



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: "Armenian Genocide memorial complex", Photo by ACM team 2017.



ACM prayer and praise points

- We thank the Lord for Bro Don and his visit to Armenia
- We pray for our mission team as they get ready to visit Armenia again this year
- We pray for much needed peace in Armenia and the new government that has been elected
- A new shipment of aid has left Sydney and is on its way to Armenia
- We pray for our sick and those in need of healing after their operations
- Pray for the preached Word in Armenia that many will come to know the Lord in a personal way
- We thank the lord for all His compassion and love for the people of Armenia

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

Are you rejoicing?

We read in Philippians 4:4 “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!”

You may ask if I know what you are going through and say “How I can rejoice if...”

- *my wife is on her death bed*
- *we do not know where our son is*
- *I have been unemployed all this time*
- *people are at my door seeking payments*
- *there is so much turmoil and unrest all around me*

Dear friend, do you know that this was the reason why Jesus came to a sinful world. Yes, the evil one does want to take our peace and joy away, but the words Jesus spoke to His disciples in the upper room were “My peace I give unto you”. Without peace in our hearts there is no joy.

We read in John 17:16 “They are not of the world, even as I am not of it.” Yes, we are in the world but not of the world. We read in Colossians 3:1-2 “Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”

So many times we fail because we look around at the situation in the world. Satan is good at deceiving us in many ways. How can we rejoice if sin is within us? Sinfulness within is one of the biggest reasons for sadness, anger and emptiness. In turn these lead to hate and depression by taking our joy away.

My dear friend have you turned to Jesus? Have you gone to your room, closed your door and opened your heart to Him to let Him in. Let Him come and see you as you are. Do not hide yourself from Him. Do not hide your sins, because He has died that you may have life. He is a merciful and a loving Saviour and a friend to the all broken-

hearted. The Lord Jesus can mend you and make you new in Him. Yes, He can take away all your hate and sadness and fill your heart with gladness and joy. He will give you a new song each morning and you will be rejoicing again.

No, this is not a secret. Millions of people around the world rejoice in the Lord daily, not for what they have but for what He did in their lives.

Have a blessed day.

HK

The beginning of Abraham's life of faith

Read Genesis 11:30 – 12:10

There are very good reasons why much of the Book of Genesis is devoted to the life of Abraham, the friend of God. More space is also devoted to him in Hebrews 11 than to any other person. What can we learn from his life? His story begins in Genesis 11.

Terah took Abram his son, Lot... and Sarai.... They went from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan. They came to Haran and lived there (Genesis 11:31).

As we read this verse we gain a distinct impression that Terah was the man in control. It is he who is said to have taken his son, daughter and grandson from Ur of the Chaldees to Haran. There they settled. But is this what should have happened?

The next chapter tells us that the Lord had said to Abram "Leave your country, and your relatives, and your father's house, and go to the land that I will show you" (Genesis 12:2). This is something Stephen mentioned when he was facing the Sanhedrin before being stoned to death – that the God of glory had appeared to Abraham when he dwelt in Ur of the Chaldees.

But Abram did not fully obey the Lord until his father died. He left his country, but he was still attached to his father's house. How long he waited in Haran we have no idea, but we may well assume that Terah still had some years to live when the family left Ur of the Chaldees. One of the questions we need to be constantly asking ourselves is whether we are fully obedient to the commands that God has already revealed to us. We must not assume that that is sufficient to do only part of the will of God.

The importance of this is seen in the way God revealed Himself to Abram. God spoke to him in Ur of the Chaldees, telling him to go to a place that He would show him. It was not till he finally reached that place that the Lord confirmed the step Abram had taken and that he had arrived where he should be.

God had also made an unconditional promise to Abram. "I will make of you a great nation. I will bless you and make your name great. You will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you. All the families of the earth will be blessed through you" (12:2-3). Later in life Abram would firmly grasp this truth and fully believe what God had said to him. He obeyed God when he was told to offer his only son, the one he loved, on an altar in a place which God would show him. He was utterly convinced that what God had promised He would do. His descendants and the blessing was to come through Isaac and therefore if he sacrificed Isaac God would immediately raise him to life. If God had made a promise, He would most definitely fulfil it.

