



# 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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Cover photo: "Alexander Tamanian, the city architect of Yerevan", Photo by ACM team 2018.

**Prayer points for ACM ministry in Armenia**

- Pray for the many who struggle with living in a metal container
- Pray for the many sick in need of urgent care
- Pray for our field officers taking the Gospel from vil-lage to village
- Pray that the preaching of the Gospel will change lives
- Pray for the translation of William MacDonald's commentary into Armenian
- Pray for Trumpet's Sound magazine and its many readers in Armenia
- Pray for the two mission trips planned for this year
- Pray for the publication of three booklets this year: *Guilt, Anger and Worry*

*The costs of the publication are covered by the gifts of believers, who donate out of the generosity of their hearts.*

## ***I am the resurrection and the life***

**J**esus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25-26).

The Lord Jesus came to give His life for the salvation of the world. He was tortured, beaten, crucified, died and was buried but He was raised again on the third day.

### **I am the resurrection and the life**

Jesus is talking about life after death; He is talking about eternal life. The Pharaohs believed in an afterlife but did not know how to achieve it. The Lord Jesus proved that He was the resurrection and the life, being raised on the third day. He is now with the Father in Heaven. He came to give us a purpose filled life, both on this earth and throughout eternity in Heaven.

### **Whoever believes in Me**

You may ask the question, how can I achieve eternal life? Many believe it is by good works, but this verse is clear. Jesus wants us all to know that we gain eternal life by faith; faith in the Lord Jesus Himself, knowing that He was God from the beginning, the Son of God who came for the salvation of mankind. He died so that through His precious blood we may be cleansed from our sins.

### **Though he die, yet shall he live**

The promise! You may physically be dead. However, there is an eternity waiting for all who believe in the Lord Jesus, an eternity in heaven for all who repent for their sins and are living for Christ.

### **Everyone who believes in me shall never die**

This is eternity achieved by believing. We know that demons believe but this does not give them salvation. The Bible is clear there is no sin that the Lord Jesus cannot forgive. Forgiveness is given to all who

come to Jesus by faith in repentance. Remember the criminal on the cross and his words. "We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said "Lord remember me when you come in your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

### **Do you believe this?**

Jesus finishes with a question. "Do you believe this?" This is a question we will all have to face sometime in our lives and our eternity depends on our answer. Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God? And that salvation is only through Him? Now you may ask the question, what do I need to do to inherit the kingdom of heaven? Come to Jesus in prayer, repent and ask Him for forgiveness, ask Him to help you to change your ways, and start a new life in Him.

Let this Easter be a special day for you, the time you come to Jesus, the day you secured your eternity in Him.

Have a blessed Easter.

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## **Going ahead of God**

*Read Genesis 16*

**G**od had repeatedly spoken to Abraham about his descendants. In Genesis 12:2 He promised to make Abraham a great nation. When Abraham arrived in Shechem (12:7) God told him that He would give that land to his descendants. The promise was repeated in 13:15 and again in 15:5. But Abraham was getting older – he was in his mid-eighties – and he still had no son. What had happened? Had God forgotten His promise?

It appears that at this stage Sarah took the initiative and suggested a solution to the problem they faced. Sarah had an Egyptian maid, Hagar, a servant who had possibly been acquired while they were in Egypt. The consequences of the journey into Egypt continued and

*this was likely to be the cause of serious trouble. Sarah suggested that Abraham take Hagar as a second wife so that she might obtain children by her maid. In the custom of the time, any of the slave girl's children would be regarded as Sarah's own. But the customs of the day are not always the ways of God.*

*It was at this point that the faith of both Abraham and Sarah was not strong; in fact it failed. Abraham did as Sarah suggested and took Hagar as a wife and before long, Hagar conceived. It was then that Sarah's plan backfired. It seems that Hagar did not consider that she was merely carrying a child for her mistress; she proceeded to despise Sarah because she was successful whereas her mistress had failed. Tension arose within the home. Moving outside the sphere of faith – complete dependence on God – had been disastrous.*

