



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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Please pray for

- Pray for peace in this troubled world
- Pray for salvation for the many loved ones around us
- Pray that the Gospel will be clear to all hearers
- Pray for the mission team visiting Armenia in July 2022
- Pray for all the families in our care
- Pray for the sick and the frail
- Pray for our co-workers on the field as they reach out to the many who are lost

In this issue...

The Gospel 3
Pastor Harry Kiujian

Who are you trying to impress? (2) 6
George Hawke

Getting Even With God 10
Rex Dearlove

The setbacks Moses faced - part 1 12
Don Stormer

ACM Armenia news 15
ACM

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The Gospel

He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned (Mark 16:15-16).

What is the gospel?

The gospel is the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners (Isaiah 61:1).

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness (Matthew 9:35).

The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor (Matthew 11:5).

What is the gospel? A Saviour is born who is called Emmanuel (God with us).

- He came to seek the lost
- He came to save the sinner
- He came that we may have life to the full

Why we need the gospel?

Looking at the world today we can see why Jesus came. All have sinned. Nothing has changed. Man is selfish, proud, and greedy, with nothing good in him.

The Old Testament sacrifices were not enough. All the blood that was shed was not enough to cleanse anyone from sin. Only the blood of Jesus can cleanse us from all our sins. This is the gospel, a gospel

that will never change, a gospel that was the same, is the same and will remain the same.

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12).

Oh how much the world needs Jesus today, how much we have fallen from grace. But the door of salvation is wide open. Dear believers, take the gospel to the world. As the gospel changed us, it can change the world. This is because the gospel is not just words but is power filled with God's Spirit. It is a double-edged sword penetrating the heart of the sinner.

We need the gospel because we are fallen men and women in need of salvation.

He cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue! For I am in anguish in this flame' (Luke 16:24).

The gospel is the only way to Christ, the only hope for mankind, the only truth. Come to Jesus, for the door of salvation is wide open for you today.

Why did so many give their lives for the gospel?

All the apostles gave their lives for the gospel, and many of the early believers were thrown to the lions, many were martyred for Christ. This was because the gospel changes people and it can change you.

I too was a sinner who came to Christ in my teens, but Jesus broke me, reshaped me, and made me new in Him. For me to live is Christ. I have never looked back to the years of slavery in sin. I am a new creation in Christ This is where I belong, and this is where I want to remain.

He gives me a new song each morning and a new hope to keep pressing on. He refreshes my soul so that my cup is full, and I am in His peace.

So many gave their lives for the gospel because of the love the Lord

Jesus displayed on the cross. He died that we may have life; there is free salvation for all mankind. On the cross His grace was displayed for all to see. When we were sinners, Christ loved us.

What should we as believers do with the gospel?

When we see beautiful flowers, we want to share them with others. When we hear exciting news, we want to share it with others. When we taste a good dish, we want others to taste it too. David said, "How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth" (Psalm 119:103).

What do we do with the gospel? We take it to heart, write it on our foreheads, and keep spreading the good news to others. We remember this is His command to every believer. It is our duty to the Lord to take the Gospel message to young and old, to poor and rich, so that sinners will repent, and the ungodly be saved.

His coming is near. Believers are ready for the rapture, but what about the others? Who will tell them the good news of the Gospel?

H. K.



"Remember the perfections of that God whom you worship, that he is a Spirit, and therefore to be worshipped in spirit and truth; and that he is most great and terrible, and therefore to be worshipped with seriousness and reverence, and not to be dallied with, or served with toys or lifeless lip-service; and that he is most holy, pure, and jealous, and therefore to be purely worshipped; and that he is still present with you, and all things are naked and open to him with whom we have to do. The knowledge of God, and the remembrance of his all-seeing presence, are the most powerful means against hypocrisy."

— Richard Baxter



Who are you trying to impress?

