the Holy Spirit, forever and ever.

Ah, Lord God, my holy Lover, when You come into my heart, all that is within me will rejoice. You are my glory and the exultation of my heart. You are my hope and refuge in the day of my tribulation. But because my love is as yet weak and my virtue imperfect, I must be strengthened and comforted by You. Visit me often, therefore, and teach me Your holy discipline. Free me from evil passions and cleanse my heart of all disorderly affection so that, healed and purified within, I may be fit to love, strong to suffer, and firm to persevere.

Love is an excellent thing, a very great blessing, indeed. It makes every difficulty easy, and bears all wrongs with serenity, for it bears a burden without being weighted and renders sweet all that is bitter. The noble love of Jesus spurs to great deeds and excites longing for that which is more perfect. Love tends upward; it will not be held down by anything low. Love wishes to be free and estranged from all worldly affections, lest its inward sight be obstructed, lest it be entangled in any temporal interest and overcome by adversity.

Nothing is sweeter than love, nothing stronger or higher or wider; nothing is more pleasant, nothing fuller, and nothing better in heaven or on earth, for love is born of God and cannot rest except in God, who is above all created things.

One who is in love flies, runs, and rejoices; he is free, not bound. He gives all for all and possesses all in all, because he rests in the one sovereign Good, who is above all things, and from whom every good flows and proceeds.

Love knows no limits, feels no burden, thinks nothing of troubles, attempts more than it is able, and does not plead impossibility, because it believes that it may and can do all things. For this reason, it is able to do all, performing and effecting much where he who does not love fails and falls.

Love is watchful. Sleeping, it does not slumber. Wearied, it is not tired. Pressed, it is not straitened. Alarmed, it is not confused, but like a living flame, a burning torch, it forces its way upward and passes unharmed through every obstacle.

Love is swift, sincere, kind, pleasant, and delightful. Love is strong, patient and faithful, prudent, long-suffering, and manly. Love is never self-seeking; for in whatever a person seeks himself, there he falls from love. Love is circumspect, humble, and upright. It is neither soft nor light, nor intent upon vain things. It is sober and chaste, firm and quiet, guarded in all the senses. Love is subject and obedient to superiors. It is mean and contemptible in its own eyes, devoted and thankful to God, always trusting and hoping in Him. He who is not ready to suffer all things, to stand resigned to the will of the Beloved is not worthy to be called a lover. A lover must embrace willingly all that is difficult and bitter for the sake of the Beloved, and he should not turn away from Him because of adversities.

*Thomas a Kempis*

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## LOVE MAKES US SERVANTS

This is what I have often said, that faith makes of us lords, and love makes of us servants. Indeed, by faith we become gods and partakers of the divine nature and name, as is said in *Psalms 82:6*: *I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High*. But through love we become equal to the poorest. According to faith we are in need of nothing, and have an abundance; according to love we are servants of all. By faith we receive blessings from above, from God; through love we give them out below, to our neighbor, even as Christ in His divinity stood in need of nothing, but in His humanity served everybody who had need of Him. Of this we have spoken often enough, namely, that we also must by faith be born God's sons and gods, lords and kings, even as Christ is begotten true God of the Father in eternity; and again, come out of ourselves by love and help our neighbors with kind deeds, even as Christ became Man to help us all. And as Christ is not God because He first merited divinity by His works or attained to it through His incarnation, but has it by birth, without any works, even before He became Man; so we also have not merited by works or love sonship with God, so that our sins are forgiven, and death and hell cannot injure us; but without works and before our love, we have received it in the Gospel by grace through faith. And as Christ first became man to serve us after being God from eternity, so we also do good and exercise love to our neighbor, after we have become pious, free from sin, alive, saved, and sons of God by faith.

*Martin Luther*

Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

1 John 4:11