# Beacon Lights

*O come, let us worship*
*and bow down:*
*Let us kneel before the*
*Lord our maker.*
*Psalm 95:6*

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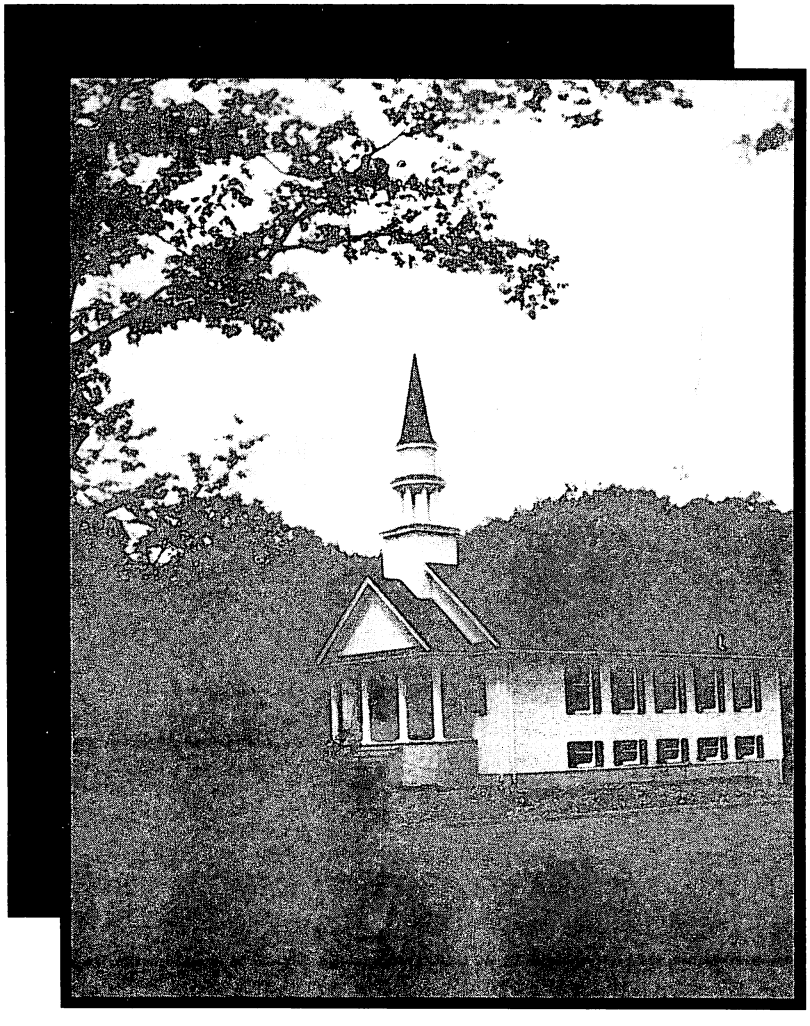

# Table of Contents


EDITORIAL
3 **Political Authority from a Christian Perspective**

4 **From the Editor**

GUEST ARTICLE
5 **Fulfillment of the Lord**

GUEST ARTICLE
6 **Righteous in the Lamb's Blood**

GUEST ARTICLE
7 **Why Must Kingdom Causes Go Begging?**

C-H-U-R-C-H F-A-M-I-L-Y
9 **[U]—The Definition of Unity**

GEM OF THE MONTH
10 **The Winter Is Past**

DEVOTIONAL
11 **Watching Daily At My Gates**

GUEST ARTICLE
15 **Calling Upon God with A Pure Heart**

DATING & MARRIAGE
17 **Biblical Marriage (Part 2)**

GUEST ARTICLE
18 **Two Swords**

GUEST ARTICLE
20 **Daniel—A Faithful Prayer Life (Part 2)**

KIDS PAGE
23 **Meekness (Part 9)**

CHURCH NEWS
**Back Cover**


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# Political Authority from a Christian Perspective

Once upon a time in a far away land called Utopia lived King More. He was a rich king. His palace spanned an enormous area and was graced with plush carpets, polished marble, and glittering gold. Every night King More feasted on delicacies from all around the world brought to him by his ships. On the grounds of the palace were beautiful fountains in which the princes and princesses could swim in the summer and on which they could skate in the winter. From a tower in his palace King More could look across his estate and beyond the gates he could see the filthy, impoverished peasants of Dystopia. They were a miserable lot, he thought to himself, and he especially disliked them when they refused to pay their taxes. He had put more than one dissident's head in its proper place: off!

It will be no surprise to learn that King More did not last very long. The peasants became disgruntled with the king's policies, captured him, and sent him to the guillotine. If you visit Versailles today, you can easily imagine the chasm that existed between the opulent king and his impecunious subjects. I, too, probably would have been tempted to grab a pitchfork and storm the Bastille during the French Revolution. Yet what we want to do and what the Bible says we should do are rarely the same thing.

God has ordained order for our world, and it is not our prerogative to destroy it at will. The Bible does not condone insurrection, anarchy, or disrespect of the government. Jesus lived in a period of political upheaval, for the Jews wished to relieve themselves of the onerous burden of the Roman government; forty years later Jerusalem would be destroyed because of an unsuccessful Jewish revolution. Nevertheless, Jesus did not join the rebels but associated himself with the hated tax collectors (Matthew 9:10). When asked whether Jews should pay Roman taxes, Jesus answered, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21).

Daniel, when he was taken as a captive to Babylon did not form a dissident group that tried to overthrow the king. Rather, he worked for the king and obeyed him in all manners except those that were contrary to the law of God.

Some have seen the Exodus of Israel from Egypt to be ground for justification of political upheaval. Although the Exodus was a significant event in the history of Israel, one that should not be ignored, a look at the event will show that Moses did not form a political party to resist the social injustices of the Israelite slavery. Instead, he came to Pharaoh with the request to worship God in the wilderness (Exodus 3:18).

Today few threats of revolution exist in developed countries, but still rebellion has managed to rear its ugly head in other forms. Yesterday I saw another deplorable bumper sticker of some citizen attempting to exonerate himself of political responsibility by proclaiming, "Don't blame me, I voted for Bush!" Is a citizen no longer held to his civic responsibility simply because the candidate for whom he voted did not enter office anymore than a church member is no longer held to his religious responsibility because the elder candidate for whom he voted did not become an office bearer? Political cartoonists caricature leaders of the senate such as Newt Gingrich and denunciations of civic leaders, those whom God has put in authority, can be heard nearly every day. Phrases such as "Slick Willy" have permeated our vocabulary. Rush Limbaugh, the popular radio talk show host, has built his popularity largely on the criticism of President Clinton.

It is granted that the reputations of political figures are far from unsullied, and the saying that when we go to the polls we vote one crook out of office and another crook in often holds true.

Taxes seem to rise every year, and it appears as if the money settles into the pockets of the politicians who voted a raise for themselves; they seem to be no different from King More. Sex scandals and financial fiascos, glaring from the front pages of the newspapers, have become a common occurrence and a shocking reality. Nevertheless, as Christians our response should not be one of rebellious criticism or unconcerned joking. The Bible commands that we respect the offices of authority and pray for those who hold them. Peter states in I Peter 2:17 that we must "honour the king."

This does not mean, of course, that we should not view our leaders with a critical eye. We should take seriously our duty as citizens by contacting our representatives and letting them know what we believe. Nevertheless, to unleash only negative criticisms on them is not only detrimental to our country, but is contrary to the law of God. As Christian citizens we need to respect those whom God has put in authority over us as well as actively participate in the political arena so that in the future our children may enjoy the religious freedoms that we now possess.

# FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to another issue of the *Beacon Lights*—my final issue. Since Erin Molenaar and I plan to get married in May, I have decided that I will not be able to assume both the duties of a newly married husband as well as those of the editor of the *Beacon Lights*. Erin and I met through the *Beacon Lights*. Sarah, Erin's sister, wrote an article, I contacted her, met her family, and, as they say, the rest is history. As an interesting side note, Pete Faber, the previous editor whom I replaced, met Karen through the *Beacon Lights*. She wrote an article, contacted Pete, they married, and Pete resigned as editor for reasons similar to mine. I still plan to be active in the *Beacon Lights* as an Associate Editor, and there are some book projects I am interested in doing, but I can no longer spend as much time on the magazine as I once did. Being the editor consumes an enormous amount of time. I am not yet sure who will be the next editor, but there are several eminently qualified people interested.

Mindy Steenhold presents for us her article Fulfillment of the Lord. I believe that I promised her I would publish it a few months ago, but I never did. Sorry, Mindy. Sarah Hanko wrote a part two for her articles, entitled Righteous in the Lamb's Blood. Sarah is the daughter of Reverend Ronald Hanko, a missionary in Northern Ireland. George Molenaar, my future father-in-law, wrote an article about the importance of giving. In our rich worlds we often think that we have only enough to get by in life, and the needs of the Kingdom of God go begging. We would do well to compare our lifestyles to those in other nations, realize the munificent blessings of God, and give accordingly.

Tom Bergman wrote a continuation of his rubric on the Church Family. I remembered to include the second half of Reverend Mahtani's convention speech, and apologize for not remembering last month. The second part of Reverend Gritter's article on marriage is also included this month.

Reverend Heys wrote an article on Calling upon God with a Pure Heart. He continues to have back troubles, so let us remember him in our prayers. Reverend Hanko penned an interesting article entitled Two Swords, Mindy included her first installment of Church News, and Connie Meyer provided yet another fabulous Little Lights story. Although Thelma Westra has written a few more poems for the coming months, I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for contributing her time and talents; they were appreciated. The devotionals this month were written by Cornie Jonker.

May God be with you both in the coming month as well as in the rest of your lives.