*When Sarah said "My wrong be upon you" we may wonder what she meant. One translation is "You are responsible for the wrong done to me". By speaking of the wrong done to her, Sarah may be referring to the contempt being shown to her by Hagar. In any case, her emotional and irresponsible reaction was to push the blame onto someone else. In saying the wrong was Abraham's fault, she was putting all the blame on him, even though she admitted that it was she who had given her servant to Abraham. One wonders what she meant by asking that the Lord judge between Abraham and her. In what way did she want God to judge Abraham?*

*Abraham also pushed responsibility onto someone else. In saying to Sarah "Behold, your maid is in your hand. Do to her whatever is good in your eyes", he was simply trying to escape any personal responsibility for what had happened, making Sarah responsible for any decision about what should be done. When she was given a free hand to act, Sarah dealt harshly with Hagar who ran away.*

*But the problem was not to be so easily solved. The angel of the Lord found Hagar by a fountain of water in the wilderness and asked where she had come from and where she was going. She replied that she was fleeing from her mistress. In turn, the angel of the Lord instructed her to return to Sarah and be obedient to her. In time, her son*



*Ishmael was born and grew to be a wild man as the angel had said he would be.*

*What are we meant to learn for all this? There are several points we must consider.*

- *God may often keep us waiting for an answer to our needs – or for the fulfilment of His promises to us. If He keeps us waiting, it is not for us to go ahead and seek to force God's hand by our own efforts to accomplish His purposes. We must wait for God's time to do His work. Going ahead of God is never wise. The far more common problem is that people are not prepared to act when God wants them to, but at times they act sooner than God's time. When he was 40, Moses was ready to set his people free from some of the harsh conditions under which they served but he was 40 years ahead of God's time.*
- *Moses is not the only one to find that acting too soon can have disastrous consequences. King Saul was told by Samuel to wait for seven days before going into battle against the Philistines. Samuel would then come to make an offering before the Israelites began fighting the Philistines. On the day that Samuel was coming, Saul became impatient and offered the burnt offering himself. For his sin and impatience Saul was told his kingdom would not endure. He eventually lost the kingdom to David. Read 1 Samuel 13:8-14.*
- *We need to be reminded that blaming others for what we have done is a common human trait, but not a good one. This practice has been common since time began. In the Garden of Eden, Adam blamed the woman God had given him (it almost seems as if he blamed God for giving him the woman!) and Eve blamed the serpent. But this does not lessen our responsibility for our actions – a responsibility we must accept. God knows who is in the wrong and the guilty person will come under His judgment.*
- *Acting without seeking the will of God is also disastrous; think of Joshua at Ai. Joshua assumed that, since Ai was a much smaller city than Jericho, victory in the battle would be a foregone con-*

clusion. He did not seek the Lord's will; if he had he would have learned sooner that there was sin which needed to be dealt with before Israel would again experience the blessing of God.

- *Linked with this truth is the allied truth that it is not wise to try to organise the way in which God will answer His promises – or our prayers, for that matter. This was initially Naaman's problem when he went to see Elisha. He expected Elisha to act in a certain way and when that didn't happen Naaman was deeply offended. He had to learn that he must obey the prophet's instructions if he was ever to have his request granted.*
- *Often we have to live with our mistakes – we cannot run away from them or sweep them under the carpet. Moses, in his impatience with the Israelites, beat the rock to supply them with water when God had told him to speak to the rock. For his sin, Moses was barred from entering the land God had promised His people.*
- *The consequences of not living by faith are not easily removed. For the next 15 or 16 years Abraham and Sarah had to live with the result of their impatience. It was not until Isaac was weaned that God instructed Abraham to send Hagar away. And the struggles between Isaac's and Ishmael's descendants continue until the present.*

