



Trumpet's Sound

50th year, Australia
JULY - AUGUST 2019



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

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Cover photo: "Armenian cross on a church entrance", Photo by ACM team 2018.



Prayer points for ACM ministry in Armenia

- Give thanks to the Father in all things because He knows all our needs
- Please pray as we search for a new office in Yerevan
- Give thanks for those who joined the mission team in Armenia in June
- Pray for the provision of a van for the work in Gyumri
- Pray for the funds needed for renovation work on Gyumri Chapel and Grace Centre.
- Pray for the Lord to provide the needs of the needy and sick in our care
- Pray for mission team which will visit Armenia in September
- Pray for wisdom and safety for our co-workers

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

Who is God?

The world is trying hard to reject God and His existence; governments, organisations, and the media are trying hard to take the word “God” out of our vocabulary and to stop teaching about God in schools. Some gods are idols or statues made by hand, but I am talking about the God of the Bible, the creator God, who was and is and is to come, the God who is the Alpha and the Omega.

God created man in His image and I believe every human being on this earth, whether living in a city or a remote village, has a deep desire and a hunger to find and worship God. The creator has placed a desire into the human heart to search for Him and find Him.

What does God say about Himself? “I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no God” (Isaiah 44:6).

What does the Bible say about God? “God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24).

What does Jesus say? “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6).

God revealed Himself through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bible teaches us about the Trinity: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Mathew 28:19).

The name of the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit

The God we worship is the Triune God. One way I can describe this is by saying that as humans we have spirit, body and soul. Our creator God is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Jesus the Son came for the salvation of mankind. Our salvation is from sin. All our sins are against God and not just against each other. The wicked soul, trying to be free from guilt, rejects the existence of God.

Poor soul, where will you run from God's condemnation? For we have all sinned and fall short of the glory of God. The Bible talks about a day of judgment when every knee will bow and men and women will be judged for their deeds, good or bad.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this is not from yourselves. It is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Repent and come to Jesus. The gate of salvation is open wide. The Lord Jesus gave His life on the cross, dying that you may live. "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

This is God's grace to all mankind. It is never achieved by works or money but is freely available when we come to Jesus for the forgiveness of sin.

You may ask how to be saved. The answer is "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved, and your house" (Acts 16:31).

HK

Failure isn't final

Part 4

Peter's transformation

After Peter publicly denied knowing Jesus he repented and was restored to fellowship with the Lord. This was recognised publicly after Christ's resurrection. Three times Peter answered Jesus, "Lord, you know that I love you" (John 21:15-19). Jesus accepted this declaration, restored him to fellowship and commissioned him for service by saying "feed my sheep". The three affirmations matched the three denials. Peter learnt to be humble; he said "Lord, you know all things" (John 21:17). And he said to others "clothe yourselves with humility" (1 Peter 5:5). Peter served as an apostle and a church elder (1 Peter 5:1-4). Through Jesus, Peter learnt that failure isn't final.

Peter was restored to service because of his repentance. God used him mightily in the early church. He preached the sermon when the church began on the day of Pentecost and 3,000 people decided to follow Jesus. He was courageous; he was put in jail more than once for proclaiming that Jesus had risen from the dead.

Jesus chose Peter knowing that he would fail and knowing that he would be restored. God used Peter's failure and sin to strengthen his faith and build him up for service in the early church. Failure cured him of excessive self-confidence. Jesus can transform failures into followers. Like Peter we all fail and we all sin in some way. But like Peter we can be transformed from failure to following Jesus once again. Like him we can be former failures, and not final failures.

Billy Monger is a British car racing driver. In April 2017 he was involved in a high speed crash and had the lower part of both of his legs amputated. It seemed as if that was the end of his career. But in 2018 he recommenced driving a Formula 3 car with hand controls. It was a great recovery.

Now that we've looked at how Peter survived failure, we need to consider how we can also survive. There are two answers to this question. The first is to ensure our failures aren't fatal. And the second is dealing with ongoing failures.

How to ensure our failures aren't final

Judas Iscariot failed and sinned when he betrayed Jesus. But his failure was final and fatal. How can we escape this fate?

- *Failure and sin separate us from God and put us under His judgment. If we do nothing about this separation and judgment, failure is final and hell is our ultimate destiny. Although failure is an event and not a destiny, it can lead to a destiny. To not trust in Christ is a fatal failure and a fatal sin.*
- *The first step to fix the problem is to be convicted of our failure and sin. It involves recognising it. We may feel guilty or sorry. For example, after he was confronted, the man who had been*

sexually immoral at Corinth was very sorry about his behaviour (2 Corinthians 2:7).

