



Trumpet's Sound

55th 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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Cover photos: Zvartnots Cathedral,
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Prayer and praise points

Thank the Lord for all His goodness.

Pray for

- peace in Armenia and surrounding countries
- the word which is preached among refugees
- the many poor and hungry, both physically and spiritually
- the many young that they will find Christ at a young age
- the safe arrival of our 26th container in Armenia
- wisdom and God's leadership for ACM

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who donate out of the generosity of their hearts.*

You Are Never Alone

Life can take us to many places and situations where we feel forgotten and lonely. Then the fear settles in – exactly what the evil one wants to see. He wants us to be defeated.

King David was often at the front line facing the enemy. Not just one or two, but thousands coming at him with swords. However, we read in Psalm 54:4 “Surely God is my help; the Lord is the one who sustains me”.

As believers, we face the enemy daily, and many problem situations arise but we have so many promises and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The writer to the Hebrews reminds us that “we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me” (Hebrews 13:16).

The message of 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 “Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus”.

Isaiah 41:10 tells us “Fear you not; for I am with you: be not dismayed; for I am your God: I will strengthen you; yes, I will help you; yes, I will uphold you with the right hand of My righteousness”.

The world is indeed changing very rapidly. Ten years ago things were much different, but God is the same yesterday, today and forever. As much as we are looking forward to the rapture, so is the Lord Jesus looking forward to the day when we will all surround Him to praise and glorify His holy name.

This verse has helped me so much in my battles: “If 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” (Colossians 3:2).

HK

Humility in Mark's Gospel

Read Mark 8:32-38; 9:33-41; 10:35-45; 12:38-40

Consider this scenario. Twelve men had followed the Lord Jesus for three years. They are convinced that He is the Messiah and that He will take over the reins of government soon.

They do not understand Him when He talks of death and resurrection. As far as they were concerned, that was not a possibility. From their point of view, the kingdom was coming, and they would become important government officials. So what they did was jockey for position.

We see the way this thinking affected the disciples, particularly in relation to the Lord's purpose in coming into this world. Peter had just answered the Lord's question about who He was. Without hesitation, he had said He was the Christ. The Lord's next teaching assignment was to tell the disciples that He would suffer, be rejected by the nation's leaders, be killed and then be raised three days later. Peter objected and rebuked the Lord. Why?

The death of the Lord Jesus was the last thing the disciples were likely to think about. He was the Messiah. He would take over the reins of government. They, as His faithful followers, expected to have a role in the kingdom. Their only question was who would get the more important positions.

But let us note what the Lord told His disciples to expect. Not a place of honour, but a cross. If we are followers of the Lord Jesus, we too have been told that we must take up the cross. This is what it means to follow Him. This is something which also puts an end to any personal ambitions we may have.

The disciples were so obsessed with the idea of being part of the machinery of government that they argued about their relative greatness as they walked along the road. It appears that they were trying to do this without the Lord knowing. But He knew, and when they

reached their destination He asked them what they had been arguing about along the road.

Where is true greatness? Who really is first? The one who wants to be first is the one who shows himself as the servant of all others. The Lord demonstrated this in the upper room during the Last Supper. There wasn't a servant in the room whose task it was to wash the guests' feet. Since none of the disciples was prepared to wash the feet of the others, it appears that this was a service they would ignore. Was this action something which was beneath them?

The Lord rose from the table and wrapped a towel around Himself and proceeded to wash the disciples' feet. Not one of them had been prepared to do this. One wonders if, in their minds, this was regarded as something like loosening a person's sandal strap – a task which even the lowest Jewish slave was not expected to do.

Not until the Lord came to Peter did anyone object. But the Lord used what had happened to teach the disciples another lesson. However, later in the evening He returned to the lessons linked with humility. They correctly called Him Master and Lord – that is what He was – but what He had done was to be a lesson for them. If He who was Lord and Master had washed their feet, they should wash one another's feet. They should be prepared in humility to care for each other.

But to return to Mark's Gospel. John (and some others) had seen someone casting out demons in their Master's name. They tried to stop him. Here the disciples were trying to maintain an inner circle of people with ability and power. Yet while the Lord and three of His disciples were on the Mount of Transfiguration, nine of the disciples had not been able to cast out a demon from a possessed boy.