As a 75 years old Abram departed from Haran, taking with him Sarai his wife, Lot his brother's son, and all the possessions they had gathered. He also took the people they had acquired in Haran, and went to the land of Canaan. They entered into the land of Canaan and passed through the land to Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. It was only at this stage that the Lord appeared to Abram and said He would give that land to his offspring. Until then he did not know at which point he would reach his destination. If anyone had asked him where he was going he could not have given a definite indication of where.

It is now that we learn about two of the most important characteristics of Abram's life: the tent and the altar. He erected an altar and he pitched a tent. An altar was first built at Shechem and then another was erected between Bethel and Ai. This was a feature that marked the remainder of his life except possibly the time he was in Egypt. An altar was both an indication that Abram worshipped the Lord God, and a witness to the surrounding people that he was a servant of the one true God. Building an altar meant that his faith was not a secret one. People may well have asked Abram about his faith and his answer was clear and certain. He worshipped the one true God.

A tent was the second characteristic of Abram's life. A tent immediately suggests that a person has no permanent dwelling place; he is simply passing through or was a temporary resident. The writer to the Hebrews takes up this point when he said "By faith, he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a land not his own, dwelling in tents, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

This leads us to Peter's teaching who begged us, as foreigners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul (1 Peter 2:11). We do not belong here; as foreigners this world is not our home. As pilgrims we are on our way to a place of rest. Therefore, like the patriarchs we too should confess that we are strangers and pilgrims on the earth; we seek a country of our own. And if this is so, God, will not be ashamed of us, to be called our God, for He has prepared a city for us.

What do we learn? Are we prepared to obey God fully? Are we prepared to let people around us know that we are followers of the Lord Jesus? Are our lives so loosely attached to this world that it is obvious to all that we are pilgrims and strangers?

Don Stormer



Eavesdropping at Gethsemane

Come walk with me this Easter among the ancient trees of Gethsemane. The Passover moon rides high in the sky. The quietness of the spring night is broken by the low sound of voices and the rustle of footsteps as we follow a man and His friends through the trees. Horrified, we watch. It seems so out of character for the conquering, victorious, joyful Jesus to be so overwhelmed at the horror of what was about to happen. "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow" (Matthew 26:38). Throwing Himself of the ground He desperately appeals to His Father. "He fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from Him" (Mark 14:35).

Surely a God who can do anything could find some way to avoid the agony to come. His answer from God was "No". Amazingly, Jesus also turned to His friends for help but they were asleep. "Are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour?" (Mark 14:37). In that brief scene we see a piercing loneliness. There is no other way. In loving submission, Jesus took another step toward the cross as God's eternal and wonderfully loving plan of redemption unfolded.

I cannot help reflecting on how Jesus, in sharing our humanity, handled the trauma and pressure of Gethsemane. Here is the simple act of a man going to His friends and saying "I have pain. I am lonely. I am under great stress. Will you be with me?" I wonder how many Christians in our age would be able to do that. Admitting need is not a sign of weakness; it is a sign of wholeness. This is very different from the strong-man attitude which would never admit a need. In fact many are so frightened of the reality of their own needs that their lives are devoted to running from them. The Christian version of the strong-man person is to say "I have the victorious, risen Christ reigning in my life. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Therefore I can't admit to a need for support. It would mean I am either saying that Christ is not sufficient, or telling the world that I am not very spiritual. I can't do either so I will just continue to tell myself and those around me that everything is fine, even if it is not."

The common objection to admitting a need for help is that you can't just go about dumping all your problems on everyone else. This is true. Notice how Jesus handled this. He had a wide circle of acquaintances, a closer circle of twelve disciples and among them, an inner circle of three. Jesus asked His disciples simply to pray, but revealed much more to His three closest friends, Peter, James and John, about how He really felt. However, it is only in His prayer to His Father that He pours out everything in His heart. There is no desperate dumping of problems on everyone else, but there is a special openness with a close few. I wonder how many have friends close enough to share at least some deeper needs and fears and admit a need for support. We can become so locked into this "Christian strong-man" idea that we are unable to say "I need your ministry and help in my life". This contributes to what could be one of the most common and devastating problems in our churches – loneliness. But what about the other side of this coin, our role as close friends? Are we the kind of people to whom someone could come, trusting us completely? We can be so bristling with judgments, opinions and unaddressed needs of our own that we appear intimidating and unapproachable, too taken up with the important task of running from our own needs to be of help to anyone else. It is all too easy to be like the disciples, so sleepy and self-occupied that we simply do not grasp what is really going on in the life of another. The disciples were very little help to the Lord as He appealed to them for support. Their insensitivity actually added to the burden Jesus was already carrying. These sad and weary men did not do well as burden-sharers. Yet what an honour that would have been, to have actually helped Jesus in His journey to the cross and the resurrection.

