

# 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.

JULY 2010

## IN GOD WE TRUST

**F**OR MANY DECADES THE PHRASE, "IN GOD WE TRUST," has symbolized our American heritage. This trust on the part of our country's founding fathers has brought abundant blessings to their posterity.

For more than two hundred years, our nation has prospered at the hand of the One who our first president called "The Almighty Being who is the Great Author of every public and private good and whose invisible hand conducts the affairs of men more than the people of these United States." America's very beginning and advancement to the status of a free and independent nation, and as a

world power, are the result of Divine Providence.

It can be rightly said that our heritage is that of those who feared the name of God—who held it in reverence and honor, desiring to hear His voice, and to see His blessing, and to follow His guidance.

In an address to his cabinet in Philadelphia on September 17, 1796, President Washington made known his decision to end his political career. He acknowledged the debt of gratitude which he felt he owed to his beloved country for the many honors it had conferred upon him and for the confidence with which it had supported him in the office of president. Then,

as a true elder statesmen, he gave wise counsel to those who would succeed him in holding the reins of government. Along with the very necessary and timely instruction on how to persevere in the newly-formed union so that regional differences and local interests would not divide it, he placed special emphasis on the importance of religion and morality in national as well as private life. The following paragraphs are from this farewell speech:

"Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connections with private and public felicity. Let it simply be asked: where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation deserts the oaths which are the instruments of investigation in the courts of justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition that

morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.

"In offering you, my countrymen, these counsels of an old and affectionate friend, I dare not hope they will make the strong and lasting impression I could wish, that they will control the usual current of passions or prevent our nation from running the course which has hitherto marked the destiny of nations. But if I may even flatter myself that they may be productive of some partial benefit, some occasional good... this hope will be a full recompense for the solicitude of your welfare by which they have been dictated."

Unfortunately, religion and morality, which President Washington considered indispensable, are being abandoned among many of our citizens today. Individual moral decay is rampant. And as far as our public national life is concerned, the honoring, teaching and practice of religion and morality are considered to be unconstitutional. We have gone far afield

from the pathways which our forefathers trod. We merit divine discipline on an individual, as well as on a national level.

As we celebrate this anniversary of our country's independence, let us in earnestness call upon God for His help and seek His blessing. The prayer of Prophet

Habakkuk would serve our needs well. He prayed: *O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy. (Habakkuk 3:2)*

*Pastor Alvin Holmgren  
Seattle, Washington  
Archived writing, July 1993*

## LITTLE THINGS

*For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. (2 Corinthians 4:17)*

**T**he choice of the word "light," above, is simply astonishing. For Paul used it to describe the nature of the Apostles' dire fate of rejection and death for the sake of Christ. How many of us, in the middle of trial, could accept an appraisal of our woe as "light"? Yet, this is precisely what Paul was inspired to believe in regard to his own woes. Even the severest of trials—beatings, imprisonments, severing of limbs and family ties, and yes, even death itself— are counted as "little" and "light," indeed, for they are all nothing but momentary. It is only in the eternal Christ where these temporal weights lose their enormous pull and become as the gnat upon the shoulder of the great ox from Aesop's fable who replied to his transient guest, "I neither noticed when you landed, nor will notice when you leave." The trials of this life, in contrast with our eternal reward, are likewise minimized. The faith of Christ grants a release from the gravity of earthly trial in exchange for a new center of infinite gravity that has come and even now draws us with cords of love. As the Lord draws us toward Himself, it cannot be but that the things of earth *will* grow "strangely dim."

Among these "dim" things ought to be our appraisal of death. Having been released in Christ from its frightful grasp, we are not longer to treat it with the awful majesty of which it

falsely boasts. The emotions we experience in relation to it or any other difficulty are not, however, disqualified; for Paul encourages us with the sympathy of Christ Himself when he pleads with us to weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice (Romans 12:15). Nor do we dismiss Christ's own emotional conflicts: His exasperation with His own generation at their lack of faith, His anger at the money changers who defiled His Father's house, His grief over the lost city of Jerusalem... but... standing over against all this emotional conflict, all this grief, anger and rejection to which Jesus submitted Himself, sharing flesh and blood with us, He bids us, here, to give these things their proper place, assuring us that none of these provocations are ultimate.

