



Trumpet's Sound

49th year, Australia

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"Trumpet's Sound" is a bi-monthly publication of the Armenian Evangelical Brethren Church in Sydney, Australia.

Editor - Pastor Harry Hratsh Kiujian

Contact Address:

ACM AUSTRALIA
PO BOX 1593,
CHATSWOOD NSW 2057
EMAIL: hkiujian@acmaust.org
URL: www.acmaust.org

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Cover photo: "Winter in Armenia", Photo by Anjela Harutyunyan 2017.



PRAYER POINTS

- safety for our co-workers and their families
- our financial needs in 2018
- the Lord to provide new workers in Gyumri
- the needy families and their harsh conditions
- our visiting mission team this year

If you would like to be on ACM's e-mail list to receive prayer letters please send an email to. info@acmaust.org

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"For Bodily exercise profits to a little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come"

1 Timothy 4.8

Starting the New Year fresh! No, you do not need a bicycle, or a treadmill. Perhaps you need a new Bible, or a commitment to join a Bible study group, or to start going to church. The Bible strongly teaches us to have fellowship with other believers, not just for coffee but to study the Bible; not to discuss church and the pastor, but to go deeper into the Word and encourage each other in Christ. Some start well and may even encourage others to come but soon drop out. It is like joining the gym, enrolling, and after few weeks saying it is too hard.

I love this verse: "Godliness is good for all things". Worshiping God, studying His Word, and having fellowship with others is good for all things.

Each time we go to church camp we are given a quiet time in the morning, not to help others fall asleep but to be with the Lord meditating, praying and reading the Bible. What a start for the day, because we know the verse which says "Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8). The world can keep us occupied with so many things, but we read that Jesus often left his disciples to have time alone with His Father.

What about you? How are your spiritual exercises? When will you start having fellowship with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit? When will you commit yourself to attend church and have Bible studies and fellowship with other believers?

Life is like a wave that could come and take you away. You may say that one time you were so close but do not know what has happened to you. If you are one of those who feel they have gone too far from

God, can you see how His loving arms are stretched towards you saying: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

We wish you a blessed year in fellowship with Jesus and His people.

HK

The blessing of being the second (2)

In the previous article we saw how God chose Matthias and did not choose Justus and we agreed that being second does not mean loss of blessings. Here we will look at two examples, one from the Old Testament and the other from the New, and see that being second does not mean that we are neglected by God.

Joshua and Caleb

God chose Joshua to lead the people of Israel after Moses. He became Israel's young new leader. But let us stop and think why God chose Joshua and not Caleb? I want to summarize some points showing that Caleb and Joshua were nearly equal in every aspect.

- Both Caleb and Joshua were in the group Moses sent to spy the Promised Land.
- Of the 12 spies, Caleb and Joshua were the only ones who obeyed and believed that God was with them, while the other 10 and the people of Israel were terrified and were even going to stone Joshua and Caleb (Numbers 14:10).
- In fact, Caleb, rather than Joshua, was the one who stopped the rebellion. "But Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, 'Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it'" (Numbers 13:30). Perhaps Joshua did not speak

because Caleb was older than he. Caleb was then 40 years old (Joshua 14:7).

- Both of them tore their garments when the people were ready to choose a new leader and return to Egypt.
- Caleb's name also came from God's mouth when God said that all warriors would die in the wilderness except Caleb and Joshua (Numbers 14:30, 26:65).
- In fact, the Bible speaks more about Caleb's obedience than Joshua's obedience (Numbers 14:24, Deuteronomy 1:36).

So, what was the difference between Caleb and Joshua? Was it his courage, bravery, or obedience? I do not think so. Possibly his faith? I do not know. However, I certainly know one thing: quite often when God chooses someone for service, He does not say why He made that choice, but He shows why He did so. He does not indicate the reason, but the field of service. For instance, in Paul's case, God did not say to Ananias that Paul was well-educated, grew up as a Pharisee at the feet of Gamaliel, was a Roman citizen, and knew the Scriptures from his childhood. Not at all. He said to Ananias: "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name" (Acts 9:15-16).

The only major difference that can be seen between Caleb and Joshua is that Joshua was Moses' servant, who was always with Moses and was younger than Caleb.

