



Trumpet's Sound

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

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Cover photo: "Armenian fruits", Republic of Armenia, Photo by John Noble, ACM team.



Prayer and praise points

Give thanks for

- the team from USA which has just completed its mission to Armenia.
- their support and love to the people of Armenia
- the ACM and CEF Teams and their dedication and love for the ministry and especially in serving the Lord

Pray for

- much fruit from the many seeds sown by the team from USA
- the Family Support Project, and the many families in need of monthly support and food

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

Obedience

Is there such thing as obedience in the 21st century? As believers let us take a closer look at God's Word. One of the first Scripture memory verses that our children learn is "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right" (Ephesians 6:1 KJV). Most people expect that children should be taught to obey; however, they rarely understand that obedience is for not only the children, but for everyone.

The biblical word for "obey" comes from the Greek word "hupakou" which means to listen attentively; by implication, to heed or conform to a command or authority. The word conveys the idea of actively following a command. There is no choice in this matter, it is to be done whether one agrees with it or not. Obedience is not optional.

Obedience commanded by God

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 reads "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

Colossians 3:22 says "Slaves, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord." As believers we need to stand out in our obedience to God and to the authorities.

Beware of reasoning about God's Word; obey it. 1 Samuel 15:22 reads "And Samuel said, Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams." God is looking and watching for our obedience to His Word, the Bible.

In John 15:14 Jesus says "If you love me, you will keep my commandment." We must follow God's and Jesus' commands daily and not be selective in which ones we obey.

Galatians 5:13-14 reads "For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself'."

Loss of blessings for disobedience

Many believers are missing out on God's blessings because of their disobedience. Joshua 5:6 tells us that "the people of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, until all the nation, the men of war who came out of Egypt, perished, because they did not obey the voice of the LORD; the LORD swore to them that he would not let them see the land that the LORD had sworn to their fathers to give to us, a land flowing with milk and honey." Romans 2:6-8 teaches that "He will render to each one according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury."

Rewards of Obedience

In Genesis 22:17-18 the Lord, speaking to Abraham through an angel, said "I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice."

Let us remember the words of Ephesians 5:6. "Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience."

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The power of listening

Have you ever had a friend share a problem with you and, as he talks about it, your mind begins to frantically thrash about for some profound or helpful comment to make? Nothing particularly insightful comes to mind and you feel desperately inadequate in the face of your friend's need. Finally your friend says "Thank you for being such a help. I feel much better now". You are left puzzling with the thought "How did I help? I hardly said a word". We are puzzled or perhaps even amazed that somehow this person has been helped without the benefit of large doses of our wisdom or advice. Let's not minimise the importance of wisdom or timely advice, but there is a hidden lesson in an experience like this. It tells us something about the healing power of listening. I once came upon a book with a wonderful title, "The Awesome Power of the Listening Heart". That is a wonderful phrase to reflect on. It captures something that James was thinking about when he said "Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak ..." (James 1:19).

When we speak, we break into someone else's space with our words, our ideas, our concerns, our judgments and our opinions. When we actually listen to someone else we come to them with a gift. "You are more important to me right now than any other item on the agenda. My concerns, my opinions, I will lay them all to one side and give you the total focus of my attention." True listening is free of judgment. It does not tell a person how he "ought" to feel or what he "should" do. It is a gift of open, safe space and acceptance. Listening is a powerful way to communicate Christian love. It is a simple fact that when people feel as if they have been listened to, they feel cared for. One of the classic examples of Christ as a listener is seen on the road to Emmaus where two troubled disciples were spiralling down into despair as they shared their confusion and doubt with each other. "Jesus Himself came up and walked along with them" (Luke 24:15).

I think most evangelical Christians would have been unable to resist instantly breaking into that conversation with "the answer". Strangely,

Jesus didn't do that. He asked questions and drew these two disciples out, and listened to them as they poured out the sorrow in their hearts. Only after listening did He "begin to explain to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself" (Luke 24:27).

