



Trumpet's Sound

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Cover photo: "Armenian church", Photo by ACM team 2017.



ACM prayer and praise points

We thank God for His goodness and praise His name.

Please pray for

- our needy families
- a drunk father bringing a lot of disturbance in the house
- sick mother with cancer and the two children who need her help
- some in poverty and facing financial problems in order to survive
- children who need to hear the Gospel
- poor living conditions of many families
- wisdom for the directors of ACM Australia, USA and Armenia
- our mission team visiting Armenia in August
- our co-workers on the field who needs our prayers daily

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

Peace and hope

You have probably watched popular makeover shows where people lose weight, or have plastic surgery, or have bought new fashion clothing. But what about our soul? Who can do a makeover, who can change us and make us new in Christ? Who can take the guilt of our sin, the emptiness in our hearts, and the sadness we carry? We drink, dance and party, but we are the same the following day. Who will help me, who will save me? Jesus is the only one who can mend and renew the broken hearted; He can transform our lives. All this will happen when we are justified in Jesus Christ. Christ clears the way for a new life built on trust in God who justifies us through faith in Jesus Christ, giving us peace and hope. Read Romans 5:

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this

so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Romans 5:1-11

When a condemned person is justified in order to be set free, he experiences the most joyful day in his life. The man who had no hope, now has hope and the man who had no joy, now has joy. How great is the grace that sets him free! What are you like today? Are you joyous? Do you enjoy the fullness of God's peace in your life? Can you see the extent of His grace, and do you know about the hope of eternity with Him?

If you have never experienced this type of makeover, now is the time to come to the Saviour and ask him to cleanse you from your guilt of sin and set you free. When the SON sets you free, you are free indeed.

Let the joy of Christ dwell in your life.

HK

Proverbs 4:1-9 (ESV)

¹Hear, O sons, a father's instruction, and be attentive, that you may gain[a] insight, ²for I give you good precepts; do not forsake my teaching. ³When I was a son with my father, tender, the only one in the sight of my mother, ⁴he taught me and said to me, "Let your heart hold fast my words; keep my commandments, and live. ⁵Get wisdom; get insight; do not forget, and do not turn away from the words of my mouth. ⁶Do not forsake her, and she will keep you; love her, and she will guard you. ⁷The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom, and whatever you get, get insight. ⁸Prize her highly, and she will exalt you; she will honor you if you embrace her. ⁹She will place on your head a graceful garland; she will bestow on you a beautiful crown."

Going into Egypt

Read Genesis 12:10-20

Abraham had arrived where God wanted him to be but soon ran into difficulties. He moved into the southern part of country but found himself facing famine. He, together with Lot, kept moving south and they were soon near Egypt. We note that God had not told Abraham to move on. So why did he keep moving south? Should he have stayed where he was? What was wrong with going to Egypt? We must be careful not to misjudge Abraham, but the questions we ask raise important issues in our lives and it is right that we ask them to learn what we should do.

We may not be able to answer these questions, so we begin our thoughts with Abraham's approach into Egypt. He realised that he had a fundamental problem – it concerned his wife. This was different from what most men mean when they think their wives are a problem! The problem Abraham faced was that his wife was still beautiful at the age of sixty five and he feared that someone in Egypt would kill him to acquire her.

So what did Abraham do? There is no indication that he asked the Lord for help or guidance. He worked out his own solution to the problem. He asked Sarah to say she was his sister so that he would live!

We know from a later episode in Abraham's life that there was truth in this statement. He and Sarah had the same father but different mothers. But he was using part of the truth to give a wrong impression – in effect he was telling a lie. And this is where we need to be careful about the way we handle the truth. There are times when what we say is true, but we only tell part of the truth – the part that places us in a very good light. When this happens, the consequences may be as disastrous as if we told a blatant lie. We will come back to this thought.

But the question that comes to mind is “What had happened to Abraham’s faith?” Earlier in this chapter we read the promise that God made to him. God would make him into a great nation and in him all families of the earth would be blessed. But at this stage Abraham had no children. If he were to become a great nation he would have to stay alive until he had at least one child. Therefore, whatever the Egyptians thought of Abraham and Sarah did not matter; God would preserve his life for some time yet.

If we get ourselves into the wrong situation we imagine all kinds of problems; some may be real but many are probably imaginary. Then we try to prepare for the problems we think lie ahead and we have our solution worked out in advance. Isn’t it better to stay where God has placed us and trust Him to lead us?

The thing Abraham imagined would happen, did. The men of Egypt saw how beautiful Sarah was and her beauty was referred to the Pharaoh; Sarah was taken into his palace. However, as the story unfolds it seems that the real problem Abraham imagined – that he would be killed – was unlikely to occur. When Pharaoh learned the truth he was extremely angry with Abraham and his words showed that the problem Abraham foresaw existed only in Abraham’s mind. If Pharaoh had known Abraham and Sarah were husband and wife he would never have taken Sarah into the palace.

