



Trumpet's Sound

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“Trumpet's Sound” is a bi-monthly publication of the Armenian Evangelical Brethren Church in Sydney, Australia.

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Praise/Prayer points

- As the COVID-19 is spreading in Armenia please keep our co-workers in your prayers.
- Pray for an end to the war between Nagorno Karabagh and Azerbaijan and for the many mourners.
- Pray for the refugees flooding into Armenia for safety. Many have lost their loved ones, many have lost their houses. Now they have no food or any belongings and this has put more strain on ACM.
- Pray for the many seeking for answers. Pray that they may all find Christ to have peace.

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Biblical words

There are many important words in the Bible like salvation, repentance, baptism, and grace. Today I want to look at the word mercy.

What is mercy? In the Bible, God's mercy means His pity, compassion, and kindness towards people. His mercy shows in the believer's life at salvation, and then God continues to show mercy in forgiveness. Mercy triumphs over judgment but refusing God's mercy has its consequences.

So many times in the Psalms, David talks of God's mercy. Think of Psalm 123:

I lift up my eyes to you, to you who sits enthroned in heaven. As the eyes of slaves look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a female slave look to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the LORD our God, till he shows us his mercy. Have mercy on us, LORD, have mercy on us, for we have endured no end of contempt. We have endured no end of ridicule from the arrogant, of contempt from the proud.

If we look for justice, think of Romans 3:10. "As it is written: There is no one righteous, not even one." However, we do not want justice because we have all sinned; we need mercy. So let us humble ourselves, let us come to Him with repentance, and let us fall at His feet because our God is merciful and loving.

Human beings are born with a sinful nature and, instead of justly condemning us, God is merciful in that He withholds the punishment we deserve and shows compassion and pity toward us. Mercy is the withholding of a just condemnation. Throughout the Bible, God gives many illustrations of His mercy. He loved us when we were sinners. He sent us His Son to make atonement of our sins.

The merciful Lord Jesus has His arms wide open for you. He wants you come to Him and let his mercy flow through you and give you peace.

Psalm 8

Read Psalm 8

Psalms 8 is another Messianic Psalm, being quoted twice in the New Testament. It begins and ends with the words: "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth." This outburst of praise causes us to ask why David penned these words. We can imagine him under the stars. After thinking about the greatness of what he saw, he asked why God should give man glory and honour.

David recognised God's majesty as he looked into the night sky and observed the moon and the stars. The greatness of His creation is recognised over all the earth and this means that His name is majestic or excellent. However, the glory of God is above the heavens. Great as God's creation is, His majestic glory lies beyond anything man can see in the starry heavens.

Although God's name is so great, even babes and nursing infants offer Him praise. This passage was spoken by the Lord Jesus after His entry into Jerusalem on a donkey. When the children in the temple area shouted "Hosanna to the Son of David", the chief priests and scribes objected. In reply the Lord asked if they had never read "Out of the mouths of babes and nursing infants you have perfected praise" (Matthew 21:15-16).

Why has God established praise in the mouths of babes and nursing infants? It is because of His enemies. In this way God silences the enemy and the avenger. Man in his own pride questions God but, instead of questioning the wisdom of God, he needs to come before the Almighty with the faith of a little child.

At the time David wrote this psalm it seems he was guarding his sheep under a starry sky. He knew that the heavens were the work of God's finger; God has put the moon and the stars in their place. We learn more about this from other Scriptures. Isaiah 40 teaches that God has not only created the stars, but He also has a name for each one. He keeps them in their course so that not one of them is missing.

The countless millions of stars, each named and in position, gives some idea of the infinite greatness of our God.

David's thoughts about the multitude of the stars led to another question. Having made such a magnificent universe, why should God be concerned with man? What is man – something made out of the dust of the ground – that God should give the least thought to him? Even more, not only has God given thought to us, but He has visited us. Why?

It is good to ask a question like this and to remember that unless God moves to help us and care for us, there is nothing of real value within us. What He does, He does for His own glory; in visiting us He blesses us and demonstrates His great glory.

David thought of the order within creation. God made man a little lower than the angels. Man is not able to do what angels do. Man is not in the presence of God, serving Him. He cannot fly at God's behest to accomplish His will. Angels are so much greater in power and might (2 Peter 2:11). However, David adds the amazing thought that God has crowned man with glory and honour.

David spoke about the extent of God's blessing to man. When man was made and placed in the Garden of Eden, God gave him dominion over creation. All things – domestic animals, wild animals, birds, fish and everything in the seas – were placed under his control.

David's question, what is man, shows him to be a man of faith and worship. This is in contrast to the response of boastful man who thinks of himself as master of the universe planning to colonise places in space. But there is another response we must consider. When we look around the world, man is not in control. He does not have control over all birds and animals; he cannot even control himself! Obviously, things are not under man's control.