Isn't this what is in the heart of the Apostle Paul as he, in another

**Those who are Christ's  
have the daring, even audacity,  
to belittle the false majesty of death...**

place, calls us to celebrate our possessions in Christ, one of which includes death itself? *Therefore let no man glory in men. For **all things are yours**; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, **or death**, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's. (1 Corinthians 3:21-23)* Who would celebrate death as his own possession except he over whom death holds no threat or power? Who would dare make such a strange claim? Those who are Christ's have the daring, even audacity, to belittle the false majesty of death and loss, ruin and chaos. These things are all, in reality, very little, indeed "light," for the one whose mind is set on things above (Colossians 3:2).

We are convinced of the true littleness of our trials only in Him and by Him who has already both suffered and triumphed over them all—rejection, dread, death, hell... He is risen victorious from the dead and has transferred ownership of all things into the hands of His own who can now confidently join the Apostle's song, *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? (1 Corinthians 15:55)*

*Pastor Nathan Juntunen  
Vancouver, Washington*



## BIBLE VERSES FOR COMFORT AND COUNSEL

**I** will share some verses that I have collected over a year's time. They have been of great comfort to me during a time of severe temptation. It is very important that we would consider both the truth and grace aspects of God's Word. *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:10)* Our God is a God full of grace and truth. Grace is the unmerited favor of God.

Grace is the relational aspect of God's character; truth is the structural aspect of His character. Grace and truth are a healing combination. Jesus says, *I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (John 14:6)*

- ♦ **Psalm 86:5** *For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.*
- ♦ **Proverbs 28:13** *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*
- ♦ **Colossians 1:14** *In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.*
- ♦ **John 13:14** *If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.*
- ♦ **Psalm 139:23-24** *Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*
- ♦ **1 Corinthians 8:9** *But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.*
- ♦ **James 4:6-8** *. . . God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.*
- ♦ **James 4:10** *Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.*

- ◆ **1 John 1:9-10** *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.*
- ◆ **James 5:16** *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 1:13-15** *Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*
- ◆ **Hebrews 4:15-16** *For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*
- ◆ **2 Peter 2:9** *The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations...*
- ◆ **1 Chronicles 16:11** *Seek the LORD and his strength, seek his face continually.*
- ◆ **Psalms 139:1-2** *O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.*
- ◆ **1 John 2:16** *For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*
- ◆ **2 Timothy 2:20-22** *But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work. Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.*
- ◆ **1 John 3:20** *For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.*
- ◆ **Galatians 6:1** *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*

♦ **1 Corinthians 6:18-20** *Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*

♦ **James 3:13-14** *Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.*

Our God is a God full of grace and truth. *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)*

Dave Impola  
Everett, Washington

## THE FEAR OF THE LORD

**T**here are many different types of fear common to people. For example, we may have the fear of falling, the fear of heights (especially when we are in a high place and the distance to the ground is great), the fear of other people when they want to harm us, and the fear of the sea when the waves are boisterous and high and our boat is small. We have also experienced the fear of sickness and death, some to a greater extent and some to a lesser.

The Bible tells of another kind of fear: the fear of the Lord. It is important for us to understand that this is not a negative or slavish fear but a childlike fear that gives us the desire and will to follow God's Word and the leading of His Holy Spirit. It is written: *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction. (Proverbs 1:7) The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. (Proverbs 9:10) The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility. (Proverbs 15:33)*

When this fear of the Lord is in the heart of a child of God, he will often pray to God for the strength and guidance of His

Spirit so he can be preserved as His child all the days of his life. A living child of God knows as David writes in the Psalms: *Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. (Psalm 139:7-10)* A Christian, walking by faith, will always want to consider what the Word of God teaches in everything because this childlike fear and God's love dwell in his heart. We all wish that this love could be burning brighter in our hearts, but because of the weakness of the flesh frailties and shortcomings are always with us.