# Fulfillment Of the Lord

by Mindy Steenholdt

II Thessalonians 2:13-14 – *"But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through the sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

Amid each passing day, Lucas felt a void in his life but most of all in his heart. He would wake up every morning with an empty feeling inside him; the worst of all was when he had a problem he had to face - sure, he had a family to help him through, but it still felt as if he were alone. He was unable to understand.

As time moved on, frustration grew within Lucas, and he promised himself he would find the solution to his emptiness. He knew deep down what that solution was, but he failed to acknowledge the Truth.

On a warm, sunny Sunday morning, Lucas and his younger siblings, along with his parents, piled in the car and headed for church. Lucas had attended church since birth, but now that he was getting older, he found it hard to drag himself out of bed at 8 a.m. to get ready for a long sermon and lots of singing. Lucas refused to see the importance of listening to the message of God and applying it to his life. This Sunday was different, though. The order of worship was the same, but as the entire congregation sang, Lucas felt something within his heart. His eyes were opened by the power of the Holy Spirit, and as he read the words he was singing, he began to understand why he had been feeling so lonely; it was because the Lord had not been the center of his life, for without God nothing is quite as wonderful as when He is present in your life and heart.

Never before had Lucas felt something so magnificent. He prayed that this warm, reassuring feeling would survive for eternity, even though he knew his heart was so sinful. Throughout the rest of the service, Lucas was attentive to the Word of God, and he took every syllable to heart in an attempt to apply it to his life. He continued to do this every Sunday while praying for guidance every day and night. He realized the importance of believing and understanding God's Word.

As a result of his spiritual growth, the hand of God brought Lucas to the point of longing to become a member of God's Church. Not long after, Lucas was beginning to understand the Scriptures and his beliefs through the instruction of the minister but above all, through the work of the Holy Spirit; this development of his spiritual life brought him an unlimited amount of happiness and contentment. Each new day brought forth a greater sense of fulfillment in his heart.

Lucas had received the wonderful gift of salvation through the graciousness of the Lord and through the working of the Holy Spirit in his heart which generated his belief in Jesus Christ. Lucas had been predestined by God to be one of His children; for that, Lucas and each one of us can be nothing but grateful and look forward to eternal life with the Lord in Heaven when our time on earth has been fulfilled.

Philippians 2:12 & 13—"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

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*Mindy is a member of Kalamazoo Protestant Reformed Church in Kalamazoo, Michigan.*

# Righteous in the Lamb's Blood

by Sarah Hanko

The tripartite image of God in man consists of knowledge, righteousness and holiness. Man through the fall irretrievably lost the threefold image. Like a cracked bucket that cannot retain water so was the innate ability of mankind to be image bearers damaged beyond repair like the bucket so that he could no longer bear the image.

To restore man to his first state of righteousness, exceeding the righteousness of mere man was needed.

"For He (God) hath made Him (Christ) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." God in His infinite love, for the elect, caused mercy and justice to meet in the suffering and death of His Son.

Our sentence before the tribunal of God was guilty. Guilty not only of actual sin but also our original sin in Adam. God as a righteous and just judge could not acquit the sinner of his trespasses until the demands of the law were met.

Christ, both "very man and perfectly righteous," fulfilled the requirements of the law and paid the full penalty for our sins. Through Christ's vicarious payment we stood as righteous in God's sight, as Judge of heaven and earth, and His righteousness was charged to our account.

A change of our legal status through Adam as our representative at the fall from innocent to guilty brought upon us a change of condition entirely sanctified to totally depraved. Wherefore, in the new dispensation of the covenant, washed in the blood of Christ as our representative, we stand justified in God's sight from which sanctification or holiness proceeds. Therefore, in the plan of salvation righteousness must precede holiness.

To impart the righteousness of Christ to us God uses the instrument of faith which like righteousness is also a gift of God. As the Belgic Confession expresses in Article 22:

> Therefore we rightly say with Paul that we are justified by faith alone, or by faith apart from works of the law. Meanwhile, strictly speaking we do not mean that faith as such justifies us for faith is only the instrument by which we embrace Christ our righteousness; He imputes to us all His merits and as many holy works as he has done for us in our place. Therefore, Jesus Christ is our righteousness, and faith is the instrument that keeps us with Him in close communion of all His benefits. When those benefits have become ours they are sufficient to acquit us of our sins.

This is in full accordance with the Word of God spoken through Paul in Philippians 3:9: "And be found in Him (Christ), not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

Hungering and thirsting after righteousness we have the divine promise that we shall be filled. Seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness we have the assurance that our earthly needs shall be supplied. However, the greatest comfort is: "There is therefore now no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," Romans 8:1.

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*Sarah is living in North Ireland with her family. Her father, Rev. Ron Hanko, is missionary there.*

# Why Must Kingdom Causes Go Begging?

by George Molenaar

Although this will not be published until the spring of the year, as this is being written (January), we've just been through the holiday season which is always accompanied by many appeals for year-end giving to myriad charitable organizations, Kingdom or otherwise. At this same time of year many church consistories also complete their budgeting process for the coming year. The process of personally deciding which causes to support in our year end giving, and our consistories' decisions in compiling congregational operating budgets are never easy. There never seems to be enough money to go around. There always seem to be more needs than there is money to fulfill those needs.

Why is this? And what does Scripture have to say about it?

In Haggai 1:3-6 we read, "Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying, Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste? Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes." God through Haggai rebuked the Israelites who after returning from exile devoted their resources to rebuilding houses for themselves while the temple remained in ruins. Because of this, God says, they remain unsatisfied in their own wants, and it would be as if they were keeping their money in bags with holes. When we neglect the financial needs of the Kingdom, God often chooses to confound and frustrate our own fleshly efforts to gain wealth for ourselves and use it for our own desires.

In Malachi 3:8-11 we read, "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts." Here, the same idea is stated positively. If, rather than robbing God in our tithes, we bring *all the tithes* into the storehouse, so that the Kingdom's needs may be met, "having meat in my mine (God's) house," then God will pour out blessing such that there will be no room to hold it, and our enemies will be rebuked.

In Mark 7:7-13 we read, "Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye."

But here Jesus warns of being strictly legalistic or manipulative of how we calculate our "tithe." The intention of the Corban laws was for one to set aside assets which would be earmarked, held in trust, for the future work of the Kingdom. The Pharisees twisted the inten-

tion of this law in order to shirk their obligation to their families, particularly aged parents. They were saying in effect, "I really would like to help you, Mom and Dad, but this money I have is set aside, is Corban, and dedicated to the Lord's work, so I cannot use it for you." In reality, the giver had full access and use of his assets, and to refuse its benefit to one's parents on the basis of Corban was a legalistic distortion of the intent of the law. So Jesus rebukes the Pharisees for this and other of their legalistic following of the letter rather than the spirit of the law.

And finally (though this has obviously not been an exhaustive study) what is the purpose of work? In Ephesians 4:28, the Apostle Paul says, "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." According to Paul, what is the purpose of our work and the wealth it affords? "To give to him that needeth."

These and many other passages in Scripture warn us against robbing God in the use of the money with which He blesses us. In light of these admonitions, how are we doing? Are we placing our own material desires above those of the Kingdom? Are we giving the full measure of what we are able to Kingdom causes? Do we legalistically hold to the 10% tithe to justify not giving more if God has so blessed? Do we look upon the fruits of our labor to be used first in our own service rather than in the service of others?

While its easy to accuse the "name it and claim it" folks of making God their cosmic bellhop and expecting Him to cater to their every whim, is our attitude towards our own prosperity really any different? Do we give our time and energy (and often our wives and mothers in full-time employment) to raising our lifestyles beyond the adequate, to satisfy "wants" way beyond our "needs"? If our God-given talents and abilities yield prosperity beyond that necessary to provide our needs, are we free to indulge our wants? Do we get caught up in our longing to have our "dreams" of having things exactly the way *we* always wanted fulfilled—a new house laid out just the way *we* always wanted it, the "prestigious" car, the second home—and then enslave ourselves to higher payments, maintenance costs, etc., that go along with them? I've heard people say, "We scrimped and saved and sacrificed to send our kids through Christian school and college, and now that they're grown up we're spending it on ourselves, on what we want." But is this what God wants? When there are so many good Kingdom causes begging for money, how can we justify living at the level that most of us do? Do we believe that because we've tithed our 10%, God has no further claim on the 90%?

According to Larry Burkett, a Christian financial expert and author, the average American family pays $6000 per year in interest on debt. For a typical congregation of 150 families, this comes to nearly $1 million per year. If we are even close to "typical" then there are tremendous financial resources which we are squandering and are not being used advance the Kingdom. If we set our minds to move forward in faith, learn to be content, and live just "adequate" lifestyles, the financial floodgates would burst open. But considering the types of automobiles in a typical church parking lot on a given Sunday morning, the houses many of us live in, the summer and vacation homes, the vacations, boats, and RV's, it becomes clear that the resources are there, but they are not being used for Kingdom work. Incredible financial resources could be unleashed for the benefit of the Kingdom, if we gave up the "American Dream," became content with just satisfying our needs, and supported Kingdom causes with what we are now spending on "wants."

Scripture says that God tests us with little things, and then if found faithful, He gives us responsibility for greater things. When we learned to tithe as children, it was relatively easy to tithe $1 of $10 gained. As we got older we struggled more with $1,000 of $10,000 gained, or $5,000 of $50,000 gained. What would we do if God continued to prosper us and blessed us with $100,000? Would my first thought be, Sure! I'll give 10% to God, and then use *my* 90% to buy an expensive car, take on more debt and bigger mortgage payments for a bigger house or a second house, take a cruise, buy a boat or RV, all of which will use up the gain not only for this year but presume upon God's Providence to supply the gain for many years to come? Or would I figure that if I were "getting by" just fine on the $45,000, why shouldn't I "tithe" $55,000 of the $100,000 gained? The cars and home provided by the $45,000 meet my needs adequately. Can I in good conscience squander "my" $90,000 remaining after a strict 10% tithe by buying things I don't really need when there are organizations and missionaries who are sacrificing and doing without even the basic needs I take for granted every day? As long as there are people who haven't heard the gospel, missionaries who could be sent but for lack of funds, languages remaining for the Bible to be translated into, ministers to be trained in seminary (and on and on, the needs are endless), should I be living

with anything more than my needs met? To do so robs God. And if we are honest with ourselves, we also rob ourselves of the joy of being really useful in the Kingdom and fulfilling the Great Commission.