- *The next step is to confess our failure and sin to God. This means admitting that we are wrong. For example, David confessed his adultery, deceit and murder (Psalm 32:5).*
- *The next step is repentance, which is a change of behaviour where our change of attitude is shown in our actions. It's like doing a U-turn in a car to go in the opposite direction. For example, the prodigal son stopped his wild living and travelled back to his father. He remembered that his father still loved him. We cannot become followers of Jesus without conviction, confession and repentance. That's the way to respond to failure and sin.*
- *Then God promises to forgive all our failures and sins, in the past, the present and the future. Peter preached, "Repent ... and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out" (Acts 3:19). God is the judge of all those who never trust in Him. This judicial forgiveness removes the barrier to heaven. It is when an unbeliever comes to faith in Christ. If we acknowledge our sinfulness and believe that Jesus paid the penalty for us, then we are viewed as God's children. Jesus died for all our failures, weaknesses, and sins. Have you experienced this kind of forgiveness? If not, why not start following the Lord by confessing your sins and trusting Christ as Saviour?*
- *After our failures and sins have been dealt with, we have peace with God and are reconciled to God. And heaven is our ultimate destiny, where all our failures are forgotten.*

Now we have ensured our failures aren't fatal, how can we deal with ongoing failures?

*George Hawke
(To be continued)*

Entertaining heavenly visitors

Read Genesis 18:1-15

It is good to look ahead and see the topics this chapter covers. Abraham entertained heavenly visitors without realising at first who they were. We will need to consider the way God appeared to people in Old Testament times. Then a question arises about Sarah's faith. When it looks as if all hope has passed, is it possible that we think there some things too difficult for God? Finally, we see Abraham pleading with God on behalf of any righteous people that might possibly be found in Sodom.

When the writer of the letter to the Hebrews encouraged his readers to show hospitality, he reminded them that some people had entertained angels unawares! One cannot tell ahead of time what blessing will result from unexpected kindness. Three men unexpectedly stood before Abraham at the entrance to his tent as he was relaxing in the heat of the day. One can imagine that Abraham looked back on that day with the greatest of satisfaction.

Abraham showed his hospitable nature in offering to bring water so that the visitors could wash their feet; he also offered a little bread so that they could eat. They agreed. However, the meal was more than we would call a morsel! Abraham's offer may reflect the custom of the day in which a person did not offer too large a meal in case the visitor declined the offer. However, what stands out is Abraham's lavish generosity. When a lamb or a kid would have been sufficient, he provided a calf – some say a young bull. This went far beyond the call of duty; the meal was definitely more than something we would call a morsel!

As the story unfolds we soon learn that these were more than men. Two were angels who would move on to Sodom after they spent time enjoying Abraham's hospitality. But the other was the Lord Himself. We know that the Lord Jesus said that Abraham had rejoiced to see His day, that he saw it and was glad. Unless the Lord was referring to the occasion when Abraham was preparing to offer Isaac as a sacrifice, this may well be the day the Lord was referring to.

This is possibly our first clear information about a theophany – an appearance of the Lord Jesus to Old Testament saints. This is the first occasion when we can be certain that the Lord was seen. God spoke to Adam and Eve in the cool of the evening, but we are not told what form He took. Enoch walked with God, but again we are given no details. Nor are we told how God communicated His message to Noah or, in the early stages, to Abraham. God spoke to Abraham after Lot left him. He also came to Abraham in a vision when He made a covenant with him (chapter 15), promising him the land where he was living. We are told God appeared to Abraham when He added the covenant of circumcision (chapter 17) but again no details are given. Here we are initially told that Abraham looked up and saw three men.

We may wonder two things about Abraham recognising his visitor. How did he recognise Him, and when did he recognise Him. There is an indication of this in verse 3 where Abraham uses a singular verb before changing to the plural in verses 4 and 5. Certainly after the two angels left for Sodom, Abraham was well aware that he was speaking to the Lord.

There were two reasons for the Lord's visit to Abraham. The first was to ensure that Sarah knew that she would be the mother of Abraham's son and the second to inform Abraham about the judgment that was soon to fall upon Sodom and Gomorrah.

The visitors first asked where Sarah was. This is a question like the one asked in Genesis 3:9 and Genesis 4:9. God knew where Adam was, and he knew where Abel was, but He wanted to elicit a response from the two men concerned. It may well be that there are times when God uses someone to ask us what seems to be an obvious question, but He is wanting us to stop and give careful thought to what we have done or are doing.

The Lord knew where Sarah was, but this question He asked ensured that she was listening. If the visitors knew Sarah's name, they also knew where she was. But even though the Lord was speaking to Abraham, the message was specifically for Sarah's benefit. And she was definitely listening!

