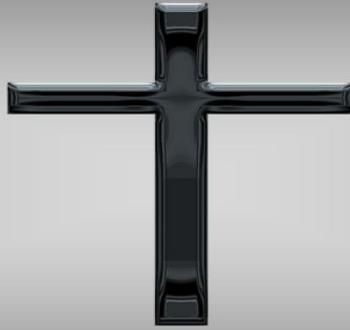


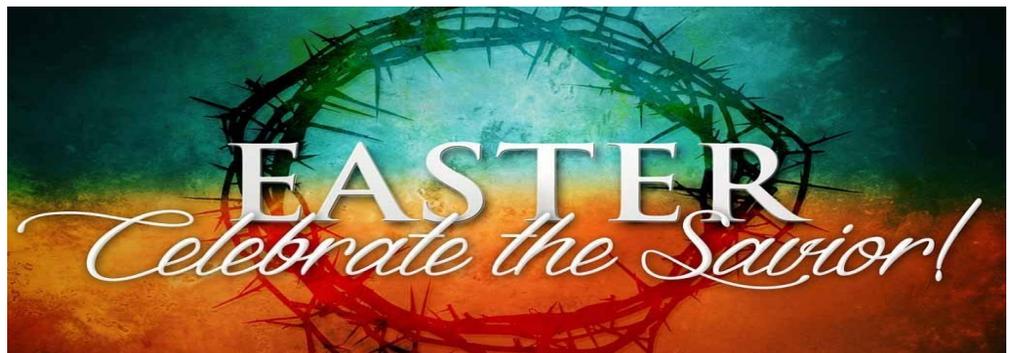
THE CROSS



"A CHURCH WHERE EVERYBODY IS SOMEBODY AND CHRIST IS LORD OF ALL"



PUT YOUR HOPE IN GOD'S PROMISES



For more information. See Pages 30-31

**March-April 2022
Volume 26 Issue 2**

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Visit our Facebook page

Hope Songs

My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness.
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly trust in Jesus' Name.

Refrain

On Christ the solid Rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

When darkness seems to hide His face,
I rest on His unchanging grace.
In every high and stormy gale,

(Hope Songs on page 16)

Hope Eternal

There's one passion of mine that I'm
so proud of, which has aided me to
expand my intellectual curiosity and truly,
has never ceased to thrill me.
It is that of investigating the reasoning
and the inspiration behind several musical
compositions that end up being popular
and enduring.

Through this passion I've learned to
appreciate the fact that many popular and
inspirational songs and hymns have been
conceived in the events of tragedy and

(Hope Eternal on page 17)

HOPE

What does the Bible teach about hope?

We often talk about hope in a type of wishful sense: "I hope you have a nice day." "Hope you have a relaxing vacation." "I hope I get the job." "I hope she says yes." "I hope I get the promotion." "I hope I don't get sick." There are many things we hope for in this life, some more probable to happen than others. However, the biblical concept of hope goes far beyond these earthly hopes. It is not mere wishful thinking, but something we have confidence will happen. Hebrews 11:1 says, "Now faith

(Hope on page 15)

"Christian Hope"

Let us pray, Heavenly Father, we are Your humble servant, we come before You today in need of hope. There are times when we feel helpless, There are times when we feel weak. We pray for hope. We need hope for a better future. We need hope for a better life. We need hope for love and kindness. We need Your light, Lord, in every way. We pray to be filled with Your light from head to toe. To bask in Your glory. To know that all is right in

(Christian Hope on page 27)

Memo from GOD

Effective immediately, please be aware that there are changes YOU need to make in YOUR life. These changes need to be completed in order that I may fulfill My promises to you to grant you peace, joy and happiness in this life. I apologize for any inconvenience, but after all that I am doing, this seems very little to ask of you. I know, I already gave you the 10 Commandments. Keep them. But follow these guidelines, also.

1. QUIT WORRYING

Life has dealt you a blow and all you do is sit and worry. Have you forgotten that I am here to take all your burdens and carry them for you? Or do you just enjoy fretting over every little thing that comes your way?

2. PUT IT ON THE LIST

Something needs done or taken care of. Put it on the list. No, not YOUR list. Put it on MY to-do-list. Let ME be the one to take care of the problem. I can't help you until you turn it over to Me. And although My to-do-list is long, I am after all ... God. I can take care of anything you put into My hands. In fact, if the truth were ever really known, I take care of a lot of things for you that you never even realize.

3. TRUST ME

Once you've given your burdens to Me, quit trying to take them back. Trust in Me. Have the faith that I will take care of all your needs, your problems and your trials. Problems with the kids? Put them on My list. Problem with finances? Put it in My list. Problems with your emotional roller coaster? For My sake, put it on My list. I want to help you. All you have to do is ask.

4. LEAVE IT ALONE

Don't wake up one morning and say, "Well, I'm feeling much stronger now, I think I can handle it from here." Why do you think you are feeling stronger now? It's simple. You gave Me your burdens and I'm taking care of them. I also renew your strength and cover you in my peace. Don't you know that if I give you these problems back, you will be right back where you started? Leave them with Me and forget about them. Just let Me do my job.

5. TALK TO ME

I want you to forget a lot of things. Forget what was making you crazy. Forget the worry and the fretting because you know I'm in control. But there's one thing I pray you never forget. Please, don't forget to talk to Me - OFTEN! I love YOU! I want to hear your voice. I want you to include Me in on the things going on in your life. I want to hear you talk about your friends and family. Prayer is simply you having a conversation with Me. I want to be your dearest friend.

6. HAVE FAITH

I see a lot of things from up here that you can't see from where you are. Have faith in Me that I know what I'm doing. Trust Me; you wouldn't want the view from My eyes. I will continue to care for you, watch over you, and meet your needs. You only have to trust Me. Although I have a much bigger task than you, it seems as if you have so much trouble just doing your simple part. How hard can trust be?

7. SHARE

You were taught to share when you were only two years old. When did you forget? That rule still applies. Share with those who are less fortunate than you. Share your joy with those who need encouragement. Share your laughter with those who haven't heard any in such a long time. Share your tears with those who have forgotten how to cry. Share your faith with those who have none.

8. BE PATIENT

I managed to fix it so in just one lifetime you could have so many diverse experiences. You grow from a child to an adult, have children, change jobs many times, learn many trades, travel to so many places, meet thousands of people, and experience so much. How can you be so impatient then when it takes Me a little longer than you expect to handle something on My to-do-list? Trust in My timing, for My timing is perfect. Just because I created the entire universe in only six days, everyone thinks I should always rush, rush, rush.

9. BE KIND

Be kind to others, for I love them just as much as I love you. They may not dress like you, or talk like you, or live the same way you do, but I still love you all. Please try to get along, for My sake. I created each of you different in some way. It would be too boring if you were all identical. Please, know I love each of your differences.

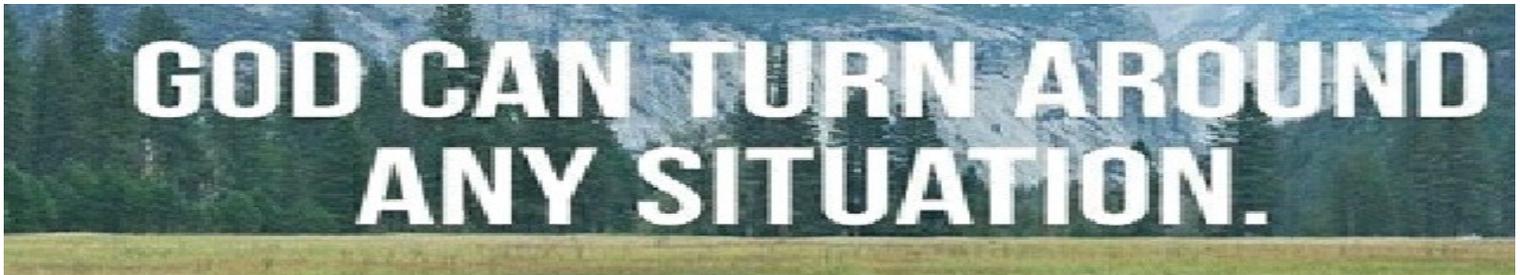
10. LOVE YOURSELF

As much as I love me for one reason of Love. Love Me. heartache when I are very precious you, how can you not love yourself? You were only ... to be loved, and to love in return. Love your neighbors. But also love yourself. See you so angry with yourself when things go to me. Don't ever forget that!

Created by **I AM**, a God. It makes My wrong, **You**.

With all My heart I love **YOU** ...

God



**GOD CAN TURN AROUND
ANY SITUATION.**



From The Pastor's Desk

Dear Church Family,

Greetings In the Name of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

We give thanks to the Lord for his grace and truth. The Lord is moving us from ***Pandemic to Post Pandemic. The Men's Ministry is fast-tracking for Celebrating Men's Day on Sunday, March 27, 2022.***

We give thanks to Bro. Marvin Privott, Bro. Woodrow James, Rev. William D. Wilson, and the Men's Ministry for their labors of love guiding us to Men's Ministry Sunday. ***Our Theme: Together, we have it all.*** We are blessed to have the Guest Preacher, Reverend Robert Hoggard, Ph.D., Student Warner School of Education, University of Rochester.

Please invite your family and friends to attend the Men's Ministry Worship Service. We request the men to please consider giving \$100.00, women \$100.00, and 50 men and women who will take a step of faith with the pastor and first Lady in providing \$200.00. Please do your best to help us reach the goal.

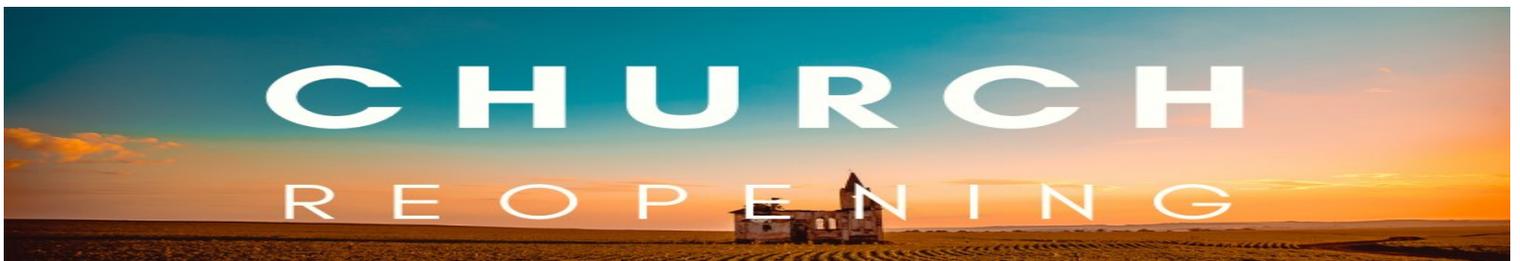
It is not equal giving but equal sacrifice. You will find the Men's Ministry envelope in your tithes & offering box. You can share online via cash app, realm, text giving, drop off in the church lockbox, or mail to the church office.

I thank the Lord for such a loving, faithful, and generous congregation.

Partners in the Faith,

Moses L. Harvill

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! Psalm 133.1



RETOOLING FOR CHURCH GROWTH 2021

- Renewing
- Reconnecting •Reopening

*But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,
and all these things shall be added to you. ~Matthew 6:33*

Growing the Church via Zoom & Virtual Church

Starting Stronger:

RENEWING

*Bible Study— Growing in Christ: Lessons on Assurance—Lessons on Christian Living
‘Living for Christ isn’t easy, but it is possible!’ Learn how with GROWING with CHRIST
Lessons will be emailed & available for you to pick up at the church.*

*We begin the year with Spiritual Renewal
-Prayer & Bible Study*

RECONNECTING

Growing the church by coming back together in love & fellowship

REOPENING

Returning with zeal for Christ and His Kingdom mission

When You Need Hope

Key Scripture: “Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.” Psalm 42:11

Key Thought: Hope is the anchor of your soul. (See Hebrews 6:19)

Prayer: Let your mercy, O Lord, be upon me as I endeavor to experience the hope you promise to me. ¹ You are my hiding place and my shield, and I find hope in your world. ²

Let my life be filled with your hope, joy, peace, and faith so that I will always continue to abound in hope through the power of your Holy Spirit. ³

Thank you for equipping me with your protective armor,

Prayers by Barbara Perry

“Prayer to Put on the Armor of God”

Deuteronomy 3:22 says, “Do not be afraid of them; the LORD your God himself will fight for you.” Amen

Pray with me: Dear God, today we put on the full armor to guard our lives against attack. We put on the belt of truth to protect against lies and deception. We put on the breastplate of righteousness to protect our hearts from the temptation we battle. We put the gospel of peace on our feet, so we're ready to take out light wherever You send us this day. We choose to walk in the peace and freedom to walk in the peace and freedom of Your Spirit and not be overcome with fear and anxious thoughts. We take up Your shield of faith that will extinguish all the darts and threats hurled our way by the enemy. We believe in Your power to protect us and choose to

“Prayer to Be More Grateful”

Psalm 9:1 says, “I will give thank to you, Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds,” Amen.

Let us pray, Lord God, we thank You for what You're done in our life. We thank You for each day, for Your work on the

“Prayer to Remember Where Our Help Comes From”

Psalm 121:1 says, I look to the mountains-does my help come from there? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth!, Amen.

Dear Jesus, Forgive us for running to the people and

“Prayer to Remember Even When Our Eyes Can't See”

John 5:27 says, “But Jesus replied, ‘My Father is always working, and so am I.’” Amen

Dear Jesu, Thank You for showing up at just the right time.

Father. ⁴ I put on the hope of salvation as my helmet. ⁵ thank you for giving me everlasting consolation and good hope through your grace. ⁶

Even now, as I pray, I experience your hope as being the sure and steadfast anchor of my soul. ⁷ from now on, I will hope continually, and I will praise you more and more. ⁸ Christ in me is the hope of glory. ⁹

Father, thank you for exchanging my sense of hopelessness with your abiding hope.

References: (1) Psalms 33:22; (2) Psalms 119:114; (3) Romans 15:13; (4) Ephesians 6:11; (5) Ephesians 6:17; (6) 2 Thessalonians 2:16; (7) Hebrews 6:19; (8) Psalms 71:14; (9) Colossians 1:27.