It seems to me that we can tend to be quick to speak and slow to listen. We have so much to say; after all, we think we have the answer to people's problems. In a world looking for answers, that is a wonderful way to be. However, if we are to follow the teaching of James or the example of Christ, we must also learn the healing skills of listening. When we have seen the world through the eyes of another person, then like Christ on the road to Emmaus, we may have something truly relevant and powerful to say. The wise writer of Proverbs said "He who answers before listening, that is his folly and shame" (Proverbs 18:13).

If you have ever experienced the refreshment of being with someone who truly listened to you, you will know what I mean. Listening is a powerful, healing skill to be learned. When we fail to recognise this in church and family life, our relationships suffer and our ability to help others is severely limited.

Focused, attentive listening from the heart to another person involves discipline and sacrificing your own ego but it is a powerful way to say "I care".

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

Timeless quote

"We must beware of thinking too much about our meals, our furniture, our houses, and all those many things which concern the life of the body. We must strive to live like people whose first thoughts are about the immortal soul. We must endeavour to pass through the world like people who are not yet at home, and are not so troubled about the fare they meet with on the road and at the inn. Blessed are they who feel like pilgrims and strangers in this life, and whose best things are all to come!"

J. C. Ryle - Expository thoughts on the Gospels: Luke volume 1

The birth of John the Baptist

Read Luke 1:57-80

In these verses Zechariah's story ends. Though Zechariah had not believed the angel's message, God honoured His promise and John was born. Neighbours and relatives joined in the celebration at the baby's circumcision and planned to name him after his father. Elizabeth, knowing what the angel had said, announced that his name was John. She shows her strength of character in being prepared to stand against neighbours and relatives who planned something different.

What happens next suggests that Zechariah may have been deaf as well as dumb. People had to make signs to him to learn what he wanted to name his son. He answered by writing on a tablet "His name is John". His ability to speak then returned to him as the angel had said it would.

One wonders how quickly an event like this fades into the background. People could see the hand of God at work and kept the memory of what happened in their hearts. However, it seems that the news did not travel very far. When John the Baptist burst on the scene thirty years later, the religious authorities were asking all kinds of questions to ascertain who he was.

Zechariah's prophecy

The story ends well. Zechariah's faith probably returned quickly; he had suffered only a temporary lapse. As soon as he realised he was dumb, he knew the angel spoke from God. However, for nine months he could not express in speech his belief in God's greatness. Once his son was named, his tongue was loosed and he burst into praising God and prophesying in words which indicate a depth of understanding of God's purposes. He understood that the long promised Messiah was coming and that John would be His forerunner. He spoke about God raising up a horn of salvation in the house of David even before the Lord Jesus was born. He was certain of the role his son would play. He knew salvation came from God Himself.

The prophecy and hymn of praise is in two parts. Zechariah spoke first about the coming Messiah and then of the role his son would fulfil. He praised God for the fulfilment of His promises: God had visited and redeemed His people. In using a past tense, Zechariah saw God's work as complete. He knew salvation came from God Himself.

Salvation would come from the house of God's servant David. Jeremiah (23:5) had written "Behold, the days come, says the Lord, that I will raise to David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land". Zechariah praised God for His redemption and for raising up the Messiah who would bring forgiveness and peace.

Zechariah saw his son as the forerunner of the Lord. The man who had questioned the message of the angel spoke with confident trust in God about the work his son would do. He would prepare the people of Israel spiritually for the coming Messiah by giving them the knowledge of salvation through the remission of sins. Zechariah acknowledged that this would happen because, in the mercy of God, the Dayspring from on high was visiting His people. The Messiah, the Dayspring from on high, would give light to those in darkness and guide people into the way of peace.

Although Zechariah was certain of the role his son would play, it is likely that neither he nor Elizabeth lived long enough to see the commencement of their son's ministry. That ministry would begin once John had become strong in spirit as well as after a period of seclusion in the wilderness areas of Israel.

To us today

This story highlights certain aspects of the life of faith which are also important for all of us.

