



Trumpet's Sound

54th year, Australia

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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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ARMENIAN CHRISTIAN MISSION

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Cover photos: tourist town of Dilijan, Armenia. Little Switzerland of Armenia.

Prayer points

- Pray for 120,000 refugees from Karabagh now in Armenia who need the Gospel
- Pray for the supply of the food that is greatly needed by these refugees for survival
- Pray for the refugees who will soon be facing very harsh winter conditions
- Pray for those who mourn the loss of loved ones; pray for the many widows and orphans
- Pray for ACM for wisdom in knowing where and how to provide help
- Pray for our co-workers in Armenia that they will be guided by the Holy Spirit
- Pray for peace in our war torn world
- Pray for the coming of His kingdom

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

Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep

Romans 12:15

What has happened to our world? We see things we have never seen before; we hear things we have never heard before. Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains. Again Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me.

As all eyes are on the Middle East. Also, near Armenia, Azerbaijan put a blockade on 120,000 Armenians who had lived in their homeland of Nagorno Karabagh for centuries. For 90 days they cut off the electricity and other supplies. There was no heating, no food, no petrol, no work, and no medication. The people were all living in fear of the unknown, and then the bombing started to scare the people to flee from their homeland. Just weeks ago 120,000 people of all ages left their houses with nothing. They left behind their shops, their land and their cattle to flee to Armenia for safety. Almost all arrived in Armenia with only the clothing they were wearing. A country with a population of 2.5 million, 30% of whom live below the poverty line, has an influx of 120,000 poverty stricken refugees.

Armenian Christian Mission has been serving to poor in Armenia for the last 25 years, but we were not ready to face such a catastrophe. People are knocking on our doors daily, asking for any kind of help – food, clothing, rent assistance, school bags for children, winter clothing for protection from the winter cold when temperatures could drop below 25 degrees. People need counselling as almost every family has lost a loved one in the war.

We weep with those who weep, but it has been very difficult for our workers in Armenia. We have been distributing food. In two days we gave food to 240 people at a cost of \$10,000. Please join us

in prayer because this task is far above our means. We are also getting a container ready to be shipped to Armenia with new clothing – new because the Armenian government has placed a restriction on any secondhand goods. Shipping will cost \$18,000. If you can help, please contact us at info@acmaust.org.

However, through all these tears we rejoice knowing that His coming is near and soon we will see Him with our eyes and we will fall down on our knees and worship Him.

May the Lord keep you all safe in our Lord Jesus.

HK

Security, strength, and purpose in Jesus

Read John 14

God sends His Son to reassure us and to guide us

Would you like to know the future? Many people consult fortune tellers, astrologists, and similar people, and some really believe what they are told. But I don't want to know the future, because the future will certainly be very mixed. It is better not to know. The old prophets had the misfortune to know the future. God told a prophet what would happen so that he could warn the people, but along the way he also learnt about himself. Ezekiel's future was to live as a symbol of God's judgment on Israel. God told him, *I am about to take away from you the delight of your eyes. . . do not lament or weep or shed any tears. Groan quietly; do not mourn for the dead.* That would be enough to make me anxious. And sure enough, Ezekiel's wife died, and he was forbidden to mourn for her.

Jesus, of course, knew about the future. He knew what His future held, and He knew that it was not pleasant. Actually, it was going to be horrible. He began to tell his disciples what was going to happen, but they didn't understand. But he did tell them what it meant

to him. Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name! Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again" (John 12:27-28). You ask, "why was Jesus troubled? He knew what lay beyond His suffering." Yet He was troubled. Deeply troubled. He was, after all, a real man. You and I know that in God's care we have a wonderful future, but that does not stop us being troubled about our immediate circumstances. Jesus was troubled, and yet He knew that all His trouble was in God's hands. In Jesus we have a picture of the horror of death meeting the passion of obedience. For the word "troubled" indicated deep emotional distress and confusion. Maybe you have felt like that too. I wonder whether you can respond as Jesus did. Yes, I am in deep trouble, but God is over all this and will in the end bring me through it to His glory. That can be hard, but it is Jesus' way.