Bible Prayers for all your needs
Victory House Publishers

trust in You. We put on the helmet of salvation, which covers our minds and thoughts, reminding us we are children of the day, forgiven, set free, saved by the grace of Christ Jesus. We take up the sword of the Spirit, Your very Word, the one offensive weapon given to us for battle, which has power to demolish strongholds, alive, active, and sharper than any double-edged sword. We ask for Your help in remembering to put on Your full armor every day, for You give us all that we need to stand firm in this world. Forgive us God for the times we've been unprepared, too busy to care, or trying to fight and wrestle I our own strength. Thank You that we never fight alone, for You are constantly at work on our behalf, shielding, protecting, strengthening, exposing deeds of darkness, bringing what needs to be known, covering us from the cruel attacks we face even when we're unaware. In the powerful name of its In Jesus name, Amen.

cross, and for helping us overcome the toughest battles of our life. Father forgive us for the times we don't operate from an attitude of sincere gratitude. Teach us to do so and to openly share Your goodness with the world around us. Help us to never grow weary of praising You for all that You're done, it's In Jesus Name we pray. Amen, Amen, Amen.

things of this world for help before coming to You. Thank You for being our helper and loving us in spite of our shortcomings. Help us remember Who You are and where our help comes from. Give us strength, courage, and a boldness to seek You and Your approval above all else, it is In Your Mighty Name we pray. Amen, Amen, Amen.

Thank You for reminding us who You are and how faithfully You care for us. Help us to never forget all You have done, are doing, and are going to do in our life. Let all of Your lessons and Your Word “stick,” that we may serve You share You and stand firm in the in-between times, its In Your Mighty Name. Amen, Amen, Amen.

The fruit of the Spirit abides in us and it is up to us to cultivate it so that we may experience the blessing and the fullness of the Spirit. God is the husbandman..."He prunes, nurtures, waters and protects His own. The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit will energize and control every faculty of our nature when our will joins the will of God. Then the "beauty of the Lord will be upon us" (Psalm 90:17) and "we shall bring forth fruit unto God" (Romans 7:4)."

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

"But the fruit of the Spirit is LOVE, JOY, PEACE, LONGSUFFERING, GENTLENESS, GOODNESS, FAITH, MEEKNESS, TEMPERANCE: against such there is no law." (Galatians 5:22, 23)

The fruit of the Spirit abides in us and it is up to us to cultivate it so that we may experience the blessing and the fullness of the Spirit. God is the husbandman..."He prunes, nurtures, waters and protects His own. The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit will energize and control every faculty of our nature when our will joins the will of God. Then the "beauty of the Lord will be upon us" (Psalm 90:17) and "we shall bring forth fruit unto God" (Romans 7:4)."

The fruit of LOVE when properly motivated "is pure, far reaching, forgiving. There is no limit to the good that LOVE does. God is LOVE. (I John 4:7)

JOY never fades, it is never destroyed by circumstances, it is unaffected by wealth or poverty, sickness or health. It is found in the presence of God (Psalm 16:11)

PEACE "is a tranquility of mind as a result of a right relationship with God". The PEACE of God in our hearts challenges sin at every turn and deals with it immediately in order to maintain that right relationship. (Ephesians 2:14)

LONG-SUFFERING means steadfastness of the soul under provocation. It means forbearance and patient endurance of ill-treatment, without anger or thought of revenge. (Colossians 3:12, 13)

GENTLENESS is sweet reasonableness, calmness and graciousness. It calms troubled waters, settles turmoil and heals strife. (James 3:17)

GOODNESS does good to others. It is kindness of heart and good deeds. It may not always be a gentle word, but a stern rebuke done for the good of someone else. (Psalm 33:5)

MEEKNESS disarms the stormy, tempestuous person. The qualities of mildness and gentleness in dealing with others. It is not weak. It is a high quality of spiritual strength. (I Timothy 6:11)

FAITH means faithfulness to Christ and His cause. It manifests itself in being a trustworthy steward of God. It is trust and obedience, belief in God's word and promises. (Hebrews 11:1)

TEMPERANCE is power, it is strength, having self-control. It means discipline. It provides balance to the Christian's life. It enables him to praise Him whether in discipline or testing. (Proverbs 11:1) (Information taken in part from World-Wide Keswick publication and Holy Scriptures)

Satan tries to imitate the real thing with an artificial fruit. As you can see, the artificial fruit is very much like the real thing and if we are not careful, we can fall into the trap of expressing limited love, temporary joy, numbness, insensitivity, manipulation, hypocrisy, half-heartedness, false modesty and choosing lesser goals.

THE FRUIT, *The Artificial Fruit,* **The Weed**

LOVE, *limited love, hatred;* JOY, *temporary JOY, sorrow;* PEACE, *numbness, carelessness, anxiety strife;*
PATIENCE, *laziness, insensitivity, impatience;* KINDNESS, *manipulation by kindness, pride;*
GOODNESS, *hypocrisy, evil;* F A I T H F U L N E S S, *half-heartedness, infidelity;*
MEEKNESS, *false modesty, self-seeking;* SELF-CONTROL, *choosing lesser goals, lack of control*
(The Fruit of the Spirit, John W. Sanderson)

Read the BIBLE in ONE Year

- | | | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| MARCH | 08) Judges 5-8 | 16) 1 Samuel 8-10 | 24) 2 Samuel 5-8 |
| 01) Joshua 7-9 | 09) Judges 9-12 | 17) 1 Samuel 11-13 | 25) 2 Samuel 9-12 |
| 02) Joshua 10-12 | 10) Judges 13-15 | 18) 1 Samuel 14-16 | 26) 2 Samuel 13-15 |
| 03) Joshua 13-15 | 11) Judges 16-18 | 19) 1 Samuel 17-20 | 27) 2 Samuel 16-18 |
| 04) Joshua 16-18 | 12) Judges 19-21 | 20) 1 Samuel 21-24 | 28) 2 Samuel 19-21 |
| 05) Joshua 19-21 | 13) Ruth 1-4 | 21) 1 Samuel 25-28 | 29) Samuel 22-24 |
| 06) Joshua 22-24 | 14) 1 Samuel 1-3 | 22) 1 Samuel 22-24 | 30) 1 Kings 1-4 |
| 07) Judges 1-4 | 15) 1 Samuel 4-7 | 23) 2 Samuel 1-4 | 31) 1 Kings 5-7 |
|
 | | | |
| APRIL | 08) 2 Kings 7-10 | 16) 1 Chronicles 7-9 | 24) 2 Chronicles 4-6 |
| 01) 1 Kings 8-10 | 09) 2 Kings 11-14 | 17) 1 Chronicles 10-13 | 25) 2 Chronicles 7-9 |
| 02) 1 Kings 11-13 | 10) 2 Kings 15-17 | 18) 1 Chronicles 14-16 | 26) 2 Chronicles 10-13 |
| 03) 1 Kings 14-16 | 11) 2 Kings 18-20 | 19) 1 Chronicles 17-19 | 27) 2 Chronicles 14-16 |
| 04) 1 Kings 17-19 | 12) 2 Kings 21-22 | 20) 1 Chronicles 20-23 | 28) 2 Chronicles 17-19 |
| 05) 1 Kings 20-22 | 13) 2 Kings 23-25 | 21) 1 Chronicles 24-26 | 29) 2 Chronicles 20-22 |
| 06) 2 Kings 1-3 | 14) 1 Chronicles 1-3 | 22) 1 Chronicles 27-28 | 30) 2 Chronicles 23-25 |
| 07) 2 Kings 4-6 | 15) 1 Chronicles 4-6 | 23) 2 Chronicles 1-3 | |
|
 | | | |
| MAY | 08) Nehemiah 4-6 | 16) Job 8-10 | 24) Job 35-37 |
| 01) 2 Chronicles 26-29 | 09) Nehemiah 7-9 | 17) Job 11-13 | 25) Job 38-42 |
| 02) 2 Chronicles 30-32 | 10) Nehemiah 10-13 | 18) Job 14-17 | 26) Psalms 1-4 |
| 03) 2 Chronicles 33-36 | 11) Esther 1-3 | 19) Job 18-20 | 27) Psalms 5-8 |
| 04) Ezra 1-4 | 12) Esther 4-7 | 20) Job 21-24 | 28) Psalms 9-12 |
| 05) Ezra 5-7 | 13) Esther 8-10 | 21) Job 25-27 | 29) Psalms 13-15 |
| 06) Ezra 8-10 | 14) Job 1-4 | 22) Job 28-31 | 30) Psalms 16-18 |
| 07) Nehemiah 1-3 | 15) Job 5-7 | 23) Job 32-34 | 31) Psalms 19-21 |

Name of God	Meaning	Application
JEHOVAH –SHALOM	The Lord is Peace	God defeats our enemies to bring us peace. Jesus is our Prince of Peace. God brings inner peace and harmony.
JEHOVAH – SHAMMAH	The Lord is There The Lord My Companion	God's presence is not limited or contained in the Tabernacle or Temple, but is accessible to all who love and obey Him.
JEHOVAH – TSIDKENU	The Lord Our Righteousness	Jesus is the King who would come from David's line, and is the one who imparts His righteousness to us.
YAH, ORJAH	"I AM<" The One Who Is The Self-Existent	God never changes. His promises never fail. When we are faithless, He is faithful. God promises His continuing presence.
YHWH	"I AM<" The One Who Is The Self-Existent One	God never changes. His promises never fail. When we are faithless, He is faithful.
ADONAI	The Lord My Great Lord	God is the Master and majestic Lord. God is our total authority.
EL	The Strong One	He is more powerful than any false god. God will overcome all obstacles. We can depend on God.

There are various names of God, many of which enumerate the various qualities of a Supreme Being. The English word "god" (and its equivalent in other languages) is used by multiple religions as a noun or name to refer to different deities, or specifically to the Supreme Being, as denoted in English by the capitalized and uncapitalized terms "God" and "god". Ancient cognate equivalents for the biblical Hebrew Elohim, one of the most common names of God in the Bible, include proto-Semitic El, biblical Aramaic Elah, and Arabic 'ilah. The personal or proper name for God in many of these languages may either be distinguished from such attributes, or homonymic. For example, in Judaism the tetragrammaton is sometimes related to the ancient Hebrew ehieh ("I will be"). In the Hebrew Bible (Exodus 3:14), Yahweh, the personal name of God, is revealed directly to Moses. Correlation between various theories and interpretation of the name of "the one God", used to signify a monotheistic or ultimate Supreme Being from which all other divine attributes derive, has been a subject of ecumenical discourse between Eastern and Western scholars for over two centuries. In Christian theology the word is considered a personal and a proper name of God. On the other hand, the names of God in a different tradition are sometimes referred to by symbols. The question whether divine names used by different religions are equivalent has been raised and analyzed.

Epiphany or The Season After Epiphany (4-9 Sundays) is a time for remembering the various times and ways Jesus was revealed to humans, particularly to the Gentiles (non-Jews) through the Magi (Wise Men) who represented other nationalities. It is a reminder of the universality of Jesus, the Savior of persons in every land. The first Sunday after Epiphany Day (January 6) is known as Baptism of the Lord referring to 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-11, Luke 3:21-22, and John 1:29-34. This is an excellent time for baptism and renewal of the baptismal covenant. Appropriate symbols are water, the baptismal shell or font, a descending dove, and a cross standing in water. The emphasis for the remainder of the season is on the beginning of Jesus' ministry, the miracles performed, and Jesus' works and teachings.

Color: Green is symbolic of the freshness of nature, hope, life, and growth.

Lent is the period of time to reflect on the events that led Jesus to Calvary. Its begins with Ash Wednesday and covers a period of forty days (excluding Sundays) culminating with Holy Week (including Passion/Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday). Lent is a time of fasting, sacrifice, and preparation.

Color: Purple (violet or lilac) is the color used to denote royalty, praying, fasting, and penitence. It represents a symbol of the majesty of Christ, and Jesus' humanity, suffering, and fasting.

A guideline given by some money managers is as follows: Give 1/10 (tithe of your income to God). Put 1/10 in savings. Put 1/10 in an emergency account until three months of pay is set aside. Live on the remaining 7/10 with freedom to work towards giving as much as possible to God's work.

Liturgical Colors

Liturgy or liturgical comes from the Greek word "leitourgia" that means public service. Thus, liturgical refers to the rites or forms prescribed for use in public worship. Colors add brightness, variety, and visual appeal for the worshiper and Christian believer. But beyond this is the wealth of meaning and theological interpretation wrapped up in the colors used during the various seasons. Below are the prevalent colors and their liturgical interpretations.

Purple (violet or lilac) is the color used to denote royalty, praying, fasting, and penitence. It represents a symbol of the majesty of Christ, and Jesus' humanity, suffering, and fasting. Advent and Lent are seasons when this color is used.

Green is symbolic of the freshness of nature, hope, life, and growth. It is used during The Season After Epiphany and King-tide. Some denominations use green during The Season after Pentecost.

White is symbolic of light, joy, purity, glory, and the bright light of truth. It is used during Christmas/Christmastide, Epiphany (January 6), Baptism of the Lord Sunday, Transfiguration of the Lord Sunday, Maundy Thursday (if Holy Communion is celebrated), Easter/Eastertide, Ascension Day/Sunday, Trinity Sunday, and Christ the King Sunday. It is appropriately used for Consecrations, Baptisms, Marriages, and Holy Communion.

Red is symbolic of loyalty, power, witness, Christian zeal, blood, fire, the work and ministry of the Church, and the Holy Spirit. It is used on Pentecost, for some The Season After Pentecost, and Church anniversaries, dedications, and ordinations. The color red is appropriate for year-round use if there is no other color available.

Black represents grief, sorrow, mourning, or death. It is used on Good Friday and sometimes for funerals. (Some prefer to use white for funerals to celebrate the homegoing of a loved one.)

Gold is the color denoting worth, virtue, glory to God, and Christian might. It was one of the gifts given to the Baby Jesus by the Magi (Wise Men). The Kingship of the Christ Child and the price Jesus paid on Calvary is also represented in this color.

Other Colors

Blue is an alternate liturgical color that is symbolic of hope. It is often used as an alternate color to purple during Advent by some denominations.

Kente Cloth is being used by many African-American congregations as a parament. It is also used on clergy and choir robes or liturgical stoles. Most of the kente cloth contains several of the liturgical colors. Kente Cloth is a strong woven fabric from the West African country of Ghana. Its name comes from the word "kenten" referring to that which cannot be torn under any circumstances. It is woven in narrow four inch strips and stitched together to make the desired width of the fabric. Traditionally, this cloth carried symbolic designs that indicated a proverb or special message. In addition to the meaning wrapped up in the colors, it also represents the commitment of believers not to allow anything to separate them from the love of God and a reminder to hold on to one's heritage.

Fasting for Health, Healing and a Heart far God's Vision for the Church

Foods to include in your eating plan during the Daniel Fast

All dairy products including milk, cheese, cream, butter, and eggs.

