

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.

MAY 2010

FELLOWSHIP IN THE EARLY CHURCH ACTS 1 AND 2



THE **SCRIPTURES** give a very favorable report of fellowship in the early church. Jesus had numerous meetings with His followers in the forty-day period between His resurrection and ascension. Luke explains in the book of Acts that these various meetings provided infallible proof of the resurrection and gave additional opportunity for the Lord to speak with His disciples of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. Then in preparation for His ascension, Jesus told the disciples not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit. They had been baptized with water, but Jesus promised that they would also be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

The disciples were obedient to the Lord's command. They continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and with Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren. When the day of promise came, we are told that *they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there ap-*

peared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2:1-4)

The power of the Holy Ghost gave the disciples the freedom and courage to speak the Word to the multitude assembled that day. Many hearts were pricked by the spoken Word and they began to inquire, *Men and brethren, what shall we do? (Acts 2:37)* Apostle Peter, the primary spokesman, said to them, *Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward (crooked) generation. (Acts 2:38-40)* St. Luke summed up the effect of the Spirit's power by saying, *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. (Acts 2:41)*

The Word of God teaches that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. God's Word also teaches that when we believe, we are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory. *Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. (Romans 8:9, 11, 16-17)*

*Pastor Alvin Holmgren
Seattle, Washington
Archived writing*

You pray in your distress and in your need. Would that you might pray also in the fullness of your joy and in your days of abundance.

Kahlil Gibran

PENTECOST

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. (Acts 2:1)

The word "**Pentecost**" is a Greek word meaning "fiftieth day." It was a Jewish festival of harvest and the giving of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai (Exodus 20:1-21). Pentecost occurred fifty days after the Passover lamb was sacrificed in Egypt and the blood of the lamb was to be upon the doorposts of the houses of the Hebrews. They were to celebrate this each year as a memorial for the promises God had given (Exodus 12:21-28). This event was a great blessing to the people. God revealed His will from heaven so they would know what was pleasing to Him and what was not. God commanded Israel to keep holy the fiftieth day after Passover, which is our Easter or Resurrection Day.

The events of the Old Testament were very important and were a foreshadow of what was to happen in the New Testament (1 Corinthians 10). The blood of the lamb on the doorpost caused the angel of death to pass over and spare the firstborn of the Israelites. The blood of our Easter Lamb (Christ) has greater power. His blood frees all of us from slavery to sin and from the power of the devil. The blood of Jesus saves us from sin and gives us eternal life. We have a much better sacrifice than the Old Testament Passover animal sacrifice.

This is also true of Pentecost. The Israelites received the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai, which are necessary and good laws from God, revealing His will for mankind. We must thank God for them and not reject them. However, they cannot overcome the power of the devil, sin or death. The Law makes us sinners and causes our consciences to accuse us before God, showing our shortcomings (Romans 7:7-25).

When the Law was given the thunder roared, the lightning flashed, the mountain smoked and shook, and the people trembled and were afraid. When we know what God demands and we recognize our sinfulness, anxiety and fear arises in our hearts. Pentecost was fearful for the Israelites and they said, *Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die. (Exodus 20:19)*

What is our Pentecost like? Our God is a God of order. He never fails to deliver His promises. Fifty days after the resurrection of Jesus, His promise of sending a Comforter, the Holy Spirit, was fulfilled.

And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2:2-4) The apostles and followers of Christ were gathered together. They heard and saw the effects of the Holy Spirit as Christ had promised that *...ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. (Acts 1:5)* They immediately knew the power of Christ and the Scriptures were opened to them. They began to speak in every language of the people gathered there, even though they knew only their mother tongue.

Christ promised this Pentecost when He told them, *And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. (Luke 24:49)* Even though they had been with the most excellent Teacher for three years, they needed heavenly power for a new life and for the work they faced.

The disciples were no longer afraid but had received power from on high to

...they went on to turn the world "upside down" through the power of the Holy Spirit.

preach repentance and the forgiveness of sins boldly. That day about 3,000 souls were saved when Peter preached to them, and they went on to turn the world "upside down" through the power of the Holy Spirit. It was clearly God's plan from the beginning that the Church, His called-out people or the Body, would be made known to the world by gathering together to fulfill His mission. *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. (Acts 1:8)*

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead, which proceeds from the Father and the Son. The work of the Holy

Spirit is to reveal Christ. In a practical sense, the Holy Spirit is the living Lord Jesus within us as a Spirit. As God is in Christ, Christ is in the Holy Spirit. *He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. (John 16:14)* Jesus glorifies the Father; the Holy Spirit glorifies the Son. The office of the Holy Spirit is not to speak of itself. The Spirit shows us the truth found in God through Jesus Christ. The power of the Holy Spirit is where Jesus is lifted up (John 16:13-14).