There is an important lesson to learn here. We note that the Lord taught this in two parts:

1. He who is not with Me is against Me
2. He who is not against us is on our side

The important lesson was that the person casting out demons in the Lord's name was on the Lord's side. We have similar words with Moses when he stood in the entrance of the camp, and said, "Whoever is on the LORD's side – come to me!" (Exodus 32:26).

The incident that confirms that the disciples were looking for position is found in Mark 10 with the request that James and John made. Matthew also tells us that they were accompanied with their mother when the request was made – in fact, she was the one who made the request.

James and John showed an exaggerated confidence in their ability to face the future. It is almost certain that they had no understanding of the cup the Lord was soon to drink, nor did they know anything about the baptism He would soon undergo. Their confidence did not mislead their Lord. He knew that in time they would drink a cup of suffering but in the meantime all He said was that the positions were not His to give; they were for the people for whom they had been prepared.

The reaction of the other ten disciples was probably what could be expected. One cannot help wondering if their displeasure with the brothers was that James and John had made their request before them. They wanted the positions of honour for themselves just as much as James and John wanted them. This is evident from the earlier conversation recorded in chapter 9. We assume all 12 had been involved in the discussion (or argument) about who was the greatest.

The Lord reminded the disciples about the standards they would find among the Gentiles. Their rulers not only exercised authority over their subjects, but actually lorded it over them. His disciples had to follow a different code of conduct. The one who wanted to be great had to be the servant. As we have seen, those who were great served their brothers and sisters in the way the Lord Himself served the disciples in the upper room. The one who wanted to be first was expected to be the slave of all!

The verses from Mark 12 show just how easy it is to be influenced by the standards of the world around us. More than once the Lord

had reason to comment on the way the scribes and Pharisees sought the important places in the synagogues or at weddings. Luke, in particular, tells us how the Lord, on an occasion when He had been invited to a Pharisee's home, advised the Pharisees not to always grab the places of honour. They could well learn one day that they were not the most important guests at the function and find they were asked to move to make way for someone who was really important.

Let us come back to Mark 10. In all this, the key verse is 10:45: *For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.* There is no way we can serve as the Lord Himself served, because we cannot give our lives as a ransom for others. However, we do have in Him an example to follow. We are to seek, with His help, to be as like Him as it is possible for us to be.

Don Stormer

Trials Like Mine

“Yes, yes, but if you were in my shoes you would know how hard my life is and you would surely pity me. I suffer so much! It's not fair! I don't deserve this! Why doesn't God care?”

I'm sure you have heard people say such things and, if we haven't actually said this ourselves, we all have probably thought it at times! When we go through hardships and difficulties. It is too easy for us to feel sorry for ourselves and bitter towards our neighbours, the world, and even God Himself.

We can't make light of suffering – so much in this life causes real grief and pain, and there is no value in denying our pain or the pain of others. The Lord Jesus deeply felt the suffering of those about Him, shedding tears for them, and the Scripture also teaches us to *weep with those that weep* (Romans 12:15).

Suffering is real, but it is possible to change the way we look at our painful experiences through the light we are given in God's Word. So

here are three steps that could help to change a dark and discouraging experience into something much more bearable and also, thankfully, even fruitful.

First, remember that as God's child, you are much loved and can never be forgotten or forsaken. When we first believed in the Lord Jesus, we came to understand that His cross confirmed forever the unbounded love of God and we knew that because Jesus rose from the dead, so too will all His redeemed children. Your new birth was not the end of God's work in your life, but just the beginning of the journey. He is bringing many sons to glory (*Hebrews 2:10*) and that means that God is working out His purpose in your life, especially in the trials.

Second, even though you may not understand exactly what He is doing through your trials, simply believe that He knows best what is necessary. After all, we have no knowledge of the future (*James 4:13-16*), no knowledge of eternity, and very little knowledge of even our own hearts (*Jeremiah 17:9-10*). Turn your faith in God's wisdom and love into action by praying that He would transform you in every way that He wants, and then expect Him to do it.