Occasionally God will offer that honour of burden-sharing to you and me. Let's be awake and ready to recognise it when it comes.

*Extract from "Is God Really Good?"
by Rex Dearlove*



Fales brothers

Galations 2:1-10

The Apostle Paul continues the point he began in chapter one, pointing out once again that his authority was God given, his teaching of the Gospel was from the Lord, and that it aligned with what the other Apostles taught.

This passage tells how Paul went with Barnabas to Jerusalem to the apostles, taking Titus with them. One of the things that Paul wanted to accomplish was to ensure that there were no hindrances to the work they were doing. Paul was working very hard establishing churches, teaching new Christians and developing leadership in local churches; he did not want their hard work to be destroyed, damaged, or hindered by certain people. For that reason, he wanted to deal with that issue when he went to Jerusalem to make sure that what he was building was not being dismantled.

It seems that Paul had taken Titus with him as evidence, not for himself, but for those that were opposing Paul, and teaching a false (or legalist) gospel to Christians, specifically to new Gentile Christians. Titus was a Gentile, recently converted to Christianity, but not circumcised. Paul took Titus with him to prove that circumcision was not necessary for salvation, because salvation is not obtained by keeping the law, but purely and only by grace. It is not by any works that man can do, but by all that Christ had done on the cross. Therefore, when Paul took Titus to Jerusalem, none of the apostles opposed Paul by saying that Titus needed to be circumcised (verse 3). The fact that the other apostles in Jerusalem (particularly Peter, John and James) did not oppose Paul, indicates that Paul's authority was from God. The Gospel that he taught was from God. It did not have keeping the law or doing any works to be saved, but was something fully dependent on God's grace.

In verse 4 Paul proved his authority and his teaching, especially to false brothers, who taught Christians that they needed to keep the law (Acts 15:1). This teaching was therefore a false gospel taught by false

brothers. These were not true Christians, but only pretended to be Christians. Alternatively, they thought they were Christians, but were not true Christians, because they were still enslaved to the law. Nevertheless, they had entered the church and caused disunity and strife, and were hindering the work of God. These kinds of things continued for a long time, where false teachers and leaders (false brothers) went into churches just to destroy the good work being done in the church (2 Peter 2:1). Unfortunately, this was not only a problem of the church 2000 years ago, but this is still a problem in some of the churches today.

There are those who still emphasise works for salvation! They do not say 'works alone', but Jesus and works, Jesus and tradition, Jesus and the law, or Jesus and rituals. However, Paul is proving here that for salvation, a person does not need anything but belief in Jesus Christ. We believe what the Bible says about who Jesus is and trust Him and rely on Him, and Him only, for salvation. Unfortunately, there are some that teach a wrong gospel today. When anyone teaches that, in order to be saved, you need to stop smoking, that is a false gospel because that teaching involves works. When anyone teaches that in order to be saved you need to quit drinking, dress better, cover your head, not colour your hair, be baptized, or do this or do that that is a false gospel! Please, do not misunderstand me. I am not talking about living the Christian life, but only about being saved. And to be saved, a person only needs Jesus and nothing else. A person needs to believe who Jesus is (what the Bible says about Him) and completely trust and rely on Him, and Him only, for his/her salvation (John 3:16; 1 John 5:11-12; John 3:36; Acts 16:31). Of course, this is not just a mental knowledge of who Jesus is or a belief that He existed. It is fully trusting Him for salvation!

Therefore, we need to know that through Christ we are free of all works, law and man's traditions and false beliefs and man's opinions in seeking salvation. Even after we are saved, there are those that still promote legalism as some did in the Galatian church and this is slavery. We need to be careful that once we have freedom in Christ, we do not go back to slavery, which was exactly what these false brothers

were doing (Galatians 5:1; 2 Corinthians 3:17; John 8:36).