The Holy Spirit reveals to us the greatness of the living Lord Jesus who has completely reconciled the sins of the whole world with His blood. Our Pentecost begins when we are able to believe our sins forgiven in the name and blood of Jesus. Where the preaching of the blood is heard, there the power of the Holy Spirit is moving. The blood of Jesus was from the fall of man to the end of the Revelation a red cord that goes through the Bible. Through the Word, the Holy Spirit brings us into a union with God. Then the Spirit comes to live in us, to enlighten, sanctify and preserve us unto everlasting life. *For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost... (1 Thessalonians 1:5)*

God's order is that the Holy Spirit works through His Church. The Church uses His Word and the Sacraments. That is why we baptize, take the Lord's Supper, listen to the Word of God and desire the absolution that our sins are forgiven in the precious name and blood of Jesus. They are means of grace instituted by Christ. Through these means, the Holy Spirit accomplishes His work in us, abides in us and comforts us.

*Pastor Elmer Yliniemi
Wolf Lake, Minnesota*

2010 REGIONAL FALL SERVICES

The Tapiola Apostolic Lutheran Church in Tapiola, Michigan, will host the 2010 Regional Fall Services August 12-15, 2010.

Timo Orre from Haaparanta, Sweden, will be the guest speaker. All are invited to join in worship and fellowship.

*God's peace,
Cal Niemela*



FAITH OR WORKS?

In other words, Christianity or religion? Saved or lost? This important doctrine is the difference between heaven and hell, eternal life and eternal death. *Ephesians 2:8-10* says, *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.* Martin Luther, in his *Introduction to Romans*, brings clearness to this doctrine:

"Faith is not that human notion that some hold for faith. Because they see that no betterment of life and no good works follow it, and yet they can hear and say much about faith, they fall into error and say, 'Faith is not enough; one must do works in order to be righteous and be saved.' This is the reason that, when they hear the Gospel, they fall-to and make for themselves, by their own powers, an idea in their hearts which says, 'I believe.' This they hold for true. But it is the human imagination and idea that never reaches the depths of the heart, and so nothing comes of it and no betterment follows it.

"Faith, however, is a divine work in us. It changes us and makes us to be born anew of God (John 1); it kills the old Adam and makes altogether different men, in heart and spirit and mind and powers, and it brings with it the Holy Ghost. Oh, it is a living, busy, active, mighty thing, this faith; and so it is impossible for it not to do good works incessantly. It does not ask whether there are good works to do, but before the question rises, it has already done them, and is always at the doing of them. He who does not these works is a faithless man. He gropes and looks about after faith and good works, and knows neither what faith is nor what good works are, though he talks and talks, with many words, about faith and good works.

"Faith is a living, daring confidence in God's grace, so sure and certain that a man would stake his life on it a thousand times. This confidence in God's grace and knowledge of it makes men glad and bold and happy in dealing with God and all His creatures; and this is the work of the Holy Ghost in faith. Hence a man

is ready and glad, without compulsion, to do good to everyone, to serve everyone, to suffer everything, in love and praise, quite as impossible as to separate the heat and light of fires. Beware, therefore, of your own false notions and idle talkers, who would be wise enough to make decisions about faith and good works and yet are the greatest fools. Pray God to work faith in you, else you will remain forever without faith, whatever you think or do."

The Bible says in *Philippians 2:12, 13*: *Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.* What God has done will stand forever, as Jesus has said, "Without me you can do nothing (John 15:5)," as one who has learned that in all things He might (must) have the preeminence (Colossians 1:18), and continues to learn. May God richly bless each of you as you do the work of the Lord, in and by the faith of Christ, which works by (because of) love, His love.

*God's peace,
Pastor Mark Matson
Pasco, Washington*

All the events, then—Christ's crucifixion, His burial, His resurrection the third day, His ascension into heaven, His sitting down at the right hand of the Father, were so ordered that the life which the Christian leads here might be modeled upon them, not merely in a mystical sense, but in reality. In reference to His crucifixion it is said: *And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. (Galatians 5:24)* In reference to His burial: *Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death...* In reference to His resurrection: *...that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:4)* In reference to His ascension into heaven and sitting down at the right hand of the Father: *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. (Colossians 3:1-3)*

St. Augustine

LORD, SHOW US YOUR GRACE!