However, Abraham shows up in a bad light in more than one way. He was prepared to compromise his wife’s purity for his own safety. Is this real love? Should he not rather have been determined to care for his wife whatever the cost? His self-interest does not portray a caring husband.

Furthermore, Abraham may well have thought that his stragem was working well. He was alive and Pharaoh was showering him with material goods – flocks and herds, camels and donkeys, male and female servants. Yet all was not well. Material success should never be sought at the cost of spiritual well-being. What is the value of material goods once our testimony has been compromised?

This half-truth came at a cost to Abraham's testimony. In a way which is not fully explained, Pharaoh learned through a series of severe plagues that Sarah was Abraham's wife. Somehow, Pharaoh learned the cause of God's judgment on him and sent for Abraham. His message was blunt: "Why have you done this to me?" A man and his whole household were suffering because of one man's selfish scheme. A pagan was rebuking a servant of the living God. There is something extremely wrong if we are justly rebuked by an unbeliever – this is something which should never happen.

Abraham was expelled from the land. He had learned a severe lesson and there is no record of him ever wanting to return to Egypt. Yet as we shall see there were continuing effects of his sojourn in Egypt. Abraham may have left Egypt behind but, as we will see in a later article, Egypt remained in Lot's heart; he would soon chose the Jordan valley because it was like the land of Egypt. And we cannot help but wonder if this was when Sarah acquired Hagar as a servant.

What do we learn? It is sadly possible for things we have done when not following the Lord closely to come back to bite us. It is therefore important that we keep close to the Lord and seek His guidance in every step.

It is also extremely important to be fully open and honest with people. To tell only part of the truth is to court disaster. What we have said may be true but if the truth is slanted in any way we are not likely to bear a good testimony before a watching world. Unbelievers may well be very quick to point out our failings and thus we bring disgrace on the testimony of our fellow believers.

Don Stormer



Take the first step

“If the leaders in our church would only... then we would really move ahead.” You can fill the space in that sentence with your own words. Maybe you would put in that space something about better quality Bible teaching, more effective pastoring, or perhaps something to do with evangelism or worship. Like me, you have probably heard countless discussions about what church leaders ought to be doing.

More than once I have come away from these kinds of conversations feeling frustrated and helpless. There is a feeling that if you are not a leader or in a position of influence, you are powerless to make any kind of significant difference. Life in your particular church can never be exciting or meaningful until “they make some changes around here”. Of course leaders that are in touch both with God and with the people around them are vital to the spiritual life of any Christian community. Without good leadership a church can truly suffer. However being locked in the mindset that church leaders are responsible for absolutely everything carries a hidden danger. It blinds us to the wonderful reality that in a very deep sense each of us is called to exercise true spiritual leadership in one another’s lives. Every interaction between two or more people contains a hidden invitation to spiritual leadership. Just reflect on how Christ exercised leadership in the lives of those two discouraged disciples as they trudged on that weary journey back to the village of Emmaus. Read the story in Luke and you will see how Christ took the initiative, entered their despair and led them to hope. That is true leadership. When we take that kind of healing initiative in one another’s lives, we exercise a very special kind of spiritual leadership.

Think of the importance of this kind of spiritual leadership where two people have a broken relationship. It takes an act of real leadership to be the first to either ask for forgiveness or extend forgiveness. That first step takes initiative. It is true spiritual

leadership. Consider when we sense that someone is struggling with a painful problem. We are presented with a choice involving leadership. We can retreat from their difficulty by carefully avoiding the issue and maintain a polite but guarded distance, or we can step out of our comfort zone, take a risk and show our willingness to somehow share the burden with them. This is an act of spiritual leadership and initiative.

We are inclined to underestimate how much influence we exert in our almost unnoticed everyday interactions with one another. Even giving a simple word of encouragement involves initiative and therefore a kind of leadership. It is easy to live life passively and let an opportunity to encourage someone slip by. Yet that word of encouragement can have a surprising impact far out of proportion to the effort it took to give it. Authentic encouragement can redirect a life or shape a ministry. Some Christian counsellors claim that from 75 to 90 percent of their counselling work would not have been needed if there had been a proper ministry of encouragement taking place in the church.

True leadership involves being willing to take a risk and take the first step. By doing this you can actually bring healing change in one another's lives.

Rex Dearlove

Repent

Acts 2:38

The Bible teaches that repentance is needed to be saved. What does the Bible mean by the word "repent"? What did Peter mean when he told the multitude to repent? In Acts 2 we see Peter preaching Jesus to the multitude. When the people heard the truth of who Jesus was, they asked Peter what they should do. Peter replied that they were to repent.