"And the Lord spoke unto Moses face to face, as a man speaks unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle" (Exodus 33:11). See also Exodus 24:13-14.

In the book of Numbers that we read that Joshua was called the servant of Moses (Numbers 11:28). If Joshua was told that he was the servant of Moses, then it is said about Caleb that he was the servant of God (Numbers 14:24). Who is greater? Humanly we would say, Caleb. For sure Joshua was also God's servant, but the point is that Caleb was not less than Joshua in any form. But we see that God chose Joshua and not Caleb!

In leading the nation, both Joshua and Caleb were brave warriors, courageous, trustworthy, God-fearing men. But Caleb became second, not first. This does not mean that Caleb did not have a blessing.

- Isn't it a great honour for Caleb to be called God's servant by God Himself? We too as New Testament Christians are called servants, but even more, we are God's children. Isn't that an amazing blessing, even if we are not leading others or have great responsibilities in a church?*
- Isn't it a blessing that the Bible speaks of Caleb's obedience and perfect faith more than Joshua's?*
- Did God not give Caleb a piece of land? He received Hebron as an inheritance for himself and his offspring (Joshua 14:13).*

Andrew and Peter

What would have happened if Jesus' inner circle of disciples were four instead of the three – James, John, Peter and Andrew? Andrew could have thought "I brought my brother to Jesus; now he is one of His inner circle, and I am not".

It is noteworthy that in the New Testament, we do not meet the expression "Andrew, son of Jonah" but "Andrew, brother of Peter". We meet "Simon, son of Jonah", but Andrew is almost always mentioned in conjunction with his brother.

- Andrew did not perform prominent miracles.*
- Andrew did not preach the Gospel boldly as his brother did, and he did not bring thousands to Jesus in just one sermon.*
- He was not one of the inner circle of Jesus' disciples, whom the Lord always took with Him.*
- He did not write one of the epistles of the New Testament, as Peter and John did.*

It's obvious that Andrew was not the first, he was always behind the scenes. Did he have no blessing or little blessing? Let us see his blessings and remind ourselves of the words of the psalmist "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord,

O my soul, and forget not all his benefits” (Psalm 103:1-2).

- He was one of the 12 disciples of the Lord Jesus. Isn't it an honour to be among the Twelve?
- The Lord Jesus said, “But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.” Andrew was certainly one of those blessed ones.
- “The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb” (Revelation 21:14). Isn't it a great blessing that one of the foundations of the city is named after Andrew?

The Lord has great blessings for us too, if we faithfully live and serve Him. We must always remember the simple biblical principle that if we are faithful in little, God will trust us with more. No matter what service you are doing in the church, whether superior or inferior, always remember that you are the first in your ministry. This is how God sees you. In God's sight you are seen as the first on the little job He has entrusted you. So let us rejoice in the Lord, for He is good and His love lasts for ever.

“Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain” (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Vartan Sarkissian

Timeless quote

“Tomorrow is the devil's day, but today is God's. Satan does not care how spiritual your intentions are, or how holy your resolutions, if only they are determined to be done tomorrow.”

J.C. Ryle, Thoughts for Young Men

Are you growing? (2)

2 Peter 1:1-15

God has empowered us for growth, but do we want to grow? There is a need for balanced growth. Every virtue needs to be balanced by adding another kind of virtue. Below is a sequence of steps or character qualities.

The sequence begins with faith

This is the act of throwing ourselves into the mighty arms of God and believing that He has saved us through Christ. He will never let us down. He will keep maintaining and supporting us day by day.

Add to your faith, goodness

This is moral courage. To be a good and honourable friend and citizen, James teaches that faith without moral action is like a body without life. Peter says the same. But you will find that simply trusting and doing the right things is not enough.

Add to your goodness, knowledge

We must not only do and believe right things, we must know the reason for this. When someone asks why we believe what we believe, and do what we do, we must be able to explain why. This is the challenge to every new generation of Christians, not only to pass on what they believe and do, but why they believe and do these things.

Add to your knowledge, self-control

This is the ability to control ourselves. Why do people with knowledge need this? What happens when we know something, and someone else doesn't? Or they do not see it our way? We can become impatient with them, or act proudly. Knowledge without humble, patient self-control can cause a great deal of damage.