1. The Daniel Fast involves a spiritual commitment to God. "Daniel proposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the Kings delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank." (Daniel 1: 8)

All fruits. These can be fresh, frozen, dried, juiced or canned. Fruits include but are apples, apricots, bananas, blackberries, blueberries, boysenberries, cantaloupe, cherries, cranberries, figs, grapefruit, grapes, guava, honeydew melon, kiwi, lemons, limes, mangoes, nectarines, oranges, papayas, peaches, pears, pineapples, plums, prunes, raisins, raspberries, strawberries, tangelos, tangerines, watermelon

All sweeteners including sugar, raw sugar, date sugar, honey, syrups, molasses, cane juice, date honey, and stevia.

2. Faith is foundational to the Daniel Fast.

"Then I set my face toward my God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting" (Daniel. 9:30 "However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting" (Matthew 17: 21)

All leavened bread including Ezekiel Bread (it contains yeast and honey) and baked goods.

3. Fast and yield yourself to God as a servant.

Daniel said, "as you see fit, deal with your servants" (Daniel 1:13)

All leavening agents including yeast, baking soda and baking powder.

4. Schedule your prayer / And end with thanksgiving. Daniel "kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks" (Daniel 6: 10)

All vegetables. These can be fresh, frozen, dried, juiced or canned. Vegetables include but are artichokes, asparagus, beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, chili peppers, collard greens, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, garlic, ginger root, kale, leeks, lettuce, mushrooms, mustard greens, okra, onions, parsley, potatoes, radishes, rutabagas, scallions, spinach, sprouts, squashes, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, turnips, watercress, yams, zucchini, veggie burgers are an option if you are not allergic to soy.

All refined and processed foods products including artificial flavorings, food additives, chemicals, white rice, white flour, and foods that contain artificial preservatives.

5. Begin with confession, (repentance), dedication, and prayer-"Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way of everlasting" (Psalm 39: 23-24)

All deep-fried foods including potato chips, French fries, corn chips.

All solid fats including shortening, margarine, lard and foods high in fat.

Remember: The Daniel Fast will lead to spiritual insight. "... to these young men God gave knowledge" (Daniel 1: 17)

All whole grains, including whole wheat, brown rice, millet, quinoa, oats, barley, grits, whole wheat pasta, whole wheat tortillas, rice cakes and popcorn.

Beverages including coffee, tea, herbal teas, carbonated beverages, energy drinks, and alcohol.

Remember, **READ THE LABELS** so you are aware of the ingredients in the package.!

Guidelines for Daniel Fast

Foods We May Eat

After answering hundreds of questions about the Daniel Fast on the blog, I developed these food guidelines. My hope is that it will serve as a more complete list. The original list used by many people was issued in a book about fasting. I know the author tried to do the best he could, but that isn't the same as getting hundreds of questions seeking clarification.

All nuts and seeds, including sunflower seeds, cashews, peanuts, sesame. Also nut butters including peanut butter.

All legumes. These can be canned or dried. Legumes include dried beans, pinto beans, split peas, lentils, black eyed peas, kidney beans, black beans, cannellini beans, white beans.

All quality oils including olive, canola, grape seed, peanut, and sesame.

Beverages: spring water, distilled water or other pure waters.

Other: tofu, soy products, vinegar, seasonings, salt, herbs and spices.

Note: Unsweetened plant-based milks and juices can be used in recipes or on cereal, but the only beverage on the Daniel Fast is water.

Foods to avoid on the Daniel Fast

All meat, animal, fish and seafood products including beef, lamb, pork, poultry, fish and shellfish.

Be blessed on your fast

Learn more about the Daniel Fast at <http://Daniel-Fast.com>

"Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5: 17)

Please make sure to READ THE LABEL when purchasing packaged, canned or bottled foods. They should be sugar-free and chemical-free. Keep this in mind as you review this list of acceptable foods. Look for the list of ingredients on the label (not the nutritional value) to make sure all the ingredients comply with the Daniel Fast Guidelines.

10 Practical Guidelines on Fasting
By Charles Ng of Singapore

1. Enter into fasting with a positive faith. If you are determined to seek God diligently by fasting, you have a Scriptural right to expect that God will reward you. In Matthew 6:18, Jesus promises to every believer who fasts correctly: “your father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.”

2. Do not wait for an emergency to drive you to fast. It is better to begin fasting when you are spiritually up than down. The law of progress in God’s Kingdom is from “strength to strength” (Ps. 84:7), “from faith to faith” (Rom. 1:17), and from “glory to glory” (2Cor. 3:18).

3. Do not set for yourself too long a period of fasting. If you are fasting for the first time, begin by omitting one or two meals. Then, move on to longer periods such as a day or two. It is better to begin with a short period and achieving it than to do a long period of fasting and not achieving it.

4. During your period of fasting, feed on God’s Word, the Bible. Where possible, read a portion of Scripture before each period of prayer. The Psalms are especially helpful.

5. Avoid boastfulness—apart from special periods of prayer, your life should be as normal as possible.

6. Check on your motives each time you fast. Take time to read Isaiah 58.

7. If you are on regular medication or suffer from diabetes or TB, it is wise to obtain medical advice before entering into any fast.

8. As you enter fast, you might suffer discomfort, unpleasant physical symptoms such as dizziness or nausea. Do not be deterred. Go through with the fast as planned. After the first day or two, these unpleasant physical reactions usually subside.

9. Remember that hunger is purely a

matter of habit. If you hold out, the sensation of hunger will go away. Sometimes you can fool your stomach by drinking a glass of water instead of snacking.

10. Guard against constipation. Before and after fasting, choose meals that will help you in this respect such as fresh fruits, fruit juices, dried figs, prunes, apricots, or oatmeal.

Total Fast: Abstaining from solid foods for 24 hours. Taking only water.

Partial fast: Abstaining from solid foods for an extended part of the day, e.g. from 7:00 am until 7:00 PM. Taking only water.

1 Meal Fast: Sacrificing one full meal a day, e.g. Abstaining from lunch.

Daniel Fast: Abstaining from meals and other delicacies. Taking only small portions of fresh vegetables, fruit and juices.

+ PRAY
COVID-19 RESPONSE

- ▶ **PRAY FOR THE VULNERABLE:** Ask God to protect those most vulnerable to the effects of the virus, especially the elderly and those with underlying health conditions.
- ▶ **PRAY FOR GOVERNMENT LEADERS:** Ask God to give our local, state, and national leaders wisdom in how to deal with the virus.
- ▶ **PRAY FOR MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS:** Ask that God would guide and protect them as they care for the sick.
- ▶ **PRAY FOR FAMILIES:** Ask God to comfort and provide for those whose businesses, job stability, and schooling have been affected.
- ▶ **PRAY FOR THE CHURCH:** Ask God to help His people have courage, find ways to serve those in need, and continue proclaiming the Gospel.

A Poem of Praise

Father God, I love You so;
You care for me even when I don't know.
I often question Your intent,
Despite those promises You've already kept.
I try to make sense of all around,
yet my eyes focus narrowly on my own.
You forgive my impatience,
and my self-righteous thoughts;
And secured my salvation through Your Son's
death on the cross.
He redeemed all my sins and gave me new life;
an act that cost a most precious price.
With Your help, dear Lord,
I will trust in the perfect plan
that is a gift from Your great hand.
Thank You for each day's new mercies,
and the grace that wipes away all my iniquities.
To You, Adonai, is my praise for always;
may my last breath be a whisper
giving You all the glory.

juliesanne.com



Sunday School is a Family Affair

8:45 a.m. to 9:45 a.m. We have classes for all ages – 3 to 103
New Members Class meets at the same time.
(For Transportation Needs Please call the Church 860-344-9527)

Come Grow with US!

Hope Eternal / Be Confident

Background Scripture: 2 Corinthians 4:16—5:10

EXALTI!

Declaration: 2 Corinthians 4:16—5:10

¹⁶ So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ¹⁸ as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

Our Heavenly Dwelling

¹ For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ² For in that tent we groan, longing to put our heavenly dwelling, ³ if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. ⁴ For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. ⁵ He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

⁶ So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, ⁷ for we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸ Yes, we are good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. ⁹ So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. ¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

Affirmation: We will develop a growing trust in God's promise of eternal life through faith.

ENGAGE

People fear the fragility of life, uncertainty about death, afterlife. In weakness and doubts about such things, where can any assurance be found? God gives believers in Jesus Christ an eternal, unseen place in him that is guaranteed by the Spirit.

If able, break into small groups: Share with those in your group thoughts about the meaning of life in the face of the certainty of death. Although death can come at any age, we may not give as much thought to the reality of death and the life beyond as we do when growing older. What is the most helpful attitude one should have about death at any time in life? What do most of us think about loved ones and close friends who pass away and the possibility of seeing them again? Does the fact that this life is full of imperfections and hardships help us to believe that there must surely be a better or more perfect life after this present one where good behavior, endurance etc. are rewarded and negative behavior is punished?

EDUCATE

II Corinthians 4:16-18: Paul cautioned the Corinthians to remain vigilant because the things they had to endure presently were only temporary. Instead of dwelling on the temporary, they should keep focused on their true and eternal destiny with Christ in glory. He was speaking out of his direct experience in the service of Christ. He had a strong unswerving faith in Christ and knew what he was talking about because he had a close walk with God in Christ. In following the example of Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Paul had increased his knowledge and understanding of the Gospel of Christ and undergirded his faith with spiritual assurance. He "knew his life was temporary-and that earthly life was relatively less important than eternal life....[He] said he had found great peace even in (or especially in) dangerous and discouraging circumstances. Even were his life not to end soon, the effects of aging and stress are only seen outwardly, perishing little by little. [He] was growing stronger inwardly-his heart and spirit-as a result of his relationship with the Lord. Daily, constantly, he found inner renewal (compare Ephesians 3:16). That was what kept him going" (Ibid., p. 443). This is what is so remarkable about Paul's message: his speaking directly out of his own knowledge and experience, teaching from the very example of his own life, which, by the way, he sought to pattern after the life of Jesus Himself, the unfailing Lord of his life.

(Restoring Law on page 12)

Pray for all of our children, teens, young adults in this school years that God's hands will be upon them keeping them from all hurt, harm and danger. Also pray for all of our families, friends, and all of God's children.

(Restoring Law from page 11)

II Corinthians 5:1-5: Paul was absolutely certain about the future life of all believers in Christ who surrendered themselves in the service of Christ. When we as believers rise again, we leave all that is earthly behind. Our bodies are renewed as a spiritual body fashioned by God—permanent, indestructible, and celestial. We are guaranteed a glorious future because God has created us for this very purpose (Philippians 3:21), working in us to will and to do God’s good pleasure in ways beyond our understanding (Philippians 2:13). As stated above, Paul lived in direct communion with the Holy Spirit, denying the flesh any domination over him. His life is an illustration that the Holy Spirit serves as our guarantee of a future promise, a foretaste of the glory that believers shall one day know. Notice that he makes it clear that “we should not expect a future existence without a body. Unlike some Greek philosophers of his time, Paul, a Pharisee, would never expect a permanent, eternal existence as some sort of free-floating spirit (compare Acts 17:32; 23:6-8; 24:15....). What he longed for was the new body at the time when what is mortal, with all its limitations and frailties, would be swallowed up by life” (Ibid., p. 445).

II Corinthians 5:6-10: “During the time we exist in our current bodies, we cannot experience the full presence of God. To be at home in our present bodies means to be away from the closest presence of the Lord. This was the result of the sins of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden; the resulting separation and banishment included the loss of direct fellowship with the Lord (Genesis 3:23). God’s holy nature does not tolerate sin in his presence (compare 1 Peter 1:15-16), and his glory is too great for sinful humans to endure” (Ibid., p. 446). Yet, living by faith and not by sight, we have that hope that through the purification of Christ, we shall be made worthy of entering into the full presence of God. For when Christ appears, we shall be like Him. Confidently and constantly living to please Christ, we have that faith of receiving His perfect purification. The judgement seat might be compared to the reward position at the Olympic Games. Those who belong to the family of God shall receive the reward for good things done in the body and experience the sadness at reward lost because of the useless things, because of their failure at times to be fit enough. (Compare 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 4:4; Romans 14:10-12).

ELEVATE

If able, break into two groups: Allow the first group discuss the following issues or concern:

1. As we grow in faith, our focus shifts from the physical and material to things that are spiritual and eternal. Is this really the case?
2. As we grow and mature in the faith, we become more willing to relinquish the cares of this world and prepare to embrace a heavenly home. Is this really the case?
3. We grow to understand that God is a God of love, grace, and mercy, but also a God of judgment. We learn to trust God’s sovereign authority regarding the distribution of both eternal reward and punishment.

Second group discuss the following:

4. We experience spiritual growth that leads us to regularly

examine ourselves to determine if we are living in a manner that pleases that pleases God. Is this true? What is your view?

5. Christian know that some matters of faith shall remain a mystery until we meet God face-to-face. Do you live with this expectation?

6. As we experience the effects of aging, we begin to take comfort in the knowledge that our eternal bodies will be perfect and whole. Do you agree with this?

iTHINK

1. Consider: if you had a choice, would you want to live forever? You should know that most people answer no. Conduct an Internet search for direct responses to this question and share with the group. Consider this: People don’t want to live forever because they get tired of continually dealing with problems and changes and issues, Paul encouraged the Corinthians to not give up. Christians have something to hope for at the end of life.

2. Let volunteers read the following passages silently: Isaiah 25:8-12; Ezekiel 28:24-26; John 14:2-4; Colossians 3:1-7; Revelation 7:13-17; 21:4-8; 22:3-9. After everyone has completed reading, ask participants to share a brief description of what heaven will be like, according to Scripture.

3. Engage in a discussion about our Western obsession with looks and appearance. Why are some people so vicious in their attacks on the internet? Why do most people relinquish excessive concern about appearance as they grow older? Discuss how meaningless and irrelevant this obsession is as it relates to our existence in eternity. Let older participants share what the thought of having renewed bodies means to them as they get older.

4. Let participants share about the faith of family and friends who are facing their mortality.

5. Give participants paper or postcards and pencils. Ask them to write down at least six ways that they intentionally make efforts to please God. Invite each to share their responses. Then ask: Why do you believe God will be pleased? In what ways could you be doing more?