A question was asked of Jesus: *Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?* (John 9:2) We now—2000 some years later and much wiser—look at this as being a somewhat foolish question, especially since we know the outcome of the account as recorded in the Bible, preserved for us. However, we still ask the same question. It just doesn't sound quite the same: Who sinned in Haiti? Is it the people in this present day or was it their pagan ancestors who caused such a horrid calamity to befall them?

The answers to all great questions, whether foolish or wise, are found within the Word. We remember the plight of the Israelites, who, because of their apostasy or the wickedness of the king, were plunged into despair and hardship by a just God. Since this is in Scripture, many are inclined to apply this same reasoning—God's reasoning—to present situations in the world around us. Surely if God would punish His own chosen people and record it for an example to us, He would do the same today to a nation or people who turn their backs on Him.

However, what was the *main* purpose for God choosing a people unto Himself? Was it solely to make them obedient unto Him? Was it to make them an example for the subsequent generations and peoples, to *force them* into obedience? When God chose the Israelites as a people, He chose a person, Abram, to be the one to whom He would show His purpose. His promise to Abram, which Abram (later called Abraham) believed, was twofold: that God would make of him a great nation, and that through him *all* the nations of the world would be blessed. Paul clarifies Israel's purpose to us in *Romans, chapter 9, verses 4-5: Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.* To apply God's correction toward Israel (which was the purpose of them being a tried people, to be found guilty under the Law, and ultimately to look unto the forgiveness and mercy found in the Messiah) to current events is somewhat faulty, although we all do it.

We do know that sin has a consequence, whether in this life or the next. The Word tells us that by one man sin entered into the world, and death because of this sin. We live in a fallen world. Not only is man subject to this sentence, but nature as well: *For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. (Romans 8:20-22)* For this reason an earthquake in Haiti would be expected and justified—as well as an earthquake in my city.

Maybe if we take it out of the national realm into the individual I can more clearly state my point. The Psalmist writes: *If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? (Psalm 130:3)* We as sinners live in a time of offered grace; we as children of Abraham by faith (and still sinners) stand in grace. *And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. (John 1:16-17)* There is a term used to convey the station of man that has lately fallen out of use as mankind strives to bolster himself with self-esteem. That term is "beggar of grace." Oh, Lord, whether we live in a "blessed" or "cursed" nation, show us Thy grace, the grace that has appeared unto all men, the grace that is made known in Jesus Christ. *To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. (Jude 1:25)*

*God's peace,
Pastor Phil Wilson
Hockinson, Washington*

Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. **Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.** Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

Hebrews 13:7-9

Dear children far and near,

I thank God this day that each of you are believers in Him and His Son Jesus, and I pray that He will bless you. We are now in the Easter season, and we remember Jesus' death and resurrection. I would like to share with you something that happened after Jesus arose.

ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

On the day that Jesus arose from the dead, two of His disciples have left Jerusalem where the crucifixion had taken place and are walking toward a town called Emmaus, about seven miles away. As these two disciples are walking along, they talk of all the sad events that have just taken place; they are very sad because their Lord was taken away from them. As they are talking, Jesus Himself appears suddenly. He walks with them and listens to what they are saying. Did these men recognize Jesus? Not at all. The Bible says, *But their eyes were holden* (not allowed to recognize Him) *that they should not know him.* (Luke 24:16) Jesus then asks them what they are talking about and also why they are so sad.

And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God



and all the people: And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. (Luke 24:18-20)

Children, do you see what is happening here? Cleopas does not know that he is talking to Jesus! Cleopas is telling Jesus all about Jesus' own death. Jesus already knows everything, but He pretends not to.

Jesus listens patiently and then says, *O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? (Luke 24:25-26)* Then Jesus speaks unto them all the Scriptures from the Old Testament that mention His coming to earth and dying for the world. After Jesus tells the two disciples all these things, they still do not know who is with them!

They finally reach Emmaus and it is already toward evening. Jesus acts like He is going to go farther, but the disciples ask Him to stay with them, so He does. While they sit and eat, Jesus takes the bread, blesses it, and breaks it and gives it to the two disciples. *And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. (Luke 24:31)*

Imagine that! These two disciples finally learn that they have just spent the whole day with their beloved friend, Jesus, and He so quickly disappears that they can't even talk to Him! I think they were totally amazed and very happy at seeing their Lord once more because they were missing Him very much!