Add to your self-control, perseverance

Anyone who has made a new resolution or begun a diet, will know

how easy it is to begin. The real test is to keep going. We make much of conversions to Christ. To start is great, but to finish triumphantly is our goal.

Add to your perseverance, godliness

We can have faith with obedience, knowledge that knows why, self-control and perseverance, but after a few years this can settle down to a dull determined effort. Without godliness, that glowing personal relationship with Christ, we lose sight of the vision that initially motivated us.

Add to your godliness, brotherly kindness

The closer we are to God, the more willing we are to engage in ordinary relationships in a loving and kind way. We become more willing to extend forgiveness and not hold high barriers that people have to jump over before we accept them in ordinary everyday kindness.

Add to your brotherly kindness, love.

This brings us to the ultimate goal of spiritual growth. Can you see where Peter's path of growth has brought us? It has brought us to think about the ultimate sign of growth. This is the ability to give and receive love. How we relate to one another is the true evidence of where we are spiritually. In my relationships with other people

- *do I unconditionally accept and love them?*
- *do I build walls or bridges?*
- *do I bring judgment?*
- *am I a healing influence on other people's wounded spirits?*

There are many people with wounded spirits. Ezekiel wrote these terrible words to the false shepherds of Israel: "You have not strengthened the weak, or healed the sick, or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally" (Ezekiel 34:4).

If a person is spiritually weak or injured, do we treat them harshly and brutally or do we strengthen them and bind their wounds? Sometimes we Christians can be pretty good at telling people what is wrong

with them. But when it comes to bringing healing, binding wounds and restoring spiritual health we are not so clever. Ezekiel says godly communities are places where the spiritually weak are strengthened and the wounded are bound up rather than judged. Judgment is needed far less than we think. Peter says we should grow to realise that there is no limited supply of love. God's love is like air. No matter how much I use, there is still plenty for everyone else.

What is the purpose of spiritual growth?

Spiritual growth keeps us from being ineffective and unproductive. This is the opposite of a futile life. Everything we do is filled with eternal significance. Men who think they are significant build monuments and statues so they will be remembered. But eventually they will be covered by dust and forgotten. But to the Christian, even giving that cup of cold water that you had forgotten about, is remembered for eternity. Paul teaches in Colossians 3 that whatever you do for the Lord is something of eternal significance.

Spiritual growth makes us aware of who we are. Without growth, we become short sighted or blind as to who we really are. We are cleansed permanently by the work of Christ on the cross, and live constantly by God's grace.

We will receive "an abundant entrance". What is an abundant entrance? This term was sometimes used to describe what happened when athletes returned home to Greece after competing in the Olympic Games. They would sometimes break down part of the city wall for a very special entrance, an abundant entrance. "You will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom" (verse 11). That we can be an ingredient in God's happiness, is glory we cannot fully understand, but that is what an abundance entrance is.

The essence of friendship between two people is that each brings enjoyment to the other. It is like that between us and God. Growth is discovering what it means to enjoy God and to be enjoyed by God.

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

Presenting the Lord in the temple

Luke 2:21-40

Joseph and Mary followed the ordinances of the law. The Child Jesus was circumcised and, after Mary's purification had been completed, He was taken to the temple and presented to the Lord.

In contrast to the information about John's circumcision, Luke's only detail about the circumcision is that He was named as the angel said He was to be. We assume that this happened in Bethlehem; it would not have been easy to return to Nazareth and then a few weeks later to return to Judea for the purification rites in the temple.

Luke again draws attention to people who observed the Law meticulously. This had been stated of Zechariah and Elizabeth. There was the same careful observance of the Law with Joseph and Mary, verse 23 telling us which particular command was being followed. However, almost incidentally, Luke tells us that Joseph and Mary were poor. They did not bring the costly offerings which wealthy people would have brought. Instead, they brought a pair of turtle doves. Again, we realise something about the poverty into which the Lord entered.

Simeon and Anna

Luke spends more time telling us about the visits of Simeon and Anna to the temple than about the purification rites. Simeon's message to Mary was something she would never forget.