Let us first define the word “repent” as it is used in the original language. The word repent in Greek is *metanoesate*, which means to change one’s outlook, or world view, or to have a change of heart. Repent therefore means to turn around from something to something else!

Therefore, what did Peter want the people to do when he asked them to repent? Did the people need to turn from their specific sins in their lives? What did they need to repent from?

Many understand the term repentance to mean “turning from sin”. This is not the biblical definition of repentance. In the Bible, repent means “to change one’s mind” (Matthew 3:2; Matthew 4:17; Acts 5:31; Acts 17:30). If the word repent means to turn from sin in order to be saved, I am afraid that no one will be saved, for in fact none of us repent in this sense; we do not turn from sin permanently, but continually go back to it. Since the word repent means to turn from something to something else permanently, repentance cannot be from sin. Thus, repenting means to turn from a wrong belief, a wrong world view, or a wrong mind set. Of course, the Bible also tells us that true repentance will result in a change of action (Luke 3:8-14; Acts 3:19).

What is the relation of repentance to salvation? It is to change one’s mind in regard to Jesus Christ. In Peter’s sermon on the day of Pentecost (Acts chapter 2), he concludes with a call for the people to repent (Acts 2:38). Repent from what? Peter is calling the people who rejected Jesus to change their minds about Him, to recognize that He is indeed “Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36). Peter is calling the people to change their minds from rejecting Christ as the Messiah to faith in Him as both Messiah and Saviour. Repentance, therefore, means to turn from the wrong belief, the wrong perception of God, the wrong view of who God is, or the misunderstanding of who Jesus is, and to turn to the Truth, who is Jesus, turn to the true teaching and understanding of the Word of God.

Repentance and faith must occur at the same time. Repentance

and faith are the “two sides of the same coin”. It is impossible to place your faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour without first changing your mind about who He is and what He has done. Whether it is repentance from wilful rejection or repentance from ignorance or disinterest, it is a change of mind. Biblical repentance in relation to salvation is changing your mind from rejection of Christ to faith in Christ. It is repentance from whatever wrong perception that you had spiritually or about God, and being saved. It is repentance from whatever you were relying on to go to heaven or to please God, to relying on Jesus alone, and nothing else! It is critically important that we understand repentance is not a work we do to earn salvation.

While repentance is not a work that earns salvation, repentance unto salvation does result in works. It is impossible to truly and fully change your mind without this causing a change in action. In the Bible, repentance results in a change in behaviour. That is why John the Baptist called people to “produce fruit in keeping with repentance” (Matthew 3:8). A person who has truly repented from rejection of Christ to faith in Christ will give evidence of a changed life (2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 5:19-23; James 2:14-26). Repentance, properly defined, is necessary for salvation. Biblical repentance is changing your mind about Jesus Christ and turning to God in faith for salvation (Acts 3:19). Turning from sin (living in sin, in a sinful lifestyle, in the old nature) is not the definition of repentance, but it is one of the results of genuine, faith-based repentance towards the Lord Jesus Christ.

Raffi Chaparian

“The terrible, tragic fallacy of the last hundred years has been to think that all man's troubles are due to his environment, and that to change the man you have nothing to do but change his environment. That is a tragic fallacy. It overlooks the fact that it was in Paradise that man fell.”

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Studies in the Sermon on the Mount

Be encouraged because God provides

“And my God will meet all of your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:19)

God provided!

Abraham was asked to sacrifice Isaac and named the place, ‘God will provide’! The story in Genesis 22 is one of the most dramatic and most significant episodes in Genesis. The command to sacrifice Isaac, the sadness of the climb of Abraham and Isaac to the place of sacrifice, the painful binding him and laying him on the altar and the last minute intervention from heaven makes this one of the most excellent stories in the Bible.

Faith and hope

In Genesis 22 we read of the last test of Abraham’s faith, which is comparable to the original call to leave his home and family. Although we are told it was a test for Abraham, God’s command was totally real. It was on Isaac that all the promises of blessing depended for their fulfilment. Torn between love for his child and obedience to God, Abraham faced a very difficult choice. We see how faith and hope triumphed over fear and doubt until the knife was raised to slay Isaac. In this way Abraham showed that he was willing to put God’s call above every other commitment and at that moment the test ended.

A lamb was prepared!

A lamb was sacrificed in place of Isaac, and the angel declared that Abraham’s act of obedience changed the status of the promises. They became sworn guarantees to countless descendants, the capture of land and blessing on him and, through him, on all the nations of the world. In Genesis 22:16-18 we read the last words spoken by God to Abraham, and their implication should not be neglected. From now on there was no doubt about the fulfilment of the promise of God. The fulfilment of Abraham’s

faith was the lamb (Genesis 22:13), but its ultimate fulfilment is the Lamb of God (John 1:29, 36).

