



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 photos: The twin King George Falls in flood, Kimberley, Australia.



ARMENIAN CHRISTIAN MISSION

Praise and prayer points

- Praise the Lord for all His goodness to us.
- Thank the Lord that shipping container #25 is ready to go to Armenia.
- Pray for our needy families in Lebanon, Syria and Armenia.
- Pray for our co-workers Martun and Angela and the family as they visit us in Australia.
- Pray for ACM's 25th anniversary celebration.
- Pray for all who will join the mission team to Armenia in July - August 2023.

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

Be holy for I am holy

As children of God, we are called to walk in holiness.

Many think holiness is a thing of the past, and that it has something to do with the saints of Bible times who lived a holy life. However, all believers are called to be holy as followers of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible is very clear on holiness.

- *Therefore, holy brothers and sisters who share in the heavenly calling (Hebrews 3:1).*
- *Therefore as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved (Colossians 3:12).*

What is holiness?

Holiness means being separated or set apart to be used by God. This means that we yield everything to Him and walk daily in His presence allowing Him to change us and mould us into His likeness.

Living a holy life is a command. God has commanded us to be holy. Therefore we make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy, knowing that without *holiness no one will see the Lord* (Hebrews 12:14). *But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: Be holy, because I am holy* (1 Peter 1:15-16).

As we obey God's command, our fellowship with Him is strengthened, resulting in a deeper walk with Him as He manifests Himself to us more and more. But we need to rely on Him daily because our holiness comes from Him and not from our own strength.

Holiness comes from God

We cannot be holy by ourselves. Holiness comes from God. The closer we walk with Him, the more we are purified. He has made us righteous before God. We cannot purify ourselves; only God can make us holy.

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Some scriptures to reflect on

- *But now He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation (Colossians 1:22).*
- *He saved us and called us to a holy life – not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time (2 Timothy 1:9).*
- *For He chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight (Ephesians 1:4).*

God makes us holy and gives us the ability to walk in holiness. However, holiness will not be manifested in our lives until we make a definite decision to obey Him and walk with Him in the light of what He has already done for us.

I pray that the eyes of our hearts will be enlightened so that we will fully accept God's gift of righteousness. And as we do, I pray that we will live a holy life, set apart to God through the power of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

HK



"Give me one hundred preachers who fear nothing but sin, and desire nothing but God, and I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen; such alone will shake the gates of hell and set up the kingdom of heaven on Earth."

— J. Wesley

"He does not regard the quantity of faith, but the quality. He does not measure its degree, but its truth. He will not break any bruised reed, nor quench any smoking flax. He will never let it be said that any perished at the foot of the cross."

— J.C. Ryle

The King is coming

2 Peter 3

I wonder if you have ever had this experience as a child. It is Guy Fawke's night and you have just lit the wick of a skyrocket and stood back. There it is standing up in the bottle with the wick burning. But the wick seems to go out. The seconds tick by and one begins to wonder whether to go back and check it. But then it might still be burning inside and suddenly take off and singe my eyebrows. On the other hand, how long should I stand here staring anxiously at an inert cardboard cylinder that may never go off?

Is the wick burning towards a spectacular event or has it gone out and I am waiting for nothing. This is very much the feeling of a great many people about the second coming of Christ. Peter's final message is this: the wick is still burning!

The story begins long ago with God creating us so we could enjoy loving Him and being loved by Him. It tells how as a race and as individuals we rejected God's loving intentions toward us. It tells how God's love did not give up on us. Because of His great love He came to die for our sins and rise again, so that we might be restored to the loving heart of God.

As many people think about the Bible, they tend to have the idea that this story of God's loving involvement with humankind is long ago and far away. But Peter tells us here that the story of God and mankind is not over yet. It is continuing on to this day and right now you and I are part of this real love drama. The next thing that will happen is that the very same man, Jesus Christ, who came to die for our sins, will Himself return to this earth.