Simeon was a devout and righteous man, waiting for the Consolation of Israel. This was not an event that would bring consolation to Israel, but a person – the Christ of God. The Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon that he would not die before seeing the Messiah. The Holy Spirit moved him to enter the temple at the very moment that Joseph and Mary were coming to do what the Law required.

Simeon's praise and his prophecy indicate a man who was very close to God. He took the child in his arms and praised God for fulfilling His word. He could now happily leave this life in peace. He had seen the Salvation of the Lord which God had prepared for everyone. Simeon

was well aware that when the Messiah came He would bring blessing and salvation, not just to the nation of Israel, but to all mankind. Isaiah (42:6) had spoken of the Servant of the Lord as the one who would bring light to the Gentiles. Simeon had grasped this truth, acknowledging that the same person would bring the light of revelation to the Gentiles, and glory to the people of Israel.

Joseph and Mary marvelled at the words spoken by Simeon. It seems that it took time to grasp the significance of the message the angels had brought some months before. Joseph had been told that the babe had been conceived by the Holy Spirit and would save His people from their sins. Mary had been told that her son, as well as being called the Son of the Highest, would inherit the throne of His father David and rule over a kingdom that would never end. Now they learn that the blessing would reach much further and that the Gentiles would come into blessing because of this Child.

Simeon blessed Joseph and Mary and added to their knowledge of the one he was holding. The Child was destined for the falling and rising of many in Israel. This enigmatic statement must be linked to words the Lord quoted and commented on in Matthew 21:42-44. The Lord reminded those listening that the stone which the builders rejected was made the head of the corner. He added that whoever fell on this stone would be broken to pieces, but on whom it fell, it would scatter him as dust.

Many in Israel refuse to believe that Jesus is the Messiah. They stumble at the stumbling block of a crucified Messiah. They fall on the stone and are broken to pieces. At the same time, many will believe; those who believe will rise to shine like the stars in the heavens. The Lord Jesus would also be a sign that would be spoken against. The Lord performed many signs to demonstrate that He was the Christ of God, but those opposed to Him derided Him as one who worked in league with Beelzebub. However, in this way the hearts of many would be revealed. The real thoughts of a man are seen in the way he treats the Son of God.

Simeon added a special message for Mary. A sword would pierce through her own soul. Mary would experience deep anguish of heart

when she saw the Lord Jesus on the cross. Her mother heart would suffer intense agony.

Anna, another person of great devotion, was in the temple and she spoke of the greatness of the small child. Anna was a prophetess who spent much of her time in the temple serving God with fastings and prayers. She had been a widow for many years, having lived with her husband for only seven years. She gave thanks to God for the Child, recognising that redemption would come through Him. Her constant attendance at the temple mark her out as a woman of God: worshipping, fasting, and praying. She told her story to those who, like her, were looking for redemption in Jerusalem.

To us today

Hearts of devotion to the Lord come to people like Simeon and Anna who had spent time with God. They had learned the way of worship. The same one they worshipped is the one before whom we must bow in worship, recognising that it was He who came to die for us. It is only in Him that we find salvation and rest for our souls.

Don Stormer

We are created for His pleasure (1)

Genesis 1:1

Some say that the first verse of Genesis is the most read verse in the Bible! Although we may think John 3:16 is read the most, they say that when people want to begin reading the Bible, they start at Genesis 1:1, even if they do not finish reading the entire Bible.

Nevertheless, this verse is so big. Let us get a grasp of all its meaning and truth! The rest of the Bible relies on it. In fact, built upon this verse are details about God which help us understand Him better as Creator, Provider, Sustainer, Saviour, and Father!

Notice that the Bible says that God created the heaven and the earth! Before God created the heaven and the earth, there was noth-

ing in existence except for God Himself! All things in all of the earth and, in fact, in all of the universe, including all things that are seen and not seen, are in existence only because God created them (Colossians 1:16; John 1:3; Isaiah 45:12).