6. Discuss how people can develop a growing trust in God’s promise of eternal life through faith.

KEY VERSES

**For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.
2 Corinthians 5:1**

From The Young People-Adult Quarterly
(Ages 18 and up) International Sunday School Lessons for
Christian Teaching

Prayer—90 devotions from Our Daily Bread Compiled by Dave Branon

ALWAYS PRAY, AND DON'T GIVE UP

Read: Luke 18:1-8

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.
Luke 18:1

Are you going through one of those times when it seems every attempt to resolve a problem is met with a new difficulty? You thank the Lord at night that it's taken care of but awake to find that something else has gone wrong and the problem remains.

During an experience like that, I was reading the gospel of Luke and was astounded by the opening words of chapter 18: "Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up" (v. 1). I had read the story of the persistent widow many times but never grasped why Jesus told it (vv. 2-8). Now I connected those opening words with the story. The lesson to His followers was very clear: Always pray, and never give up.

Prayer is not a means of coercing God to do what we want. It is a process of recognizing His power and plan for our lives. In prayer we yield our lives and circumstances to the Lord and trust Him to act in His time and His way.

As we rely on God's grace not only for the outcome of our requests but for the process as well, we can keep coming to the Lord in prayer, trusting His wisdom and care for us.

Our Lord's encouragement to us is clear: Always pray, and don't give up!
David McCasland

Prayer Tip: Make a daily appointment with God, and add it to your calendar.

ALWAYS THERE

Read: Psalm 55:16-23

Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you.
Psalm 55:22

The radio engineers who work at Our Daily Bread Ministries were getting ready to broadcast via satellite. They had prepared everything, including the satellite link. But just as they were to begin uploading, the signal to the satellite was lost. Confused, the engineers labored to reconnect the link,

but nothing worked. Then they got the word—the satellite was gone. Literally. The satellite had suddenly and surprisingly fallen from the sky. It was no longer there.

I suspect that sometimes when we pray, we think something similar has happen to God—that for some reason He isn't there. But the Bible offers us comfort with the assurance that God hasn't "fallen from the sky." He is always available to us. He hears and He cares.

In a time of desperation, David wrote, "Evening, morning and noon I cry out in distress, and he bears my voice" (Psalm 55:17). No matter when we call on God, He hears the cries of His children. That should encourage our hearts. What was David's response to having a God who hears prayer? "Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you" (v. 22). Although God may not answer as we would like or when we would like, we know that at "evening, morning and noon" He is always there.
BillCrowder

KEEP ON ASKING

Read: Luke 11:1-13

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. *Luke 11:9*

I heard a woman say that she never prayed more than once for anything. She didn't want to weary God with her repeated requests.

The Lord's teaching on prayer in Luke 11 contradicts this notion. He told a parable about a man who went to his friend's house at midnight and asked for some bread to feed his unexpected visitors. At first the friend refused, for he and his family were in bed. Finally he got up and gave him the bread—not out of friendship but because the caller was so persistent (vv. 5-10).

Jesus used this parable to contrast this reluctant friend with our generous heavenly Father. If an irritated neighbor will give in to his friend's persistence and grant his request, how much more readily will our heavenly Father give us all we need!

It's true that God, in His great wisdom, may sometimes delay His answers to prayer. It's also true that we must pray in harmony with the Scriptures and God's will. But Jesus moved beyond those facts to urge us to persist in

prayer. He told us to ask, seek, and knock until the answer comes (v. 9).

So don't worry about wearying God. He will never tire of your persistent prayer! Foanie Yoder

Prayer Tip: Approach God confidently (Hebrews 4:16).

HE ALREADY KNOWS

Read: Matthew 6:5-8

Do not be like [pagans], for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. *Matthew 6:8*

A friend who is a commercial pilot told me about a flight in which he encountered a serious mechanical issue—a problem with dangerous implications. When the situation occurred, the warning lights in the cockpit informed him of the problem, and he monitored it all the way to the destination, ultimately landing safely.

Once on the ground, the pilot immediately went to the maintenance staff and reported it. To his surprise, the mechanics responded, "We already know about the problem and are ready to fix it. When you got the cockpit warning, we automatically got an electronic warning as well."

As he shared that incident, I couldn't help but compare it to Jesus's words about our heavenly Father: "Your Father knows what you need before you ask him" (Matthew 6:8). He said this in contrast to people who believe that they must "keep on babbling...for they think they will be heard because of their many words" (v. 7). Jesus presupposes God's knowledge of and concern for His children.

Even though God knows our needs, He still wants us to share our heart with Him. He stand ready to hear our prayer and to repair our brokenness by His grace. Bill Crowder

Prayer Tip: Be persistent. God gives us permission to go to Him over and over with our requests.

THE ARMOR OF GOD

EPHESIANS 6:10-18
"... Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes." v. 10, 11.

The Shield of Faith (Eph. 6:16)
Faith is being sure that God will keep His promises. Faith in God protects you when you are tempted to doubt.

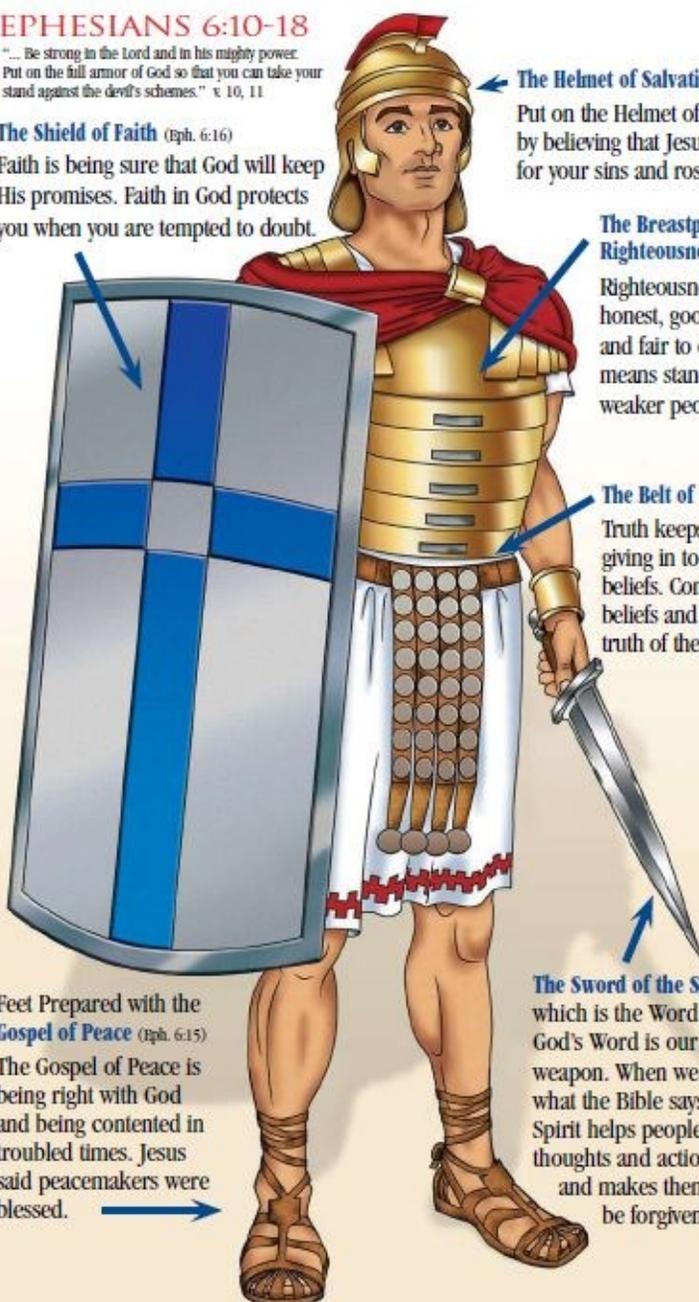
The Helmet of Salvation (Eph. 6:17)
Put on the Helmet of Salvation by believing that Jesus Christ died for your sins and rose again.

The Breastplate of Righteousness (Eph. 6:14)
Righteousness is being honest, good, humble, and fair to others. It means standing up for weaker people.

The Belt of Truth (Eph. 6:14)
Truth keeps us from giving in to the world's beliefs. Compare your beliefs and actions to the truth of the Word of God.

The Sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17)
which is the Word of God. God's Word is our offensive weapon. When we tell others what the Bible says, the Holy Spirit helps people see their bad thoughts and actions, and makes them want to be forgiven.

Feet Prepared with the Gospel of Peace (Eph. 6:15)
The Gospel of Peace is being right with God and being contented in troubled times. Jesus said peacemakers were blessed.



Ephesians 6:10-20 (New King James Version)

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age,^[a] against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; 18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints— 19 and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak

(Hope page 1)

is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."

The Christian's hope is grounded in the belief that there is more to life than what we can wish for in this world. The Christian hope is based on the resurrection of Jesus Christ and in God's promise to resurrect all who believe in Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:19–23). It is the hope of forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:13–14). It is the hope of a heavenly home (Hebrews 11:16). It is the hope of a glorified body in which to live (Philippians 3:20–21; 2 Thessalonians 1:10) and the hope of a new earth on which to live (2 Peter 3:13). Most importantly, it is the hope to live in these new glorified bodies on a new earth in the very presence of God Himself for all eternity (Revelation 21:2–4)—eternal life and joy in the presence of God (Psalm 16:11). This is the hope of all true believers.

This Christian hope is not wishful thinking. We have been given promises by God Himself that Jesus Christ, whom He raised from the dead, will return again. We have been promised by God Himself that when Jesus returns, we who believe will be transformed into the perfect image and likeness of His Son (2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 John 3:2–3). We have been promised that we who believe will be forgiven our sins because of the death of Christ and will inherit eternal life because of the righteousness and resurrection of Christ (2 Corinthians 1:20; Titus 1:2). The resurrection is no myth. It was a historical event witnessed by hundreds of people. Jesus Christ rose from the dead and appeared to His disciples and at least 500 other people (1 Corinthians 15:3–8). After forty days, Jesus ascended to heaven where He reigns at God's right hand (Acts 1:3; Ephesians 1:20). He will come again to judge the living and the dead (Acts 10:42). In this we hope, and we have good reason to hope, for God has said it will be and God accomplishes everything He says (Hebrews 10:23; 1 Corinthians 1:9). He has done so throughout history and will continue to do so in the future.

As further assurance, God has given His Holy Spirit to believers in Christ (2 Corinthians 1:21–22). The Holy Spirit testifies to our hearts, minds, and spirits that the promises of God are true. The Holy Spirit confirms the truth of God's promises to us and assures us by His very presence in us that we belong to Christ (Romans 8:16). The Spirit confirms our adoption into God's family and therefore assures us that our hoped-for inheritance is certain (Romans 8:17). In fact, the Holy Spirit is God's pledge to us.

The Bible has much to say about hope, but this is what it says about our greatest hope. The ultimate Christian hope is that one day Christ will return and we who are looking forward to that return will go to be with Him forever (Titus 2:11–14). Because of Christ, we will triumph over sin, guilt, death, and hell itself (1 Corinthians 15:54–58; Romans 8:37). We will inherit eternal life to be enjoyed in the presence of our most loving and gracious God. We will even receive rewards for what we have done for Christ and we will reign with Him in a new world—a perfect world of love and righteousness. In this we hope and because God has promised it we know it will certainly happen (Hebrews 6:13–20). All God's promises find their fulfillment in Christ, our Lord and Savior. He is our hope (1 Timothy 1:1)!

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope" (Romans 15:13).

The blessed hope – What is it?

The blessed hope defined in Titus 2:13–14 is "... the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works."

When followers of Jesus speak of the blessed hope, they look forward to seeing Jesus. While we wait, we live godly lives. Titus 2:11–13 says, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope ..."

When we see Jesus, our difficulties on earth will fade and become a distant past. Romans 8:18 says, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us." Aware of the blessed hope we have, our perspectives on suffering and on this world change.

Jesus told His disciples He would return (John 14:3); the angels declared He would return (Acts 1:11); the letters to the early churches said He will return. Our hope is not a fanciful wish, but a trust in Jesus' promise and faithfulness. Romans 5:5 says that "hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."

When Jesus returns for His church (all of His followers from the establishment of the church in Acts 2 to the day He returns), this is called the rapture. An archangel will announce this event, and a trumpet of God will sound. Dead believers and living believers will have new bodies and be taken to heaven. First Corinthians 15:51–52 says, "Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed."

So, as followers of Jesus, how should this blessed hope impact us today? First John 3:3 says, "And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure." God calls us to live righteously, share the gospel, make disciples, and love others. As we await Jesus' return, we glorify God by living transformed lives (1 Corinthians 10:31).

(Hope Songs from page 1)

My anchor holds within the veil.

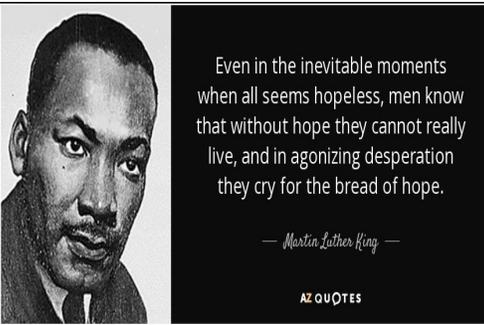
Refrain

His oath, His covenant, His blood,
Support me in the whelming flood.
When all around my soul gives way,
He then is all my Hope and Stay.

Refrain

When He shall come with trumpet
sound,
Oh may I then in Him be found.
Dressed in His righteousness alone,
Faultless to stand before the throne.

Refrain



Jesus Christ is Risen Today

Jesus Christ is risen today, Alleluia!
Our triumphant holy day, Alleluia!
Who did once, upon the cross, Alleluia!
Suffer to redeem our loss, Alleluia!

Hymns of praise then let us sing, Alleluia!
Unto Christ, our heavenly King, Alleluia!
Who endured the cross and grave, Alleluia!
Sinners to redeem and save, Alleluia!

But the pain which He endured, Alleluia!
Our salvation hath procured, Alleluia!
Now above the sky He's king, Alleluia!
Where the angels ever sing, Alleluia!

Sing we to our God above, Alleluia!
Praise eternal as His love, Alleluia!
Praise Him, all you heavenly host, Alleluia!
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Alleluia!



It Is Well with My Soul

When peace, like a river, attendeth my
way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to
say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.

Refrain

It is well with my soul,
It is well with my soul,
It is well, it is well, with my soul.

Though Satan should buffet, though tri-
als should come,
Let this blest assurance control,
That Christ hath regarded my helpless
estate,
And hath shed His own blood for my
soul.

Refrain

My sin—oh, the bliss of this glorious
thought!—
My sin, not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no
more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my
soul!

Refrain

For me, be it Christ, be it Christ hence to
live:
If Jordan above me shall roll,
No pang shall be mine, for in death as in
life
Thou wilt whisper Thy peace to my soul.