This will give you different feelings, depending where you stand:

- If you know Christ, it will fill you with great joy for you will actually meet face to face for the first time, the one you love.
- If you have chosen to stand outside of God's love, it might fill you with great fear.

- If you respond with disbelief, you might ask, "How could this happen?"

Peter has a special message for this third group of people. We have reliable eyewitness evidence that the hundreds of prophecies about Christ's first coming actually came true in about AD 30. So far, the Bible has had a good track record in foretelling the future. Don't you think that gives us good ground to believe that the prophecies about the second coming of Christ must be very reliable?

Be prepared for those who mock. Peter was a realist. When he was filled with the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, he saw 3000 people come to Christ in one day. He also knew that every person had to make up his own mind about the message of Christ. Many chose to reject it. Their opposition to truth was not because they were so devoted to reason and logic, but from something else. It comes from evil desires. The real reason is that they do not want it to be true.

There is a well-known story about the famous naval commander, Lord Nelson. He was about to sail his ship to attack the enemy when the Admiral's ship flew signal flags ordering Nelson to retreat. One of Nelson's officers told Lord Nelson of the command to retreat, but Nelson did not want to. In desperation the officer handed Nelson a telescope and said, "Read the flags for yourself". Nelson had one blind eye so he held the telescope up to his blind eye and said, "I see no signal to retreat", and sailed on into battle.

Peter says these people are like Lord Nelson. They have already decided what they desire. They don't want to see what is true in case it interferes with their own desires, so they hold the telescope up to their blind eye so they cannot see it. The mockers also argue that Christ would not come again because, Everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation (verse 4). Nothing like this has ever happened before so why should it happen now? Peter replies, Before the flood of Noah, people could have used the same argument (verse 6).

There had never been a flood before, but that didn't stop it from happening! Do you see the point? Just because something has never

happened before, does not mean that it will not happen.

Bishop Wright once announced that man had never flown, and never would. "If we were intended to fly, God would have given us wings", he said. Bishop Wright had two sons; Wilbur and Orville Wright. They invented the first aeroplane.

Things do happen that never happened before. The world had a beginning so it is reasonable that it has an end. The universe is not a clock that God wound up and left ticking on the shelf while He went off and forgot about it. God is "Sustaining all things by His powerful Word" (Hebrews 1:3). To destroy the world, God does not have to do something; He simply has to stop doing something. The day will come when God will simply stop sustaining the heavens and the earth. Peter tells us these things:

- The prophecies about Christ's first coming came true, so we had better take the prophecies about His second coming seriously.
- The reason people don't accept the second coming, is because it is undesirable to them. It would interrupt their plans.
- Just because something has never happened before does not mean that it will not happen.

All of this leads to a question. Why has Christ not returned yet? Eternity is not simply a long, long time. It is life above and apart from time. Therefore you cannot measure God's plans on a human clock. To us 2000 years seems a long time. However even humanly speaking, a geologist will tell you that in terms of geology 2000 years is a mere nothing. How much less must 2000 years be to God, to whom the entire history of this universe is just a fleeting moment? Leaving aside the fact that God and man run on different time scales, there is another reason why Christ has not yet returned. "The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise. . . but patient. . . not wanting any to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." (verse 9). The day of the second coming of Christ will be the end of the opportunity to repent. So Christ delays his coming to extend the opportunity to repent, as an expression of His mercy. This reveals the true heart of God. What if He had come the day before I was going to trust in Christ? That very

delay that people condemn God for, is the very thing they should thank Him for. It is an opportunity to repent.

At the perfect time, the day will come when Christ comes back to this earth as He promised. When it actually happens it will be a massive, inescapable, and totally unexpected reality. To many it will be a devastating psychological earthquake. We are told of Christ's return, not just to satisfy our curiosity about the future or to give theologians something to argue about. We are told of Christ's return to give us a whole new perspective on our lives and what this means. For Christians it is like this: the One who loves you is coming back for you. This does not make what we do with our lives on earth less important, but more important. A life lived in the glowing hope of Christ's return makes its mark in both this world and the next. In the end there are two kinds of people in the world:

- Those to whom the second coming will be a terrible interruption to all the "really important " things they wanted to do.
- Those to whom the second coming is the consummation of everything they have desired and worked towards.