Prophet Jeremiah tells about those who walk in unbelief and sin without the fear of the Lord in their hearts. *Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts. (Jeremiah 2:19)* In another place he writes these beautiful words of comfort: *And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. (Jeremiah 32:40)* May God bless each one of you so that this everlasting covenant through our Lord Jesus Christ and these eternal blessings may be with you always.

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

And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, **and ye that fear him**, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

Revelation 19:5-7

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## Dear Children,

Hello again to each of you. I pray you are well today. We must remember to thank God every day for life and health. Oh, we forget so easily! I know I do, but the Lord deserves to be thanked as He gives us good gifts every day, and we don't even ask for them.

In our last story Jesus was taken up to heaven and, just before that, He had told His disciples to stay in Jerusalem until the power from on high, from God, would be sent to them. Let us look into the Bible and see what is happening in *Acts 2:1-18*.



## THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES—PENTECOST

There were many people gathered in Jerusalem at this time as they came together to celebrate Pentecost (*Pente* means 50.) This was an Old Testament celebration marking the end of the grain harvest or the firstfruits (the first grain or fruit) of the harvest 50 days after Passover. Much thanks was given and offerings were made to God. Now in the New Testament it was the time of Pentecost again, and the firstfruits of this time would not be grain but to celebrate Jesus and the Holy Spirit coming to live in the hearts of men.

The disciples listened to Jesus and were staying in Jerusalem, just as Jesus had told them to do. They were waiting for the promise (the Holy Spirit) that Jesus told them would come to them from the God the Father.

The day of Pentecost had come and the disciples were gathered together 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 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 (languages), as the Spirit gave them utterance (words to speak).* *Acts 2:2-4*

See, children, the Holy Spirit was the power that the disciples were instructed to wait for, as they would need this to do the Lord's work. I want you children to know that if you can say you believe in God and His Son Jesus you have that same power living in your heart. We have received that power through believing in the one true God.

After the disciples had received this power, God gave them the ability to speak of Him in many different languages and the people were amazed to hear it in their own languages. The people were also amazed because they knew that the disciples were all from the same area and would have spoken one language with each other and yet at the moment they spoke in many different ones.

Many were amazed and liked what they heard; others said the men were drunken, but Peter stood up to tell them it was not so. He told them that this was the fulfillment of a prophecy spoken long ago by the prophet Joel: *And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. (Acts 2:17-18)*

We can be so thankful that God sent this comforting Spirit to also live in our hearts and give us power to speak the good news of Jesus to whoever will hear.

I pray that God will keep each one of you in His care all the days of your life, and that you will keep Him in your heart and ask God to help you be strong. You are blessed, children, and, even though some of you may not have much in this life, you have the greatest riches with Jesus in your heart. No one can take that away from you. It is your hidden treasure and it is certainly worth sharing with others.

When you stop and spend time reading in the Bible about Jesus I pray that God will bless you. The Bible is the best book we could ever read.

*From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the LORD'S name is to be praised. (Psalm 113:3)*

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

## LORD, REVIVE US AGAIN

The Psalmist cries out in *Psalm 85:6-7*: *Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee? Shew us thy mercy, O LORD, and grant us thy salvation.*

**A**t the beginning of this psalm, he tells what God has done for His people: brought them back from captivity, forgave their evil doings, and turned away His anger from them. But looking at the state and the prospects of the people of God, the Psalmist observes that a revival is needed; therefore, he asks, *Wilt thou not revive us again?*

How is it with you, dear brother and sister, you whom God has released from the captivity of the devil, forgiven you your iniquity and turned His anger away from you? By examining yourself and the church in general, do you feel that a revival is needed? Are you satisfied with the condition of your heart and spiritual life? I shall not ask you if you are satisfied with the condition of your fellow-believer, because it is much easier to see faults in others than in yourself.