Now some might say that money doesn't buy souls. And, of course, this is true; we are not advocating Simony here. But in Romans 10:13-15 we read, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" The preaching of the Word is essential to the saving of souls. The Holy Spirit does his regenerating work in conjunction with the preached Word to bring about conversion. This is a biblical fact of life. And it is also a fact of life that the preparation, equipping, and sending of ministers of the Word and the support and maintenance of the organizations that prepare, equip, and send them, takes money—lots of money. Yes, we need to pray for our ministers and missionaries. Yes, we need to send them encouraging letters and cards and let them know that we are behind them and are praying for them and their work. But are we "walking our talk" with regard to our financial support for their work? I have often wondered what missionaries must think when they come back on furlough and visit our churches and homes and see the luxury in which most of us live. And often these visits place them in an almost begging situation because many are responsible for raising their own support. Is this really necessary? Are our "wants" more important than their "needs."

This is not a popular subject these days. But can any of this be any more cutting and pointed than the admonitions we find in Scripture throughout Proverbs and in passages such as Matthew 6:19-34, Philippians 4:11, and the entire Epistle of James. As God's redeemed covenant people we should be patterning our whole lives, including our financial affairs, after the principles God has given us in His Word. We need to get past spiritualizing our faith and learn how to put it into action. In order to glorify God in our finances we need to learn how to get out of debt and stay out of debt, how to simplify our lives, how to "own little so that we are little owned," how to break out of the pattern of ostentatious keeping up with the "Joneses," and how to face the scorn and persecution that will come on us when we begin to more and more stand out from the "business as usual" society in which we live...in short, we need to learn how, as the Westminster Shorter Catechism says in its first question, to "glorify God and enjoy Him forever." Christian authors such as Larry Burkett and Ron Blue have written many good books and published many useful materials for personal growth and study groups on these issues.

Burkett has often suggested that the easiest and surest way to get a finger on the pulse of someone's spiritual condition is to take a look in their checkbook. I'm afraid most of us could not survive the scrutiny. We need to take radical measures to change this before we are left to hear the words of Christ in Matthew 7:20-23, "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Let's get started bearing fruit in this area of our lives.

C-H-U-R-C-H F-A-M-I-L-Y

# [U]-The Definition of Unity

by Tom Bergman

**Unity**, (u'ni-ti). *noun* 1. State of harmony, of being in agreement 2. Having achieved a dimension of oneness and concord 3. State in which the church, all individuals being members of one body, live together as brothers and sisters in the Lord 4. Good and pleasant when brethren dwell together 5. Synonymous with the dew of Mount Hermon, the waters of which caused the hillsides of Zion to Flourish and prosper 6. Symptoms include giving cheerfully and consciously to the needy, visiting the afflicted, and—in all matters—loving the neighbor as oneself 7. Faithful effort to reach this state shows true love for Christ.

*Tom is a member of Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church in Hudsonville, Michigan.*

# The Winter Is Past

The frozen turf is softened by the sun
And gentle rains descend;
A lighter, warmer breeze has now begun
To signal winter's end.

The snowdrop and the crocus start to poke
Green sprouts above the earth;
The fine mist vanishes like wispy smoke—
The world speaks of rebirth.
I praise the Lord for beauty of the Spring
When hope is born anew.
He makes my very soul with rapture sing,
His light is breaking through.

As He renews creation all around,
His awesome power is shown.
My life is also quickened to abound
With praise to God alone.

*by Thelma Westra*

# Watching Daily At My Gates

by Cornelius Jonker

*For our meditations this month we will briefly look at some Biblical words that begin with the letter "B."*

### March 1

**Read Psalm 8 (note vs. 2)**

**BABES**—What a familiar term with which we begin our meditations this month. We all know what babies are. Everyone of us enters the world as babes. We know, too, that due to the sin of our first parents, Adam and Eve, babies are born into the world with a depraved and sinful nature. Yet, as we look upon a tiny babe, our impression is one of innocence and guilelessness. Scripture, in many instances refers to babes in this sense, as for example the delightful paradox in Psalm 8:2 where God establishes His power upon that which is weakest. In Matthew 11:25 Jesus thanks the Father that His gospel is hid from the proud and haughty unbelievers (wise and prudent) and is revealed unto the simple and humble believers (babes). We are also admonished in I Peter 2:2 to be as babes who desire the spiritual milk of the word that we may grow thereby unto salvation. Let us not be ashamed then to humble ourselves before God as little babes, for His strength is made perfect in weakness.

### March 2

**Read Psalm 20 (note vs. 5)**

**BANNER**—Did you ever watch a parade where soldiers marched confidently and proudly? Then you undoubtedly saw that in front of them the flags of their nation and regiment were held aloft so that everybody knew to whom their allegiance belonged. Scripture also uses this figure of a flag or a banner as for example in Isaiah 13:2, "Lift ye up a banner upon the high mountain..." and in Psalm 60:4 "Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth." How do we as soldiers of the cross display that banner? Do we show by our life and our witness in the world that we are not ashamed of the gospel of God, or do we hide that banner ofttimes for fear of ridicule and contempt? May God give us grace to boldly hold aloft our banner of truth for all to see.

### March 3

**Read Romans 6:1-4**

**BAPTISM**—Today is the Lord's day and we have the privilege to gather in God's house in the communion of saints to worship Him and hear His Word. This is the chief means of grace which the Holy Spirit employs to make us conscious partakers of the salvation in Christ. Perhaps you will also witness the sacrament of baptism today. This also is a means of grace and signifies the washing away of sins by the blood of Christ. What a great gift of God this is to His church. By baptism we are incorporated into Christ and enter the fellowship of God's covenant, a gracious fellowship of friendship between God and His people in Christ. How thankful we are and ought to be, that God in His electing mercy included us in His covenant. May we heed this admonition, "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the times, because the days are evil." Ephesians 5:15, 16.

### March 4

**Read Ephesians 6:11-17**

**BATTLE**—It's Monday today, and does life seem like a battle to you? Well, it really should, you know. It undoubtedly isn't the kind of battles that I and my comrades fought in Europe in World War II. There, we had a physical enemy with real bullets and bombs and artillery, and they were committed to fight and to destroy us. All around us is another enemy though, that is out to destroy us, a threefold one, in fact, and we must battle that enemy constantly. That enemy is the devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh and it is very real. Without the armour of God, we cannot win this battle. Ephesians 6:11-17 gives us five pieces of armour for defense, plus the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God for our weapon of offense. Proper use of these components will surely spell victory. So train as a godly soldier, and by God's grace, never surrender to these enemies!

### March 5

**Read Isaiah 46:3-4**

**BEAR**—Although the Bible speaks often of bears, the large animals with which we are familiar, it more often uses the term bear as a verb which means to carry or uphold. Scripture is replete with this concept which begins with man who bears the image of God. What a responsibility then is ours to serve Him as His friend servant in obedience and holiness. Alas, but we are sinners, and Leviticus 24:15 states "Whosoever curseth his God shall bear his sin," and Proverbs 9:12: "If thou scornest thou alone shalt bear it." But thanks be to God Who has provided a sin bearer for us. Jesus our Saviour bore His own cross, bore the guilt of our sins and bore the Father's wrath so we would be redeemed. In Isaiah 53:11 we read: "my righteous servant shall bear their iniquities." What is our calling now? Walk in thankfulness and obedience and heed these words in Galatians 6:2, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

### March 6

**Read Psalm 96:7-9**

**BEAUTY**—There is much beauty on this earth despite the fact that the curse rests upon it. Think of a vivid sunset, a colorful garden ablaze with a multitude of flowers, a majestic snow capped mountain next to a valley in which nestles a pristine lake, or perhaps you, if you are a young man, are smitten with the beauty of a certain maiden. To be sure, there is beauty in God's creation, but it is earthly beauty. And this beauty will one day pass away. However, there is also true beauty which is spiritual, and that beauty is God Himself! All other beauty is a reflection of His perfect beauty. The Psalmist in Psalm 27:4 states that "one thing have I desired of the Lord that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord." Also in Zechariah 9:16-17 we read: "And the Lord their God shall save them in that day as the flock of his people:.... For how great is his goodness and how great is His beauty!" This is the essence of true beauty which we and all the saints shall behold in glory.

### March 7

**Read Psalm 93**

**BECOMETH**—Although this is an old English rendering of the word "becomes," it has a dignity and profundity all its own. It means suitably appropriate or proper, and we can glean valuable lessons from Scripture

such as Psalm 93:5: "...holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, forever." It certainly is worthy of note that we deport ourselves in God's house in a proper manner, coming with a reverent attitude, proper attire, and a zeal for God's glory. Proverbs 17:7 tells us: "Excellent speech becometh not a fool." But positively, this verse speaks to us as wise (not in ourselves, but by God's grace) and therefore we must use the gift of speech in an appropriate and Godly manner in all our walk of life. The apostle Paul writes to the church in Philippians 1:27, "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ." To put it in other words: Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ." That, people of God is our calling and it becometh us to practice it each day.