Jesus went on to tell His disciples several worrying things. First, He told them that one of them was going to betray Him. That thought deeply troubled Jesus. But the disciples could not understand it at all. Who of them would be a traitor? Then He told them that His time with them was nearly over. That was impossible to understand. They had left their homes and their jobs to follow Him. They had had three years of wonderful ministry, and now – nothing? Was He just going away? And finally, He told them that one of His closest disciples would deny him publicly. It was more than distressing.

Hence Jesus' words to them: *Do not let your hearts be troubled.* Why? How can they not be troubled? His answer is simple. They always believed in God, and throughout their long history as His people, He had never abandoned them. Now Jesus adds the important difference that He makes. *You can believe in me as you believe in God.* What is He telling them?

That's the first thing for us today. You have worries? You are anxious about the future? You are in trouble now? You believe in God. You know how He has acted in the past. Jesus says, "Do not let your heart be troubled, anxious, confused. You believe in God; you can trust me as you trust Him." Jesus knows what it is to be deeply

troubled, anxious, confused. But He also knows God is with Him, in Him. Later on He will tell His disciples that they too can live that way with God. As we can.

That brings us to the second point that Jesus makes (verses 2-4). You can trust me because of who I am. And the disciples pursue this question. Jesus says He is not actually leaving them, because He will come back for them. And they know where He is going. But they don't – they imagine a journey to some far country. And Jesus responds again by directing them to Himself: Thomas, – all of you – *I am the way – and the truth, and the life*. We could think about this amazing claim for some time but let me say just this. Jesus does not show us the way. He is the way. And He is the only way. People know that there are many other paths, and Jesus clearly taught that they are attractive, easy, but misleading. He and only He is the way through the future to the Father's promised land. And that is because he is also the truth. What he taught was God's truth, but more importantly, the life He lived demonstrated God's truth, and only in Him do we find the truth. Others have made true statements, but only Jesus embodies the truth in Himself. This means that to know truth, you have to know Him. And knowing Him as the way, loving Him as the truth, then we find Him to be the life. The life of God, and the life of eternity.

What does that mean? You can trust Jesus. *Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father* (verse 9).

But finally, the fact is that Jesus, after dying that horrible death, rising from death in victory, and ascending to the Father, did go away. He promised to come again, but here we are, and He has not yet returned. How then are we to live in His absence? He begins to answer that question in verse 15. *If you love me you will keep my commandments*. In other words, live the way I have taught you. Live according to the truth you now know. Live the way I have shown you. Live in the love I have demonstrated in my life.

But there is more. He promises that in the meantime He will return and be with us forever in this life. And He does it by sending His Spirit. *And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever — the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept*

him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. This is the beginning of Jesus' teaching about the coming of His Spirit. The disciples are worried, confused, distressed. But here is the solution to their dilemma. Jesus will not leave them alone. He will be gone, He will return, but in the meantime He will send a "counsellor" an advocate, a helper to be with them.

Wonderful words, and especially that name for the coming of His Spirit in us "the Counsellor". The meaning is actually, "someone else to stand by you", or "another one to befriend you". And isn't that what everyone needs? And look again at what He says in verses 17,18: *you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.* Who was it who was living with the disciples? Why, Jesus Himself. Who was the One they already knew? Well, Jesus of course! And who promises to come to them? Jesus Himself. The Counsellor whom Jesus sends is none other than the Spirit of Jesus Himself. And He is also the Spirit of God.

This Counsellor, this Comforter, this companion on the way, what will He do? Verse 26 says, He will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. This is His first job, to remind us of what Jesus has said to us. The disciples had heard it all but, like us, their memories were imperfect. You and I have heard what we have heard, we have read what we have read, and the Spirit will bring that to mind as we need to know and obey it. But He cannot bring to mind what Jesus has not spoken to us – which is another reason for needing to read God's word daily. Then we can hear the Lord speak to us, and the Spirit will be able to bring to our minds the things Jesus has said to us.