The disciples went back to Jerusalem right away to find the rest of the disciples and to tell them that they had seen Jesus and that He was risen indeed. As they were speaking Jesus suddenly appeared in the room with them. The disciples were afraid, but when Jesus saw that He spoke to them saying, *Peace be unto you. (Luke 24:36)*

We can't see Jesus in person but we can see how He lives in our lives and in other people's lives who serve Him and we can talk to Him anytime, anywhere. We don't have to be sad that He died, but we can thank Him with all our hearts that He did die for us. He dearly LOVES us and because of Him we can have peace in our hearts.

God keep you all in His care!

Love,

Gwen Wilson

Dear friends,
God's peace!

The Bible tells us a brief story about a family that Jesus helped in *John 12:1-3*: *Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.*

What a miracle occurred in the house of Martha, Mary and Lazarus. Lazarus, who had been dead, sat at the table with Jesus to eat with Him. This is a marvelous picture of those who have been born again from the death of trespasses and sins to sit with Jesus in heavenly places.

Ephesians 2:4-10 says: *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

When Lazarus was raised from the dead, his heart was filled with love, thanksgiving and praise for the Lord Jesus Christ. He sat with Jesus. Martha and Mary also showed their love by serving and worshipping Him. This love for Jesus and desire to be with Him is the fruit of the Holy Spirit which is written about in *Galatians 5:22, 23*: *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

We are filled with love for Him who has loved us first so that we might love Him. We have joy in fellowship with God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1:3, 4). Jesus forgives us and gives us peace that the world cannot give. *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you... (John 14:27)*

Dear friend, have you been raised from the dead like Lazarus, been born again from God, and received the forgiveness of your sins? Jesus is powerful to save, forgive and wash you clean through the blood that He shed on Calvary's cross. Believe in Him today, praise, worship and thank Him always, and sit in fellowship with Him and His people.

*In God's precious love,
Pastor Andrew Kandoll
Champion, Michigan*

Paul was now in bonds, yet not so close kept as to be denied pen and paper; God, it seems, gave him some favor in the sight of his enemies: Paul was Nero's prisoner, but Nero was much more God's. And while God had work for Paul, He found him friends both in court and prison. Let persecutors send saints to prison, God can provide a keeper for their turn.

But how does this great apostle spend his time in prison? Not in publishing invectives against those, though the worst of men, who had laid him in; a piece of zeal which the holy sufferers of those times were little acquainted with: nor in politic counsels, how he might wind himself out of his trouble, by sordid flattery of, or sinful compliance with, the great ones of the times. Some would have used any picklock to have opened a passage to their liberty and not scrupled, so escape they might, whether they got out at the door or window. But this holy man was not so fond of liberty or life as to purchase them at the least hazard to the Gospel. He knew too much of another world to bid so high for the enjoying of this; and therefore he is regardless what his enemies can do with him, well knowing he should go to heaven whether they would or no. No, the great care which lay upon him was for the churches of Christ; as a faithful steward he labors to set the house of God in order before his departure. We read of no dispatches sent to court to procure his liberty, but many to the churches, to help them to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free. There is no such way to be even with the devil and his instruments, for all their spite against us, as by doing what good we can wherever we be come.

William Gurnall

IN LOVING MEMORY OF LEW AND PENNY MATSON

Lewis Albert Matson (born in Venersborg, WA to Albert and Helena “Vivian” Matson) married Ethel Marguerite “Penny” Simms (born in Manor, WA to Earnest and Charlotte Simms) on July 28, 1944, in Vancouver, WA. After 64 years of marriage and eleven children, Lew died December 19, 2008, of congestive heart failure, holding the hand of Penny, his beloved wife. Almost 15 months later, which she couldn't help but feel was about 14 months too long, Penny died, also of congestive heart failure, March 13, 2010. We are confident that they are together again, safe in the arms of Jesus.

Lew was a lifelong member of the ALC in Hockinson, WA. He enjoyed serving on the regional Western Mission Board for many years and lent his gentle, loving wisdom to the local Hockinson church board for even longer. By God's grace, the Christian testimony left by Lew is especially significant in the example he set by treating his wife and children with loving respect. He would not have raised his voice to his wife, let alone his hand. Since Penny did most of the child-rearing and Lew was often gone for long hours working, he took care to support her decisions and stood behind her in matters of discipline and behavior, always modeling and teaching respect. As a leader in the home, Lew made it clear to all, all of the time, that he loved his children's mother. Penny gave her life to Jesus in the early days of their marriage and enjoyed attending the ALC until her failing health and hearing kept her housebound.