Refrain

But, Lord, 'tis for Thee, for Thy coming
we wait,
The sky, not the grave, is our goal;
Oh, trump of the angel! Oh, voice of the
Lord!
Blessed hope, blessed rest of my soul!

Refrain

And Lord, haste the day when the faith
shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
The trump shall resound, and the Lord
shall descend,
Even so, it is well with my soul.

Refrain

His Eye Is on the Sparrow

Why should I be discouraged and why should the shadows fall?
Why should my heart be lonely and long for heaven and home?
When Jesus is my portion, my constant Friend is He,
His eye is on the sparrow and I know He watches me.
His eye is on the sparrow and I know He watches me.

I sing because I'm happy;
I sing because I'm free;
His eye is on the sparrow
And I know He watches me.

Let not your heart be troubled; these tender words I hear;
And resting on his goodness I lose my doubts and fears;
For by the path He leadeth but one step I may see;
His eye is on the sparrow and I know He watches me.
His eye is on the sparrow and I know He watches me.

I sing because I'm happy;
I sing because I'm free;
His eye is on the sparrow
And I know He watches me.

Whenever I am tempted; whenever clouds arise;
When songs give place to sighing; when hope within me dies;
I draw the closer to Him; from care He sets me free;
His eye is on the sparrow and I know He watches me.
His eye is on the sparrow and I know He watches me.

I sing because I'm happy;
I sing because I'm free;
His eye is on the sparrow
And I know He watches me...

(Hope Eternal from page 1)

despair. When all HOPE and anticipation appeared to have disappeared. Let's look at two of such major songs.

Start with "Precious Lord". All you need to know is that title; major, major hit. It was written in Chicago in 1932 following the death of Thomas Andrew Dorsey's wife Nettie and infant son during childbirth. Known as the "Father of Black Gospel Music," the heavenly blessed and musically endowed Dorsey, lived a full life of making miracles of African American church hymns with popular blues and jazz music.

After suffering a severe illness earlier in his life, Dorsey was converted in 1928 and became divinely active in Pilgrim Baptist Church in Chicago. From 1932, he served as the church's imminent choir director for forty years. He created over a 1,000 musical works, of which, at least, 200 were gospel songs. He promoted the idea of "gospel song" through the formation of the National Association of Gospel Choirs and Choruses and served as that organization's president.

Even though he had hundreds of jazz and blues songs to his credit, he turned to "gospel" music, and was actually, one of the first to use that term, following the tragic loss. He recounted the tragedy that; at a large revival meeting where he was the featured soloist in St Louis, a messenger boy had handed him a telegram, which announced the unexpected death of his wife. The infant child at whose birth the wife had died also passed away the following day. Quite reminiscent of the story of Job in the Bible.

For days Dorsey said he secluded himself in grief and depression. He recalled feeling as if God had done him an injustice. Didn't want to serve Him any more or write any more gospel songs. He just wanted to go back to the jazz world as he once knew.

"But still I was lost in grief. Everyone was kind to me, especially a friend, who seemed to know what I needed. On the following Saturday evening after the loss, he took me up to a neighborhood music school. It was quiet; the late evening sun crept through the curtained windows. I sat down at the piano, and my hands began to browse over the keys." Recalled Dorsey.

Out of that despair came the song, "Precious Lord", and as everyone knows, the rest is what history is made of.

The lyrics capture the grief not only of himself, but also of anyone who had suffered major loss or losses in their lives. The opening line, "Precious Lord, take my hand, lead me on," indicates a

suffering soul who is reaching out. He recognizes that he is at the end of the rope of life; "I'm tired, I'm weak, I'm worn," clearly referring to Matthew 8:23-27, where Christ stills the storm, and adding "Through the storm, through the night, lead me on to the light." He evokes a level of HOPE that can only be personal and be deeply embedded in an abiding faith and an unflinching belief in the Lord.

Precious Lord, take my hand
Lead me on, let me stand
I'm tired, I'm weak, I'm lone
Through the storm, through the night,
Lead me on to the light
Take my hand precious Lord, lead me home.

When my way grows rear precious
Lord linger near
When my light is almost gone,
Hear my cry, hear my call
Hold my hand lest I fall
Take my hand precious Lord, lead me home.

Here's my other big song.
Does the acronym "LEVAS" mean anything to you? It's my preferred mnemonic to the venerable and popular "African American National Anthem" - "Lift Every Voice And Sing".

It is a hymn with lyrics by the poet and social activist James Weldon Johnson and set to music by his younger, musician brother, John Rosamond Johnson. Talk about the blessed Johnson & Johnson. Written from the despair and disillusionment of African Americans during the late 19th century, the hymn is a prayer of HOPE, a prayer of thanksgiving, a prayer for faithfulness and a prayer for freedom. It draws on the Biblical imagery of exodus from slavery and oppression to freedom and liberation to the "promised land."

It was originally written as a poem and recitation in 1900. "Lift Every Voice and Sing" was initially, commonly sung within African American communities, in churches and meetings. Later, the NAACP organization began to promote it as a "Negro national anthem". And by the end of the decade of 1910 through 1920, it had been featured in numerous African American hymnals.

James Weldon Johnson was a principal of a firmly, racially segregated school, in Jacksonville, Florida. His initial intention was to write a poem in commemoration of President Abraham Lincoln's birthday. However, amid the civil rights movement, Johnson decided to write a poem which was themed around the African Americans struggles amidst the

Reconstruction era, including the passage of oppressive Jim Crow laws in the Southern states.

"Lift Every Voice and Sing" was first recited by a group of 500 students but over the years, it was sung as a hymn and anthem within Black communities. Johnson wrote that "the school children of Jacksonville kept singing it; they went off to other schools and sang it; they became teachers and taught it to other children. Within twenty years it was being sung over the South and in some other parts of the country." And as they say, the rest is history, as well as hopeful.

Lift every voice and sing, Till earth and heaven ring, Ring with the harmonies of Liberty, Let our rejoicing rise, High as the listening skies. Let it resound loud as the rolling sea, Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us, Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us, Facing the rising sun of our new day begun, Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod, Bitter the chastening rod, Felt in the days when hope unborn had died, Yet with a steady beat, Have not our weary feet, Come to the place for which our fathers sighed, We have come over a way that with tears has been watered, We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered, Out from the gloomy past, Till now we stand at last, Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

If you are like me and have heard this song in every other which way, it's time to hear one more rendition. This acapella version by 5 guys who call themselves the "committed" of Oakwood University, is out of this world. You can hear them on YouTube at; <https://youtu.be/ngFDy52eCZY>. And they are Mahalia Latortue, Nkenge Jones, Symone Coles, Brandon Pridgett and Ashley Berry.

So, there you have it. The more you follow the reasoning and the history behind the lyrics to any song, the better it means to you. Let's all be blessed by the thoughtful, committed members of this human community.

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Question: "Is the ACTS formula for prayer a good way to pray?"

Answer: The ACTS formula for prayer has been taught to children and new believers for many years. *ACTS* is an acronym that gives a basic model on how to pray: with Adoration, with Confession, with Thanksgiving, and with Supplication. While prayer formulas can help us learn to pray, they do not necessarily make our prayers more effective or ensure that our prayers will be answered. This model for prayer is loosely based on the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9–13), except for thanksgiving.

The ACTS model for prayer includes these elements:

Adoration – The *A* in the ACTS model stands for adoration, which means worship—glorying and exalting God. Through adoration, we show our loyalty and admiration of our Father. As we pray, we are called to worship God in adoration. This could be a song of praise to Him, praying a psalm of worship, declaring His attributes, or a myriad of other forms of worship.

Confession – The *C* in the ACTS model stands for confession. The word *confess* means "to agree with." When we confess our sins, we agree with God that we are wrong and that we have sinned against Him by what we have said, thought, or done. God forgives us and restores our fellowship with Him (1 John 1:9).

Thanksgiving – The *T* represents thanksgiving. Philippians 4:6 says, "With thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" (ESV). How is thanksgiving different from adoration? The difference is that worship focuses on who God is; thanksgiving focuses on what God has done. We can thank God for many things including His love, salvation, protection, and provision.

Supplication – The *S* stands for supplication, which refers to prayer for our and others' needs. A supplication is a request or petition. We may pray for mercy (Psalm 4:1), leading (Psalm 5:8), wisdom (James 1:5), and much more. Paul encouraged us to make "supplication for all the saints" (Ephesians 6:18, ESV), which means to pray diligently for our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Is the ACTS formula for prayer biblical? The acronym itself isn't found in the Bible, but it can serve as a guide, especially when we are learning how to pray. Remember, prayer isn't a formula, and each prayer doesn't have to cover every type of prayer. God wants us to talk from our hearts and express ourselves to Him. As we grow in our love for Jesus Christ, we will naturally desire to talk to Him more.

Question: "What is the five-finger prayer?"

Answer: The five-finger prayer is a method to help people remember categories of people to pray for. It is a memory device used as an aid to prayer.

The little finger, or the pinkie, is the smallest finger, and it represents the individual who is praying. We need to pray for ourselves, but in humility we need to remember that we are the least important.

The ring finger this is usually the weakest of our fingers, and it reminds us to pray for the weak and the sick among us.

The middle finger is the tallest finger, and it reminds us to pray for our leaders.

The pointer finger, or the index finger, reminds us to pray for people who point the way—teachers and church leaders.

The thumb is the thickest and strongest digit, and when the hand is at rest, the thumb is the nearest to the rest of the body, reminding us to pray for family and friends—people who are closest to us.

The five-finger prayer has been popularized by Pope Francis. There is nothing specifically Roman Catholic about the five-finger prayer; it is simply one method to help people remember whom to pray for, similar to a prayer list. Since we always have our hands with us, the reminder of those in need of prayer is constant.

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Our Daily Bread

THE JOY OF GOOD NEWS

The Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news. Isaiah 61:1

One evening in 1964, the Great Alaska earthquake shocked and writhed for more than four minutes, registering a 9.2 magnitude. In Anchorage, whole city blocks disappeared, leaving only massive crates and rubble. Through the dark, terrifying night, news reporter Genie Chance stood at her microphone, passing along messages to desperate people sitting by their radios: a husband working in the bush heard that his wife was alive; distraught families heard that their sons on a Boy Scout camping trip were okay; a couple heard that their children had been found. The radio crackled with line after line of good news—pure joy amid the ruin.

This must have been something like what Israel felt when they heard these words from the prophet Isaiah: “The Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor” (61:1). As they looked over the wasteland of their wrecked lives and grim future, Isaiah’s clear voice brought good news at the very moment when all seemed lost. God intended to “bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives. . . [To] rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated” (VV. 1, 4). In the midst of their terror, the people heard God’s assuring promise, His good news.

For us today, it’s in Jesus that we hear God’s good news—this is what the word gospel means. Into our fears, pains, and failures, He delivers good news. And our distress gives way to joy. Winn Collier

Where do you need to experience good news?

When has God’s good news replaces your fear and worry with joy?

God, I need some good news. I hear bad news all the time. I need to hear what You say about things. I need the joy You bring.

Today’s Scripture: **Isaiah 61:1-7**

¹ The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and rerelease from darkness for the prisoners, ² to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, ³ and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor.

⁴ They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations. ⁵ Strangers will shepherd your flocks; foreigners will work

your fields and vineyards. ⁶ And you will be called priest of the Lord, you will be named ministers of our God. You will feed on the wealth of nations, and in their riches you will boast.

⁷ Instead of your shame you will receive a double portion, and instead of disgrace you will rejoice in your inheritance. And so you will inherit a double portion in your land, and everlasting joy will be yours.

INSIGHT

Jesus read from Isaiah 61 not long after He began His public ministry (Luke 4:18-19). Then He proclaimed to an astonished synagogue audience in Nazareth, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (V. 21). Interestingly, as He read Isaiah, Christ stopped before the last part of Isaiah 61:2, which reads, “and the day of vengeance of our God.” this omission was surely intentional. Jesus was likely signaling two things: He was declaring Himself to be the long-awaited One, and He was informing the people this wasn’t a time for judgement. It was the time for proclaiming good news, setting captives free, and comforting the brokenhearted. Salvation had arrived. Tim Gustafson

NEVER SAY “CAN’T”

Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say. Exodus 4:12

Jen was born without legs and abandoned at the hospital. Yet she says being put up for adoption was a blessing. “I am here because of the people who poured into me.” her adoptive family helped her to see she was born “born like this for a reason.” they raised her to “never say ‘can’t’ ”and encouraged her in all her pursuits—including becoming an accomplished acrobat and aerialist! She meets challenges with an attitude of “How can I tackle this?” and motivates others to do the same.

The Bible tells the stories of many people God used who seemed incapable or unsuited for their calling—but God used them anyway. Moses is a classic example. When God called him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, he balked (Exodus 3:11; 4:1) and protested, “I am slow of speech and tongue.” God replied, “Who gave human beings their mouths? Who makes them deaf or mute? ...Is it not I, the Lord? Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say” (4:10-12). When Moses still protested, God provided Aaron to speak for him and assured him He would help them (VV. 13-15).

Like Jen and like Moses, all of us are here for a reason—and God graciously helps us along the way. He supplies people to help us and provides what we need to live for Him. Alyson Kieda

When have you felt incapable or ill-equipped for a task or role you felt God calling you to fill? How did God help you?

God, I’m so glad you didn’t leave me here on this earth to do it all on my own. Thank You for Your love and guidance and the people You’re placed in my life.

Today’s Scripture: **Exodus 3:7-10; 4:10-15**

⁷ The Lord said, “I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. ⁸ So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that Land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey.... ¹⁰ So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.”

EXODUS 4

¹⁰ Moses said to the Lord, “Pardon your servant, Lord. I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue.”

¹¹ The Lord said to him, “Who gave human beings their mouths? Who makes them deaf or mute? Who gives them sight or makes them blind? Is it not I, the Lord? ¹² Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say.”

¹³ But Moses said, “Pardon your servant, Lord. Please send someone else.”

¹⁴ Then the Lord’s anger burned against Moses and he said, “What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he can speak well. He is already on his way to meet you, and he will be glad to see you. ¹⁵ You shall speak to him and put words in his mouth; I will help both of you speak and will teach you what to do.”