And the effect of the ministry of Jesus through this Counsellor? Peace. Peace. Verse 27: *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.* You hear that this is the conclusion of the matter. Jesus began addressing the disciples' problems with "*Do not let your hearts be troubled*". He ends His reassurance with the same words. He gives us His peace. Not a superficial peace such as the

world gives, but a deep and abiding peace that flows beneath all the troubles of this life, real as they seem to us. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

Let us appreciate the truths John, the Apostle of love, recalls for us of the words of Jesus. We do have worries and anxieties, but we also have the One we can trust who promises to take us on the right way, lead us into all truth, and bring us to eternal life. Trusting Him and relying on His Spirit, we have peace.

Dr Paul Whiting

Psalm 4

Psalm 4 is the prayer of a man who has been troubled by people who have endeavoured to bring him down. He has turned to God in his distress and found relief. He has experienced the blessing of the Lord and has been able to rest in His goodness.

It appears that, although the Lord had relieved him in his distress, David had to turn once again to the Lord for help. It is easy to imagine when this could have happened. More than once he had had to escape from Saul's cruel jealousy and even if at times Saul acknowledged his sin, it was not long before David was on the run again in order to avoid Saul's murderous intentions. Once again then, David asks the God of his righteousness to hear him when he calls and to have mercy on him.

David asks how long men will try to turn his glory into shame. How long will they try to destroy him or at least to humiliate him? Those opposed to him had set their minds on things with absolutely no value.

What these people needed to learn is that all their actions against David would fail. The Lord had already set the godly apart for Himself. If God's hand was protecting David, he would be kept. In this knowledge, David had an absolute conviction that God would hear him and protect him.

However, the question we wonder about is how we react to a situation like this. Or how should we react to the scheming of ungodly people. David outlines four things we do:

- Be angry and do not sin. Some people speak as if anger is sin, forgetting that God is angry with the wicked every day. When Paul repeated this instruction in Ephesians 4:26 he added “do not let the sun go down on your wrath”. There is such a thing as righteous anger.
- Meditate within your heart on your bed and be still. What things do we meditate about? It is good to dwell on the tender mercies of our God, to think of all His goodness and love to us. As we do this we find our hearts becoming still in the presence of the Lord.
- Offer the sacrifices of righteousness. Even though we no longer offer all the repeated sacrifices for sin, there are still sacrifices we offer to God. Among these is the sacrifice of praise, the fruit of our lips, which we offer as we give thanks to His name (Hebrews 13:15).
- Put your trust in the Lord. It is vain to trust in man; our trust must be in the Lord God alone.

There are many around us who will try to discourage us by asking who will show us any good. David was not allowing himself to be defeated by them. Instead, he turned in prayer to the Lord asking Him to lift up the light of His countenance upon him. If the Lord looks with favour on us He will preserve us from all our troubles. David tells us the way the Lord does this. He puts gladness in our hearts that is greater than the gladness some people experience in a time of rich harvest. As a result David was able to rest in peace. The Lord enabled him to dwell in safety.

Have we learned to look to the Lord as the psalmist did? Is the Lord the one we seek first when we face problems? If so, we can lie down in peace knowing the Lord keeps us safely in His care.

Don Stormer

The Fruit of the Spirit

We would deem it irreverent to set one passage of Scripture above another. Every part has its own purpose, just as every member of the body has its own function. Nevertheless, some portions do shine with special lustre. The inspired writers, at times, rise above the circumstances and controversies of their times, and express themselves in veritable jewels of revelation. Such a jewel shines in the two verses concerning the Fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23, and we crave our reader's indulgence while we meditate, God willing, upon this wonderful theme in a series of articles.

First of all, we must notice the contrast with *the works of the flesh* mentioned in verses 19-21. The Christian has three great enemies, *the world, the flesh, and the devil*. The world is opposed to the Father, the devil to the Son, and the flesh to the Spirit. What a dark catalogue the Apostle presents to us! Some of these vices we may shrink from in abhorrence, but others search us out. Which of us is free from emulations, wrath and envyings? The heart of man is indeed *the hold of every foul spirit* (Revelation 18:2). The Apostle adds: *They which do (or practise) such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God*. Even a Christian may stumble, but where the life is characterised by such things, the divine life is manifestly absent.

But the Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. How much is contained in that word "but". It transports us from man to God, from earth to heaven, from sinfulness to holiness.