*It is never wise to go ahead of God and to try by our own efforts to accomplish His will. We must do His work in His way and in His time. This is a message that is even more important today when so many think that updated ways of spreading the gospel are necessary. Let us ever be resolved to do the Lord's work in His way.*

*Don Stormer*

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*"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep  
to gain what he cannot lose." Jim Elliot*

## ***Is it OK to...?***

**L**ast night I listened to a talkback show on a Christian radio station. One of the issues receiving a fair amount of interest from callers was what I call an “is it OK” discussion. You know the sort you often hear among Christians. Is it OK to play sport on Sundays? Is it OK to buy lottery tickets? Is it OK to...? You can plug whatever you like in that space. In this case it was “Is it OK to have body piercing?” Inevitably someone phoned in with Leviticus 19:28 “Do not cut your bodies for the dead”. I think that is really an allusion to a pagan Canaanite practice. Then another caller referred to Ezekiel 16:12 where God illustrates the way He lavished His love on the people of Jerusalem by saying “I have put a ring on your nose, earrings on your ears”. This, the caller claimed, implies that God approves of body piercing. I don't know how the discussion ended as my attention span wasn't up to it.

However, it did set me thinking about how we Christians handle these grey areas of behaviour. I call them grey because they are capable of discussion. Some issues are black and white. We don't have to discuss whether adultery is OK, nor do we have to discuss whether it's all right to show love to your neighbour. It is the areas where there is no clear answer that cause the most debate and often, regrettably, fairly harsh judgment of those who see things differently.

One of the things this body piercing discussion reinforced to me was how focused we Christians are on “what we do”. It is admirable that we care about what we do, but sometimes our concern about behaviour is superficial and misguided. And worse, we think God is like us, focused only on behaviour. God looks more deeply than that and so should we. As you read through the Scriptures you can see a recurring theme. Good actions and bad actions are not just isolated events. They are a fruit or an outcome of something else going on deep inside. “Man looks at the outward appearance but God looks at the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).



*Perhaps it is time for us to become more like our Father in heaven and start looking at what is going on in the heart.*

*When someone asks one of these "Is it OK to..." questions, perhaps a good question to think about would be "What else is going on in this life? What unmet inner need does this person believe that lottery tickets, body piercing or 'whatever' will meet?" Often there will be issues of feeling significant or loved, that can only be met through a richer experience of who they are in Christ. In other words, the question "Is it OK to..." is not actually the real question that person is asking. Perhaps that question only exists because some deeper question remains unanswered. Simply deciding that some particular action is OK or not OK may not help at all. Perhaps the mere existence of the question is a symptom of a much deeper cry of the heart; a much deeper question about finding one's true identity in Christ that the person cannot see for themselves. Older Christians should be mature enough to recognise and address those deeper cries of the soul rather than plunge into some shallow, heated debate about whether it is OK to do this or that.*

*It is both easy and damaging to reduce issues of Christian living to merely doing or not doing something. What we often finish up with is a shallow legalism rather than moving closer to the deep connectedness with Christ that our souls are crying out for. As we address the big questions about who we are in Christ, and how much we really enjoy God, then we begin to view the smaller questions in quite a different way. They tend not to give us nearly so much trouble!*

*Rex Dearlove*

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"For he grew up before him like a young plant and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken smitten by God and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace and with his wounds we are healed." (Isaiah 53:2-5)

## Graduation!

**M**any young people will graduate in May and June. My son graduated just a week ago, and in fact, many of you who are reading may graduate, or know a person who will graduate soon. This definitely is a time to celebrate with good reason! After all, it is a big accomplishment!

And I think that this accomplishment will not be the last, but rather the first of many others to follow in the lives of all graduates. As hard work and determination is required and expected to achieve graduation, the same is required and expected for all future accomplishments. And I believe that all those who are graduating during this time will continue to give their best and work hard to achieve other accomplishments. The Bible says, "Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with your might." Therefore, it is right to give your best and work hard in whatever you do in the future. But, may I encourage you and remind you that true accomplishment and success comes from the Lord God! True and lasting accomplishment will only be when you are walking with God. The Bible says, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" This does not mean not to pursue dreams and goals, nor to have success or accomplishments in life but rather, in the midst of them, not to forget what is most important: God Himself and living for Him.