It is important to know why God created the heaven and earth, including human beings. He created all things for His pleasure, that is, to bring Him enjoyment, and for Him to have pleasure through all of His creation (Revelation 4:11). Now, we know that God takes pleasure from His creation because nature declares God's glory (Psalm 19; Genesis 1:4, 12, 18, 21, 25; Psalm 104:31). But what about us as human beings? Do we give pleasure to God? If God created us, which He did, and if He created us for His pleasure, we need to ask ourselves if God takes pleasure in us? Do we give Him pleasure?

How can we give pleasure unto God? Well, we build on the foundation that God created us (Genesis 1:26; Genesis 1:27; Genesis 2:18; Colossians 1:16). God not only created us, but did so for a purpose – His pleasure, praise, glory and honour (Isaiah 43:7; Isaiah 43:21; Psalm 149:4). Therefore, the next question we should ask is how can we give pleasure to God? Is God getting pleasure out of us? How can we bring pleasure to God (Revelation 4:11)?

First, God wants us to have fellowship with Him. Since the beginning of creation, God delighted to have fellowship with men. He did so with Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:8-9) and Enoch (Genesis 5:22). Abraham was called God's friend (James 2:23). Notice that the Bible says that Abraham obeyed God, and only then was he called God's friend. When a person believes in God through Jesus Christ and obeys Him, he/she becomes a friend of God. Jesus called His disciples friends if they did what He commanded them (John 15:14). Therefore, God takes pleasure in human beings, when they believe in Him and begin fellowship with Him through Jesus.

Second, God takes pleasure in seeing His children live in peace and unity (Philippians 2:2; Psalm 133:1; Romans 12:16; Ephesians 4:3). God does not want us to make an issue of little things, but to forgive each other, working together for the common cause of furthering the kingdom of God.

Third, God takes pleasure when you and I praise, honour, and glorify Him in our lives. This happens in two ways – by proclamation and obedience. God takes pleasure when we proclaim His name, or herald the truth (Mark 16:15; 1 Peter 3:15-16; Acts 1:8). God takes pleasure when we obey Him (Matthew 5:16; John 15:14; John 14:15, 23). Our obedience to Him will glorify Him, as well as give Him honour, and that is what He takes pleasure in.

Does God take pleasure in us? Having fellowship with Him, being in unity and peace with Christians, and glorifying His name through our lives will cause God to take pleasure in us!

Raffi Chaparian

God or money?

Mark 10:17-22

The pursuit of money

In past societies, if a man had no wages he faced literal starvation and death. A supply of money insulated him from the fear of death by starvation. Later, money replaced the supplies of food and clothing. Soon, those who had more money forgot the reason they had so much. Money became a purpose in itself, a status symbol and a measure of success.

Some rich people have a tendency to become superior to those who have little or no money. They can enjoy their life of luxury, which is not available to others. They are given tremendous power and they think that they can use their money to rule over other people. “The love of money” finally becomes idolatry. This is why the Apostle Paul said: “The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.” (1 Timothy 6:10a).

The Lord Jesus talked a lot about money

We need to ask three main questions about money: 1. How did I obtain it (legally and honestly)? 2. What am I doing with it (buying

unnecessary luxuries or helping the needy)? 3. What is it doing to me? Some of the Lord Jesus' parables address the heart of the last question. Of the 38 parables the Lord Jesus gave, 16 concern money or possessions. Out of all the problems addressed, almost half of His parables touch the issue of money or possessions.

Wrong use of money

How often it is true that we spend money we don't have to buy things we don't need in order to impress people we don't like. The problem is not that money itself is bad. The real problem is simply that money has a tendency to replace God.

What is the problem?

In Mark 10:17-22 we read about a young man who seemed to be seeking after God. He was offered the amazing opportunity to be with the Lord Jesus and learn from Him. However, he walked away disturbed because he would not give up all that he had. The problem is not that his money was bad. The problem was simply that his money had made him its slave.

Today's tragedy

The real tragedy today is that so many people run after money. They aim for money because they have never realised that there is something far more important. Too often in running after making a living, we fail to make a life. In running after money, we fail to see the larger purpose of our time on earth.

What is my goal concerning money? Am I using money to live, or living for money?

Dr Czeslaw Bassara



We thank you for your prayers and support. This picture is from Vanadzor, where children are regularly learning God's Word and glorifying God. The Lord blesses us.