Third, live one day at a time. It is easy to be overwhelmed by the thought of days, weeks, months of pain, but just handle today's troubles today, leaving tomorrow's troubles for tomorrow. The Lord Jesus spoke of this principle when He said, *Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble* (*Matthew 6:34*). What is before you that can be done today? Get up, give thanks for today's mercies, and do it. Tomorrow's work is for tomorrow.

Never let yourself drown in self-pity, bitterness and despair. Believe in God, look to Him to fulfil His good will in you, and serve Him today.

God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Corinthians 1:9).

Neil Buckman

Psalm 7

In this psalm David is pleading to the Lord for help against those who persecute him. He has a particular person in mind who is named Cush, a Benjamite. Who this man is we are not told, but he may have been a close ally of King Saul who was also from the tribe of Benjamin. David gives no indication of the reason for the persecution as he entrusts himself to the Lord's protection. He needs help because he fears being in a situation where he will be torn to pieces without anyone being near to help him.

We can imagine David remembering the helpless lambs he had rescued from the lion and the bear. Now he is in a similar situation and he feels just as vulnerable. Hence his prayer for deliverance.

Perhaps we have often felt helpless in the same way that David did, and when we look at our lives we can see no reason why we are being attacked. David examines himself but can find no evil within him that would justify the attack of his enemies. In fact, he has taken care of people who were his adversaries and set them free from some of the problems which they faced. Twice he refused to harm Saul when it was in his power to do him harm. Once he secretly cut off part of the king's robe when the King turned aside into a cave where David and his men already were. On a second occasion he had taken the king's spear and water jug when it was in his power to kill the sleeping Saul. He could indeed say that he had not repaid evil to the person who was at peace with him.

David was ready to suffer punishment if he was guilty of sin. He was not trying to avoid just punishment for some sin which he had committed. He was quite prepared for his enemy to pursue him and tread his glory into the dust. But since he could see no justification for the attacks he was facing, he asked God to act in judgment against his foes.

David pleads with the Lord to arise and act in judgment. He believes that, because of the rage of his enemies, God should arise and act against them. Because of the congregation of peoples (nations?)

surrounding the Lord, David asks that for their sakes He judge the people.

In this we are shown a good example. It is not for us to take vengeance on people whom we consider have wronged us. God tells us that vengeance belongs to Him; in His time and in His way He will act against those who trouble us. It is our responsibility to bring our troubles to the Lord and to trust Him that He will act in the way which will bring Him glory and give us protection.

David was convinced of his innocence in the matter about which he was being attacked, and was prepared that the Lord judge him according to his righteousness. But beyond this, he longed for the wickedness of the wicked to come to an end and the righteous to be established. But even in the turmoil within his soul he could call God the one who defended him and saved the upright in heart.

Although David has been calling on the Lord to act in judgment against his enemies, he had no doubts that God is just and righteous. God is angry with the wicked every day and if man will not repent, He will act in judgment. Now there is a tendency for many people to push away any thought of judgment into the future, but we need to remember the message of Romans 1:18: "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness." Judgment is not only in the future but God has the right to judge now.

Man is therefore commanded to repent or face the wrath of God. If he continues to prepare weapons that will cause death and if he continues to work with iniquity he will be trapped in his own folly. He will be like a man who sets a trap to catch his prey and then falls into the trap himself.

By contrast, the psalmist, in spite of all his problems, will give thanks to the Lord and sing praise to the Lord Most High. He had begun the psalm by addressing it to Yahweh Elohim – the Lord my God – and he concludes by singing the Yahweh Elyon – the Lord Most High. We first read this title in the account of Melchizedek blessing Abraham – Abraham was blessed in the name of God Most High.

When we are faced with foes of various kinds, how do we react? Do we bring the matter to God in prayer and leave it with Him in an attitude of simple trust? Do we continue to praise Him for all His righteousness and His goodness to us?

Don Stormer

The Fruit of the Spirit is Joy

The second grace mentioned as forming part of the Fruit of the Spirit is "joy". That need not surprise us, for every movement of the Spirit has been a movement of joy and song. In Apostolic days there was great joy when the Gospel came to Samaria (Acts 8:8). The first mark of the Spirit filled believers in Ephesians 5:19 was that they spoke in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. The same has been true ever since. Whether it was in the days of Luther, of Wesley, or of Darby, the Spirit has always filled hearts with joy and song.