It ought to be noticed, too, that the vices are called works, while the virtues are called fruit. In the former, the emphasis is on doing, in the latter, on being. In the first, we see the energy of the flesh, but in the second, we see the energy of God and the repose of faith. In the one case the word is plural, "works"; in the other it is singular, "fruit". Dr. H. Moule drew the contrast beautifully in the following words: "A weary course of discords and internal collisions, a life in pieces and

out of joint, is thus contrasted with a life whose growth is one harmonious development from one rich central principle, germinating and fructifying into a result of purity and peace".

Another striking fact about all the graces mentioned is that not one of them is of the spectacular kind. We know that the Spirit did sometimes manifest Himself in a spectacular way, in powerful preaching, in fervent praying, or in ecstatic utterance (cf. 1 Corinthians 14); but none of those things is found here. The Apostle in this passage is dealing with the Christian's walk (verse 16), and everything he says is applicable to every Christian in every circumstance of life. Had he said that the fruit of the Spirit is speaking with tongues, we might have replied in his own words, *Do all speak with tongues?* (1 Corinthians 12:30). But when he says that the Fruit of the Spirit is love, then everyone is included.

Another contrast. All the works of the flesh are manifestations of the self-life, while the Fruit of the Spirit is all a manifestation of the love-life. The following analysis has been suggested: Joy is love exulting; peace is love in repose; long-suffering is love on trial; gentleness is love in society; goodness is love on the battlefield; meekness is love at school; and temperance is love in training.

Again the nine grapes on the bunch, or the nine dates on the cluster, have been subdivided into three groups of three. It has been suggested that the first three describe our condition, the second three, our conduct, and the third three our character. Similarly, C.F. Hogg and W.E. Vine speak of the first three as Godward, the second three as manward and the third three as relating to what we are in ourselves. These divisions are helpful, but must not be pressed unduly. It is surely clear, for example, that "love" is part of our character and conduct as well as our condition.

One last word. Let us not think that the word "fruit" implies that there is nothing we must do. Other passages teach us that we must "give all diligence" (2 Peter 1:5). The truth of the matter is this. We are like the farmer. He must toil hard, sowing, reaping, ploughing and watering, but God alone gives the increase. So, too, we must work and pray, trust and obey, but the Divine Spirit alone can send the fruit.

Job (2)

Last issue we thought about Job's uprightness and Satan's attack on his wealth and health. We continue...

Job's comforters

Some of Job's friends heard about his misfortune and set out to comfort him. One would be tempted to think that Satan had selected Job's comforters in order to make his life more miserable. Such a thought would be speculation, but it remains a possibility. We know that Satan did not touch Job's wife. Did he reckon that she did not have the strength of faith that Job had and therefore he could use her to try to make Job curse God? We do not know. But we can be certain that Satan will do everything he can within the limits imposed on him, using whatever means he can to increase our problems and, if possible, to cause us to sin.

Job's friends may have had good intentions when they set out to comfort him after hearing about his plight. But they were so unhelpful and uncompassionate that we refer to people who bring gloom when they should bring encouragement as Job's comforters. But why were they so unhelpful?

We are given their beliefs and also the accusations they made against Job in three cycles of speeches. In each cycle the accusations against Job become more serious. Each of the comforters was completely convinced that Job had committed a sin so serious that God had placed him under judgment. Eliphaz, the first to speak, initially expressed his theology carefully, but nonetheless with a firm conviction that if someone was suffering as Job was, he must have done something really bad. He believed that people who are innocent are not destroyed.

Bildad took his arguments further. He asserted that Job's children had sinned, and God had given them over to the penalty of their sin. Because God does not reject a blameless man, Job had only to be pure and upright and God would accept him. Zophar was even more

unkind. He believed that Job should have been suffering even more, claiming that God had even forgotten some of the sins which Job had committed.

In the second cycle of speeches the three visitors become more extreme in their claims. Eliphaz did not merely suggest that Job must have committed some serious sin to be punished this way but described the fate of the man who shook his fist at the Almighty. He would lose all his wealth and inhabit ruined dwellings. Bildad described the fate of the godless man in vivid terms, being convinced that the lamp of the wicked would be put out, that he would have no survivors and that the memory of him would perish. Zophar repeated his belief that a disastrous fate awaits the ungodly.