- 1. We cannot assume that our faith is strong enough to meet difficult circumstances. If a godly man like Zechariah failed, we must take heed to ourselves lest we fall.*
- 2. We can be thankful that temporary unbelief does not cancel the promises of God. When we have times of doubting, we must*

bring those doubts before the Lord and ask Him to help us to see His purposes in the problems we face.

3. *It is very likely that our lack of faith – or unbelief – may result in some punishment, or at least the withholding of blessing. We must not treat unbelief as something that is not serious. But we thank God that the blessings He has promised, such as eternal life and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, will never be withdrawn.*
4. *We must also resolve to be persistent in prayer. Sometimes our prayers are answered immediately or within a very short period. Other times we may, like Zechariah and Elizabeth, wait for years. God has His purposes in making us wait. Our task is to remain faithful to Him and to continue in prayer.*

Don Stormer

Five million dollars

One thing I know—I cannot speak for others, but I can speak for myself; I cannot read other minds and other hearts; I cannot read the Bible and lay hold of it for others; but I can read it for myself, and take God at his word. The great trouble is that people take everything in general, and do not take it to themselves. Suppose a man should say to me, “Moody, there was a man in Europe who died last week, and left five million dollars to a certain individual”. “Well,” I say, “I don't doubt that; it's rather a common thing to happen.” I don't think anything more about it. But suppose he says, “But he left the money to you”. Then I pay attention; I say, “To me?” “Yes, he left it to you.” I become suddenly interested. I want to know all about it. So we are apt to think Christ died for sinners; He died for everybody, and for nobody in particular. But when the truth comes to me that eternal life is mine, and all the glories of Heaven are mine, I begin to be interested. I say, “Where is the chapter and verse where it says I can be saved?” If I put myself among sinners, I take the place of the sinner, then it is that salvation is mine and I am sure of it for time and eternity.

Anecdotes and illustrations of D.L. Moody

Three steps to spiritual revival

God's Word is the key

In Old Testament times the Jews were God's special people. He promised them many things, but some of these were conditional on their obedience (Exodus 15:25-26; 23:25-26; Deuteronomy 7:12-16). If they worshipped idols, they were told: "The LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and only a few of you will survive among the nations to which the LORD will drive you" (Deuteronomy 4:27 NIV). Because the Jews were unfaithful and followed idols instead of the true God, they were overrun by the Assyrians and Babylonians and Jerusalem was plundered and destroyed.

However, after 70 years of captivity in Babylon, some returned to their homeland. This journey of about 1500 kilometres took them four months to travel (Ezra 7:8). They returned in three phases: Zerubbabel rebuilt the temple, 80 years later Ezra led a spiritual revival, and 13 years later Nehemiah rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem. Although there was opposition from the surrounding nations, they persisted and there was spiritual revival when they turned back to worshipping the only true God. Let's look at the key steps in their revival.

The main character is Ezra, who was a devoted student and a teacher of the Scriptures (Ezra 7:10). He was instrumental in a spiritual revival after Nehemiah rebuilt the city walls. One day all the Israelite men and women gathered together and Ezra "read it (the books of Moses) aloud from daybreak till noon" (Nehemiah 8:3). The people listened for five to six hours! That's a long time! Thirteen Levites helped by "making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people understood what was being read" (Nehemiah 8:8). As Aramaic was the language at the time, they probably translated it from Hebrew into Aramaic. On the next day Ezra taught the leaders, priests and Levites from the Scripture (Nehemiah 8:13). When they discovered that they had not been celebrating the Festival of Shelters, they celebrated the festival with joy. On every day of this seven day festival, Ezra read from the Scripture (Nehemiah 8:18).

Three days later the people gathered together to confess their sinful ways. They “read from the Book of the Law of the LORD their God for three hours, and spent another three hours in confession and in worshipping the LORD their God” (Ezra 9:3). They prayed one of the longest prayers in the Bible, which traces God’s faithfulness across history despite the Jews’ unfaithfulness (Nehemiah 9:6-37). After this they wrote a binding agreement that they would obey the Lord and follow the Scriptures (Nehemiah 9:38–10:39). So the sequence of events was: they read the Bible (chapter 8), they confessed their sins (chapter 9), and they obeyed the Lord (chapter 10).