What are the signs that should indicate to all that we need to be revived? Let me attempt to enumerate some of them. 1. When there is a lack of brotherly love and Christian confidence. 2. When there are dissensions and jealousies, and evil speaking among the believers. 3. When there is a worldly spirit prevalent among the members of the church. 4. When confessors fall into gross sins. 5. When Christians become careless and drowsy, not caring whether unbelievers all around them are bound for destruction. 6. When excuses are sought after and found, why Christians need not give up luxuries, that more might be given for God's work. 7. When Christians do not hunger and thirst after righteousness that their own souls might be fed and refreshed by the Word and that sinners might be saved, but go to church only when it is convenient for them to do so or if, perhaps, there are not better matters to attend to, and then, too, if the speaker be of their choice.

How many of these signs are visible among us today? How many of these signs do you see in yourself? Is there a lack of brotherly love in your heart, and have you lost confidence in other Christians? If so, what is the reason? Is the fault in them

or in you? If in them, have you gone to them, with brotherly love, and told them your reason, or have you gone about speaking evil about them behind their backs to stir up dissensions among the flock of Christians? Has the spirit of the world found room in your heart, which things—such as worldly friends, amusements, clothing and adornments, honor and esteem of the world, worldly possessions, car, home, money, wife, children, or any other thing or combination of things—seemed uppermost in your heart and mind, so that your thoughts, and conversation, were and are more on them than on the things of God? *Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. (Colossians 3:2)*

Have you fallen into any gross sins which have not been confessed and forgiven? Have you become careless in your speech, deportment and appearance before unbelievers, to the detriment of Christians and a stumbling-block in Christianity? These are signs of drowsiness, because Christians speak louder with their actions than with their words. Have you denied yourself any luxuries so you could give more abundantly to the work of God, or do you give only a tiny portion of your abundance? Let us remember what Jesus said of the widow's mite.

Do you feel such an inward need to attend services and Bible Study that you will put all other things aside as less important, though you have to drive a few miles and make some small sacrifice to attend, because you do not want to miss? Do you pray to God that He would bless His servant in the pulpit and that your heart might be receptive to His grace and truth? Do you enter God's house in the spirit of prayer?

Placing ourselves like this before the all-knowing God with these many questions, are we able to give an unreserved answer: yes? To how many of these questions do we have to add some reservation or admit that we are guilty in God's presence?

Perhaps now we can observe with the Psalmist that we are in need of a revival, and join with him in praying, *Wilt thou not revive us again?*

Many of us can recall times when our hearts burned with love toward God and our fellow man, that it was a pleasure for us to speak to others about what God had done for us. It seemed natural for us to seek Christian companionship, that together we could sing and talk, read and pray, thus remaining

faithful that others might be saved. It was natural for us to have confidence in one another, both the young and the old, to be of one heart and mind, blessing and forgiving one another, without a thought of speaking evil or unkindly, or being envious, of anyone. The love of God was so abundantly shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit that there was no room for the love of this world. Even in the middle of our work our thoughts were on what spiritual things we could do and enjoy when our material duties ended. Our fervent prayers were for our unbelieving loved ones and friends, that they would be saved, and our hearts rejoiced when we heard someone had been converted. The more we heard of God's Word, His truth and grace, the more we wanted to hear. It seemed as though we never got enough. Time spent around the Word of God never seemed too long. Distances were shortened by the anticipation and the hope of sitting at the feet of Jesus to hear what He had to say to us.

**The more we heard of God's Word,  
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Why does all of this seem odd and childish to us now? Have we increased in stature and wisdom, and outgrown such childish things? Yes, we may have become older in years, matured in experience, and learned in the doctrine of Christ, but that is not the reason. Has our Christianity, the doctrine of Christ, or the preaching of the Word of God changed, causing this? No. That is not so, although those who cannot see any fault in themselves may say so and attempt to place blame on some thing, or someone else.