It is this question that the writer to the Hebrews asked before showing that one day the Lord Jesus will be in control.

For he didn't subject the world to come, of which we speak, to angels. But one has somewhere testified, saying,

“What is man, that you think of him?

Or the son of man, that you care for him?

You made him a little lower than the angels.

You crowned him with glory and honour.

You have put all things in subjection under his feet.”

For in that he subjected all things to him, he left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we don't see all things subjected to him, yet. But we see him who has been made a little lower than the angels, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour, that by the grace of God he should taste of death for everyone. Hebrews 2:5-9

The writer to the Hebrews refers to this passage to show the superiority of the Lord Jesus over angels. Having quoted verses 4-6 he adds the salient point that this is something we do not see; man does not have dominion over the creation around. The writer is saying that God created man to have dominion but this has not yet happened.

What do we see? We do not yet see man in control of nature around us. But we see Jesus. Consider what is said about Him. He was made a little lower than the angels: either little lower in position or lower for a short period of time. This was something He did for the suffering of death. The Lord Jesus tasted death for everyone, doing this by the grace of God. Now He is crowned with glory and honour.

The writer to the Hebrews leaves us to meditate on what this means. Man made a mess of his God-given responsibilities. He is no longer in control of creation. The Lord Jesus is now in the process of accomplishing the purposes of God. One day He will step into this world and assume control. Then all things will be in subjection to the perfect man. The Man of God's choice will control the universe; all will be subject to Him.

As we consider this, we also burst out in praise as the psalmist did: “Oh Lord, our Lord, how excellent is your name in all the earth.”

Don Stormer

Memory loss

Did you forget something? Do you ever forget where you put your keys, phone or glasses? Have you ever gone into another room at home and wondered what you went in there for? We all forget some things and forgetfulness can be a normal part of aging. We get memory lapses. Our brain doesn't function as well as it used to.

Mary couldn't find her car keys. She looked on the hook just inside the front door. They weren't there. She searched in her purse. No luck. Finally, she found them on her desk. Yesterday, she forgot her neighbour's name. She decided to see her doctor. After a complete check-up, her doctor said that Mary was fine. Her forgetfulness was just a normal part of getting older. The doctor suggested that Mary take a class, play cards with friends, or help out at the local school to help her memory.

Israel forgets

The worst kind of forgetfulness is to forget God and what He has done. The Israelites forgot God during the exodus from Egypt. When they got to the Red Sea they forgot God's kindness in releasing them from slavery (Exodus 14:10-12; Psalm 106:7). So, they rebelled against Moses. Three months later, they came to Mount Sinai where they received the Ten Commandments (Exodus 19:1). Then while Moses went up the mountain for 40 days (Exodus 24:12-18), they forgot the exodus and the Ten Commandments and made a gold idol in the shape of a calf and worshipped it (Exodus 32:1-8). Because they forgot God, the Israelites complained to Moses. Later they were told to never forget the exodus (Deuteronomy 6:12; 8:2) and to never forget the God who delivered them from slavery in Egypt so they could settle in Canaan (Deuteronomy 8:11, 14).

In the times of the judges, the Israelites "forgot the Lord their God and served the Baals and the Asherahs" (Judges 3:7). They worshipped idols instead of the true God. And after Gideon's death, the Israelites

set up an idol as a god “and did not remember the Lord their God, who had rescued them from the hands of all their enemies on every side” (Judges 8:34).

In Psalm 103, David said to never forget the good things God has done (v. 2-5). For a believer this includes forgiveness. And whenever we are healed, it's because of God's mercy and how He designed our bodies. He protects us from many dangers, accidents and tragedies. We also receive God's love and compassion. And He satisfies our longing as we live for Him.

In the seventh century BC, the book of the Pentateuch (law) was discarded or lost during the reign of the ungodly kings Manasseh and Amon. No one had read God's Word for at least 40 years! But about 622BC, it was found in the temple during the reign of King Josiah (2 Kings 22:8; 2 Chronicles 34:14-15).

Israel reminded

God told the Israelites “do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them fade from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them” (Deuteronomy 4:9).

And the Passover and Unleavened Bread festivals and the consecration of the firstborn were God-given reminders of their deliverance from slavery in Egypt (Exodus 13:8-9, 14-16).

So, teaching Scripture and continuing to do what God had commanded them was the antidote to their forgetfulness.

Are we in danger of forgetting God's Word, the Bible? What about us?

Like the Israelites, we are also forgetful. When we are self-centred, we forget God. The cure for self-centeredness is to remember what God has done (Psalm 77). And God has given us resources to combat our forgetfulness. We have Scripture, the Bible, which is a record of what God has done and what He has commanded. We also have prayer and the Holy Spirit to remind and strengthen us.