The Bible tells us not to forget the Word of God, but rather to meditate on it day and night and to live by it, for it is then you and I will have success and accomplishment, not only for this life, but also for the life to come!

Therefore, congratulations! May God help you to achieve much more success, but remember that walking in the ways of God is true accomplishment and success!

Raffi Chaparian



## ***Biblical aspects of personal relationships***

### **Monotheism**

*Monotheism is a system where people worship one supreme God. One of the central teachings in the Old Testament is Deuteronomy 6:4: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!" Against the idolatry of surrounding nations with their many gods (polytheism), God revealed this essential aspect of His nature to Israel in Old Testament times. The Lord is one God. The Old Testament witness is fundamental to the oneness of God. In their daily prayer, Jews repeated the Shema: "The Lord our God, the Lord is one." In this they confessed the God of Israel to be the transcendent Creator, without any rival.*

### **Trinity in the New Testament**

*In the New Testament God further revealed that He is One in Three and Three in One; His essential being is triune. God is the eternal triune God of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, united in will, purpose, love, holiness and righteousness. Christianity is both monotheistic and Trinitarian. The relationship of Father and Son is well known in the Gospels because Jesus, the eternal Son who took on human flesh, is most visible to us as He strikes a responsive chord through the Father-Son relationship.*

### **The Triune Family cooperates**

*The unity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is portrayed by the Lord Jesus' Trinitarian teaching (John 14–16). This truth is expressed in the ministry of the Lord Jesus recorded in all four Gospels as well as in the rest of the New Testament. The Triune God cooperates as one in bringing the lost person home again into a redeemed family of believers.*

### **Selfless love**

*The most distinctive characteristic of the Persons of the Trinity is their selfless love for one another. Each esteems the other in a way that makes the Trinity a model for believers. The Father gives all authority to the Son and bears witness to Him, as does the Lord Jesus to the*

Father (John 8:18). Yet the Son claims nothing for Himself. He gives all glory to the Father who has sent Him (John 12:49-50). The key to unlocking the mystery of the Trinity is to observe how the Persons of the Trinity give themselves to one another in selfless love, always at one another's disposal.

### **The mutual love of the Triune Persons**

*The Father serves the Son; the Son serves the Father; Father and Son serve the Holy Spirit, who in turn, serves the Father and Son in oneness. The mutual love of the Triune Persons spills over into the creation and is seen in their generous cooperation in saving lost people (John 14:15-17; 25-26).*

### **The original pattern**

*The Trinity is God's revelation of Himself as the ultimate truth about reality. The family is the original pattern from which God creates all the families of earth with their unity and diversity. The family of mankind, after losing its relationship with the divine family at the fall, is restored to fellowship by God. This happens when its members acknowledge the grace originating in the Father, expressed by the Son, and energised by the Holy Spirit.*

*Dr. Czeslaw Bassara*

## ***Failure isn't final***

### ***Part 2***

### **3. Peter didn't want Jesus to wash his feet**

*In biblical times, the use of open sandals made it necessary to wash one's feet frequently. A servant usually washed the feet of a host's guests. When Jesus celebrated His last Passover with His disciples, He began to wash the disciple's feet. This shocked Peter. He thought it was wrong. So Peter said to Him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you*

will understand.” “No,” said Peter, “you shall never wash my feet.” Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.” “Then, Lord,” Simon Peter replied, “not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!” (John 13:6-9).

Peter didn't stop to think about the spiritual significance of the foot washing. Because sin destroys our fellowship with the Lord, Peter needed spiritual cleansing. The external washing was a picture of cleansing from failure and sin. It symbolised Jesus washing away a person's failure and sin. But Peter didn't understand Jesus' path to the cross.