Dan Crawford was asked what impressed him most forcibly when he got back to London after 23 years in the long grass of Central Africa. He said, "The fact that London has lost its smile. I stood on the bridges, and walked along the thoroughfares, and looked at the hurrying people, and they all looked sad".

Is that strange, after all? The masses of any great city are strangers to the Spirit and are therefore strangers to real joy. Truly, the prophet Joel said, "Joy is withered away from the sons of men" (Joel 1:12).

The following quotation may be found interesting. "The great purpose of religion [*we should prefer to say the Gospel.*] is not to make men happy, but to make men good; but whatever makes men good is very sure to make them happy. It is worthy of remark that in the Bible we meet with the word joy twice as often as the word sorrow; the word hell you may see in 53 instances, the word heaven in 475; and for once you read *damnation*, you read *salvation* sixteen times. *Gladness* occurs nearly 50 times, sadness only once. I find the word

happy in some 27 passages of Scripture, whereas I believe that you will look in vain from the beginning of the Bible to the end, for the word unhappy. Of course these words do not tell much, apart from the examination of the texts; still, a religion, the source of which, and the truest expression of which, are to be found in a book in which the cheerful words so greatly outnumber the mournful ones, can hardly be a very sorrowful kind of religion" (H. S. Brown).

The source of joy is God Himself. Just as He is the source of love and life and light, so He is the fountain of joy. The Psalmist (43:4) spoke of God as his "exceeding joy."

We know most of joy as we appreciate God's salvation, for it is in that way that the barrier between God and us is removed: No wonder the angelic message was "Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy" (Luke 2:10). All those whose hearts have gone on from Bethlehem to Calvary can say, "the Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad" (Psalm 126:3). Alas, too, that sometimes they have to say with the Psalmist in another place, "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation." (Psalm 51 :12).

The question may be asked: "How can this joy be realised in my life?" The answer is: "by faith". Without faith the fountain of joy remains closed, but as we think of all that God has done for us; as we believe the story of His rich grace, we cannot but be joyful. Thus Paul wrote, "The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing" (Romans 15:13). So also Peter, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Peter 1:8).

Faith, however, must be sustained. One way is through the Word. Jeremiah is often thought of as a prophet of gloom. There was much in his day to cause despair. Nevertheless he could write, "Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart" (Jeremiah 15:16). If our joy is small it may be that we have not been listening sufficiently to the voice of God through His Word.

Instructive also are the words of our Lord in John 15:11. "These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you and

that your joy might be full." The Lord's own joy is here promised to those who abide and obey. If we neglect prayer and communion we cannot expect His joy. If we are not surrendered to His love, His joy will not be made full in us. Also, if we do not obey His commandments our joy will be short-lived. What joy the Saviour had, in doing His Father's will! Even concerning His sufferings we read, "For the joy that was set before Him He endured the Cross, despising the shame" (Hebrews 12:2). So we in our turn may have a foretaste of heaven as we are identified with that Cross in winning the lost or helping the saints.

Herein, too, lies the glory of Christianity. If the worldling were asked to make a list of the things that were conducive to happiness, he would mention such things as money, health, and friends. The Christian on the other hand, can regard all things as contributing to his joy. James wrote, "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations" (James 1:2).

In the prison at Philippi (Acts 16) there were stripes and stocks but there were also songs. Later on, from another prison cell Paul wrote to Christians in the same city, "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say rejoice" (Philippians 4:4).

The last reference also suggests the infectious and irresistible character of joy. In verse 25 it says that prisoners were listening to them. They had never heard praise from the prison-house before, and they could not help but listen. Men will always be arrested by true joy. Dr A.T. Schofield tells how as a young man he found Christianity to be a good scheme for getting people to Heaven, but that it made them very miserable down here, until he was brought into touch with a simple believer who revelled in his faith. That was a turning-point in the doctor's life. If only we Christians were more characterised by joy we would count far more in our witness.

We know that perfect bliss lies ahead. "In Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Psalm 16:11). We shall be presented before the presence of His glory "with exceeding joy" (Jude 24). But let us not forget that we are meant to

be joyful now. The joy of the Lord is our strength now (Nehemiah 8:10). In Deuteronomy 28:47 judgment was pronounced upon Israel because they did not serve the Lord their God with joyfulness and with gladness of heart. If we are without joy now, we are unspiritual, for the Fruit of the Spirit is Joy.