Matthew 6:1-15

(continued from previous issue)

A model prayer (6:9-15)

Then Jesus said, “This, then, is how you should pray” (Matthew 6:9a). He gave the disciples a model prayer to establish a pattern for prayer. It was not given to be recited word for word. And it was given to Jews living under the Old Covenant, not Christians living under the New Covenant.

Focus on God

The prayer begins by putting God’s interests first.

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:9b-10).

The prayer is addressed to God the Father in heaven and mentions three things: hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, and your will be done.

“Hallowed be your name” means that God is holy or set apart. He deserves to be honoured, praised and worshipped because He is separate from the created world. The prayer is that He be regarded as holy.

Then it anticipates Christ’s kingdom on earth. That’s when His will “will be done, on earth as it is in heaven”. Jesus offered the kingdom to the Jews, but it was rejected. The King does not offer the kingdom today because He is in heaven. But in a coming day Jesus will fulfill the promise of His earthly kingdom.

That’s when

- God will be worshipped “on earth as it is in heaven”,
- His kingdom will come “on earth as it is in heaven”, and
- His will will be done “on earth as it is in heaven”.

Focus on people

Then the prayer addresses the physical and spiritual needs of people. “Give us today our daily bread” (Matthew 6:11).

Physical needs – the daily physical needs. Believers are to live one day at a time. God provides for our basic physical needs. We are to trust Him to meet our present needs. We shouldn't worry about the future.

This is followed by, “And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one” (Matthew 6:12-13).

Spiritual needs. A “debt” is something we owe. Matthew uses it here figuratively for sin (Luke 11:4). Acceptance of forgiveness from God implies that we extend forgiveness to others. This is parental forgiveness that is necessary to maintain fellowship with God, not judicial forgiveness from the penalty of sin. The Father forgives us on the basis of Christ's death for our sins. Because we have been judicially forgiven by God, we are able to forgive others (Ephesians 4:32). Those whom God forgives are to forgive others.

God does not lead us into temptation to sin. The word “temptation” here refers to trial. The idea is “Do not allow us to be led into trial”. We do not want to be carried into or caught up in the trial so as to crumble under pressure. This is a prayer for the ability to stand up under pressure. God allows trials to come into our lives in order to build us in the faith.

The “evil one” is Satan. Satan uses trials to entice us to sin. This is a prayer for protection from Satan's schemes.

Addendum

Verses 14 and 15 are an addendum to and explanation of verses 12 and 13. “For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins” (Matthew 6:14-15).

Our forgiveness of others takes incentive from God's forgiveness. Non-forgiveness affects our daily fellowship with God. If we forgive others, then our Father will forgive us and if we do not forgive others then He will not forgive us (Matthew 5:7; James 2:15). So, the parental forgiveness from God in verse 12 is conditional on us forgiving others. Do we need to forgive someone in order to restore our daily relationship with the Lord?

Discussion

How do we know this is an accurate account of what Jesus said? There is evidence that the books of Matthew and Mark were written within 20 years of the death of Christ. If Matthew was written this early, in the region where the events took place, it would have been difficult for them to include obvious lies, given that they would have been written to people who were alive during the events recorded in the Gospels.

In this chapter Jesus addresses three types of religious hypocrisy: giving, praying, and fasting.

Elsewhere, Jesus called the Pharisees hypocrites. They put tradition above scripture and honoured God with their lips, but not with their hearts (Matthew 15:3-9). They did not practice what they preached; everything they did was for people to see; and they were like painted tombs – beautiful on the outside but dead on the inside (Matthew 23:1-32). It's not a pretty picture. There were hypocrites then and there are hypocrites now.

We all can be hypocrites sometimes, like when we commit a sin of omission (James 4:17). An example found in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37) is of the priest and Levite who walked past the man who was half dead. Another example is when we fail to share the gospel with an unbeliever. That's walking past someone who is spiritually dead. How many people or situations do we walk past?