Let each of us search ourselves in the light of the Spirit of God. Have we examined ourselves, are we aware of these faults in ourselves and tried to correct them without much success? Even though we pray, "O God, help me to be more spiritually minded and fervent about Thy business! Give me a burden for the salvation of the lost, that I must go out and speak to them of Thy love, grace and truth. Kindle within me the fire of love, that the last sparks in my cold heart go not out. Help me to be more gracious and not so critical of my brothers and sisters in faith. Restore within me a right mind and a humble spirit that the world, the devil and my own corrupt nature detract me not

from drawing close to Thee through Thy Word and Thy Spirit." In such a prayer we acknowledge ourselves lacking in these things and desire to correct them but have been unable to do so. Why this inability? St. Paul answers that question for us in *Romans 7:19-20, 24-25: For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me... O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.*

Here is the means that enables us to correct ourselves from faults and sins: Jesus Christ our Lord! This is why we should fervently pray, *Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?* When God revives us we receive strength to cast aside every weight and sin. Our hearts will begin to burn with love so fervently that its fire will burn away all lack of confidence, dissensions, jealousies, evil back talk, worldliness, sinful desires, carelessness, drowsiness, avarice, greed, indifference, to hear anew the Word of God. That which before seemed impossible now becomes possible.

When the people of God become sufficiently convicted of these sins and faults and become convinced they are unable to correct them themselves and fervently cry to God for a revival, believing that God will hear and answer their prayers, they shall receive it. Jesus meant it when He said, *And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. (Matthew 21:22)* And again, *Ask, and it shall be given you... If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? (Matthew 7:7, 11)* St. James says, *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering... (James 1:5-6) ...ye have not, because ye ask not. (James 4:2)*

What has happened to the spirit of prayer? Has Satan convinced the believer that praying leads to self-righteousness? At the beginning of the great awakening and revival in northern Europe, we read of saints whose knees were calloused from praying. It is far better that calluses grow on our knees than on

our hearts and consciences. No wonder God answered their prayers with such a forceful revival that whole communities were converted. If we would only search the Bible we would see for ourselves what wonders have been wrought by prayer because ...*the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. (James 5:16)* The devil knows this; therefore, he tries to hinder us from praying effectually by bringing in other thoughts to make our minds wander. He knows full well that God wants us to pray for one thing at a time, and if we but concentrate to pray for a revival and that God would first begin it in us, God could use us in reviving others. I am sure we would have such a revival that it would reach out to the unsaved world, to the glory of God and the salvation of many souls.

Do not let the devil convince you that this is not God's time for a revival. God is always willing to revive us if we are willing to clear our hearts and consciences from all obstacles which obstruct our prayers from being heard. Let us all unite in earnestly and fervently asking the Lord, *Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?* And let us believe that God will hear us and answer our prayer.

*the late Andrew Mickelsen*

*March 1962 CM*

*Submitted by Gary Bertram*

*New Ipswich, New Hampshire*

## **MERCIES OF GOD**

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. 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. Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. (Romans 12:1-9)*

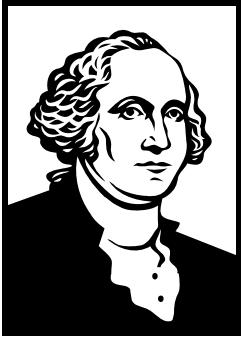
**I**n the latter portion of his letter to the Romans, the Apostle Paul gives a significant challenge to the church. He calls Christians to a radical life of service. Paul beckons us away from the world, so that we might live lives in accordance with the will of God. But how can we do this? No matter how hard we try to be faithful to our calling, we slip and fall. In the weakness of our flesh, we find ourselves to be like the Apostle Paul: *For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. (Romans 7:15)* This statement from Paul is not some sort of false modesty, but rather a declaration about the truth of the human condition. Because of sin, we cannot follow the commands of God by our own efforts.