However, this does not mean that, as Christians, we can do what we want. Absolutely not! Yes, we are saved by grace alone, and we are free in Christ. We are free from false teaching, free from man's works, free from legalism and free from man's opinions. This does not mean that as Christians we are free to do whatever we want to do (Romans 6:18; Galatians 5:13; 1 Peter 2:16). We are God's ambassadors. We represent God and must live in a way that will honour and glorify God.

Notice in verse 2 that Paul went to Jerusalem because of a revelation, one from God Himself. This is why Paul could stand firm without wavering before false teachings (verse 5). He had confidence in the Word of God, which had been revealed to him. If we want the same confidence, we must pay attention to the same revelation that Paul had – the Gospel, the Word of God. And as we pay attention to the Word of God, Jesus incarnate, the one who became a man, we are able to stand firm and not be tossed left and right by every wind of false doctrine (Ephesians 4:14). In verses 6-10 Paul again confirms that his apostleship is of the Lord!

Therefore, do you believe Jesus Christ is who the Bible says He is? And do you trust and rely on Him only for your salvation? If you do, you believe the true Gospel. May we all believe this truth.

Raffi Chaparian



Timeless quotes from R. C. Sproul

"If God is the Creator of the entire universe, then it must follow that He is the Lord of the whole universe. No part of the world is outside of His lordship. That means that no part of my life must be outside of His lordship."

"Most Christians salute the sovereignty of God but believe in the sovereignty of man."

Moses and God's holiness

God commanded Moses “Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground” (Exodus 3:5). According to this verse, the ground of the mountain was holy, and Moses was commanded by God to remove his shoes. This is the incident where the bush was burning without being consumed. But before moving any further, bear in mind that this was the first encounter between Moses and God on the mount of Horeb (Exodus 3:1). The location of Horeb is disputed. Since biblical times, Jewish and Christian scholars have offered varying opinions as to its location.

In the New Testament we read about a similar occasion where Jesus forbade someone from coming nearer to Him. Jesus told Mary Magdalene “Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father...” (John 20:17). But in both cases, even though the witnesses were forbidden from coming closer, they each received additional commands from God. It is as if the Lord says “Move your attention from gazing at the miracle to the command which I am about to give you”.

The shoes of those days were not like our shoes. If a man took off his shoes, his feet would still be dusty, especially in wilderness regions. In other words, whether Moses took his shoes off or not, his feet would be dusty. So from here, we can conclude that God gave Moses that command to teach him a special lesson.

God also spoke with Moses on many occasions: concerning the 10 plagues in Egypt, the Ten Commandments, the preparation of the tabernacle and its instruments. God always spoke to Moses, but we do not read elsewhere that He commanded Moses to remove His shoes. We read something quite similar happening to Moses' successor, Joshua. “And the commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua “Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did so” (Joshua 5.15). The same lesson was being taught to the next leader!

As mentioned earlier, this was Moses' first encounter with the God

of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In it God manifested His holiness to Moses. But God has many other qualities. Why did He not show His goodness, love or mercy? God wanted Moses to know and believe that He is holy from the first conversation. He was not like the gods of Egypt or Canaan. I am sure that Moses had learnt this from his mother Jochebed before he was a child at Pharaoh's palace. But being taught by someone and being taught by God Himself are quite different things (see Galatians 1:11-12, 1 Thessalonians 4:9). Moses needed to learn this first lesson well, because he would lead and teach a whole nation.

"Holy" means separated or consecrated. God is holy. In God's holiness all His qualities are enclosed. God is holy, He is different, His faithfulness is different, His mercy is different, His thoughts are different, His love is different, His rules, laws and commands are different, His wrath and judgments are different, and His might is different.

At the time of the burning bush, it was more significant for Moses to see God as holy, rather than faithful or merciful. Why? Humanly speaking, we might think that because God was going to lead a whole nation, His faithfulness and mercy would be needed more than His holiness. Or again, we may wonder why God did not reveal Himself as the Almighty God, as He had with Abraham? "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless" (Genesis 17:1). Surely Moses and the people of Israel needed to hear about this quality more than His holiness, because they were slaves in Egypt. God was revealed to Abraham by the name God Almighty because he needed to see that quality of God more than any other one. He was 99 when the Lord appeared to him again and reminded him of His promise.