This pattern is similar to the Jewish revival under King Josiah. After he was informed of God’s message in Scripture, “he tore his robes” and wept in anger and sorrow acknowledging the nation’s disobedience, and then promised “to follow the LORD and keep His commands” and acted to remove all the idols in the land of Israel (2 Kings 22:8–23:20; 2 Chronicles 34:14-33).

Read the Bible

What can we learn from this? Revival begins with God’s word. Did you notice how often they read the Scripture? The Bible showed them how they had failed. The Bible is our spiritual food: “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16). It helps us learn God’s perspective on our world including what is right and what is wrong (“teaching”); where we are on the wrong track (“rebuking”); how to get back onto the right track (“correcting”); and how to live a godly life (“training in righteousness”).

Confess our sins

After they read the Bible, they felt guilt and shame. This led to confession of sin in prayer to the Lord; they were honest with God. After God speaks to us in Scripture, we need to respond in prayer. This is necessary to keep in touch with God: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). Although the penalty of our sins has

already been paid, sin affects our relationships in the family of God. If we confess our sins to the Lord, He promises to forgive them and enable these relationships to be restored. If the sin is against another person, we should confess to them so that they in turn can forgive us (Luke 17: 3-4; James 5:16).

Follow the Lord

After they confessed their sin, there was repentance and obedience; they acted to get back on track. Signs of being in fellowship with the Lord and with believers in the family of God are that we keep His commands, obey His word, and live as Jesus did (1 John 2:3-6). This means obeying Christ's teachings, doing what pleases Him, and letting Him live His life through us. Paul said, "I follow the example of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1). Christ left an example for us to follow, and said "learn from Me" and "Whoever wants to be My disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Me" (Matthew 11:29; 16:24; 1 Peter 2:21).

Lessons for us

So let's read and meditate on the Bible and apply it to our lives. This is the key to the three steps of spiritual revival: read the Bible, confess our sins, and follow the Lord.

George Hawke

The resurrection of Jairus' daughter (Mark 5:21-43, Luke 8:50-56)

T*he father, the mother, and the relatives gathered around the bed of a 12-year-old girl watching her suffering. Perhaps she had been lying there for a few days and her condition was really serious.*

Jairus, the father, was a synagogue leader. He would surely have heard about the Lord Jesus. On that day he thought to himself (or

perhaps his wife or one of his close friends suggested to him) that he should go and find the Lord Jesus and bring Him home. He could have asked one of his friends or relatives to do that, explaining that he wanted to stay at home, close to his daughter. But he did not do that, he did not trust His daughter's fate to someone else. At that crucial moment, he personally decided to go and find the Lord Jesus.

Jairus came out of the house with questions. Was it the last time he was going to see his daughter? Would he find Jesus? Would Jesus agree to come with him? With trembling heart and frustrated mind he rushed to find Jesus. Finally he found Him, as always, in the crowd surrounded by people. Being a synagogue leader He had the courage to come and kneel before Jesus in front of everyone and earnestly beg Him to come to his house. He said "My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live" (Mark 5:23).

On the way, with the crowd claiming Jesus' attention, Jairus' task was getting difficult. Suddenly, a woman who had had a bleeding problem for 12 years touched the garment of the Lord Jesus and was healed. At that moment Jesus stood and asked who had touched Him. For Jairus, this was a waste of time, an unwanted incident, because every second was vital; but for Jesus, there was a lesson to teach Jairus so that he would wholeheartedly believe in Him.

A miracle took place before Jairus' eyes. He began to believe when he eyewitnessed the miraculous healing of this woman. Jairus began to hope in his heart. "Oh, may my little daughter endure a bit more. If He cured this woman who suffered for 12 years, He surely could cure her..." And again they turned their feet to the house of Jairus. Shortly afterward, some people came from his house and told him the bad news. Before they uttered a word, Jairus would have understood from their facial expression that his beloved daughter had passed away.