INSIGHT

Moses offered several objections to being the one chosen to lead Israel out of Egypt: he was unworthy (Exodus 3:11), had inadequate knowledge of God (V. 13), lacked any special powers (4:1), and had a speech impediment (V. 10). In each case, God responded by pointing Moses to a deeper understanding of God rather than focusing on himself. For it’s ultimately God’s presence and power that qualifies people (3:12), not their personal strengths and weaknesses. Monica La Rose

Ministries, Grand Rapids, Michigan
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Words To Live By

“Still I Rise”

by Maya Angelou—1928-2014

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may tread me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.
Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,

Still I'll rise. Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops.
Weakened by my soulful cries.

Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard '
Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own back yard.

You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.

Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.

“Daily Confession of Faith”

In Christ I am anointed and a powerful person of God.

I am a joint-heir with Jesus and more than a conqueror.

I am a doer of the Word of God and a channel for His blessings.

If God be for me, who can be against me?

I am blessed coming in and I am blessed going out.

My enemies are fleeing before me.

God has commanded His blessing on my storehouses.

He has opened His Good treasures and I shall lend and not borrow.

I am the head and not the tail.

He has given me power to make wealth.

I dwell in the secret place.

I have His protection and provision.

God is my refuge, my fortress.

I am not afraid of the snare of the fowler.

No Evil shall befall me and no plague shall come nigh my dwelling.

God has given his angels charge over me and they are bearing me up in their hands

lest I dash my foot against a stone, as declared in Psalm 91.

1 Peter 2:9 establishes I am a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation.

I am a peculiar person called out of darkness into His marvelous light.

1 Peter 2:24 states, I have been healed by the stripes of Jesus.

***Cancer, sugar diabetes, heart disease, sickness, afflictions, infections,
or any other disease cannot enter my body.***

I am without spot or blemish, an intercessor,

the righteousness of God, saved, and washed in the Blood of Jesus.

“No weapon formed against me shall prosper, and every tongue which rise against me in judgement You shall condemn.

This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD,

and their righteousness is from Me,” Says the LORD.

I am saved from wrath by Him and justified by the blood of the Lamb.

***Lord I pray that those may prosper that love Jerusalem and that peace will be within them
and prosperity in their houses according to Psalms 122:6-9.***

Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah!

Spirit Lifters

By Norman Vincent Peale

Realize the Power Within You

Realize the power that is within you, and you will no longer be the victim of a depressed spirit.

And what is this inner power? Simply the God-given ability to believe.

To the extent to which you develop this faculty, you will master the defeats in your life.

The great issue is to learn to believe.

This is stated in one of the most important of all Scripture passages:

Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are

possible to him who believes." Mark 9:23

Learn to believe. Learn to cast out doubt. This is done by the practice of affirmation.

Affirm faith, think positively, visualize achievement. Never think doubt. Always think faith.

This text affirms that when you learn to believe, the area of the impossible is vastly reduced and the area of the possible is greatly increased.

If you set this text firmly at the center of your thought patterns, you will never again be a victim of low spirits.

What Christ Can Do for You

We read in the Bible of the marvelous things Jesus did for people---and wish that the same experience might be ours.

Through faith in Jesus Christ, they were able to accomplish the most astonishing achievements, or were rescued from sad plights or gained tremendous new power over difficulties.

Rather sadly we ask, "Why can't that happen to me?"

It can, and as proof I urge you to meditate upon this tremendous Spirit Lifter:

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.
Hebrews 13:8

The simple truth stated here is that Jesus Christ never changes. He is an invariable factor in a variable world. He is just the same now as when He walked the shores of Galilee. He has the same kindness, the same power to heal and change men's lives. He is the same restorer of courage, the same transformer of people's souls.

Any things that He ever did for anyone throughout all history, He can do for you. It all depends upon how completely you surrender yourself Him---and how sincerely you believe.

You Are Never Alone

Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go... I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you. Genesis 28:15

Uncertainties can be frightening, but these reassuring words show that God will be with you wherever you go on in whatever situation you find yourself. You are never alone. He will always see you through.

He Makes You Whole

Depression of spirit is often caused by a haunting sense of incompleteness and by unresolved conflicts. Jesus Christ, the skillful Physician, heals the personality as surely as he heals the body and soul. This described in a wonderful passage:

Wherever He entered, into villages, cities, or the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged Him

that they might touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched Him were made well. Mark 6:56

To experience His healing power, yield yourself to Him willingly. Make the first move, however timidly. He will respond with the miraculous touch that makes you whole in body, mind and spirit. How your spirits will rise as you gain a deep inner sense of wholeness!

Receive God's Blessing

Our spirits rise when we learn how to receive the abundance of good things God wants to give to us. The secret is in two verses:

So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be open to you. For everyone who ask receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Luke 11:9-10

Note that the word ask is immediately followed by the word will be given; that directly after the word seek are the

words you will find; and that quickly after the word knock is assurance that it will be opened. It is to emphasize that everyone who seek finds, and to all who knock the storehouse is opened.

Therefore, confidently ask. Then visualize yourself as now receiving; seek, then affirm that you have found; knock, then believe that God's storehouse is opened.

Practice receiving. Believe that you have been given. Then feel your spirits lift as you realize that God's blessings are actually showered upon you.

No More Doubt—Only Confidence

But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:19

If we do our part—live right and have faith—God will see that all of your real needs are supplied. God has infinite riches, enough for all of us. We can receive these through

God's law of boundless supply. Live according to His principles, and you will never look in vain for any necessity. How the spirit rises when you develop confidence and know that you will be cared for, that all will be well, that the future is bright with promise.

Barbara Perry Speaks

“Still under Construction”

**“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**

Let us pray, “Father, thank You that our life is Your workmanship and that we are under construction according to Your blueprint. Thank You that You’re working in our life, and You will bring us

to completion. We are looking beyond the messy areas to see the masterpiece in the making, its in Jesus’ Name we ask and pray. Amen, Amen, Amen.

Hallelujah, Thank You Jesus. Jesus chose Peter to be one of His disciples even though he knew he was hot tempered, impatient, and would fail many times.

See we all have some messy areas we need to improve in. The point is to let God make us and mold us. Stay pliable. We should be better this year than we

were last year. We should be making progress. Don’t let the mess become normal. The hot temper, the addiction, the negative—that’s not who we are. Keep growing, keep resisting that temptation, keep saying no to those carnal desires.

Remember every time we do the right thing, it makes it a little easier the next time. There’s nothing wrong with being under construction; there is something wrong with not making any progress.

“Chains Broken”

“O LORD, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: Thou hast loosed my bonds. Psalms 116:16

Let us pray, “Father, thank You that You are the Most High God, our chain breaker, who is releasing us into increase, into favor, and into new levels. Thank You that what has limited us in the past is not going to hinder us anymore. We believe our chains have been

broken, its In Jesus’ Name we pray. Amen, Amen, Amen, “Hallelujah Thank You Jesus.”

Imagine what you could become without the chains that are limiting you. The chain of fear and insecurity, chain of guilt, shame, feeling wrong about ourselves, a chain of negative words that was spoken over you, telling you that you don’t measure up and you will never be successful. It’s time to be freed from those chains. Our destiny is too great, your assignment too important to go around bound. Quit telling yourself

you’re stuck, you’ll always struggle, you’ll always be lonely, you’ll always fight depression.

See the chain breaker, the Most High God, is working in our life right now. When we least expect it, things are going to shift in our favor and we’re not going to be a slave to debt, fear, or an addiction. God is releasing us into increase, into favor, and into new levels, Amen. Ask Him to set you free, and start living from a freedom mindset, Amen.

“It’s Not Worth It”

“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. Romans 12:2

Let us pray, “Father, thank You that when we fix our attention on You and do what’s right, You change us from the inside out. We decide we’re not going to be pressured into compromising, and

we’re not going to live like everyone else and we will not lower our standard to please someone else, Amen.

There’s a price to pay to become all we were created to be. We may not be able to do what others do. But we can always do the right thing, by going the extra mile.

See people may not understand why we won’t talk behind someone else’s back, why we won’t slack off at work with them, or why we won’t laugh about certain things. Its because it’s not our business to judge them or become like

them or lower our standard. Value God’s blessings more than what another person thinks of us. If we don’t feel good about something, if we have to talk ourselves into it and make excuses as why it’s okay, it’s not worth it. We’ll never go wrong taking the high road.

Have a made-up mind. “I’m going to be a person of integrity and honor God in all I do. I’m not going to compromise what I know God says.” be the person whom God rewards.

“Change Coats”

“to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified Isaiah 61:3

Let us pray, “Father, thank You that though we can’t change our past, but we can control our attitude today and make sure that we are not wearing a coat of heaviness and discouragement. Thank You that we can put on a garment of praise and thanksgiving. We are going to live today with a great attitude, its In Jesus’ Name we pray. Amen, Amen, Amen. Hallelujah, Thank You Jesus. Thank You for changing our coats.

The Scripture says to put on a garment of praise for a

spirit of heaviness. A garment is like a coat. Before we can put on a coat of praise, we have to take off a coat of heaviness.

See sometimes we wonder why we don’t have any joy, why we’re not passionate. We’re wearing the wrong coat. “Nothing good is in our future. We never get any breaks.” that coat of discouragement doesn’t look good on us, that coat of self-pity is out of style, and that coat of bitterness over who left us or what we didn’t get doesn’t fit us anymore. Now do our part and take off that coat of offense and put on a coat of praise. “Father, thank You that Your plans for us are for good. Thank You that what You started in our life You will finish.” if we’re going to rise to the next level, we have to adjust our attitude. We can’t have a defeated mentality and live a victorious life, Amen

THE BEAUTY OF HOLLAND

I AM OFTEN ASKED TO DESCRIBE THE EXPERIENCE OF RASING A CHILD WITH DISABILITY - TO TRY TO HELP PEOPLE WHO HAVE NOT SHARED THAT UNIQUE EXPERIENCE TO UNDERSTAND IT, TO IMAGINE HOW IT WOULD FEEL. IT'S LIKE THIS...

WHEN YOU'RE GOING TO HSE A BABY, IT'S LIKE PLANNING A FABULOUS TRIP TO ITALY. YOU BUY A BUNCH OF GUIDEBOOKS AND MAKE YOUR WONDERFUL PLANS. THE COLISEMUM, THE MICHELANGELO DAVID. THE GONDOLAS IN VENICE. YOU LEARN SOME HANDY PHRASES IN ITALLAN. IT'S ALL VERY, VERY EXCITING!

AFTER MONTHS OF EAGER ANTICIPATION, THE DAY FINALLY ARRIVES. YOU PACK YOUR BAGS AND OFF YOU GO. SERVAL HOURS LATER THE PLANE LANDS. THE FLIGHT ATTENDANT COMES IN AND SAYS, "WELCOME TO HOLLAND.

"HOLLAND!!!" YOU SAY, "WHAT DO YOU MEAN HOLLAND! I SIGNED UP FOR ITALY. I'M SUPPORT TO BE IN ITALY! ALL MY LIFE I'VE DREAMED OF GOING TO ITALY."

BUT THERE'S A CHANCE IN THE FLIGHT PLAN. THEY LANDED IN HOLLAND AND YOU MUST STAY. THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT THEY HAVEN'T TAKEN YOU TO A HORRIBLE, DISGUSTING, FILTHY PLACE, FULL OF PESTILENCE, FAMINE AND DISEASE. IT'S JUST A DIFFERENT PLANE.

SO YOU MUST GO OUT AND BUY NEW GUIDEBOOKS. AND YOU MUST LEARN A WHOLE NEW LANGUAGE. AND YOU WILL MEET A WHOLE NEW GROUP OF PEOPLE YOU WOULD NEVER HAVE MET.

IT'S JUST A DIFFERENT PLACE. IT'S SLOWER-PACED THAN ILALY, LESS FLASHY THAN ITALY. BUT AFTER YOU'RE BEEN THERE AWHILE AND CATCH YOUR BREATH, YOU BEGIN TO LOOK AROUND, AND YOU BEGIN TO NOTICE THAT HOLLAND HAS WINDMILLS, HOLLAND HAS TULIPS. HOLLAND EVEN HAS REM-BRANDTS.

BUT EVERYONE YOU KNOW IS BUSY COMING AND GOING FROM ILTALY, AND THEY'RE BRAGGING ABOUT WHAT A WONDERFUL TIME THEY HAD THERE. AND FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE YOU WILL SAY, "YES, THAT'S WHERE I WAS SUPPOSED TO GO. THAT'S WHAT I HAD PLANNED."

AND THE PAIN WILL NEVER, EVER GO AWAY, BECAUSE THE LOSS OF THAT DREAM IS A VERY SIGNIFI-CANT LOSS.

BUT IF YOU SPEND YOUR LIFE MOURING THE FACT YOU DIDN'T GO TO ITALY, YOU MAY NEVER BE FREE TO ENJOY THE VERY SPECIAL, THE VERY LOVELY THINGS ABOUT HOLLAND.

SOURCE UNKNOWN

Joyce Meyer: Promises for your Everyday Life - a Daily Devotional

“What Are You Hoping for?”

Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: even to day do I declare that I will render double unto thee; Zechariah 9:12

I have a question for you: What are you hoping for? What are you expecting in life? Are you looking for something good to happen or are you expecting to be disappointed?

So many people are feeling

hopeless these days. However, Jesus did not die for us to be hopeless. He died so that we could be full of hope.

The devil wants to steal your hope and he will lie to you. He'll tell you that nothing good can happen in your life or that the things you care about won't last. If you're struggling with a difficult situation, he'll tell you it will never end. But you have to stay full of hope and remember that the devil is a liar. God can change everything!

Our Father is good, and He has

good plans for your life. If you will maintain your hope, especially in the midst of troubled and uncertain times, He has promised you “double for your trouble”. So refuse to give up hope. Start expecting God to do something, something good!

Prayer starter: Lord, my hope is in You. Satan is a liar and I will not listen to him and lose hope. I expect You to do good things in my life.

“Your Three Best Weapons”

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not was after the flesh: 2 Corinthians 10:3

Through careful strategy and cunning deceit, Satan attempts to wage war against you and keep you in a mindset of defeat. But God has given you spiritual weapons to use against him. Here are the three main spiritual weapons you can use to fight off the enemy:

1. **God's word:** Receive it through preaching, teaching, reading and private Bible study. Continue in the Word until it becomes revelation given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

2. **Praise:** This defeats the devil faster and more efficiently than any other battle plan, but it must be genuine heart-praise, not just lip service or a religious ritual.

3. **Prayer:** Prayer is relationship with the Godhead. It is communication with God, asking Him for help or talking with Him about whatever is on your heart. To have an effective prayer life, we must

develop an intimate, personal relationship with the Father. Know that He loves you and that He wants to help you.

There is a way going on, but God is fighting on your side and has given you the weapons you need. Use them to send Satan running!