This incident shows Jesus as a humble servant. It was before His greatest act of service.

So Peter failed when he resisted Jesus washing his feet. He told Jesus not to do it. Fortunately he changed his mind soon after.

#### **4. Peter fell asleep when Jesus prayed**

After the last supper, Jesus took Peter, James and John into the Garden of Gethsemane and said to them “Stay here and keep watch” and “pray that you will not fall into temptation”, after which He left them and prayed. He asked God the Father if there was any way by which sinners could be saved other than by His death, burial and resurrection. But there was no other way. And Jesus wanted His followers to understand the importance of prayer during difficult times.

He returned to His disciples and found them sleeping. “Simon,” He said to Peter, “are you asleep? Couldn't you keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Mark 14:37-38). He came back three times and found them sleeping! They couldn't stay awake when Jesus faced the thought of becoming a sin offering for humanity. They slept when they should have been praying. They couldn't stay awake.

This incident illustrates our human weakness.

So Peter failed to obey Jesus when he slept instead of keeping watch and praying. And later that night Peter did fall into temptation when he denied knowing Christ.

## **5. Peter attacked the servant of the high priest**

*When Jesus was being arrested, Peter cut off the right ear of Malchus, the servant of the high priest (Luke 22:50-51; John 18:10-11). He was trying to stop Jesus being arrested. But Jesus told him to put his sword away and Jesus healed the man's ear. At this time, Peter didn't understand that Jesus had come to die for our sins. He was being arrested so He could be crucified. The time had come for Him to lay down His life. Jesus' betrayal and death was in God's eternal plan; it was no accident. It was predicted in the Old Testament, but Peter was acting against God's plan and against God's will. Peter failed. He didn't understand that physical weapons are useless for spiritual warfare. Our weapons are prayer, the Bible and the Holy Spirit. Peter was on the wrong wavelength. He wasn't on the same page as Jesus.*

*This incident illustrates that God's battle is won by His power alone. The ultimate answer to our problems comes through faith in Christ, not faith in others, such as politicians.*

*So Peter failed when he used violence to try to stop the arrest of Jesus. He took matters into his own hands instead of bringing them to Jesus.*

## **6. Peter denied knowing Christ**

*Peter's most famous failure is mentioned in each of the Gospels (Matthew 26:69-75; Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:55-62; John 18:15-19, 25-27). This occurred when Jesus was being questioned by the high priest before His crucifixion. Three times Peter denied knowing Jesus.*

*Here's how Luke described it: "Then seizing Him [Jesus], they led Him away and took Him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance. And when some there had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them. A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, "This man was with Him [Jesus]."*

*But he denied it. "Woman, I don't know Him," he said. A little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." "Man, I am not!" Peter replied.*



About an hour later another asserted, "Certainly this fellow was with Him, for he is a Galilean."

Peter replied, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!" Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly" (Luke 22:54-62).

George Hawke



## ***An open letter to my supporters at ACM***

*Dear supporter,*

*I write to you from Vanadzor, one of the poorest area of Armenia where thousands are still living in rusted bottomless metal containers.*

*I do not have words to describe how thankful I am to an organisation, based far away in Australia, interested in people living in poverty thousands of kilometres away in an unknown village. You are saddened at our failures and rejoice at our successes.*

*For almost five years my family has been surviving with your help. I have two children, a daughter and a son who are proud of what you have done in our lives. My son's wish is that when he grows up he will be someone who can help others in need.*

*I personally have many medical issues. It is only through your help that gradually I am feeling better.*

*I thank each and every one of you who stands by our side in our need by taking all our burdens away.*

*May the Lord protect each one of you and your families. You are*

*helpers, always ready to support the weak, the sick, the hungry and the poor.*

*May the right arm of the Father be with you always.*

*Meline*