## March 8

**Read Psalm 111:7-10**

**BEGINNING**—We don't have to read far in the Bible to find this word. The very first sentence reads "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." We can only marvel that the holy and majestic Triune God, Who has no beginning nor ending, has, according to His good pleasure instituted a beginning of time, a beginning of His creation and a beginning of His Church of which you and I are living members. And because of that beginning, we can look forward to another beginning—that of eternal life with Christ. We are exhorted meanwhile in Hebrews 3:14, "For we are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." Of ourselves we cannot do this or even will to do it. Only by that new life in Christ, Who has regenerated us by His Spirit can we desire to be made partakers of Christ Who "is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." Colossians 1:18.

## March 9

**Read Psalm 111:7-10**

**BEGUILE** -- Have you ever been influenced to do something that, although your conscience warns you against it, yet the thing being presented is so attractive, that you succumb to its charms, only to find out that you were misled and deceived? That is the meaning of beguile, and is a clever tool of Satan to cause us to sin. Remember how Satan beguiled Eve with the lie? "Ye shall not surely die, but ye shall be as gods." Well, Satan is alive, and just as busy today. In fact, we read in II Corinthians 11:14 "for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." Young people, when you are enticed into wrong doing on your dates, when you are lured to worldly places of entertainment, when you are tempted to skip society or worship services, or influenced to participate in any manner of sinful things that appear attractive to your flesh, remember these words in Colossians 2:4 & 6: "And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words....As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him."

## March 10

Read Psalm 10:1-3

**BEHAVE**—How we conduct ourselves, or behave, which is another word for it, tells a lot about us, and perhaps our family and our upbringing. I remember as a child, that my father often said to me, "Son if you do your very best in school and only get C's in your subjects on your report card, I'll be satisfied, but in conduct I expect only an A." That was good advice then and is certainly apropos today. You've heard this expression: "Actions speak louder than words." How true this is, and as children of God in a sinful world, we are called to set an example of a godly walk. As you meet in God's house today, take notice of the apostle Paul's admonition to Timothy and the church in I Timothy 3:14-15: "These things write I unto thee...that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

## March 11

**Read Romans 10:8-11**

**BELIEVE**—"Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief." This is one of the most poignant and touching confessions in all of Scripture and was spoken to Jesus by the father of the spirit possessed son. Every one of us is faced with the question, "What think ye of Christ?" And we either answer in the affirmative based on the assurance in Acts 13:48 "And as many as were ordained unto eternal life believed," or, God forbid, we answer negatively as Jesus points out to the Jews of His day "Ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep." John 10:26. God's people, His elect, or believers, have bestowed upon them the gift of faith by His sovereign grace which according to our Canons "produces both the will to believe and the act of believing also." How do you know if you are a believer? Look for the fruits of the Spirit in your own heart, and repeat these words of faith: "Lord I believe, help thou my unbelief."

## March 12

**Read John 10:17-29**

**BELONG**—We all like to belong, don't we? Because to belong means to have one's rightful place or to be a part of something, such as a citizen of a country, or a member of a church, or part of a close knit group of fellow students or friends or a part of a family. To belong means that one is accepted and meets certain qualifications. One who does not belong is an outsider. This can be a very painful experience, therefore we take some comfort in the fact that we belong to any or all of the above examples. But do you know what is your *only comfort* in life and death? The answer is given in our beloved Heidelberg Catechism to that very first question: "That I with body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ...." Then all other relationships are secondary. Do you belong to Christ? Then live your life today and each day as a redeemed child of His.

## March 13

**Read Psalm 68:17-19**

**BENEFITS**—One of the first things a person may ask a prospective employer is, "What kind of benefits do you give your workers?" Quite often, the more benefits that a company offers, the more appealing and attractive that workplace becomes. But as a former employer, I know that these benefits only came at great cost. In Psalm 103:2 we read: "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and forget not all his benefits." What are these benefits? The very first one mentioned is the benefit of forgiveness. There is none so important than this, because in the forgiveness of sins, salvation is begun. Many, many other benefits follow in this beautiful psalm and it would be well worth your while to read it and enumerate them. These benefits also were obtained at great cost, namely the death of the Son of God. What a great redemption is ours! What a wonderful Savior!

## March 14

**Read Philippians 2:6-8**

**BEWARE**—Have you ever encountered a sign at close range with this word BEWARE staring at you in bold letters? It may be a familiar "BEWARE OF DOG," or as I have seen when entering territory previously occupied by enemy troops, "BEWARE OF MINES." In either circumstances, one thing is certain, we become very cautious and wary and watch our every move. Well this is what we as Christians must do too, because there are many BEWARE signs in Scripture such as Deuteronomy 6:12: "Beware of covetousness." Many more passages could be cited, but let us constantly with God's help, be on our guard, "because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." I Peter 5:8.

## March 15

**Read Psalm 72:17-19**

**BLESS**—Does God bless us or do we bless God? Actually both of those questions can be answered in the affirmative. In Psalm 5:12 we read, "For thou Lord, wilt bless the righteous." And in Psalm 103:1, "Bless the Lord, O my soul." To bless God though means something quite different from God blessing us, for God is no creature and to bless means basically to call well or good. When God blesses us, He calls that which is good to come upon us. We cannot add anything to God; but we can say that He is good, and we must do so with our soul—the innermost recesses of our being. Think about that when we close our worship services each Sunday with a doxology that blesses the Name of our God. Sing it with a sincere and thankful heart, with the glorious anticipation of one day hearing the Savior saying to us these unspeakably wonderful words: "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for your from the foundation of the world," Matthew 25:32.

## March 16

**Read Hebrews 13:20-21**

**BLIND**—I recently heard the results of a poll taken from a random number of people regarding which of our two senses, sight or hearing, was in their opinion the most important. I don't remember the percentages, but by far the most picked sight. Eyesight is surely a precious gift that we tend to take for granted. But there are some who lose their sight and others who are born blind. Although through various means these persons can life active and productive lives, yet it is a great affliction. But a far greater affliction is to be spiritually blind. By nature, that is what you and I are. We cannot behold the things of God and we grope in the darkness of sin. But God in His mercy provided a Savior and Redeemer for all His elect blind. Isaiah prophesied in the Old Testament: "Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened" and Jesus fulfilled that in His earthly ministry when the blind received their sight. That is a picture of our spiritual eyes being opened so that seeing, we may see, and appropriate the things of the kingdom of heaven.

## March 17

**Read Hebrews 13:20-21**

**BLOOD**—Many of us are squeamish or uncomfortable at the sight or thought of blood. It is so vital to our bodies that we cannot live without it. The Bible tells us in Leviticus 17:11: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood." But even more vital for our life and the life of the church is the blood of Christ. Without the shedding of this precious blood there is no remission of sin. With no remission of sin, no eternal life. All through the Old Testament, the bloody sacrifices pointed to the one perfect sacrifice of Christ on the cross. How true the words of the hymn, "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness." May the word which you hear preached today strengthen your faith in that wonderful Savior Who willingly shed His blood that we might be redeemed.

## March 18

**Read Psalm 34:1-3**

**BOAST**—Here is a word found rather frequently in Scripture that can be used in both a negative and positive way. We all are prone to boasting. That may take the form of pride in our jobs, our accomplishments, our nice car, our new clothes or in our bank accounts. Such boasting is really carnal and the Bible warns us against it. Proverb 27:1, "Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." Psalm 49:6-7, "They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him." Positively, we certainly can and must make our boast only in the Lord as we read in Psalm 44:8 "In God we boast all the day long, and praise thy name forever."

## March 19

**Read Romans 12:4-8**

**BODY**—The Psalmist declares that we are "fearfully and wonderfully made." Our bodies are formed by God, given breath by Him and created in His image. What a wonderful complex physical being is man with every part working in harmony with each other. Wicked, unbelieving man, foolishly declares that we are products of evolutionary development from lower species of animal life and shake their fist at God in rebellion. We also know that because of sin, death came into the world, and so these earthly bodies must one day die. But Scripture tells us that just as a seed dies when it is sown into the earth, and a living plant emerges, so our earthly bodies will be raised as heavenly bodies, perfectly fit for eternity. What a blessed hope that is! The Bible also tells us that the church is likened to our body and just as our body needs all of its parts to function well, so the church is composed of many members and every member is necessary, each with his or her special gifts and calling. This means then that we treat each other with respect and loving concern since we are "members one of another."

## March 20

**Read Isaiah 29:1, 8**

**BOOK**—In early Biblical history Job lamentably exclaims, "Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book!" Job 19:23. Well God saw to it that not only his words were preserved in a book, but all of God's Word necessary for our salvation were faithfully and miraculously given to the Church. The Book of Books is our Bible—the inerrant, inspired Word of God. Do you read it often and prayerfully? What is your choice in other books? Do they build you up spiritually, or do you read the world's books, full of sin and lust and profanity? We read in Scripture, that a set of books are kept in heaven. The psalmist David pours out his heart to God and cries, "put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?" Psalm 56:8. And in Revelation 21:12, "and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. How thankful we must be for the great mercy of God Who beholds His saints in Christ, and as therefore justified and redeemed.

## March 21

**Read I John 5:1-4**

**BORN**—When we see or hear this word we quite naturally think of the process of birth and of little babies entering the world. Every person who has ever lived had to be born from their mothers and there are no exceptions. There is another kind of birth, however, which we read about frequently in the Scriptures and only certain persons experience that. Remember how Jesus in John chapter 3 tells Nicodemus "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God"? This is the new birth, or implanting of new life in the heart of the sinner who by nature is evil and dead in trespasses and sins. This is a miraculous work of the Triune God by the Spirit of Christ in the very depths of man's existence. Every elect child of God receives this new birth and it often occurs before he is even born. And just as man cannot cooperate in his physical birth, so he is totally passive in his rebirth. What a blessed assurance is ours when we see the fruit of that work in our lives! "Not by the works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Titus 3:5.