At that moment his feelings boiled over. Probably, troubling thoughts entered his mind. "Why did I not find Jesus sooner, why has this woman bothered us? Could my daughter have been saved if I had reached Jesus sooner? All my efforts were in vain, how can I go home

and look at my wife's face? What should I say?" At that very moment, the pity and grief of Jairus were dissolved by the sweet words of the Lord Jesus who said "Do not be afraid; only believe", words spoken as soon as Jairus heard that his daughter had died. What a loving and caring Lord we have. He didn't permit the bad news to crush Jairus' loving heart. In other words Jesus was saying, "Don't be afraid, I am with you".

It is interesting that the Lord says, "Do not be afraid". The girl was already dead! Why did He say that to Jairus? Jesus here is revealing what Jairus was feeling in his heart. From the moment Jairus came out of his house until the moment He found Jesus and walked with Him, he feared he would lose his daughter. He was afraid it was too late to bring Jesus in.

My personal conviction is that if the girl had died when Jairus was at home, he would probably have preferred to stay and mourn his loss. He would probably not think of finding Jesus but would start organising the funeral. He did not have the faith of the Shunammite woman who, when her only child died, went and found the prophet Elisha and brought him home (2 Kings 4:18-37). Jairus as leader of the synagogue should have been familiar with this Old Testament story, but he had forgotten it and his faith had vanished, because fear overwhelmed his heart. Oh, dear reader, don't allow fear to control your life. Fear will certainly not allow you to trust God, even if He is walking beside as Jesus was walking with Jairus.

We can divide Jairus' trip into three periods. The first one starts from the moment Jairus left home and found Jesus. At this stage he thought he should find Jesus before his daughter's death. This was the time of an attitude when we feel "I have to do something". The second period starts the moment he saw the healing of the woman, until the hearing of the sad news. Here he hoped that all would be well as he hurried to take Jesus to his home. Half of his work was done. We can describe this period as "I have done my part, Jesus will do His part". The third was from the moment of receiving the death message until they reached home. Here Jairus' hope was transformed into something else, which the Bible calls faith. And this is what Jesus asked of

Jairus. He said “only believe”. It was not “hope” but “believe”. We can call this period “He is all in all”.

God is willing to be with us in our quests. When Jairus sought Jesus, God led him to the place where Jesus was. When he found Jesus and invited Him home, the Lord did not reject him, although He did not find faith in Jairus' heart. What the Lord did was to help Jairus in transforming his little hope into a genuine faith. Is it not wonderful to have such a Saviour, who is always with us, understands us and helps us to trust Him completely amid our fears? Let us rejoice, not for the miracles Jesus can perform, but for His dealings and His caring for His children.