In the third cycle of speeches, in which only Eliphaz and Bildad participated, Job was accused of things he had never done. He was accused of demanding security from his brothers for no reason, of stripping men of their clothing and of sending widows away empty-handed. Yet none of these could be true. God had already told Satan there was not a man like Job in all the earth – a man who was blameless and upright, who feared God and shunned evil.

Each of Job's friends, had at the base of their beliefs, a conviction that a person had to reach a certain standard of conduct in order to please God. However, it is probably fair to say that Job's friends thought no further than this life. Therefore, apart from the fact that we are not justified by the good things we do, Job's friends had one serious fallacy. They were advising Job that if he lived a blameless life, God would bless him. But this was the very accusation that Satan had made, saying that Job only served God because of the blessings that God bestowed on him. It doesn't always happen that people prosper because they serve God! If it did, then there are many people who would serve God for the wrong reason.

Elihu

Job's comforters were unable to convince him of sin and finally they stopped their attempts to prove that he must have sinned grievously. It was at this stage that Elihu stepped in. A young man with

the brashness of youth, he claimed to know what the problem was. However, some of his assumptions were wrong and therefore he was just as likely as the others to talk nonsense. He spoke about God chastising a person with pain. But we know that Job was not being chastised for wrongs he had done.

However, Elihu did draw attention to the fact that Job was blaming God for the difficulties he was facing. Job was speaking about the ways of God when he had no knowledge of what God was doing. However, Elihu knew no more than the others. He knew nothing about the contest between God and Satan and the extreme pressure Job was facing. Unless we have full knowledge of what has happened, it pays us to be very careful before passing judgment on others!

Apart from not knowing all the facts, Elihu was also as guilty as the others in accusing Job of saying what he did not say. Job did not say he was pure, without transgression. What he was claiming all along was that there was nothing he was guilty of that would have brought this punishment.

There were differences between Elihu and Job's comforters. He did not say, as they did, that if Job repented God would bless him with wealth. Elihu rightly said much more about God's power, speaking of God being exalted in His power with no one able to teach like Him (33:22).

Can we imagine the difficulties Job faced? Few people ever face the satanic opposition he faced. In times like this our trust in God may be tested to the limit. What can we do? We must look to God for His sustaining grace and rest in the assurance that *No temptation has taken you except what is common to man. God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able, but will with the temptation also make the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it* (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Don Stormer

To be continued



Changes in ACM

So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do. (Luke 17:10)

This verse was specially and lovingly given to me by a dear brother in Yerevan on my first visit to Armenia in 2010. This trip was only possible by the kind invitation of Hratsh Kiujian whose name is synonymous with this Trumpet's Sound magazine, a work that has continued faithfully for 54 years since being started by Arto Kiujian, father of brother Hratsh.


Since that first visit, I have been encouraged and blessed by the work of Armenian Christian Mission and its workers who faithfully present the gospel to the poor, not only in Armenia, but also in Lebanon. It was my privilege to visit Lebanon for the first time from 13–22 July this year, with Raffi Chaparian who has overseen the work for the past three years.

I have been truly humbled to be elected chairman of Armenian Christian Mission at our AGM last July. Echoing those profound words In Luke 17:10, I am an unworthy servant, only doing what is my duty! The Greek word used for duty is so apt – paying my debt! Also, in the words of Paul, I am nothing, but we remember the comfort of the Lord Jesus, for without me ye can do nothing (John 15:5).

Our desire is to encourage you to be partners in the work of the Lord, as you have been in the past, both in prayer and in practical support. The Lord has provided us with a new building in Yerevan named Paros (Lighthouse). We were able to accommodate our mission trip members very comfortably this year and we look forward to do even more in our next trip (30 August to 16 September 2024).

More activities have been planned for these premises.

- Weekly Bible studies and preaching the gospel to the family support members and others

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- Brother Martun is burdened to start a men's fellowship group
 - Other activities for children and meetings to encourage our workers in ACM.

The support of about 150 families both in Armenia and Lebanon continues and we are thankful for the many who have contributed sacrificially over the years. We value your prayers as we look to our Lord and seek His face to lead us as we come to the close of another year. May we continue to do for our Lord and Christ that which is our duty.

Dr Daniel James