In the New Testament believers are told to teach others about the good news of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Peter 3:15). And they are told to remember Him by celebrating the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23-26). Are we spreading the good news to others? Are we celebrating the Lord's Supper regularly?

Forgetting God is worse than COVID-19. Let's remember God's deliverance and provision for us. Don't be like the Israelites and forget to remember God. Don't be a spiritual COVID casualty.

George Hawke

Timeless quotes

"I think the reason we sometimes have the false sense that God is so far away is because that is where we have put him. We have kept him at a distance and then when we are in need and call on him in prayer we wonder where he is. He is exactly where we left him."

Ravi Zacharias

"One of the most staggering truths of the Scriptures is to understand that we do not earn our way to heaven. ...works have a place—but as a demonstration of having received God's forgiveness, not as a badge of merit of having earned it."

Ravi Zacharias

"Sometimes I go to God and say, "God, if Thou dost never answer another prayer while I live on this earth, I will still worship Thee as long as I live and in the ages to come for what Thou hast done already. God's already put me so far in debt that if I were to live one million millenniums I couldn't pay Him for what He's done for me."

A.W. Tozer

Rules and Relationship

Some Christians see their lives as little more than keeping rules. They regard a moral life as sufficient, and so they have some rules which, without discomfort or difficulty, they follow, may I say, religiously. They don't drink, don't smoke, don't swear and they are careful with money – careful to earn it and to keep it. But such a life fails on two counts: first, because a merely moral life is not a spiritual life, and second, because they are not living out of a relationship with the Lord, but only following rules. Anyone should be able to see that such a life is no more than a poor, and deadly, imitation of our high calling. Rules are never a substitute for relationship.

However, we know that personal discipline is very profitable for a Christian, and it necessarily requires some rules that we set for ourselves. They may be positive or negative – “I will do this” or “I won't do that”. Either way, they are rules, and there is a danger hovering around them.

The danger is that our peace with God ceases to be through the Lord Jesus and our performance becomes the ground of our peace. If we do well, then we feel right with God and blessed, but if we slip up or relax a little, our peace vanishes. And when we think like that, any discipline at all becomes hard and God seems more like an unfeeling taskmaster than our Heavenly Father.

So, to be kept from this error, we must cling almost fanatically to the glorious gospel of Christ, where our merits are shown to be utterly worthless and His sacrifice to be everything. By that sacrifice alone are we reconciled to God, now and always – never by our performance or virtue. Full, perfect and eternal reconciliation was won through the blood of His cross and the incomprehensible power of His resurrection and it's our relationship with Him, through faith, that is our secure foundation and our full salvation.

So why is there a need for personal discipline at all? Because our salvation is not yet complete – we are still looking forward to the prom-

ised resurrection of the body when the Lord returns. In the meantime, we have three enemies to contend with: the world that continues to reject Christ, the devil who seeks to destroy His work, and our own sinful nature that would rather be God than worship Him. Personal discipline is simply our choosing to swim against the current in order to learn, to grow and to serve the Lord. No one can live a spiritual life without this type of discipline. Paul speaks of athletes and soldiers in his letter to Timothy – at that time few believers would have doubted the need for focus and discipline.

However, one important question remains – what does a spiritual life look like, and what does it feel like? The Lord Jesus is Himself the perfect example of a spiritual life. If you are told that a certain type of behaviour is of the Spirit, simply ask if it would be appropriate for the Lord Jesus to behave in that way. The Scripture is clear: “He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked. (1 John 2:6). We have seen the Man from Heaven, and that settles the matter.

Does a spiritual person feel very holy and pure? No! Unlike the Lord, we have a corrupt and sinful nature that we must deal with daily to ensure that sin does not “reign in our mortal body” (Romans 6:12). As we go on learning to walk in the Spirit we become even more aware, not less, of our corruption. However, at the same time, we will learn to live free from its degrading influence, and we will love more freely and more selflessly. Other people will experience more of Christ in our lives, but we won’t feel Christ-like at all. Nevertheless, we will know His peace and we will increasingly rejoice in Him. Our cup will run over, goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our lives, and we will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Neil Buckman



“Praying and sinning will never live together in the same heart. Prayer will consume sin, or sin will choke prayer.”

J. C. Ryle

What makes us count?

How do you get the conversation moving after being introduced to someone you have never met before? There was a time when it was common to resort to the old question: "What do you do?" High unemployment over recent years has made this a risky and often tactless question that may be followed by an embarrassed silence and a stumbling explanation about job hunting and work prospects.

As human beings we seem to be gripped by this often misguided idea that knowing what people do, will somehow give us an insight about their identity, what they are like, and who they really are. We derive much of our own identity from what we do. It is this fact of human nature that heightens the pain of unemployment. With no work, there is a sense of lost identity because we no longer "do" anything. This very human fixation about having an identity from what we do, has a profound and often damaging impact on our relationship with God and how we truly feel about ourselves. If what we "do" gives us identity and makes us feel as if we count in the world, then what we "do" for God will be the reason we feel as if we have value as people before Him. Our sense of value will depend on how effectively we perform as Christians. When feeling good depends on our effectiveness in Christian service we have exposed ourselves to many problems and much inner sadness.