Prayer Starter: Lord, thank You so much for giving me the spiritual weapons I need to fight my enemy. With Your help, I know that I can win the battle today!

“Be a True Worshiper”

“But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.” John 4:23

Worship is so much more than just singing songs. It is a condition of the heart and a state of mind. We can even worship God passionately without singing a single note. Our worship for God is born in our hearts, it fills our

thoughts and it is expressed through our mouths and through our bodies.

The world often thinks of worship as “religion,” which could not be further from the biblical concept of worship. It's about a personal relation, spiritual intimacy and passionate expressions of devotion from people who love God with all their hearts. This is true worship.

The Bible says that God is seeking those who worship Him ‘in spirit and in truth.’

I find it interesting that He does not want just anybody to worship Him. He

wants true and genuine people. He does not want to be worship out of fear, obligation or religion.

True worship is a result of intimacy with God. Worship God today with your whole heart, and be a worshiper in spirit and in truth!

Prayer Starter: Lord, I don't just want to offer You lip service. Instead, I give my life to You as a true worshiper, intimately connected with You. You are so good to me and I want to worship You ‘in spirit and in truth.’

“Walk with Boldness”

“The wicked flee when no man pursueth: But the righteous are bold as a lion. Proverbs 28:1

Some people exude boldness, while others struggle with living boldly as a loved child of God. I had that problem until God showed me some important keys that helped me live boldly, and I want to share them with you.

1. Refuse to live in fear. Fear is an epidemic in our society. The Bible instructs us in Hebrews 10:38 to live by

faith and not draw back in fear.

2. Put setbacks behind you. You are not a failure because you try new things and they don't work out. You fail only when you stop trying. Don't be afraid to make mistakes, and if you do, recover quickly and press on.

3. Don't draw comparisons. Boldness will be impossible as long as you compare yourself to others. Boldness comes from accepting who you are and being the best you can be.

4. Be willing to take action. Search your

heart and ask yourself what you believe God wants you to do, and then do it.

Pray over these four keys, and ask the Holy Spirit to help you live them out. Hold up your head and be filled with boldness.

Prayer Starter: Holy Spirit, I want boldness to be one of my defining traits. Help me to live out these four keys by keys by Your strength.

A Bird's Eye View Of The Bible

Old Testament

There are 39 books in the Old Testament library.
There are four types of writing in the Old Testament:
Law, History, Poetry, Prophecy.

It is helpful to know which kind of literature you are reading before you start: is it poetry, or is it history?

LAW

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

The first five books of the Bible are sometimes called the Law of Moses. They give many of God's laws about how to live.

HISTORY

Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1&2 Samuel, 1&2 Kings, 1&2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther.

These 12 historical books cover the occupation of the Promised Land, the time of the Judges, Israel's kings, the fall of the two kingdoms and a return to Jerusalem.

POETRY

Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs.

Nearly one third of the Old Testament is written in poetry. These five poetical books ask profound questions about evil, pain, love, wisdom and God.

PROPHECY

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

The 17 prophetic books account for almost a quarter of the Bible. They are divided into "Major Prophets" (the first five books) and, "Minor Prophets" (the last 12). The "Minor" ones are shorter, not less important.

New Testament

There are 27 books in the New Testament library.
There are three types of writing in the New Testament:
History, Letters, Prophecy.

Before you study a New Testament book it helps to consider what kind of literature you are reading: is it a letter or is it history?

HISTORY

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts

The first four books, called gospels, are not like our modern biographies. But they do give four portraits of Jesus. Acts is part two of Luke, about the early church.

LETTERS

PAUL'S LETTERS

Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon.

We have 13 of Paul's letters. Except for one personal one, Philemon, they were all written to groups of Christians.

OTHER LETTERS

Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude.

We don't know who wrote Hebrews. Tradition states that all the writers of the New Testament, except for John, were martyred.

PROPHECY

Revelation

Written by the apostle John, this book has seven letters to churches and numerous visions about God.



(Christian Hope from page 1)

the world, as You have planned, and as You want it to be. Help us to walk in Your light, and live our life in faith and glory, in Your name, we pray, Amen, Amen, Amen, Hallelujah Thank You Jesus.

What is so important about Christian hope?

If our future is not secured and satisfied by God then we are going to be excessively anxious. This results either in paralyzing fear or in self-managed, greedy control. We end up thinking about ourselves, our future, our problems and our potential, and that keeps us from loving. In other words, hope is the birthplace of Christian self-sacrificing love. That's because we just let God take care of us and aren't preoccupied with having to work to take care of ourselves. We say, "Lord, I just want to be there for other people tomorrow, because You're going to be there for me." If we don't have the hope that Christ is for us then we will be engaged in self-preservation and self-enhancement. But if we let ourselves be taken care of by God for the future—whether five minutes or five centuries from now—then we can be free to love others. Then God's glory will shine more clearly, because that's how He becomes visible. When God satisfies us so deeply that we're free to love other people then He becomes more manifest. And that's what we want above all.

We ask what's the difference between a Christian definition of hope and the way it is usually used? The word "hope" in ordinary English vocabulary is generally distinguished from certainty. We would say, "I don't know what's going to happen, but I hope it happens."

When we read the word "hope" in the Bible (like in 1 Peter 1:13 says, "Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming Amen.) Set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ". Hope is not wishful thinking. It's not "I don't know if it's going to happen, but I hope it happens." That's absolutely not what is meant by Christian hope.

Christian hope is when God has promised that something is going to happen and we put our trust in that promise. Christian hope is a confidence that something will come to pass because God has promised it will come to pass. How do we build our hope in God?

See hope is a portion or part of faith. Faith and hope, in our mind, are overlapping realities: hope is faith in the future tense. So most of faith is hope. The Bible says, "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). This implies that hope, like faith, is also strengthened by the word of God. Hope comes from reading His precious and very great promises and looking to Christ who purchased them. I would sum it up like this: The most important verse in the Bible for us should be, (Romans 8:32 which says, "He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?") Now that last part is hope producing! But it's grounded in the rock-solid statement that "God didn't spare his own son." The essence of what we look to in the Bible to build our hope is, What has Christ done for us in our sinful condition that enables us to know that we will not come into judgment and condemnation and that all things are working together for our good? And the answer is that Christ died for us, rose again for us, and therefore all the promises of God are yes in Him.

So let's look away from the circumstances that confront us, look to Christ, look to the promises, and hold fast to them. Hope comes from the promises of God rooted in the work of Christ, Amen, Amen Amen.

Let us pray, Lord, help us to hear You saying, "we are Your hope" over all the other voices. Your word says, You are the hope for the hopeless so we're running to You with both hands stretched out and grabbing on to You. Please fill us up with hope and give us a tangible reminder today that hope is an unbreakable spiritual lifeline (Hebrews 6:19-20 says, "Which we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and entering into that which is within the veil; 20: Whither as a forerunner Jesus entered for us, having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek Amen.) God, You also know those things in our heart that we barely dare to hope for, today we give them to You, we trust them to You, and ask that You because we know that You can do more than we could ever guess, imagine or request in wildest dreams (Eph 3:20 says, Amen). God, You are our hope and we trust You, in Jesus Name we pray, Amen, Amen Amen.

Barbara Perry

PAST THE BOUNDARIES OF KNOWING

Today Scripture: **2 CORINTHIANS 4:7-18**

We fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. 2 Corinthians 4:18

It was a hard day when my husband found out that, like so many others, he too would soon be furloughed from employment as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. We believed that God would meet our basic needs, but the uncertainty of how that would happen was still terrifying.

As I processed my jumbled emotions, I found myself revisiting a favorite poem by sixteenth-century reformer John of the Cross. Entitled "I Went In, I Knew Not Where," the poem depicts the wonder to be found in a journey of surrender, when, going "past the boundaries of knowing," we learn to "discern the Divine in all its guises." And so that's what my husband and I tried to do during this season: to turn our focus from what we could control and understand to the unexpected, mysterious, and beautiful ways God can be found all around us.

The apostle Paul invited believers to a journey from the seen to the unseen, from outward to inward realities, and from temporary struggles to the "eternal glory that far outweighs them all" (2 Corinthians 4:17).

Paul didn't urge this because he lacked compassion for their struggles. He knew it would be through letting go of what they could understand that they could experience the comfort, joy, and hope they so desperately needed (vv. 10, 15-16). They could know the wonder of Christ's life making all things new. *Monica La Rose*

When have you experienced God's glory in ways you couldn't understand? In what areas of your life might you experience God beyond the "boundaries of knowing"?

Loving God, there's so much heartbreak and uncertainty in our world. Help me to learn to follow You past what I can understand to the wonder of Your life breathing new life all around me.

⁷ But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. ⁸ We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. ¹⁰ We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. ¹¹ For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body. ¹² So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

¹³ It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken." Since we have that same spirit of faith, we also believe and therefore speak, ¹⁴ because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself. ¹⁵ All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.

¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸ So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

INSIGHT

In fulfilling his call to preach the gospel, Paul endured great dangers, persecutions, and hardships (1 Corinthians 4:9-13; 6:4-10; 11:23-29). He chose to see these as "light and momentary troubles" achieving "an eternal glory" (2 Corinthians 4:17). Paul persevered, energized by God's mercy (v. 1), the greatness of the gospel (vv. 2-6), and the power of Christ's resurrected life (vv. 7-14). His confident refrain is, "We do not lose heart" (vv. 1, 16). Such confidence isn't rooted in himself, but in God's "all-surpassing power" (v. 7) and all-sufficient grace (12:9).

Ministries, Grand Rapids, Michigan,
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Crises/Emergency: Cell phone 860-754-4606

Cross Street Recovery Ministry the "Hope Line" is in operation 24 hours per day. Please call 860-754-4606 if you, a friend and/or a family member are in need of counseling and/or are in crisis, **PLEASE** dial the "Hope Line". All information will be confidential.

CROSS STREET MINISTRY OF RECOVERY
We can't but through God, all things are possible. How might we pull on God's strength to help each other recover?

Let the spirit of God work for you in a Mighty, Mighty Way

For more information contact:
Church office 860-344-9527.or
Rev. Gregory B. Winborne: Days: 860-616-3834

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Sunday

8:00 a.m. **Church School** (see Zoom Meeting)
 10:00 p.m. **Worship Service**
<https://zoom.us/j/959628798>
 Meeting ID: 959 628 798
 (929) 205-6099, Code: 959628798#

Tell your family and friends from across the Country.
 We can be watched worldwide.

Tuesday

Bible Study

Time: 6:00 P.M.

Join Zoom Meeting Link: <https://zoom.us/j/562367770>
 (929)205-6099, Code: 562367770#

Wednesday

Day Of Prayer

Prayer Times: 6:00 A.M. 12:00 P.M. & 6:00 P.M.
 Free Conference Call: 1 (727) 731-4561

Sunday School ZOOM Meetings

8:00 a.m.- Contemporary Sunday School: Adults

Voice Only Call: (929) 205-6099;
 Code: 140827210#
 Web-link for Video Call: <https://zoom.us/j/140827210>

8:30 a.m.- Dr. Long's Sunday School Class

Voice Only Call: (929) 205-6099;
 Code: 734629713#
 Web-link for Video Call: <https://zoom.us/j/734629713>

9:30 a.m.- Beginners Sunday School: Ms. Carolyn Smith

Voice Only Call: (929) 205-6099;

Code: 233007146#
 Web-link for Video Call: <https://zoom.us/j/233007146>

11:00 a.m.- Primary Sunday School: Rev. Earlene Grant

Voice Only Call: (929) 205-6099;
 Code: 614890401#
 Web-link for Video Call: <https://zoom.us/j/614890401>

11:30 a.m.- Juniors Sunday School: Rev. Greg Winborne

Voice Only Call: (929) 205-6099;
 Code: 856361645#
 Web-link for Video Call: <https://zoom.us/j/856361645>

We thank you for your generous giving. Ways you can give:

- Online: crossstreetamezion.org
 1. Realm, (Realm: <https://onrealm.org/TheCross/-/give/TJXKDEVIXE>)
 2. Text 73256 (Thecross)
 3. PayPal,
 4. CASHAPP: \$TheCross440
 5. Mail: P.O. Box 223 Middletown, Ct 06457,

6. Drop off on Sunday 11:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.
 7. Call the office for someone to pick up
 8. Church outside Lockbox

(Note: you can find links on the website; <http://www.crossstreetamezion.org/Give>)

Sanctuary Guidelines

There will be one service at 10:00 A.M. The doors will open at 9:45 A.M. to begin temperature check-in. As you enter the building, we request you to sanitize your hands.

If you choose to worship in the Sanctuary, there will be one entrance open, the main doors in the front of the building. The committee and I ask that you follow the guidelines for seating. The pews and floor will be marked to help you do this.

We also kindly request all persons attending to wear a mask over their mouth and nose to prevent the possible spread of illness to the most vulnerable among us. Masks are not required for those under the age of two or for persons unable to remove their masks.

I understand that there has been considerable discussion about masks. Since the scriptures are, of course, silent on the matter, I do not think we need to agree on the substance of the question. It is a matter of personal conscience. However, since some of our more vulnerable brothers and sisters

would experience a great deal of anxiety worshipping with a group of people who are not wearing masks, I ask that you consent to wear a mask for their sake (see 1 Corinthians 8-9 for the principle).

Worship Outside: If you prefer to worship outdoors, there will be designated parking and an outside speaker, and you can listen on radio frequency 89:3 F.M. and watch on your phone via zoom, Facebook, or YouTube. During Communion, someone will bring the sacrament to you.

Livestream Worship: Finally, we will continue to live-stream the 10:00 A.M. service so that you can watch from your home. If you are experiencing any signs or symptoms of a new illness, including fatigue, fever, chills, difficulty breathing, cough, or nausea, please make use of the live stream and consider contacting your healthcare provider.

Other Precautions: Since studies seem inconclusive on whether singing increases the risk for viral spread, and since we want to exercise an abundance

of caution at this point in re-opening, if you choose to join the worship and praise team in singing, please keep on your mask.

Please refrain from shaking hands and embracing one another at this time.

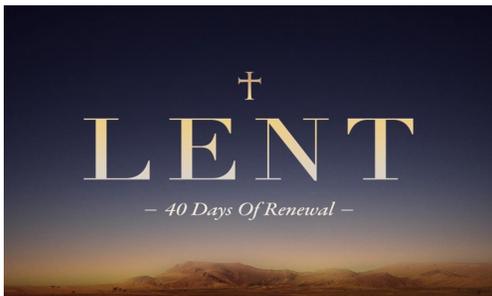
I understand that some of these precautions may feel burdensome. They are temporary, and, even so, I hope you will join me in giving thanks to God for bringing us back together again and ask him to provide us with patience and kindness for each other.