The key to understanding Romans 12 can be found in verse one, *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God...* What are these mercies of God? They are the mercies that Paul describes in chapters one through eleven. Paul tells us that no one can save himself and everyone is a sinner (ch. 1-2). He then tells us that it is faith in Christ Jesus that justifies us in God's sight, not the works of the Law (ch. 3-4). Paul then instructs us that God's gift of grace in Christ is far greater than the power of sin and death (ch. 5). Now, through the death and resurrection of Christ we are united with Him (ch. 6). We still struggle with sin (ch. 7), but we are not condemned by God or the Law, because we walk by the power of the Holy Spirit (ch. 8). God's mercy is given to everyone, both Jew and Gentile (ch. 9-11).

So then, Paul tells us that because of all of these mercies of God, we are now able to serve Him. Our efforts gain us nothing, while God's effort gives us everything. Because of God's mercy we have been forgiven, justified and restored. We live this new life of servanthood because of who we now are in Christ Jesus. May God grant us grace to always abide in His mercies.

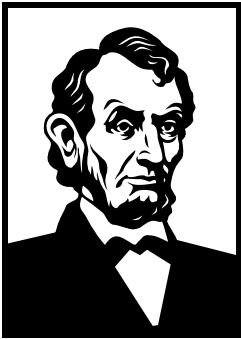
*Pastor Chuck Bylkas  
South Range, Michigan*

## PRAYERS OF PRESIDENTS



O eternal and everlasting God... increase my faith in the sweet promises of the Gospel; give me repentance from dead works; pardon my wanderings, and direct my thoughts unto Thyself, the God of my salvation; teach me how to live in Thy fear, labor in Thy service, and ever to run in the ways of Thy commandments; make me always watchful over my heart, that neither the terrors of conscience, the loathing of holy duties, the love of sin, nor an unwillingness to depart this life, may cast me into a spiritual slumber, but daily frame me more and more into the likeness of Thy son Jesus Christ, that living in Thy fear, and dying in Thy favor, I may in Thy appointed time attain the resurrection of the just unto eternal life...

*President George Washington  
Prayer Journal*



Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue... until every drop of blood drawn with the lash, shall be paid by another drawn with the sword... so still it must be said "the judgments of the Lord, are true and righteous altogether." With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and for his orphans, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations.

*President Abraham Lincoln  
Second Inaugural Address  
March 4, 1865*



To preserve our blessed land we must look to God... It is time to realize that we need God more than He needs us... Let us, young and old, join together, as did the First Continental Congress, in the first step, in humble heartfelt prayer. Let us do so for the love of God and His great goodness, in search of His guidance and the grace of repentance, in seeking His blessings, His peace, and the resting of His kind and holy hands on ourselves, our nation, our friends in the defense of freedom, and all mankind, now and always. The time has come to turn to God and reassert our trust in Him for the healing of America... Our country is in need of and ready for a spiritual renewal. Today, we utter no prayer more fervently than the ancient prayer for peace on earth. "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace..." And God bless you all.

*President Ronald Reagan  
from a speech to the American people on February 6, 1986*

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## To a Dear Young Person

As you stand upon Life's threshold,  
Just ahead are joy and pain;  
All will not be smooth and thornless,  
'Twill be sunshine mixed with rain.

As you walk upon the pathway,  
Let your Savior be your guide;  
When temptations would o'ercome you,  
In His wounds then safely hide.

Many prayers for you are offered  
To the mercy-seat above;  
Father, Mother—both care deeply—  
Would enfold you in God's love.

When that blessed day is here, then  
May we all be clothed in white,  
May we all sing praises ever  
To the Lamb, who is our Light.

*Lily Prouty  
Forest Grove, Oregon*

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

Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah. I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.

Psalm 32:7-8