## March 22

**Read Psalm 74:1-2**

**BOUGHT**—All through history, man has bought and sold goods for a price. Practically everything we own has been bought—our homes, cars, clothes, furniture, food, etc. This is a way of life and always has been. We read in the very first book in the Bible that Abraham bought a field so he could bury his wife and even bought servants for his household. David bought the threshing floor of Aruanah which became the site of Solomon's temple. In the New Testament we read that this process will continue until the end of time for Jesus in Luke 17:28, 30 stated "Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; ...even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed." Did you realize that we ourselves are bought? Listen to I Corinthians 6:20: "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." That price was the highest price ever paid for anything, namely the precious blood of the Son of God Himself. Thank God for that today and every day of your life.

## March 23

**Read John 6:33-35**

**BREAD**—Did you know that the word bread appears more than 360 times in Scripture? Even as it is very well known in our present day, so it was also in Biblical times. Immediately after the fall, God said to Adam, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread," Genesis 3:19. Bread in Scripture can have more than one meaning. It can mean the literal loaves that are baked in an oven, either leavened or unleavened or sometimes, as in the fourth petition in the Lord's Prayer "Give us this day our daily bread," it can mean whatever our Father in heaven in His wisdom deems is necessary for our physical and earthly subsistence. Jesus in His great discourse in John chapter 6 says of Himself, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he will live forever" (vs. 51). We do this as we hear His Word preached and as we partake of the Lord's Supper. But it is also a spiritual act of one who knows he is dead in sin and guilty before God and therefore reaches out for Christ as his redemption. May we also, by believing His Word, partake of that Living Bread.

## March 24

**Read Psalm 33:1-6**

**BREATH(E)**—Our subject today deals with a function of our bodies that started the moment we were born and continues twenty-four hours a day without ceasing. It is an involuntary action, whether we are awake or sleeping and therefore one usually is not aware of it. But we cannot possibly live without it, and that something is our very breath. In Job 33:4 we read, "The spirit of God both made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life." So really, without breath we die and with breath we live. If God should take away our breath, we would immediately cease living. What dependent creatures we are, and how important it is that we live holy and obedient lives to such a great God Who daily holds us in life. The Bible refers many times to the breath of God as a mighty force that can not only give life, but that can destroy and devour. Shortly before Jesus ascended into heaven we read in John 20:22 "he breathed on them (disciples) and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." May the Word of God that you hear preached today be "breathed" into your hearts by this same Spirit of Christ.

## March 25

**Read I Peter 3:8-9**

**BRETHREN**—"How pleasant and how good it is, when brethren in the Lord, in one another's joy delight, and dwell in sweet accord." This versification of Psalm 133 certainly describes how we ought to live with each other in the communion of saints. It is a special relationship whereby we desire another's welfare above our own. How many of us practice this? Abraham did when he said to His nephew Lot, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee...for we be brethren" (Genesis 13:8). Our Savior practiced it perfectly by laying down His life for His brethren and by doing this He exhorts us to be willing to do the same. If we truly cherish our brethren in this degree how much more love, harmony, and peace would be experienced in our homes, in our churches and in all spheres of our lives.

## March 26

**Read Isaiah 61:10-11**

**BRIDE**—Probably the most exciting, memorable, and happy day of a woman's life is her wedding day, and there is good reason for it. She has grown from being a child into a young woman. She is to leave her father and mother, and establish a home and family of her own, and most importantly she becomes the bride or wife of her beloved husband, and as Scripture describes it, "they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). That's why it is so vitally important that these two people who become "one flesh" also are one in spirit, one in faith and one in doctrine. A godly marriage is also a beautiful picture of Christ and His bride which is the Church. The Triune God, Who lives a perfect covenant life in Himself establishes His covenant with believers and their seed in their generations. That is the way God is pleased to gather His Church. And that is why the family is so important. The world of unbelief goes its selfish and wicked way. Abortion, spouse and child abuse, and divorce have risen so much in our day that it almost seems to be the norm. May our brides who adorn themselves with care and beauty on their wedding day also adorn themselves inwardly with a meek and godly spirit as a fitting picture of the Church, the bride of Christ.

## March 27

**Read Revelation 21:9-11**

**BRIDEGROOM**—Yesterday, our subject was brides. Today we will think about the other partner in marriage which is the bridegroom. In today's society, most, if not all, emphasis is placed on the bride. Her dress, her hairdo, her attendants are given prominence. And the high point of the wedding, it seems, is when she makes her appearance. Now I'm not saying that this is unimportant, but in the Bible, it is the bridegroom who is the central figure. Remember the parable of the ten virgins? The bridegroom's appearance was the all important event and the five wise virgins went in with him to the marriage feast. John the Baptist refers to Jesus as the bridegroom in John 3:29, "He rejoiced greatly to hear the bridegroom's voice and said, this my joy therefore is fulfilled." May we, as members of the church which is Christ's bride eagerly await His appearance when we shall be one with Him and enjoy His presence with us eternally.

## March 28

**Read Hebrews 1:1-4**

**BRIGHTNESS**—It's a bit difficult to describe the term "brightness." To some, who have just awakened from a sound sleep in a dark room, their eyes will protest that even a dim light is too bright. Others, who gaze at a brilliant bolt of lightning is a dark night will consider that the ultimate in brightness. And then there will be those who say that the sun in the heavens is the brightest of all since we cannot even gaze at it with naked eyes without irreparable damage. All this may be true, but the real essence of brightness is God Himself. In I John 1:5 we read "God is light and in him is no darkness at all." The apostle Paul describing his conversion on the road to Damascus states, "at midday I saw in the way a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun," Acts 26:13. To think of a light that is brighter than the sun is beyond our comprehension. But even more than that, this brightness has great power. Listen to what we read in II Thessalonians 2:7 "And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." Let us fear our great God with obedient and reverent hearts.

## March 29

**Read Matthew 7:15-20**

**BRING**—What will you bring today? If you are going to work perhaps you will bring along your lunch. If you receive a paycheck, you will probably bring it to the bank. Many, many examples could be mentioned because we are a "bringing" people. The Bible often uses this word and uses it in both good and evil connotations. What a joyous event when the angel of the Lord said to the shepherds "Fear not for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy" (Luke 2:10). And what evil tidings when Peter warns the church "there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies" (Peter 2:1). Jesus in His sermon on the mount tells us that men are like trees, some good, and they bring forth good fruit; some corrupt, and bring forth evil fruit. There is no middle ground. From childhood on to old age, we bring forth fruit. May it be said of us, by God's grace, "Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age," Psalm 92:13-14.

## March 30

**Read Psalm 51:15-17**

**BROKEN**—If we possess something that is broken, we consider that it is useless or of little value. Our options then are to either throw it away or try to repair it if possible. Our landfills are real testimonies to mountains of broken articles. But do you realize that you possess something that is priceless only when it is broken? That sounds strange, doesn't it? However, we read in the Bible that only a broken heart is acceptable to God. Of course that is not a literal beating heart that is torn apart or ruptured. It is a spiritual act of contrition worked by God Himself whereby the power of Satan is broken and we cry out as the Publican, "Lord be merciful to me, a sinner." In Psalm 34:18 we read, "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." Pray constantly that God will break our proud hearts on the basis of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ Who suffered His body to be broken for our redemption.

## March 31

**Read Matthew 11:28-30**

**BURDEN**—We usually think of a burden as an oppressive load that is borne with difficulty, and it is usually not a physical load, but a spiritual one. Psalm 38:4 speaks of one as follows: "For mine iniquities are gone over mine head; as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me." Later in that same Psalm we are told how to be free from that burden. "For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin" (vs. 18). Burdens can take many forms for the child of God, and they are very real. As you gather in the communion of saints today, heed the words found in Galatians 6:2, "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ." "Cast thy burden upon the Lord and he shall sustain thee" (Psalm 55:22).

# Calling Upon God With a Pure Heart

by Rev. John A. Heys

As you know, Young People, the day you were born you were not able to walk, or even to crawl. In fact, although you were born with legs and feet, you had to be carried, and have food brought unto you. You could cry for that food, and thereby could express your desire for it, but you came into this world with tremendous physical needs, and you needed help for your life.

What we should also bear in mind is the awesome truth presented in Scripture. When born physically, we also needed to be born spiritually, with a new life, in order to know and enjoy the salvation, which God prepares for His elect. This is presented so clearly in John 3:3. There we read: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Still more, in II Timothy 2:22 we read: "Flee from youthful lusts; but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

Now youthful lust is the sinful desire of the flesh, that lets Satan lead us, and get us to walk in ways of hatred against God. Yes, that is so very, very true. We walk in love of God, or we walk in hatred against Him. It always is either...or. We do what God wants us to do, or we do what Satan desires to have us do. We walk in love toward God; or we walk in hatred against Him, and in what Satan wants us to do. We walk as children of God, or as children of the devil.

Take note of the fact that our God, through the Apostle Paul, commands us, in the words above, to flee from "youthful lusts." The older we get, the more we by nature grow in our sinful nature. Little children do not and cannot commit some of the sins which adults walk in and defend. That is why, in the verse quoted above, we have sinful lusts, all through our earthly lives.

As you know, Adam and Eve, those first two adults, were by Satan gotten to have sinful lusts, and thus to begin to walk against God. And all men now come through their fathers and mothers into a life of sinful flesh, turned away from God. He told Adam, as we read in Genesis 2:17, that if he committed his first sin, he would die, that is, die spiritually. And, dying spiritually, Adam and Eve could not bring forth any kind of children, but those who were spiritually dead.

We must constantly bear in mind that we either walk in love toward God, or in hatred against Him. Every person who came into this world, as born of a father and mother, is spiritually dead. Our Saviour, Jesus Christ, had no earthly father, and had no sinful nature. But every other born child of man is spiritually dead, until God causes him to be born again. In John 3:3 we read: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven."