Vartan Sarkissian

ACM ministry

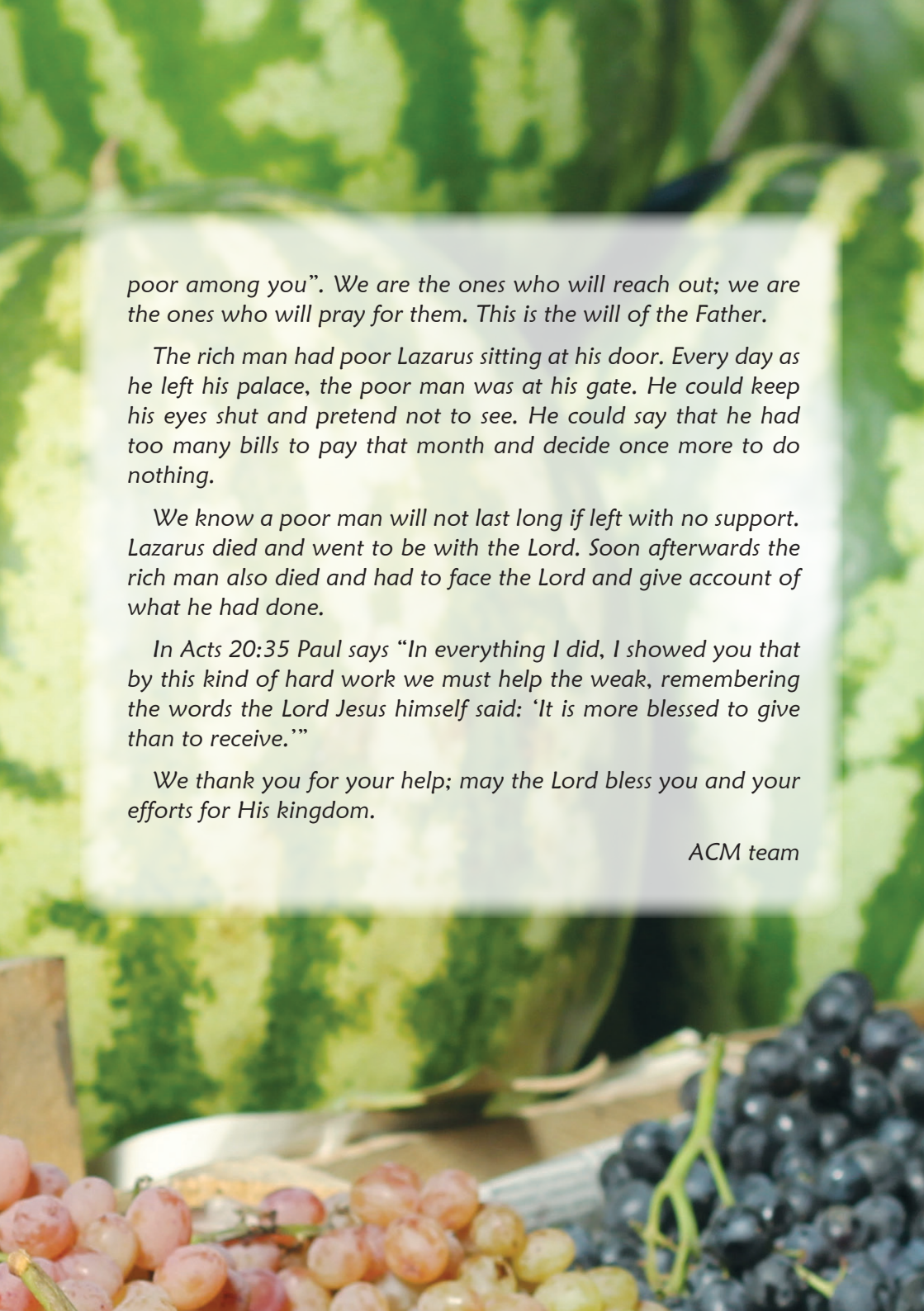
A*rmenian Christian Mission is a faith mission with many sponsors and volunteers in different countries who join us in prayer, physical work, and financial support. Many who become part of our team visit our mission field. We are thankful for all those who have been praying for us. The Lord has indeed been gracious to us.*

We are happy to announce that you will soon be able to follow our activities on our website – www.acmaust.org.

Many ask what the most urgent needs are. Our main aim is to help needy families in crisis, by taking them the Gospel, helping them spiritually, praying with them, paying their medical expenses, buying food for the family, milk for new babies, paying the electricity bill or assisting them with rent.

A sum of \$100.00 per month goes a long way in assisting a family in crisis. We have many families listed who need help and it is very difficult to reject them. Our prayer is that the Lord will encourage you to be a part of this rewarding ministry.

In Matthew 26:11 the Lord Jesus said “You will always have the



poor among you". We are the ones who will reach out; we are the ones who will pray for them. This is the will of the Father.

The rich man had poor Lazarus sitting at his door. Every day as he left his palace, the poor man was at his gate. He could keep his eyes shut and pretend not to see. He could say that he had too many bills to pay that month and decide once more to do nothing.

We know a poor man will not last long if left with no support. Lazarus died and went to be with the Lord. Soon afterwards the rich man also died and had to face the Lord and give account of what he had done.

In Acts 20:35 Paul says "In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

We thank you for your help; may the Lord bless you and your efforts for His kingdom.

ACM team