The Lord very clearly put His finger on this problem when the disciples returned from their missionary journey. They were rejoicing in their very successful Christian service. Christ entered into their joy but gave a very relevant warning. Don't rejoice in what you do, but rather in who you are, people who are deeply and intimately loved by God. Luke 10:20 says "Rejoice that your names are written in Heaven".

If our joy and sense of identity and worth depend on what we do, there is a curious danger. There is pressure to be effective, because feeling good depends upon it. We find ourselves coming to God not for deep relationship, but for power or solutions to the problems of ef-

factive Christian living. Dr Larry Crabb points out in his excellent book Finding God, "We come to God for solutions, but He comes to us for fellowship". God is no longer an intimate lover, but a useful resource in our crusade to find identity, meaning and joy in the things we do. Feeling good through serving and doing become the goals, and God merely becomes the means.

God can be quite tiresome in His consistent refusal to co-operate with this empty program, which is allegedly for His glory and over a period of time service, joy and even life itself begin to dry up. It may take some time to discover we are running on empty. Eventually we realize that God seems far away and we wonder what went wrong. It is very simple: serving God has replaced knowing God. Joy and sense of purpose don't come from what we do, but from who we are, someone who God loves. Remember the Apostle John's identity, the one who Jesus loves. We must return to that wonderful invitation to intimacy with God.

"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20). It is at that inner table with God that we begin to find our true identity and joy as deeply loved individuals. Our problem is that we want to be up and doing. We think our sense of self-worth depends on it. But God just wants to sit and eat with us. Where is His sense of priority? We must learn that any Christian service that is truly effective is merely an overflow of what happens at that place of deep fellowship with God. Those who find their joy and self-worth in serving God rather than in intimately enjoying Him are dangerously adrift and showing the first evidence of spiritual decline.

You count because of who you are, someone loved, forgiven and invited on an adventurous journey to intimacy with God.

Rex Dearlove



Listen

When I ask you to listen to me and you start giving advice, you have not done what I asked.

When I ask you to listen to me and you begin to tell me why I shouldn't feel that way, you are trampling on my feelings.

When I ask you to listen to me and you feel you have to do something to solve my problems, you have failed me, strange as that may seem.

Listen! All I asked, was that you listen. Not to talk or do – just hear me. Advice is cheap: 10 cents will get you both Dear Abby and Billy Graham in the same newspaper. And I can do that for myself; I'm not helpless. May be discouraged and faltering, but not helpless.

When you do something for me that I can do for myself, you contribute to my fear and weakness.

But when you accept as a simple fact that I do feel what I feel, no matter how irrational, then I quit trying to convince you and can get on with the business of understanding what's behind this irrational feeling. And when that is clear, the answers are obvious and I don't need advice.

So please listen and just hear me, and if you want to talk, wait a minute for your turn; and I will listen to you.

Rex Dearlove

¹May the Lord answer you when you are in distress;
may the name of the God of Jacob protect you.

²May he send you help from the sanctuary
and grant you support from Zion.

³May he remember all your sacrifices
and accept your burnt offerings."

Psalm 20:1-3

Lord have mercy on us

In 301, Armenia was the first nation to accept Christianity. Today it is at war with two Muslim countries, Azerbaijan and Turkey. We have 3,000,000 people against 100,000,000.

During each mission trip with an ACM group, we have always visited Karabagh. There are many churches and believers both young and old. We have preached in many of them and have had fellowship as we visited houses, studied the Bible, and prayed and worshipped the Lord together.

Today many of these families have escaped to Yerevan. Most of the fathers, husbands and sons have stayed behind to fight the enemy.

It breaks our hearts to see the church scattered, families torn apart, with many dead among them, many wounded and many mourning.

Our workers in Yerevan are facing these families daily and asking us to pray for them. The government approached us to see if as a humanitarian organisation we can help the refugees.

Each day groups of 80-100 are sent to us. At first we had goods from Australia but we soon ran out of supplies. Then they were asking for hygienic material like nappies, and for children's clothing. Now winter is near and soon temperatures will drop to 30 below zero. We can only look up to the Lord for help. This week we are buying children's winter clothing to keep them warm. Please keep Nagorno Karabagh and Armenia in your prayers. We want our nation to repent and turn to the Lord. We want to see every knee bowing down and every tongue confessing that Jesus is Lord.

Prayerfully,

HK





**"God is not unjust; he will not forget
your work and the love you have
shown him as you have helped
his people and continue to help them"
(Hebrews 6:10)**