Moses' first lesson was to learn that God is holy. This is the quality that the angels repeat day and night saying "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" (Isaiah 6:3). Moses learned other qualities of our God, and taught these to the people over 40 years. He saw God's omnipotence: the ten plagues, the parting of the Red Sea, and the provision of manna. He saw God's faithfulness in providing food and drink in the wilderness. He saw God's righteousness in giving fair laws, punishing sinners and unbelievers.

The question for you and me is "How and where are we going to hide our sins from the face of a holy God?" The writer to the Hebrews says "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31). The psalmist says "If you (God) kept a record of our sins, no one could last long" (Psalm 130:3). Have we learned this lesson?

Since God is holy, He must punish the sinner, but not with such a punishment that the sinner bears for some years, or even some hundreds of years, before being released. This punishment, which is hell, is everlasting. But since God loves us, He has also provided a way to escape and receive His forgiveness. God punished Christ for our sake. The Bible says "For our sake he (God) made him (Jesus) to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him (Jesus) we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Dear friend, let God's holiness not frighten you, but alert you. Go to Him, confess your sins, and by faith accept Christ as your personal Saviour. Sooner or later, all of us will stand before this holy God. It is my prayer that this day will be a time of joy and not of condemnation for you.

Vartan Sarkissian



Proverbs 3:1-7 (ESV)

¹My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments, ²for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you. ³Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart. ⁴So you will find favor and good success in the sight of God and man. ⁵Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. ⁶In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. ⁷Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from evil.

Surviving winter in Gyumri

Each year many tourists from all over the world visit Armenia. Some come to see one of the oldest nations that has survived to this time, others to see the biblical Mount Ararat, others to visit the land of their ancestors, some for the food and wine, others for the magical views and the abundance of organic fruits and vegetables, others the historic churches and buildings.

Visiting Armenia in winter is another thing. It is harsh, especially in the villages. Gyumri is the second largest city in Armenia, we have been supporting some needy families by sending regular financial support, food parcels, medical assistance and wood for winter. In December the temperatures can drop to 30 degrees below zero.

We met a family living in a metal container in which there were grandma and grandpa, their widowed daughter-in-law and her two children. As we walked into the metal container the old lady greeted us with tears. I asked what has happened and she said they stole all the wood we had sent them for winter. Now they did not know how to manage without heat.

I was shocked by the size and the condition of the container. It was leaking, damp and cold and the smell inside was not healthy at all. To think that five lived in that small container! I asked where they slept and the old woman indicated that they only had two beds and a couch. Because of the cold she hugged one of her grandchildren while the grandfather hugged the other grandchild as they tried to go to sleep.

In the morning as we were observing the area outside one of the containers, I noticed a table with three large bowls full of water covered with a glass sheet. I got closer to look inside the bowl, thinking there might be some fish in the water but there was nothing. As the women looked at me I asked what these were. One said she had not had a wash for a month and was just warming some water in the sun so she could wash.

The following year I had a visitor with me from a humanitarian organisation who was visiting Armenia. He joined me from Africa and we were able to take him to show him these conditions. However, he was very reserved and did not say much. On the last night (after five days) he came to me to thank me that he could join our team. When I asked him his thoughts he replied that this was the harshest poverty he had seen in the world. I had goose bumps all over me because I had known that for years but found it difficult to describe the reality to people. I said to him that surely things are much worse in Africa but his reply was "How can you live when summer temperatures are 40 degrees plus and winter 40 below?"

Yes, it is hard to see them in these conditions, but we are committed to reach out in their time of need. Our main calling is to take the gospel to the poorest of the poor in Armenia. The gospel gives hope, changing people's perspective to life, changing sadness to joy, and complaints to praises. Your support and prayers are much needed for this ministry to continue. For two dollars a day you can make a big difference in their lives.

God willing, our mission team will be in Armenia in August and we look forward to coming back with more pictures and testimonies to share with you. Thank you for your prayers.

HK for the ACM team