God's sacrificial love

In the New Testament, there is more to the sacrifice of Isaac than the supreme example of someone committing himself to obey God completely (Hebrews 11:17–19). It is a picture of God's sacrificial love. Just as Abraham gave his only son as a sacrifice, so also the Father "did not spare his own Son" for this world. (Romans 8:32a; John 3:16) The place where God's Son, the Lord Jesus died is the place of God's provision. As the lamb died in Isaac's place, so also the Lord Jesus gave His life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45). The Lord Jesus paid the full price to release us from the bondage of sin and death.

God provides!

"...but gave him up for us – how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" (Romans 8:32b). If God gave His best gift, His beloved Son, to bring us to salvation, He will certainly also give whatever is necessary to bring to fulfilment the work begun at the cross of Calvary! We can be encouraged because God did not stop providing! He is the God of Abraham and He is our God, too! The Apostle Paul, in the Epistle to the Philippians, knew this truth and it was the reason that he was encouraged and he was able to encourage others. He was certain about this: "my God will meet all of your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

Dr Czeslaw Bassara

"There are many of us that are willing to do great things for the Lord, but few of us are willing to do little things."

Dwight L. Moody

"Where one man reads the Bible, a hundred read you and me."

Dwight L. Moody

What did David mean when he wrote that he was "fearfully" made in Psalm 139:14?

Psalm 139 describes some of God's attributes. He knows everything (v.1-6), His Spirit is present throughout the universe (v.7-12) and each person is created by Him (v.13-16). The verse before and after Psalm 139:14 describe the development of a baby from conception. This caused David to praise God for His power and skill and exclaim that "I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps. 139:14NIV). The Hebrew word that is translated "fearfully" is *yare* (Strong's #3372). In Vine's Dictionary it means "to be afraid, stand in awe, fear". When used of an exalted person it means "standing in awe". This implies honor, reverence and respect for the person. To be "fearfully" made means to be "awesomely" made.

What about Christians today? The New Testament says Christians should worship God "with reverence and awe" (Heb. 12:28). He is the ultimate authority over humanity; He observes us and will judge us (1 Pt. 1:17; 2:17). We will all give an account of ourselves at the judgement seat of Christ (Rom. 14:10-12; 2 Cor. 5:10). Those who reverence God will desire to honor Him with holy living and by submitting to one another (2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 5:21). Living in the fear of the Lord was associated with numerical growth in the early church (Acts 9:31).

So, like David we should stand in awe of God and respect His great power and position. This is expressed in the song by Rich Mullins:

*"Our God is an awesome God;
He reigns in heaven above
With wisdom power and love:
Our God is an awesome God".*

George Hawke

ACM field ministry

I look back over the past twenty years to the time when we started with one person and no vision. Little did we know that the vision was His. Today as I sit in my office, overwhelmed by the needs of the many families in our care and the size of the work, I can only look up to Him who, with the help of many believers, has sustained us during these years.

We thank you for much needed prayer. At times the news from the field is heart breaking. Sometimes the need is beyond our ability to meet. Sometimes our prayers are mixed with tears as we hear and see the different situations. But the Lord is always near and we trust Him in all things.

I encourage you to watch two short videos on YouTube showing some of our activities in Armenia. Please go to "YouTube ACM Armenia". I want to bring your attention on one called "Village Hovk". In that clip you will see an old lady living with her deaf and dumb husband. I was very touched when I saw that clip.

Last year on our mission trip to Armenia, we were in that area and my co-worker pointed out, in the distance, the shed that the deaf and dumb man lived in. It was on top of a hill isolated from everything. The day was very cold with winter approaching and my co-worker noticed the old lady outside in her yard. We took the dirt road towards her. We stopped the car and I made the effort to go to her. Some of my friends had donated money for the poor.

We do not usually go out to distribute support, but something prompted me to put some money in her hand and she immediately grabbed my hand pulling it towards her with all her strength to kiss it. I tried hard to stop her but all she was saying was "But you do not understand; you do not understand".

I asked what I did not understand. She said that this was for her winter bread which she had been praying for. Soon it would start snowing and the valley would be covered in snow. There were no shops or houses. They lived in a totally isolated area and their only hope was the Lord. They had no bread for the five month long winter when all is covered with snow.

This is my God. "It is by faith" and faith will never shame us. Think of someone who gave special support for the needy and the poor in Armenia. Think of a mission team travelling 36 hours to Armenia and then going another two hours' drive and be outside an unknown shed in the village of Hovk. Think of this old needy woman walking in her field and for us to see her and stop and for the Lord to prompt us to give.

Please continue your prayers for Armenia. The needy and the poor need your prayers today.

Harry Kiujian for the ACM team