It's been asked "if Christianity is true, why are there hypocrites in the church?". Until all believers are glorified, there will, unfortunate-

ly, be hypocrites in the church. What's important to remember, however, is that this does not negate Christianity or the claims of Christ. Accusations of hypocrisy assume that there is a moral standard that hypocrites break. But where does this standard come from? It assumes a moral lawgiver, God, rather than arguing against Him.

We should evaluate ourselves and our own motives. Jeremiah said "the heart is deceitful above all things" (Jeremiah 17:9). We should know that our heart is deceitful. Do not mislead yourself about your own motives. Pray and ask God to reveal your motives to you and give you sincere motives. Do not live for popularity or recognition. Do not delight in the praises of people. Instead live to please God.

On Boxing Day, our extended family went to a Big Bash cricket game. Driving home late at night I was caught going up to 10 km/hr over the speed limit by a hidden speed camera at a traffic light at Eastwood. Likewise, God is watching us all the time even though we are often unaware of it.

Who are we trying to impress? Is it God or is it people? God is the only one we need to impress. Live to please God, not others. After all, our character is more important than our reputation.

Conclusions

The main point was – don't be a hypocrite when giving, praying or fasting. In particular, don't participate in these just to earn the praise of others.

In this passage Jesus asks us why we do the things we do. What is the motive behind our actions? Jesus is encouraging us to be like our Father who is generous and gives to us, to enjoy spending time with our Father in prayer and desiring the things He desires, and to trust in our Father by trusting Him to provide and sustain us.

Don't be a hypocrite! Obey God instead.

George Hawke



Getting Even With God

It is probably true for most of us that we would far prefer to give a gift than to receive one. Do you doubt that? Think about giving to a charity. Would you rather be the person giving the gift or the person receiving the gift? Being the person receiving the gift is difficult. Accepting a gift is an admission of weakness and need. You are in a position of powerlessness, dependent on the generosity or whim of a person with greater financial power. You have no control over what you will receive. It is the giver who is in the position of power and that is the position we all prefer to be in. I wonder if that is the reason why, when someone gives us a gift or does us a favour, we begin to plan what we will do in return. There is a natural ebb and flow of giving and receiving in all relationships that is wholesome and right. However, we all know those people, for whom it seems impossible to do a favour or give a gift without a fairly prompt repayment in some form. It is rather like a boomerang that you can never throw away. It keeps coming back. It seems as if many of our relationships are rather like a market place where it is very important to maintain a proper balance of trade.

It is probably true to say that we exchange gifts more than we give them. How many of us have rushed out a couple of days before Christmas to mail a Christmas card to someone we have just received a card from, but we had not sent a card to. Keeping the score even is so important. We find it so difficult to simply accept the card as a kind gesture and leave it at that. We have to send it back to keep the balance of trade even.

The idea of a truly free gift is so alien to our culture, that it takes a revelation of the Holy Spirit to help us understand what God has freely given us. "The Spirit . . . helps us understand what God has freely given us" (1 Corinthians 2:12).

Living in a world of these marker-place relationships makes us poorly equipped to deal with the infinite generosity of a God whom

we cannot out-give. Getting the balance of trade even with God is an impossible task and yet it is amazing how often we attempt it.

It seems to me that there are two possible responses to His marvelous gift at Calvary. One is the get even with God attitude, which finds it hard to be in the position of humble acceptance. It is always digging into its own resources, often quite unconsciously, to somehow repay God. There is a sense in which they have not truly received God's gift, and are unconsciously trying to give it back as service or in some other form. It does not like the role of humble, dependent acceptance of God's generosity. The person with this attitude will always approach Christian service with a sense of being driven, and they will often suffer inner exhaustion and impoverishment.

The other response is the person who is truly willing to be a receiver. They live in a state of open-handed acceptance before God. They are content to let God be the giver into their lives. They know they can never get even with God and are content to take the position of humble, dependent acceptance of His grace. Out of this kind of life flows not just a wooden, obedient service, but an empowering and healing influence that touches and changes the lives around them. As you reflect on the boundless, uncalculating grace and love shown at the cross and resurrection, think about the words of the old hymn, "Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling."