The blessed gift of God, in His grace, is to cause those He eternally chose in Christ to have a new spiritual life of love towards Himself. Therefore, if we love God, it is because He in love caused us to be born again spiritually. He causes us to have a new, pure heart that enables us, and causes us, to walk in love towards Him. We come into this world with the need of a pure heart; and by God's grace we will be given it; and will know it, by what God enables and moves us to do. We do absolutely nothing to begin salvation in us. Even the desire for it is due to what God has already given to us, and done in us.

Remember that God told Satan that He would put enmity between him and Eve, and between his seed and the woman's. Just look up Genesis 3:15, and take solid hold of that truth. If we love God, it is because of what He did in us, and does not do in all the human race that came out of Adam and Eve. Christ Jesus, our Savior, was born of a woman; but He has no earthly father, and was not born with a sinful nature. Every other child, born by an earthly father and mother is born spiritually dead. Just look up Genesis 2:17, Ephesians 2:1, and Colossians 2:13.

God told Adam that he would die the day that he would commit the sin of eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and of evil. And we are told by God through Paul that we, who are "dead in trespasses and sin," by God's grace receive a "pure heart." We by God's grace are quickened, that is, are made to be spiritually alive. Just look up Colossians 2:13. There we are told that "You, being dead, in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him (that is with Christ) having forgiven you all trespasses." We do call upon God with a pure heart, because of what He does in us, beginning salvation in us by His grace.

In Psalter Number 94, based on Psalm 36 we read in the fourth stanza: "The fountain of eternal life is found alone with Thee, And in the brightness of Thy light We clearly light shall see." We also sing that beautifully from Psalter Number 383:1. There we sing: "All that I am I owe to Thee: Thy wisdom, Lord, hath fashioned me; I give my Maker thankful praise, Whose wondrous works my soul amaze." This is based upon Psalm 139:14.

The awesome question is whether we do call upon God with a spiritually pure heart. The only way that we can do that is that work of God's grace, whereby He implanted in us a new spiritual life. He promised that in Genesis 3:15. There He predicted putting enmity between His elect and Satan. He promised giving His elect a clean, spiritually pure heart. He told Satan that; and He always keeps every word of His predictions and promises.

God gives His elect a pure heart, which has the desire and ability of calling Him our God, loving Him, and serving Him as the only God, and almighty God. Are you thankful for such a gift of God in you, Young People? You will, if He had begun it in you. Such a pure heart is so wonderful and important; and it reveals that you do have a God-given pure heart.

Indeed, it is wonderful, and a God-given gift when God saves us from the punishment, which we by nature deserve. *But* the basic element in our salvation is the gift of love of Him. He removes our guilt, and the punishment which we deserve. But the basic element in our salvation is that He takes from us our natural hatred of Him, and of His law. To be a Christian is to be made like Christ. It is to make us love God, and want to do what He wants us to do.

Just look at what God said to Satan, the day when he got Adam and Eve to hate God, and do what He forbids man to do. He told Satan that He was going to work enmity against Satan in the hearts of His elect. That is what God promises to do in those whom He eternally chose in Christ, to be His covenant people. Doing that He makes them able to be delivered from the punishment which they do deserve.

Go back to that verse quoted at the beginning of this article. We are called by God to call on Him "out of a pure heart." Salvation is not merely, or in the first place, deliverance from the pain and punishment which as sinners we deserve. Many people merely want that; but the basic element of our salvation is implanting the desire to walk in love of God, and serve Him with heart, mind, soul and strength. Basically salvation is deliverance from the love of sin, supplanted by love of God. If we do not want that, we do not want the salvation earned by Christ Jesus, our Savior.

When we desire a pure heart, one that loves God, we have the basic element of our salvation. Then we want to flee from youthful lusts, and follow righteousness, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord, out of a pure heart. And that means that God is going to make us spiritually perfect with body and soul, when Christ returns at the end of time, as we now know it and experience it.

Wanting to be saved from our love of sin, and become God's holy people, reveals that God *did begin* salvation in us, and will bring it to its fullness. Having a pure heart reveals that we are enjoying God's love of us, making us creatures who love Him fully and eternally. Salvation is not merely relief from the punishment which we deserve. Basically it is deliverance from Satan and sin, as children of God, who love Him and in that love want to glorify Him, by all that which we desire and do.

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# Biblical Marriage

## *Part II*

by Rev. Barry Gritters

*This article is adapted for young people from a speech given for Holland Protestant Reformed Chruch's Evangelism Committee.*

*(I wrote last time that Christian young people want Godly marriages because the glory of God is at stake. Motives are everything. If we want a happy, Christian, marriage only because we want to be happy and have happy children, God won't bless those wishes of ours.)*

This truth of marriage also gives practical instruction as to what marriage is all about.

**First, marriage is a "one-flesh" union.**

"Therefore shall a man leave his father & mother and cleave unto his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). "Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh." (Matt 19:6). Ephesians 5 makes it more plain when it says, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall become one flesh."

In marriage, a man leaves his father and mother, and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh. Why? Because of Christ and the Church!! Christ lives as one flesh with the Church when He united Himself to her by faith through the gospel. Christ, now, shares His joys, tells the secrets of His counsel, speaks to the Church, is one with her. Because that is the model, our marriages are one-flesh marriages.

**Second, the wife is not her husband's equal.**

God brings this out when He said, in Genesis 2:18, "It is not good that man should be alone, I will make an help, meet for him." The word "help-meet" sometimes is misunderstood. But you don't understand what marriage and family is if you don't understand what a wife is. Literally, Genesis says, "I will make him an helper, fit or suitable, for him." It is as though the man is the mold into which the woman is poured, so that she fits into him exactly. God made the woman just what she needed to be to supply man's lack, to complete him. She is the help of man, suited for him in every respect—physically and bodily, as we can plainly see; as well as spiritually and emotionally. We ought to be thankful to God for this wise and fitting creation of the woman for the man. We ought to understand how fitting the woman is for man.

Why is it so? Because of Christ and the Church. Because the Church is not the equal of Christ! Never in her life would the Church dare to say that she is equal to Christ in strength, in honor, in glory, in wisdom, in power. Never in her life would the Church, unless she were a rebellious Church, say that she has the same duties as Christ, to be shared equally with Him! The Church understands that her existence comes out of Christ, that she is created for Christ. And, O, how this is misunderstood not only in marriage, but in church life!!!

**Third, the woman is a beautiful creation.**

When God created Eve, He formed her specially with His own hands, taking special pains to form her! When God formed Eve, He also formed her in His Own image, able to reflect and spiritually reflecting His Own glorious attributes. Genesis 1 has God saying, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness." And then it has, "So God created man in his own image. In the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

Woman is a glorious creature, not to be trampled on, ignored, treated as a nothing; but to be highly honored, respected, esteemed.

Aside from Genesis, how do we know that to be the case? Because of Christ and the Church! Even though the Church is not the equal of Christ, that doesn't mean that she is, in any way, a lowly, insignificant, worth-

less thing, to be scorned or trampled on!! Listen to what God teaches us to sing from Psalm 45: "O royal bride, give heed..." She's a queen! "Thy beauty and thy grace Shall then delight the king..." She's a beautiful queen! "To thee, since thou art His, great honor shall be shown; the rich shall bring their gifts to thee...thy glory they shall own." She is highly esteemed!! "Enthroned in royal state, All glorious thou shalt dwell, with garments fair, inwrought with gold... The Church He loveth well..."

Women today often resent the word "submission." (I've had girls ask me not to use that word in their wedding, because their family wouldn't understand.) But when women are treated by their husbands as Christ treats the Church, in this loving, honorable way, they will not have such a difficult time submitting. Did you ever think that the difficulty with submitting is as much a husband problem as a wife problem? Christ loves us and we love to submit to Him.

**Fourth, the union of marriage is used by God to bring forth children.**

In marriage, God wills that if it is physically possible the husband and wife bring forth children. Almost every Christian husband and wife have a natural desire to have children. Whether they have those children naturally or by adoption isn't the main thing; the main thing is that, normally, they have children.

Again, that makes sense because of the marriage of Christ and the Church. Perhaps you say, "Well, the others made sense, but I don't see the connection here." It works this way, does it not? Through the union of Christ and His Church--which is a union by faith--there are children produced! When the Church is close to Christ, when the Church preaches Christ, when the Church lives the life of Christ, then God is pleased to give her spiritual children--converts--from her own natural children as well as through mission work. Our marriages reflect that, not only in that we have as many children as possible (given our individual limitations), but that we rejoice in the birth of those many children.

**Fifth, husband and wife live together for life.**

Genesis 2 teaches that a man leaves his father and mother and cleaves to his wife. He "sticks" to her--he cleaves to his wife. If it is not explicit, then it certainly is implied here that divorce is not the way out of marriage troubles. In Malachi, God says, "Jehovah hates divorce." And in the New Testament, the word is clear that, but for one exception, divorce is forbidden. Matthew 5 and 19, Luke 16, Mark 10, Romans 7 and I Corinthians 7 all make clear that divorce is forbidden, that when a man marries a woman, they take vows for life!

Do we hear this? Do you young people hear this? Today men and women marry with the thought that if time shows that they are incompatible (whatever that means) they may divorce. God says "NO DIVORCE!!" God says that He gave marriage as a relationship in which you cleave to your wife in love.

Why is that? Where is our right to say, "no divorce!!"? It's far different from what the psychologists say. Because of Jesus Christ and His Church! Jesus cleaves to His bride. And though there may be unfaithfulness on the part of the Church, Christ never puts His bride away. He always takes her back, and always woos her back to Himself.

*(concluded next issue)*

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Guest Article

# Two Swords

by Rev. C. Hanko

*"So it came to pass in the day of battle that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people who were with Saul and Jonathan: but with Saul and Jonathan his son was there found," I Samuel 13:22.*

You will recall that there was no smith in Israel. The Philistines had made it impossible for the Israelites to make swords and spears, which made them defenseless against the enemy. The

were completely defenseless, except for two swords. Can you think of a more precarious situation?