Penny set an example of biblical scholarship from an early age. She emulated the Bereans of whom Luke says, *...they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. (Acts 17:11)* She modeled and taught respect for Lew's simple direct faith in the Lord that radiated trust and joy in every circumstance. Together, as they grew in faith, they supported personal responsibility for all one's actions including earthly consequences when appropriate. Together, they created a family gathering place where all children were expected to be absolutely safe, and where trust was to be unbroken.

Lew liked to say that he was a "jack of all trades." He made a living as a logger, mechanic and truck driver. He had a special talent for machinery, especially the temperamental gear shifts in his beloved old trucks. His creative fixes are still a source of wonder and sometimes amusement for his family. He was an outdoorsman and loved trekking with his family to the mountains, especially the "second home" of his childhood, Silver Star Mountain. Lew was a gifted story-teller from the old, oral tradition, and his family remembers and will miss his recounting of adventures and remembrances of the Lord's blessings from the early days.

Penny spent her adult years and energy raising their large family on the banks of the Lewis River at NE Lewisville Hwy, Battle Ground, WA. As the children came quickly, the house seemed to become smaller, and the early years were spent in a four-room home where all of the family living was carried out in the kitchen. Crowded and cheerful, clean and organized, warm with the wood stove, the smells of cooking, and the sounds of singing, the family life centered on Penny who was very accepting of having her children "tumble all over her" like a large litter of puppies in a very small basket. Her love of flowers and gardening brought joy to her middle years. Both before she had many children and after her children got older, Penny loved to crochet. She made many gifts for her loved ones until her sight began to fail.

In more recent years, Lew and Penny enjoyed a much expanded home which was capable of holding their ever-larger extended family as they flocked to the draw of Lew's simple, steadfast faith, his teaching, his charm, and his story-telling abilities and Penny's vitality, her mother's heart, her intelligence, her curiosity and her commitment to continued learning. Their home, which was on a primary north-to-south route through Clark County, was through all the years an often-used stopping point for friends and family traveling in either direction. Penny created a home which welcomed drop-in company at any time of the day or early evening. When Lew retired, he joined her in offering coffee and Christian fellowship to friends and family from far and near. They will be greatly missed by many, many people.

The family of Lew and Penny Matson

CONFESSION

If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. (1 John 1:6-10)

We are to confess before God that we are guilty of all sin, even of those which we do not know. However, we should confess those sins which we know and feel in our hearts and which burden our consciences, to a trusted Christian (confessor). The confession of sins to a confessor is a precious gift of God and a privilege which every Christian should use according to his needs and the demands of his conscience.

Confession should never be taught in an exacting spirit. Neither should it be taught as a condition for salvation, but rather, as a gift of God's mercy. The only condition for salvation is scriptural faith in Jesus. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life (John 6:47).*

If a believer's conscience is burdened with sins he has committed and acknowledged before, these sins may still be a hindrance to his faith. If the believer feels an inner need and urge to confess these sins to a trusted Christian, this is the voice of the Holy Spirit to which he should be obedient. Confession of sins to a confessor is not a meritorious work and the believer is not made righteous by this act, for he is already righteous in Christ. He confesses his sins in order to restore peace of conscience through absolution, and so that he may be able to freely appropriate the Gospel. He is not to think that only those sins which he confessed are forgiven, for absolution means that all his sins are forgiven, even those which he may not be aware of.

Principles of the Doctrine of Christ

Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

James 5:16

JESUS AND HIS MOTHER

And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. (Luke 2:51)

Was subject unto them. Performed the duty of a faithful and obedient child, and not improbably was engaged in the trade of Joseph, that of a carpenter. Every Jew was required to learn some trade, and there is every reason to think that our Savior followed that of His reputed father. From this we learn:

1. That obedience to parents is a duty. Jesus has set an example in this that all children should follow. Though He was the Son of God, and on proper occasions was engaged in the great work of redemption, yet He was also the son of Mary, and He loved and obeyed His mother, and was subject to her.

2. It is no dishonor to be a mechanic, or to be brought up in an obscure employment. Jesus has conferred honor on virtuous industry, and no man should be ashamed of industrious parents, though poor, or of a condition of life that is far from ease and affluence. Industry is honorable, and virtuous poverty should not be regarded as a matter of reproach. The only thing to be ashamed of, in regard to this matter, is when men are idle, or when children are too proud to hear or speak of the occupation of their parents, or to follow the same occupation.