Sometimes you meet people who are obsessed about the end of the world. Peter says we are not looking for an end, but a new beginning. Not a sunset, but a sunrise. Not destruction, but a new creation is our hope. We are looking forward to a massive celebration in heaven. Experiencing the reality of God in His love and glory will be so awesome it is far beyond our human imagination.

Those who reject God in their lives will be given what they chose: God's absence in their lives. They will hear His words Depart from Me for I never knew you (Luke 13:27). What would it be like to be cast from the presence of God forever? We could not even start to imagine how awful this would be.

But those who trust Christ will see, face to face the One who loved them to death. In that glance, all the painful puzzles of life will be resolved. All tears dried and there will be joy with Him forever.

Rex Dearlove

Pharaoh offers concessions

In our last issue we considered two of the ways in which Pharaoh resisted God. He used his magicians to imitate what God was doing and he hardened his heart against the Lord, refusing to obey Him. Now we think about his attempt to defeat God by making limited concessions.

3. Grudging offers

At first Pharaoh refused to let Israel go free, but later he demanded that they leave immediately. In between these two occasions he made grudging concessions that he had no intention of honouring and which were unacceptable to Moses – and ultimately unacceptable to God.

a. Concession 1: Go, sacrifice to your God within the land

Pharaoh probably hoped that he was making a concession that would appease Moses and Aaron. His aim would have been to make the Israelites think that they were being given a great privilege.

However, this would have been completely unsatisfactory. Moses pointed out the obvious difficulties the Israelites would have faced from the Egyptians. They needed to offer sacrifices to the Lord. To the Egyptians this was something that was an abomination. Their reaction would have provoked civil unrest; Moses envisaged the Egyptians stoning the Israelites when they saw the Israelites offering sacrifices.

But worse than that, the Israelites would have still been slaves in Egypt. Once the sacrifices had been completed, Pharaoh would have insisted that they return to their labour. There would have been no improvement in their social position. Moses therefore rightly insisted that the Israelites needed to go a three day journey into the wilderness. The nation had to make a complete break with Egypt in order to be set free.

b. Concession 2: Go not very far away

Because the country was in the grip of the plague of flies, Pharaoh had to act in some way. He appeared to be making a greater concession. "I will let you go to sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; only you must not go very far away – plead for me."

Obviously Pharaoh wanted the Israelites near so that he would be able to force them to return to work. Moses raised no objection. We are not told why this was so. Did Moses know how Pharaoh would behave once the flies were removed? Or did he believe God would protect them? The reason Moses raised no objection is immaterial. As soon as the flies had gone, Pharaoh changed his mind.

There is a danger in remaining too close to the world. A person who is close to the world is likely to be drawn into it. Lot made the mistake of staying in Sodom after Abraham rescued him from captivity. In the end his testimony was completely ruined.

c. Concession 3: Only some were allowed to go

Pharaoh told Moses that they could go and serve the Lord their God. But he wanted to know who would go. When he learned that everyone was to go he set conditions – only the men among them were allowed to leave and serve the Lord.

Again this was unsatisfactory as the men would have soon returned to their families. The people would still have been in bondage and there was no guarantee that the conditions of severe slavery would be relaxed in any way.

However, Moses did not have to respond to Pharaoh's restrictions – he was driven from Pharaoh's presence.

d. Concession 4: Leave the flocks and herds behind

Pharaoh knew he had to make some concessions. Go, serve the Lord; your little ones also may go with you; only let your flocks and your herds remain behind. Pharaoh had just suffered the frightening experience of three days thick darkness and he knew he had to do something. But he still wanted to retain control over the Israelites. So some restrictions remained. The Israelites were told they could take

their children but they had to leave their animals behind.