The Philistines, who were the archenemy of Israel at that time, had built an army consisting of thirty thousand chariots, six thousand horsemen, and a large, well-armed infantry.

These came to fight against the army of Israel, which consisted of a mere thousand men. At the very sight of this Philistine army the Israelites fled, some to hide in the woods and in caves, some to the tribes that dwelt on the other side of Jordan, and some even defected to the enemy.

Confident of their superiority over Israel, the Philistines sent three marauding bands throughout Israel to plunder to their hearts content. The archenemy of God's people seemed to triumph, while Israel trembled with fear and anguish.

Only three hundred men remained with Saul and Jonathan, and they were without weapons. They had neither sword nor spear except for the two swords in the hands of Saul and of Jonathan.

Two swords, yet one too many. That is, the sword in the hand of wicked, unbelieving Saul was useless. Yet the Lord gave Israel the victory over the mighty host of the Philistines with only one sword. As Jonathan said, 'There is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few."

While Saul sat under a pomegranate tree with three hundred men around him, not daring to face the enemy, Jonathan and his armor bearer had gone off by themselves.

Confident that the Lord would give him the victory, Jonathan exposed himself with his armor bearer to the enemy. Seeing Jonathan, the Philistines thought that the whole army of Israel had somehow found means and courage to fight against them.

Little did the Philistines realize that Saul's army was scattered, that Saul and a handful of men felt completely helpless, and that only Jonathan and his armor bearer were approaching.

'Yet they confidently say, "Come up to us and we will shew you a thing." So Jonathan, trusting solely in his God, scrambles with his armor bearer up the hill to meet the enemy. Twenty Philistines fall slaughtered before him. At that moment the Lord sends an earthquake. The ground trembles and shakes under them, and the Philistines flee in terror. The entire army of chariots, horsemen, and infantry are panic-stricken, fighting and killing one another as they go. Even the Israelites who had defected, now join in to kill off the Philistines. There is a great slaughter and the enemy is driven back into their own land.

The God of Jonathan still lives. The faith of Jonathan is the same faith that God gives to you and to me. It is still true today that one believer and the Lord still outnumber and are more powerful than all the hosts of Satan.

We have a powerful sword, the Word of God.

Christ manipulated that sword against Satan with His powerful: "It is written!"

Joseph used that sword against the wiles of Potiphar's wife when he said, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"

You and I are called by God to do the same. The church on earth is a militant church. Its members are soldiers. You and I are called to fight against the most powerful enemies: the devil, the world and our sinful flesh.

Not as if that sword of the Word of God has some magical power. But the Word is the means whereby the Holy Spirit convicts of sin and guilt, either unto repentance or unto greater condemnation. God's Word never returns void.

The devil is a cunning, treacherous, sneaky, mean fighter. He has centuries of experience. He has a huge host of demons at his beck and call. I would not be surprised if he has one certain demon to keep an eye on you, and another one for me. He likely watches every move we make, looks for our weakest spots, waits for the best moment of attack. He knows when, where and how to make his assault.

He has the whole world at his command and uses even this present evil world to lure us or to threaten us. Who knows what means he will use as he plots to destroy.

But he can also attack us through our sinful flesh. Sin wars in our members. Well must we be aware that, "I am evil, born, in sin." Except for the grace of God, we not only might sin, but we surely will.

The devil may even use our most intimate friend to lure us into sin. He pulls no punches.

Remember this: No battle, no victory. No victory, no crown. To fight that battle you need the Sword of the Word of God. But you need more. You need the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:13-17).

Are you a Saul or a Jonathan? If you are a Jonathan, you must equip yourself for battle. You must do that now, even while you are young.

You must put on the helmet of salvation, a strong conviction of the truth of God's Word. You must protect your heart with the shield of faith. You must bind that shield securely in its proper position with the girdle of truth.

To be prepared to meet the enemy you must have your feet firmly bound up in the shoes of the Gospel of peace.

Now take in your left hand the shield of faith to quench all the fiery darts of the devil.

And last, but not least, take up the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

Stand firm! The enemy is numerous and powerful but, in Christ Jesus we are *more than conquerors!*

*Not human strength, nor mighty hosts,*
*Not charging steeds or warlike boasts*
*Can save from overthrow*
*But God will save from death and shame*
*All those who fear and trust His name,*
*And they no want shall know.*

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Guest Article

# Daniel—A Faithful Prayer Life

Part 2

by Rev. Jaikishin Mahtani

What do you think Daniel was praying for at this time? If you were in that chamber and you knew that you would be cast into the lion's den, would you be praying: "Lord deliver me?" Earlier we read that he asked his friends to ask, in prayer, for the mercies from the God of heaven that they might be delivered. Surely here, too, he was crying that God would deliver him. But, Daniel knew who his real enemies were. Those enemies were not merely fierce lions. Those enemies were the wicked who were seeking to destroy him together with the remnant in Babylon. So he prayed to the God of heaven. He knew that God will be faithful. Do not forget this! He has been given dreams and visions. He knows God's Word. He knows that God is faithful. No wonder that he prays also with thanksgiving. He is not praying a desperate prayer. He is praying with gratitude to God that God is able to deliver him. And even if God does not deliver, He is a God of salvation; He is a God Who is faithful to His people; He will bring all things to pass.

We come then to the secret behind Daniel's prayer life! Daniel was faithful in prayer because he knew the faithfulness of Jehovah! Young people, our faithfulness in prayer is only in the way of knowing the faithfulness of Jehovah. How can we learn, in times of distress, to pray? How will we remember also in times of prosperity to give thanks to God? What is the secret we must uncover so that we can learn to pray when we are old but also when we are young? How can we learn to pray not only in the evening but also in the morning? How can we learn to pray not only on the Lord's Day but every day, to be steadfast, to be regular, to be consistent in prayer? Here is Daniel's secret. His faith. Nothing more, nothing less.

Faithfulness in prayer is only in the way of faith. The beautiful gift of faith by which we are made righteous is also the means by which we continue to commune with God. How often do we take that faith and put it away in a drawer? And I even know the blessings of that faith. But, beloved, are we like Daniel who lived in the consciousness of his faith? Is faith at the very root of our life? Is the faith that we have in God, the faith with regard to our salvation, the faith concerning His kingdom, the faith about the future, that fills our hearts and minds? Then we cannot help but pray! We will pray because we are filled with faith.

Daniel 11: 32 tells us the people who know their God, they shall be strong and shall do exploits. Daniel surely knew his God! He was strong in the faith. Not only does the first part of the book's narrative of Daniel's life, but also the last six chapters of the book of Daniel's visions emphasize prayer and the secret that Daniel had in his faithfulness in prayer. This is clear for example Daniel 9, a passage of Scripture which will show to us

directly the secret behind Daniel's faithfulness in prayer. "In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; in the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish 70 years in the desolations of Jerusalem. And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: And prayed unto the LORD my God....." Before we look at this prayer more closely, let us understand the point. Although Daniel was a man blessed with visions and dreams, he knew his need of the Bible. He read the Word of God. He turned to his books and there he found out the number of years which Jeremiah the prophet had already prophesied years earlier! Had he heard Jeremiah when he was a young lad? Perhaps. Had he known Jeremiah? We do not know. But the scrolls of the prophecy of Jeremiah he had treasured. He took them out and he read them. He did not say, "Ah, I am a man of experience. I am a man of vision. God speaks to me directly." He came to the Word and there he read it, and there he understood that it was God who had already promised that after 70 years He will bring His children back to Jerusalem. Can you imagine how he leaped with joy? How he danced with singing? How he was filled with gratitude to God because the Word of God once again reminded him and taught him, revealed to him the truth of God and of His covenant?

Even Daniel, notwithstanding all the Pentecostals today who want to tell us that God speaks to them directly, the man who was filled with visions and dreams knew that if he was to be faithful to God and faithful in prayer he had to open his Bible and he had to read and search it! "Read your Bible and pray every day if you want to grow." That may be a simple childlike song, but it is true! If you want to grow! If you want to grow strong, if you want to grow wise there is only one way: Read your Bible and pray! Every day! Daniel knew that. In fact it was in the opening to the Scriptures, as he searched those Scriptures, that he knew how to pray, too.

One of the first things that comes forth upon Daniel's lips in his prayer recorded in Daniel 9 is: "O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; we have sinned, and have committed iniquity...." It is in the reading of the Scriptures that, once again, God reminds us of the reason why we are in such a terrible state; the reason why we are so downcast and discouraged; the reason why we are persecuted. Why were they in the Babylonian captivity in the first place? Do you know? God had warned them again and again, "You bow before the idol gods of the nations, you give your sons and daughters, to marry amongst the children of the ungodly, and I will send you to the Babylonian captivity." And still, knowingly and deliberately, they contradicted God's commandments. And now they are in captivity. When Daniel read the Bible, Daniel did not say, "Oh, God forgive these people, these ungodly people who are compromising." As he read the Word of God he came to deep contrition, repentance of heart. He is on his knees and is praying, "Forgive us, O God!" When the Bible is closed, and we are not reading it reverently, submissively, honestly, we also quit praying. O perhaps in formality we still pray, but not in such a way pleasing and acceptable in God's eyes. How dare we talk to God and close our ears to Him? Proverbs 28:11 tells us that he who despises the law, even his prayer is abomination in the sight of God. If we are to pray faithfully, we must read God's Word faithfully also. If we are to pray aright, we must read the Bible! In the face of God, in the face of His Word, then alone we will understand that God would allow even all our enemies to attack us and persecution to come upon us, yea, even weaknesses and struggles so that we may learn once again to humble ourselves and to call upon the Name of God. That is prayer, is it not? To be humbled, to be on our knees, whether literally or figuratively. We recognize that it is not of us. In fact, we deserve only God's wrath. But God is merciful to us.