Much Love to All. Faithfully Yours,
 Pastor Harvill

Special Note: For now, we will have service in the Sanctuary every other Sunday (First and 3rd) and 2nd and fourth in the parking lot only, along with Live streaming.

Please let us know by phone call, letter, or email what else we can do to help you become comfortable returning to in-person worship.

The Cross Street Journal is published Bi-monthly. It can be found on our website: crossstreetamezion.org & in the front lobby. If you would like a PDF copy sent to you, Email your request to: ken46@snet.net. If you have an article or information (word count 1000 - 1500 or less) for current and future publications the deadline for this information is the Monday after the 2nd Sunday of each Month. **You may submit your information in the following ways:** place the information on a CD (Window format) and leave it in the Cross Street office, E-mail Ken Simmons (Ken46@snet.net), or give it to him. **Praise God!!!**



word *lencten*, meaning “lengthen” and refers to the lengthening days of spring. The forty days represents the time Jesus spent in the wilderness, enduring the temptation of Satan and preparing to begin his ministry.

Lent is a time of repentance, [fasting](#) and preparation for the coming of Easter. It is a time of self-examination and reflection. In the early church, Lent began as a period of fasting and preparation for baptism by new converts and then became a time of penance by all Christians. Today, Christians focus on relationship with

God, growing as disciples and extending ourselves, often choosing to give up something or to volunteer and give of ourselves for others.

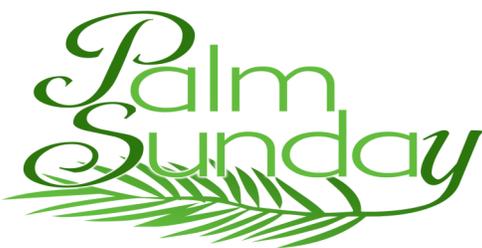
Sundays in Lent are not counted in the forty days because each Sunday represents a “mini-Easter.” This is why you will see the designation “Sunday in Lent” rather than “Sunday of Lent” in the naming of these Sundays. On each Lord’s Day in Lent, while Lenten fasts continue, the reverent spirit of Lent is tempered with joyful anticipation of the Resurrection.

Lent is a season of forty days, not counting Sundays, which begins on [Ash Wednesday](#) and ends on Holy Saturday. Lent comes from the Anglo Saxon

HOLY WEEK

Communion. Historically, the Passover marked the Israelites’ departure from Egypt when the final plague was cast upon the Egyptians to smite the first born dead (Exodus). The Hebrews received special instruction to kill a lamb the or goat for each household and to sprinkle the blood on the doorpost and the life of the first born would be spared. Every Jew/Hebrew was required to celebrate the Passover, and the Lord’s Last Supper was Jesus’ observance of the Passover. However, Jesus brought new meaning to this event as it commemorated Israel’s deliverance from Egyptian bondage – all of humanity was delivered from sin.

either a love feast or Holy Communion being participated in by all. One cannot but help call to mind the celebration of the feast of the Passover by Jews. Christians celebrate similarly, for this is in remembrance of the Lamb of God who willingly shed blood for the sins of the whole world.



Holy Week begins with **Palm Sunday** (Sunday, March 28) to **Easter Sunday** (Sunday, April 4)

The key to many customs and traditions in Lent is what down through the ages has come to be known as Holy Week, the last week in Lent. It has become a tradition to trace the activities of Jesus that led to the cross of Calvary.

Holy Week begins with **Palm Sunday** as a reminder of Jesus’ triumphant entry into Jerusalem. The people along the roadside waved palms and shouted “Hosanna” the Hebrew word for “save now.” (See Matthew 21:1-11, Mark 11:1-10, Luke 19:28-40, and John 12:12-19.) Many churches today bless the palms and distribute them in the form of crosses to be worn by the worshipers.



Most authors agree that the term “Good Friday” evolved from “God’s Friday.” It is one the three days that many persons make an effort to attend church, the other being Easter Sunday and Christmas Day. Services in most churches last about three hours since generally, the seven last words of Jesus are used.

The Seven Last Words are:

1. “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.” Luke 23:34
2. “Today, you will be with me in Paradise.” Luke 23:43
3. “Woman, here is your son, ... Son, Here is your Mother.” John 19:26-27
4. “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani? My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Mark 15:34 and Matthew 27:46

5. “I am thirsty.” John 19:28

6 “It is finished.” John 19:30

7. “Father, into your hands I commend My Spirit.” Luke 23:46

The Lord’s Supper was the last meal that Jesus shared with the disciples before going to Calvary. It occurred on what is called Maundy Thursday. “Maundy” is a variation of the Latin word “mandatum” meaning “commandment” (see John 13:34). The significance of God’s love for humanity comes forth in this act because it was and is through Jesus’ blood and body that persons are redeemed. Therefore, the new commandment requires persons to love one another just as God loves all persons. The Latin word “Mundo” means to wash, and some claim this is how Maundy Thursday came into being, since Jesus washed the disciples’ feet on that day. Some denominations and congregations still carry out the practice of washing feet before Holy Communion, at least on Holy Thursday.

Yet another tradition credits the name to the word “maund” for basket and the practice of giving baskets of goodies to the poor. Whatever the source, Maundy Thursday is practiced in just about every Christian church with

More and more today, however, times and length of services are being



Maundy Thursday lifts up the event of the Lord’s Last Supper that was celebrated in the Upper Room at the time of the Jewish Passover. It is the basis for the establishment of sacrament of Holy

arranged to meet the working schedules of most parishioners. Good Friday represents the day of that dreadful crucifixion and is not just a day of mourning. It is a day of remembrance of the events of the day, especially the time Jesus hung on the cross. It is appropriate to leave the altar bare and use no liturgical color. However, if desired, black may be used. In many countries, the old practice was (and in some instances still is) not to cook on Good Friday. Rather, one drinks some beverage and eat hot cross buns. Like most other customs and traditions, cross buns have pagan origins. According to Rudolph Brasch, it was part of a pagan festival of bread offered to idols at spring time. Horns were stamped on the buns. This, however became the mark of the cross. It not only was a symbol, but served a practical purpose. When these buns were used in love feasts, it was easier to divide one into four pieces.



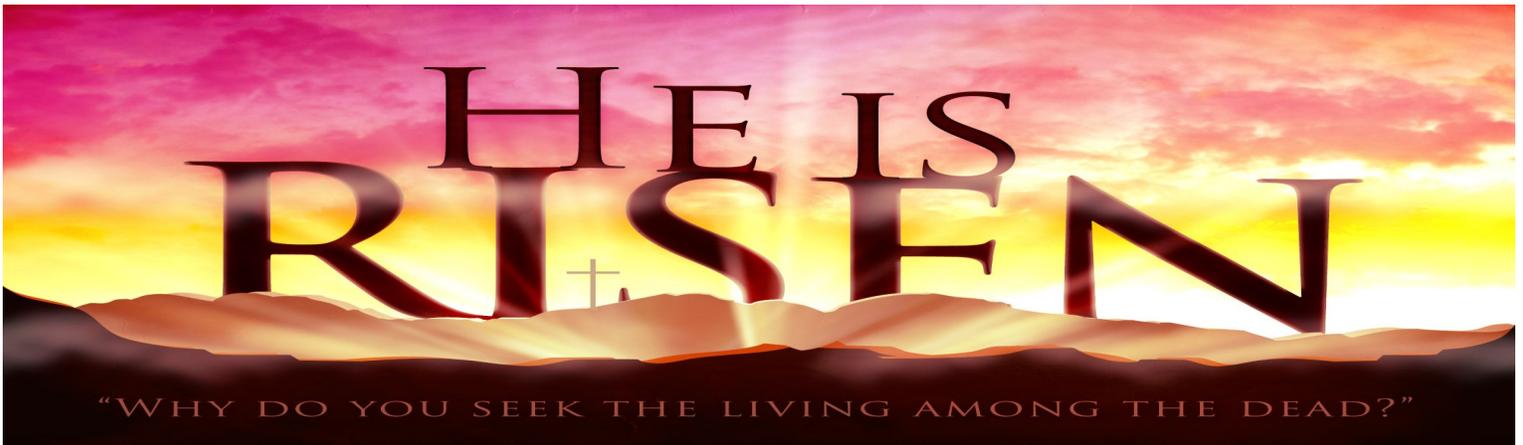
Easter Sunday commemorates the glorious resurrection of Jesus from the dead. It is the other highest point of the Christian Year. Thus, joy and celebration engulfs the season as the Christian Church rejoices in the fact of the resurrection and its meaning to the Christian faith, hope, and life. Many wonder why Easter occurs on various Sundays from year to year? Easter does not occur on

a set day like Christmas because it is determined by the moon and the seasons in nature. Thus, for most Protestants and Roman Catholics, Easter falls on the Sunday near the beginning of Spring, which is also after the first full moon. Because of the fluctuating cycle, Easter Sunday can occur anywhere between March 22 and April 25. Therefore, Easter is a determining factor in the cycle that sets the beginning and end of some of the seasons. The number of days in the season of advent (four Sundays weeks prior to Christmas), Christmas / Christmastide (from Christmas day to the day before Epiphany-January 6, twelve days), Lent (forty days, excluding the Sundays), and Eastertide (fifty days), are constant seasons in terms of length. The Season After Epiphany, The Season After Pentecost, and Kingdomtide experience the variation from year to year.

Easter has been described as the oldest festival of the church. It truly is the key to Christianity, since it emphasizes the redemption of humans. Note that in the early Christian Church, the word used for Easter was *Pascha*. This is from the Hebrew word for Passover. The closeness and similarity between the Jewish Passover and the celebration of Lent and Easter should be recalled and remembered. The Jews observed the *Passing Over* of the houses of the Israelites who had the blood of the lamb smeared upon the posts of their houses, by the death angel during their sojourn in Egypt. This was the final plague before Pharaoh agreed to let God's people, the Israelites go. For Christians, the blood that saves persons from eternal damnation is the blood of Jesus, shed upon the

cross at Calvary. Easter, like the word Lent, has nothing to do with the reason for celebrating these occasions. Rather, Easter comes from the name of an Anglo-Saxon spring goddess, *Easter*, whose festival was observed at the spring equinox. Easter is indeed THE DAY of the days in the church calendar. This is the day that celebrates Christ's resurrection from the grave. Without the resurrection, there would be no Christian Church. This is why many Christians moved their day of worship to Sunday. So, not only is it a day of worship, but a little Easter, when persons remember that Christ rose from the dead. (See Matthew 28:1-7, Mark 16:1-8, Luke 24:1-12, and John 20:1-10.)

The observance of Lent would have no meaning if it were not for that victorious first Easter. The crucifixion without the resurrection would not be a victory and would destroy the essence of the Christian faith and God's redemptive act. To be resurrection signifies that something or someone who was dead has return to a living state. Christ's resurrection was a demonstration of that fact and a revelation of God's power over sin and death. Thus, the agony and tragedy of the cross was transformed into a joyous celebration and God's fulfillment of the covenantal promise was affirmed. ALLELUIA! Jesus arose as a "mighty triumph over His foes" and lives forever. The liturgical color for Easter/Eastertide is white, symbolizing purity. Along with white, gold is often used to give emphasis to this most holy day of the church year.



ALLELUIA, HE IS RISEN, ALLELUIA, HE IS RISEN!



CROSS STREET A.M.E. ZION CHURCH

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- Rev. James Battle
- Rev. Myrtle Turner
- Rev. Gregory Winborne
- Rev. Joyce Johnson
- Rev. Earlene Grants
- Sister Felicia Freeman



Pursuing New Possibilities in the Pandemic

But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them,

With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible. Matthew 19:26 KJV

"I am a Christian"

By Maya Angelou

When I say ... "I am a Christian"
I'm not shouting "I'm clean livin'."
I'm whispering "I was lost,
Now I'm found and forgiven."

When I say ... "I am a Christian"
I don't speak of this with pride.
I'm confessing that I stumble
And need Christ to be my guide.

When I say ... "I am a Christian"
I'm not trying to be strong.
I'm professing that I'm weak
And need His strength to carry on.

When I say ... "I am a Christian"
I'm not bragging of success.
I'm admitting I have failed
And need God to clean my mess.

When I say ... "I am a Christian"
I still feel the sting of pain.
I have my share of heartaches
So I call upon His name.

When I say ... "I am a Christian"
I'm not holier than thou.
I'm just a simple sinner
Who received God's good grace,
somehow!

The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:9-13 (KJV)

Our Father which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom
come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is
in heaven. Give us this day our daily
bread. And forgive us our debts, as we
forgive our debtors. And lead us not
into temptation, but deliver us from evil:
For thine is the kingdom, and the
power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.



Then the Lord answered me and said:
Write the vision and make it plain on
tablets, that he may run who reads it.
Habakkuk 2:2

The Jabez Prayer

And Jabez called on the God of Israel
saying, "**Oh, that You would bless
me indeed, and enlarge my territory,
that Your hand would keep me from
evil, that I may nor cause pain!**" " So
God granted him what he requested.
1 Chronicles 4:10 (NKJV)

"God's Word

*For the word of God is quick, and power-
ful, and sharper than any two-edged
sword, piercing even to the dividing
asunder of soul and spirit, and of the
joints and marrow, and is a discernor of
the thoughts and intents of the heart"*
Hebrews 4:12

Prayer: Forever, O Lord, your Word is
settled in heaven. I bless you because
you have given me rest according to all
that you have promised to me. Not one
word of all your good promises has ever
failed. In light of this truth, I will walk in
your Word at all times.
I love your Word, Father, it is a lamp
unto my feet, and a light unto my path.
All of your words are pure, O God, and
you are a shield to me. Lord God, your

way is perfect, and your Word is tried.
You are a shield and a mighty buckler to
me as I trust in you.
With your Word you made the heavens,
O Lord. all of your promises are yes in
Christ, unto your glory, O God. You
have spoken through your Word since
ancient times, in order to give light to
those who sit in darkness, and you guide
my feet in the way of peace.
Your Word is quick, alive, and powerful,
and sharper than any two-edged sword.
It pierces even to the dividing asunder of
my soul and spirit, and of my joints and
marrow, and is a discernor of the
thoughts and intents of my heart.
Father, I am thankful for your Word, and
I will endeavor to walk in the light of your
Word all the days of my life.

If you were to die today, do you know where you will spend eternity ???

Doxology

Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.
Jude 24-25