Tom Carson

I Don't Believe God Exists

It started simply enough. "I don't believe God exists" Mike the barber said in a matter of fact way. Bill went to a barbershop to have his hair cut and his beard trimmed. As the barber began to work, they began to have a good conversation, telling stories as usual. They talked about politics and the elections, the state of the economy, their families and kids.

When they eventually touched on the subject of God, Mike said: "I don't believe that God exists."

"Why do you say that?" asked Bill.

"Well, you just have to go out in the street to realise that God doesn't exist. Tell me Bill, if God exists, would there be so many sick people? Would there be abandoned children? If God existed, there would be neither suffering nor pain. I can't imagine a loving God who would allow all of these things."

Bill thought for a moment but didn't respond because he didn't want to start an argument. Mike finished his barbering job and Bill left the shop. Just after he left the barbershop, he saw a man in the street with long, stringy, dirty hair and an untrimmed beard. He looked dirty and unkempt.

Bill turned back and entered the barbershop again and he said to Mike, the barber:

"You know what? Barbers do not exist."

"How can you say that?" asked the surprised barber. "I am here, and I am a barber. And I just worked on you!"

"No!" Bill exclaimed.

"Barbers don't exist because if they did, there would be no people with dirty long hair and untrimmed beards, like that man outside."

"Ah, but barbers DO exist! That's what happens when people do not come to me."

"Exactly!" Bill affirmed. "That's the point! God, too, DOES exist! And that's what happens when people do not come to God too."

Selected

***"Peace I leave with you;
my peace I give to you."***

John 14:27

Questions, many unanswered questions...

At the end of 2023, we closed a chapter in Armenian history: a saga of life and death, of struggle, loss, and the heaviest of burdens. In December 2022, Azerbaijani so called "ecoactivists" closed the only road connecting Artsakh to the motherland Armenia. For months, our compatriots from Artsakh fought tirelessly to reopen the Berdzor (Lachin) corridor, not just for food, but for the right to self-determination, to live in their homeland, and to keep Artsakh as Armenian land. Adults and children endured humanitarian disasters for an extended period. Unfortunately, after more than nine months of being blockaded, Artsakh faced ethnic cleansing, migration, and the opening of the way for regular warfare. The people of Artsakh endured many heavy and cruel days. In 2020, Armenia sheltered over 20,000 displaced Artsakh people, sharing their violent path, and now 120,000 of our compatriots found themselves displaced again, many becoming double or triple refugees.

The successive military attacks by the enemy drained us of countless precious lives, disrupted the peace of the region, and led to the capture of high-ranking military and former spokespersons of the Artsakh Republic's military leadership at various times.

We extend condolences and support to all families of martyrs, share the sorrow and suffering of those who lost relatives as well as those who were captured, and we wish a speedy recovery to all our compatriots who were hurt.

Artsakh was left without Armenians... Temporarily.

Silence, hopeless expectations, broken hearts, uncertainty...

Most arrived in Armenia with nothing but the clothes on their backs, facing difficulties at every turn. Where to go? What is safe? How to survive? How to continue living, settling, finding work...

They sought help from every possible avenue: state institutions, charitable foundations, organisations—anywhere that could alleviate even a fraction of their pain.

The Armenian Christian Mission, within its limited means, extended a helping hand to address the primary problems of our fellow Armenians. In November and December 2023, the Foundation organised six meetings in Yerevan and Gyumri where 373 Artsakh Armenians, including family members, participated in psychological and Christian encouragement programs. They were provided with food packages, essential hygiene items, warm clothing for children, school bags stocked with supplies, and blankets. Those who desired them also received Bibles and Christian literature as gifts.

In this trying period, let us become more united, consolidated, and determined as followers of the Lord Jesus. Let us preserve our heritage with hope and faith as we turn the first page of 2024: standing firm, living, enduring, achieving new milestones.

Let us pray that our compatriots find comfort, believe in the Lord, trusting Him their lives and future, and discover the true peace of God.

Angela Harutyunyan