Another thing which stands out clearly in Daniel's prayer is Daniel's love for Jerusalem. How often in this prayer he prays concerning the city. Of course this answers the question, too, why he was facing Jerusalem as he prayed. Zion, the city of God, continued to be Daniel's love and treasure. Notice how often in this prayer he asks God to bless Jerusalem. For example, verses 16&17: "O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem.... Cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate." He prays that God will once again redeem His people. Although Daniel is far away in Babylon, he does not forget God's people and kingdom. This too was due to his faith in Jehovah the Savior of His people. With this faith he prayed, and he prayed faithfully.

Yet a third thing stands out clearly in his prayer on account of his faith. Daniel sought the glory of God. It

was not only his own life. He was not crying in desperation that he was going to die. He is eighty years old—at the end of his life anyway. What does he pray? Notice verse 19: "O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name." In this prayer he recounts how God had taken His people out of bondage through Moses and how God is able to deliver His people. In a most godly sense he is challenging God. He is saying: "O God, Thou who art the sovereign God, are you going to let the enemies laugh at us? Are you going to wipe out the remnant? For Thy own name's sake, O Jehovah, hear my prayer." Have you ever prayed that way? We will not pray that way unless we are reading the Scriptures. On the other hand, we will indeed pray this way when we walk by faith, and when our faith is being nourished. As we go up to God's house to hear His Word, we grow to pray more faithfully. As we daily read the Scriptures we will learn to pray like Daniel did. For the glory and honor of our faithful God.

Daily devotion is not just praying, but opening the Bible and reading it prayerfully! Young people, do you have a set time to open your Bible and read it every day, meditating upon the Word while searching the Scripture? Devote half an hour, ten minutes, some time in the day or night when you can really search the Scriptures. Do not be satisfied with a quick prayer, or even a quick reading at the table. Faithfulness in prayer after the example of Daniel will mean that we know that we are not only going to pray to God in our distress and praise God and thank Him, but we are searching the Word. Think of it, on the Lord's Day, when we come to His house to worship Him, is it not true that as we hear the preaching that is when our song and our prayers increase, we are filled with gratitude, we are stirred to a greater searching of His Word, we are talking about God, we are praying to Him. Why? Because the Word of God comes to us and we know that God is speaking to us and then we respond in prayer. Prayer is as the flower opening up unto God as the sunshine of God's love comes upon us. Do you want to be faithful in prayer every day? If you want to commune with God and really walk with Him, this is the secret: open your Bible. Search the Word. Let God speak to you. When God's Word comes upon your heart you will not but pray. When God's will is revealed to you, you will not but pray godly prayers according to His will. When God's holiness is impressed upon you as you read the Word, you will not but cry out in humble repentance. And when His promises are repeated, and you remind yourself of them in the daily reading of the Scriptures, you will not but be filled with gratitude and thanksgiving morning, day and night, praying.

Learn from Daniel. He was weak in himself but found strength to pray through the power of faith. In chapter 10 we find Daniel is in prayer and fasting. He is fainting because he has been given so many glorious visions. You know what happens? You read, verse 18, "There came again...one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me, and said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me." Even Daniel was weak, you know. He found that as he was praying and as he was seeing the vision that he became very faint. He was struggling. He could not tell a word. But then the Son of Man, and this was the Lord Jesus Christ in the Old Testament appeared to Daniel. Then Daniel was strengthened! Daniel was given the Word. The Son of Man spoke to him and Daniel said, "Lord, speak on. Speak to me and then I will have the strength to pray." Again in verse 21, the Son of Man said to Daniel: "I will shew thee that which is noted in the Scripture of truth..." Then Daniel was able to be bold and stand up and continue to receive visions from God. Only through the Word, was Daniel faithful in prayer. It is the same with us. Keep away from God's house, neglect the preaching of the Word, neglect your daily reading of the Scriptures, and I guarantee you that you will not know the power and worth and the blessedness of prayer.

Finally, let us be reminded of the fruits of such a prayer life. The first is faithfulness itself. Daniel was faithful as a young lad but also to the end of his live. Although his death is not recorded, in Daniel 12 we are told some beautiful things about Daniel's end. We read there in Daniel 12 of the last judgment, verse 2: Many of them (that is a multitude of them)...all will come out from the dust of the earth, and shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And then notice verse 3: "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." That is Daniel. He stands as a star in the firmament. And he shall ever be remembered as that wise and godly man who knew his God and remained faithful to the end. So that last verse of Daniel closes this way: "Go thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days."

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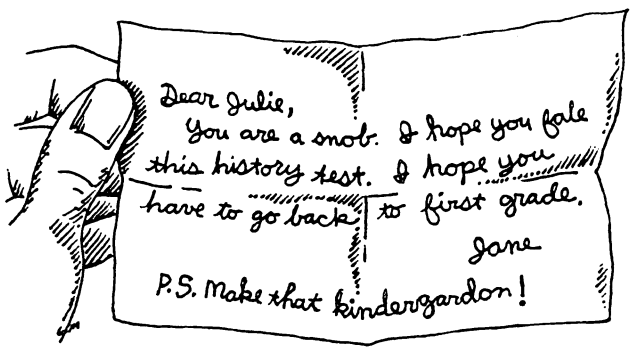
# "LITTLE LIGHTS" . . . LET IT SHINE!

by Connie Meyer

## Meekness (Part 9)

"...and the expedition of Lewis and Clark was completed after two years," concluded the teacher. "Remember—test on Friday."

Within seconds the bell rang, but not before Julie noticed a note had been secretly placed on her desk. She glanced around to see who could have put it there, but no one gave any indication that it was from them. Since it was time to go home, she put the note in her pocket and gathered her books. However, after she had her coat on and was ready to climb into the bus, she could wait no longer. She reached for the note in her pocket and cautiously unfolded it.




How Julie wished she had waited to read the note! A rush of emotion came over her as she entered the bus. She tried to act as if everything was fine, when really all she wanted to do was cry. It would be a miserable ride home.

"Hey, Julie, sit here!" called Sarah.

Julie tried to smile as she joined her friend.

"You ready for that history test on Friday?" asked Sarah cheerfully.

"Not yet," said Julie. Did she dare show Sarah the note? After some silence she said, "Sarah, I want to show you something—but you can't tell!"

Sarah loved secrets. 'Oh, I won't tell!" So Julie shared the note with her.

"That's awful!" cried Sarah, "Let's write a worse note back to Jane!"

For a second that sounded like a good idea to Julie too—but only for a second. "No, wait, I don't think so."

"But why not? She deserves it!"

"Maybe so. But I think we better just forget about it." As the words came out of Julie's mouth, she knew how hard it would be to forget about it!

Sarah sighed and shook her head, "I can't figure you out."

Julie replied, "Jesus would be meek. He wouldn't write a mean note back. I won't either."

Then Julie ripped up the note and threw it in the trash as she left the bus.

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*Connie is the mother of 5 children and attends Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Walker, Michigan.*

**Unscramble these words from Matthew 11:29.**

"Keat ym keyo poun oyu dan ralen fo em;
" ____ __ ____ ____ ___ ___ _____ __ __;

rof I ma keme nad woyll ni rathe . . ."
___ I __ ____ ___ _____ __ _____. . ."

(UPSS046-840)

# Church News

## BIRTHS:

### GEORGETOWN, MI

Tim & Linda VanDyke were blessed with the birth of a daughter, Nicole Ann.

Craig & Jessica Scholten were blessed with the birth of a daughter, Alyssa Marie.

Tim & Yvonne Schimmel were blessed with the birth of a son, Anthony Jordan.

### PEACE, IL

Dan & Dawn Zandstra were blessed with the birth of a daughter, Brittany Sue.

### HUDSONVILLE, MI

Vern & MaryLou Haveman were blessed with the birth of a son, Arend George.

Dave & Faith Miedema were blessed with the birth of a daughter, Jessica Faith.

### HOPE, MI

Ken & Pam Engelsma were blessed with the birth of a daughter, Monica Joy.

Carlyle & Marcia Miersma were blessed with the birth of a son, Brandon Anthony.

## BAPTISMS:

### GEORGETOWN, MI

Cole Douglas, son of Mr. & Mrs. Doug Bleyenburg.
Rachel Kristine, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Doug Holstege.
Tonya Renee, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Bill Zwak.
Alyssa Marie, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Craig Scholten.
Nicole Ann, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Tim VanDyke.

### HOPE, MI

Alison Renae, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Joel Vink.
Jessica Jean, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Brent Klamer.
Monica Joy, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Ken Engelsma.
Brandon Anthony, son of Mr. & Mrs. Carlyle Miersma.
Emily Louise, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Dave Langerak.

## PROFESSIONS OF FAITH:

### HOPE, MI

Melanie Vander Waal, Jaime Engelsma, Kirsten DeVries, Pam Kuiper & Darrel Tanis have confessed their faith in the Lord Jesus.

### PELLA, IA

Brenda Koehler has made public her faith in Jesus Christ.

## MARRIAGES:

### PEACE, IL

Peter Medema & Karen Tysse were joined in marriage on January 13, 1996.

## TRANSFERS OF MEMBERSHIPS:

To Pella: Mrs. Johanna Hittle

To Pella from Hull: Brian & Stephanie VanEngen.

To First, Holland from Hope, Grand Rapids: Kevin VanOverloop

To Hudsonville from Hope, Grand Rapids: Miss Lafern Kortering.

To Byron Center from Hope, Grand Rapids: Rev. Doug Kuiper.

To Hope, Grand Rapids from Grandville: Mr. & Mrs. Carlyle Miersma and four baptized children.

*Also: Thank you to the other churches who sent in bulletins but didn't have any news to contribute to this months Church News.*