And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. (John 2:1-5)

Woman. This term, as it is used here, seems to imply reproof, as if she was interfering in that which did not properly concern her; but it is evident that no such reproof or disrespect was intended by the use of the term *woman* instead of *mother*. It is the same term by which He tenderly addressed Mary Magdalene after His resurrection, and His mother when He was on the cross.

What have I to do with thee? This expression is sometimes used to denote indignation or contempt. But it is not probable that it denoted either in this place; if it did, it was a mild reproof of Mary for attempting to control or direct Him in His power of working miracles. Most of the ancients supposed this to be the intention of Jesus. The words may sound to us harsh, but they might have been spoken in a tender manner, and not have been intended as a reproof. It is clear that He did not intend to refuse to provide wine, but only to delay it a little; and the design was, therefore, to compose the anxiety of Mary, and to prevent her being solicitous about it. It may, then, be thus expressed:

"My mother, be not anxious. To you and to me this should not be a matter of solicitude. The proper time of My interfering has not yet come. When that is come I will furnish a supply, and in the meantime neither you nor I should be solicitous."

Thus understood, it is so far from being a harsh reproof, that it was a mild exhortation for her to dismiss her fears and to put proper trust in Him.



Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home. (John 19:25-27)

Behold thy son! This refers to *John*, not to Jesus Himself. Behold, my beloved disciple shall be to you a son, and provide for you, and discharge toward you the duties of an affectionate child. Mary was poor. It would even seem that now she had no home. Jesus, in His dying moments, filled with tender regard for His mother, secured for her an adopted son, obtained for her a home, and consoled her grief by the prospect of attention from him who was the most beloved of all the apostles. What an example of filial attention! What a model to all children! And how lovely appears the dying Savior, thus remembering His afflicted mother, and making her welfare one of His last cares on the cross, and even when making atonement for the sins of the world!

Behold thy mother! One who is to be to thee as a mother. The fact that she was the mother of Jesus would secure the kindness of John, and the fact that she was now entrusted to him demanded of him affectionate regard and tender care.

And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home. John seems to have been in better circumstances than the other apostles (see John 18:16). Tradition says that she continued to live with him in Judea till the time of her death, which occurred about fifteen years after the death of Christ.

Albert Barnes



Happy
Mother's
Day!

May God bless you, mothers!

CHRISTIAN MONTHLY

Vol. LXVI—No. 5

Subscription Rate: 1 Year

US: \$12 Canada: \$18 (Payable with US money order only) Foreign: \$25
(Washington residents add 7.7% sales tax — \$.92 for 1 year)

Send articles for publication to:

Lois Matson, Editor
CHRISTIAN MONTHLY
PO Box 2996
Battle Ground, WA 98604 USA
Phone: (360) 904-6951
Fax: (360) 686-4131
E-mail: cm@apostoliclutheran.org

*Address subscriptions, payments,
and Book Concern orders to:*

Anders and Clara Sundqvist, Managers
THE BOOK CONCERN
PO Box 2126
Battle Ground, WA 98604-2126 USA
Phone/Fax: (360) 896-7344
E-mail: books@apostoliclutheran.org

APOSTOLIC LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AMERICA

website: www.apostoliclutheran.org

Western Mission: western@apostoliclutheran.org
Eastern Mission: eastern@apostoliclutheran.org
Foreign Mission: foreign@apostoliclutheran.org

The Christian Monthly (ISSN 0009-5494) is published monthly for \$12 per year by the Apostolic Lutheran Book Concern, 19113 NE 144th Street, Brush Prairie, WA 98606.

Periodical postage paid at Battle Ground, Washington.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the above PO Box 2126 address.

Christian Monthly

May 2010

19

The Ascension of Our Lord

See the King of kings ascending
To His throne of power again;
Who in humble garb descending,
Came to dwell with lowly men.

Glad the angel hosts adoring
Fling the golden gates aside;
Mortals, view the Victor soaring,
Heaven receives the Lord with pride.

Strike your harps, ye choirs supernal;
Lift your songs of welcome now;
For, behold your King eternal
Comes with laurels on His brow.

Gone the sorrow and the sighing;
All the anguish and the pain;
Gone the weakness and the dying,—
Choirs immortal, raise the strain;

Hallelujah! endless glory
To the King of Glory give;
Mortals, heed the gladsome story,
Christ is risen, and thou may'st live.

John Brownlie

If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christ. Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved, and to be steady on all the battlefield besides is mere flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point.

Martin Luther

*Submitted by Phebe Johnson
Astoria, Oregon*