Pharaoh would have known that the Israelites needed their flocks as sacrifices. But he also knew that they couldn't permanently leave his kingdom without their flocks and herds. The Israelites had been shepherds since the time of Abraham, and flocks and herds were an integral part of their life. Once again Pharaoh was doing his utmost to keep the Israelites as slaves.

What did the Lord require?

God wanted every one of His people out of Egypt. He had planned a future for them in which they would be the people through whom the message of salvation would come. But they needed to be completely separate from the idolatrous influences of Egypt. The Israelites had to leave Egypt completely – families, possessions and all. Only then would they be able to fulfil their purpose the God had planned for them.

Concessions from Moses?

Moses was aware that Pharaoh would do his utmost to keep the Israelites as slaves. God had clearly told him that Pharaoh would not let the Israelites go not even by a mighty hand. But Moses also knew that God's plan was the complete release of His people. Therefore at no stage did Moses make any concessions to Pharaoh. His first responsibility was to be faithful to the Lord. He faithfully presented the Lord's demands and would not accept a compromise from Pharaoh.

To us today

We must be fully conscious of the fact that Satan does not want to lose control over us or, alternatively, that he wants to regain some influence over us so that we are not effective in our witness for the Lord.

To what extent are we so enmeshed with the world so that we are incapable of bearing witness to our Lord? His expectation is that we will be faithful to the instructions that he gives us. Do we do as He commissions us – or not?

Don Stormer

Looking for help

“Look, I’ve been a Christian for a number of years, and I know that the Lord wants me to trust Him fully and to yield my life to Him, but, well, I just can’t.”

“Then I’m sorry, I can’t help you because you don’t want help.”

“Of course I want help! I wouldn’t be here talking to you if I didn’t.”

“The One who can help you is the Lord Jesus, but you don’t want Him to.”

“What do you mean? Of course I want Him to!”

“But it was He who called you to trust Him and to yield your life to Him. His promise is that if you lose your life, you will find it.”

“I know that, but that’s just the point! I can’t do it.”

“If you couldn’t do it, why would the Lord ask you to? A good father doesn’t tell his child to do something impossible and the Lord hasn’t told you to do something impossible either.”

“But I can’t do it. It’s too hard. I’ve tried a hundred times and I can’t.”

*“If you **can’t**, then the Lord is at fault. If you **won’t**, then you are at fault. Which do you think it is?”*

“Stop it! This isn’t helping me at all. And you’re just playing with words!”

*“No, I’m not playing, and this is not a game! If in fact you **won’t** yield your life to the One who loved you enough to die for you, then you have a reason, and you need to bring that reason into the light. To say you **can’t** obey Him is in effect to blame God for your situation, and that will get you nowhere.”*

“Listen, I do want to live for Him, but it’s hard. Everyone knows it’s hard!”

"Everyone except Jesus. He said, 'My yoke is easy and my burden is light.' Look, it is very easy to step from the platform onto a train, but it is very difficult to board the train and remain on the platform. You can't do both."

"So you're telling me that I won't surrender my life to Him because I simply don't want to."

"Yes, that's right, and you have a reason, or perhaps many reasons, why you don't want to."

"And what are they?"

"That's something you'll have to learn from the Lord. Ask Him to show you what's in your heart - what it is you value more than Him."

"I'm scared. But what if I ask Him to show me and when I know I still don't want to let whatever it is go?"

"He can certainly give you repentance if you're willing to turn to Him, but He won't override your will. It has to be your choice. But if you don't ask Him then your choice has already been made – you'll have demonstrated that you love darkness more than light."

"Oh! What am I going to do? I feel trapped!"

"...trapped in the love of God who has chosen you and called you to glory! This calling is a serious matter, not a hobby for your spare time and not something you can treat lightly. And why should you? He stands ready, as the faithful shepherd that He is, to guide you into everything He has for you. Why turn away? Why hold back? Why resist Him?"

"Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."
(Matthew 11)

Neil Buckman



The story of the cracked pot

An elderly Chinese woman had two large pots, each hung on the ends of a pole which she carried across her neck. One of the pots had a crack in it while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water. At the end of the long walks from the stream to the house, the cracked pot arrived only half full.

For a full two years this went on daily, with the woman bringing home only one and a half pots of water. Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it could only do half of what it had been made to do.

After two years of what it perceived to be bitter failure, it spoke to the woman one day by the stream. "I am ashamed of myself, because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your house."

The old woman smiled, "Did you notice that there are flowers on your side of the path, but not on the other pot's side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, so I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back, you water them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate the table. Without you being just the way you are, there would not be this beauty to grace the house."

Author Unknown



"Another real danger to young men is thoughtlessness and lack of consideration. Lack of thought is one simple reason why thousands of souls are cast away forever. Men will not consider,-will not look forward,-will not look around them,-will not reflect on the end of their present course, and the sure consequences of their present ways,-and awake at last to find they are damned for lack of thinking."

— J.C. Ryle


CEF Armenia

Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD (Psalm 31:12). 2022 was a difficult year emotionally for the people of Armenia. The country lacked stability and there was shooting every day on the border. There was war, we lost territory and many young people. All these bad things made the people sad. We still have a serious problem in Karabakh where 120,000 people, 30,000 of whom are children, have been isolated from the world since December 12 when Azerbaijani Ecological activists blocked the only connecting road between Armenia and Karabakh. The people there now live as if in a big prison, living in fear that the Azerbaijani president will harm them. Beside this, the economic situation makes life difficult. More than 40% of the population is poor.

To give a clearer picture, Armenia is surrounded by countries which do not wish us good. Armenia has borders with four countries. Three of them are Islamic and of these, two (Turkey and Azerbaijan, with a combined population of 90 million) are aggressive enemies who hate Armenia (the population of Armenia is 2.9 million) and want to see the region without Armenians.

BUT with all this negative picture, I would like to present to you a different kind of people who live in the same country but think differently. These are people who live with hope, rejoicing in the Lord and living in His goodness. They know that

- *In all things God works for the good of those who love him (Romans 8:28).*
- *Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain (Psalm 127:1).*
- *If the Lord had not been on our side when people attacked us, they would have swallowed us alive when their anger flared against us (Psalm 124:2-3).*



Those people make life in this country different. You can find hope on their shining faces. They believe in a God who knows and controls everything. We thank God for His children in Armenia and Karabakh, who continue to live by spreading the good news of Jesus. They have, and they use, the opportunity to share their faith and hope at Christmas time through Christmas Clubs

Before starting the Christmas clubs, we had two teacher training sessions where 52 teachers from different denominations come to learn what to do in a Christmas program and how to give the message to the children. We work with them like friends by showing that all the children's workers in Armenia should work as a family, helping each other. This is the spirit of unity which we learn from our Master. By His grace, in December 2022 and January 2023, the CEF team, with the help of volunteers, was able to hold Christmas Clubs in 59 locations throughout Armenia and Karabakh. It was a source of great joy for us to be able to proclaim the Good News to over 1,500 children. This was such a blessing to us personally, and a new record for the CEF team. We were able to teach the children that Jesus is "Emmanuel" (meaning "God with us") We challenged them to respond to Emmanuel by making the decision within their hearts to say to HIM that they are also "with HIM."

Before we began the clubs in December, we had the thought that perhaps this could be the last Christmas when we would be able to be with the children and to share with them, so we worked hard to reach more children. We thank God for the wide-open doors which we currently have in Armenia. Please continue to pray for Armenia and Karabakh, that the Lord may touch the hearts of the people.

Serving the children of Armenia and Karabakh together,

Terenik and Hasmik Barjiamian
CEF Country Leaders for Armenia