Willingness to constantly be a "receiver" from God is the key to all effective living and service.

Rex Dearlove

The setbacks Moses faced - part 1

Exodus 4:26-5:23

Moses set out to return to Egypt; he was at last going to do the will of God. However, we may wonder what thoughts went through his mind. What exactly would he have expected? How much

did he understand of God's statement that Pharaoh would not let the people go?

When things go wrong...

At first, everything appeared to be proceeding well. Aaron met Moses as God had arranged. Together they met the elders of the Israelites who welcomed the news that God was about to help His people. Then setbacks occurred. How do we react when things do not go according to plan?

Consider what happened. Although the elders of Israel were happy with what Moses said, Pharaoh certainly wasn't. When Moses and Aaron went to him with the Lord's command that he let the Israelites go, he asked who Yahweh was. Not only did he question who God was, but he also said that he would not let Israel go.

Instead, Pharaoh made life harder for the slaves. Where previously they had been provided with the straw they needed to make bricks, now they had to find their own but still produce the same quota. When the Israelite foremen were beaten for not producing the daily quota, they soon found that complaining to Pharaoh would not make any difference. He accused them of laziness and had no intention of making life easier for them.

The elders of the Israelites had no idea of the struggle between God and the forces of evil; all they could see was that their slavery was more cruel than it had been before. They blamed Moses and Aaron for their troubles.

Moses' reaction

Moses didn't know how to handle the problem he faced. In effect, he said to the Lord that he had done what he had been asked to do – and things were worse than they were before.

He asked questions. Why have you brought trouble on us? Why did you send me? Was it so that I would fail? What Moses did not see (and what we so often do not see) is that there is a continual struggle between God and His hosts and the forces of evil. This had happened

to Joseph. For no good reason (from his point of view at the time) he had. When he explained the butler's dream he said:

Only remember me, when it is well with you, and please do me the kindness to mention me to Pharaoh, and so get me out of this house. For I was indeed stolen out of the land of the Hebrews, and here also I have done nothing that they should put me into the pit (Genesis 40:14-15).

But Joseph did not receive the help he had hoped for. Then when Pharaoh had his dreams Joseph was summoned from obscurity to be the man immediately under the king.

When he summoned a famine on the land and broke all supply of bread, he had sent a man ahead of them, Joseph, who was sold as a slave. His feet were hurt with fetters; his neck was put in a collar of iron; until what he had said came to pass, the word of the Lord tested him. The king sent and released him; the ruler of the peoples set him free; he made him lord of his house and ruler of all his possessions, to bind his princes at his pleasure and to teach his elders wisdom (Psalm 105:16-22).

It was only years later, after he had been reunited with his brothers that Joseph could say that what they had intended for evil had been planned by God for good. It was only after experiencing trials that Joseph could see the overruling hand of God.

David is another example of a man who was chosen by God and then had to wait until Saul self-destructed. How often must David have wondered why he was hiding in the wilderness? However, it was there that he came to know his God very intimately. It was also there that he learned to lead a very diverse group of men.

While we are passing through difficult times we don't see the over-all plan that God has for us. We don't know the pathway that He has planned which will draw us closer to him. Sometimes He may reveal why certain things happen – He did so with Paul's thorn in the flesh. But it may not be till everything has come to completion that we realise what God has planned.

How would we react?

Joseph had the only valid attitude for one of God's people to take when he told his brothers that although they meant it for evil, God meant it for good. The question for us is whether we would wait patiently for God to do what He wants to do. Unfortunately, we are often impatient, expecting God to change things immediately.

Moses complains

Moses had not realised that God knew what would happen when He said that He was sure Pharaoh would not release the slaves. However, Pharaoh was not the final authority and both he and Moses would learn that God was in control and would force Pharaoh to obey his commands.

After Moses was reviled by the elders of his own people, he went back to the Lord with his complaints. He thought of the extra trouble that the Israelites were facing and asked why he had been sent to Pharaoh. Not only had Pharaoh refused to release the Israelites and increased their sufferings, but there was no sign of God delivering His people. It would appear that Moses wanted to be relieved of his commission.

God in control

However, God had no intention of releasing Moses from his task of speaking to Pharaoh. Nor did God have any intention of letting Pharaoh disobey him forever. Pharaoh might try to keep the Israelites by force, but eventually he would be just as forceful in telling them to leave.

First, God reminded Moses who He was. He said "I am Yahweh" (normally translated as LORD, the covenant keeping God). He was the one who had appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty – Elohim Shaddai – the all-powerful God. However, by His name Yahweh, LORD, He did not make Himself known to them. Now He was to reveal more about the significance of His personal name.

Don Stormer
(To be continued)

ACM

Armenia news

We praise the Lord for what has been done while serving the Lord these past three months in Armenia. Our co-workers have been busy serving the poor and needy, teaching scripture, holding fellowship Bible clubs for children and much more. We thank you for your prayers and support and ask you to continue your much needed prayers.

Vrej is the father of a family we support in Vanadzor. They have been living in metal containers all their lives – no windows, no doors. They have three children, and the fourth was born last month. A donor was keen for us to buy them a house and recently Vrej and his wife visited the house we bought for them. In tears, they were thankful to the Lord for giving them something they had never dreamed of. Please keep Vrej and his wife Anushig in your prayers.

A CEF leaders' training course was held in our building in Gyumri. We were able to bring two of our girls from Vanadzor to join the course which ran for three days. Please pray for these young people who have been trained, that the Lord will use them among children.

Container shipping has been a huge problem – shortage of ships, and the cost of shipping has doubled. We had to pay \$15,000 after waiting three months. Our next container will be ready in two months and your prayers are much needed for this work. Please pray also for storage room in Sydney as we have run out of storage space.

Students: Over the years, we have supported 19 students for tertiary education. Most of them are now working, but six are still in university. If you would like to sponsor a student, please contact us.

Health issues: Many of our needy family members are sick – either the elderly or the young, the parents or the children. Regular medication is important, but this is very costly. In the past three months we have reached out to 15 sick people with medication, some for

operations and we also do home care for them. Please pray for this ministry and for all involved. If you are keen to sponsor a family, please contact us at www.acmaust.org.

Christina lived in a small village in Gyumri. Her house was old and unlivable. The timber flooring had holes in it, and poisonous snakes used to come in the house through these holes. We have done some major renovations to the house and poured concrete on the ground to stop the snakes coming in and tormenting the kids.

Easter outreach for children: We have selected nine villages to reach with the news of the resurrection. Games have been prepared for the 560 children who will be involved. We would like to distribute gifts to the children. There will be a lot of travelling and your prayers are important for the safety of all participating, both leaders and children.

Gospel: Praise the Lord the gospel is alive. It touches and saves people. Meetings have been held in Vanadzor, Gyumri, Yerevan, Sevahogh, and Etchmayazin. Noragert is a new village we have been taking the gospel to. Four people came to the Lord and now we are holding regular meetings there. Please pray for Ashod, Martun and Tomik that the Lord will empower them with His Spirit as they preach and teach.

ACM centre: For two years we have been asking churches for space to gather our families for fellowship and for children's ministry, as well as seeking space to store our shipments. Our workers have been facing many difficulties in working from home. We have been given a sum of money to buy a building. We are thankful to the Lord for hearing us and responding to our needs. Please join us in prayer for the Lord to provide us a building suitable for both present and future needs of ACM.

Mission trip: For two years the pandemic has meant we have not been able to travel. ACM would like to have a mission team in Armenia in July–August this year, God willing. If you would like to join us, please enquire now as we have limited room for more participants.