One wonders why the Lord had come to convey the message to Sarah that she would bear a son. One commentator wonders if Abraham had not informed Sarah about the Lord's message to him. That seems unlikely as Sarah expressed no surprise at the Lord using the name Sarah rather than her old name. Had she not believed what Abraham told her so that the message needed to be especially told her?

But again, there is a lesson for us. Do we really believe that God is able to do the impossible? Do we have confidence that He will sustain us day by day? Do we commit our way to Him each day with confidence that He can guide us and keep us through the day? Do we believe that He is able to strengthen us so that we are able to serve Him faithfully?

There is another aspect of this story that puzzles us. No comment was made in chapter 17 about Abraham's action in falling on his face and laughing when told that Sarah would bear a son. Was his laughter an act of unbelief? We are not told. Why was his laughter not rebuked but Sarah's was?

It would seem that Sarah definitely doubted the power of the Almighty. Abraham may have wondered at the unlikelihood of people their age becoming parents, but Sarah's question doubted God's ability to do as He had promised. She had passed her menopause and to her childbirth was impossible. But there is nothing which is too hard for the Lord.

What Sarah then did was to double her sin. To her unbelief she added a lie. Sometimes our efforts to cover up the wrongs we have done merely add to them. It is far better to confess our sin than to deny it. After all, even if we do hide it from our fellows, there is nothing hidden from the Almighty; everything is open in His sight.

What do we learn? God is all powerful and faithful to His word. He will do as He promises. For our part we are called to trust implicitly. Do we?

Don Stormer

Seek and Find

Matthew 7

God keeps His promises. Sometimes we hear someone ask “What about people who have never had an opportunity to hear of Christ? Will they go to heaven? Or will they go to hell without a chance?” Christ Himself answers this: “Seek and you will find” (v7). This is an unconditional promise that applies even to people who live in places where they have not had a chance to hear the gospel. God says if they seek, they will find. It doesn’t matter if they live in the middle of China or on an island in the middle of nowhere.

Some years ago, together with some other Christians, I was visiting homes door to door in a small New Zealand town. We explained that we were Christians visiting to tell people about Jesus Christ. At one home, the lady said “You must be the people God has sent to help me”. Well that was an unusual response! We went in and the lady told her story. She had lived an interesting, full and successful life and she had no need of God. She was in fact an atheist. However, one day her seven-year-old son was killed on the road in front of her by a passing motor cycle. In the months that followed she suffered intense grief and one day in despair she stood in her kitchen and cried out “God I have never believed you existed but if you do, show yourself to me”. Just a few weeks later we came to her door. She saw our visit as an answer to that strange prayer and, a short time later, both she and her husband gave their hearts to Christ. Once again God had kept that promise. She had sincerely sought after God and God arranged that she would find Him. You can hear stories like that from all over the world.

There was a little Chinese boy who lived in north China in a village where no one had ever brought the gospel. At night his grandmother would take him with her as she went out to worship an idol in a shrine. He would stand outside and look in at the ugly dirty idol that his grandmother would bow before. Then he would look up at the myriads of stars in the glorious night sky. He would puzzle about the connection and think “That idol? Those stars? I want to know the God

who made those stars". Later on, a Chinese Christian brought the gospel to that village and that boy was among the first to receive Christ. He later became a mighty evangelist in China. God keeps His promise: "seek and you will find".

If you already know God but feel that you are not progressing in your spiritual life, you may be seeking to know more about God. A good question to reflect on is "What am I doing with the light (or knowledge) I already have?" As you read through the Bible and see how God works in the lives of men and women, you begin to see a fundamental spiritual principle. Before God gives you more light, He asks a question: "What are you doing with the light you already have?"

Have you ever fed a young child sitting in a high chair? When you put a spoonful into the child's mouth there is something really important to remember. Wait for the child to swallow the food before you put the next spoonful in. If you put the second and third spoonful in before it has swallowed the first one, you begin to run into a pretty messy problem. That is how God is with us. He feeds us a spoonful at a time. But the important thing to see is that you don't get the second spoonful until you have swallowed what you have already been given.

Light accepted brings more light. Light rejected brings darker night.

God will keep His promise to you if you are seeking Him.

Rex Dearlove

Timeless quote

"You may think that you are insignificant in the great plan of God, but you are not. You are tremendously important to God - so much so that Jesus died for you, and the Holy Spirit lives in you. You may seem small in your own eyes, and this is good; because God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. However, don't let your humility become sin by making you believe you can do nothing for God. God can use you to help Him accomplish His will on this earth."

— Warren W. Wiersbe

Moses (1)

Read Exodus 3

Moses had been a great person. For 30 or so years of his early life he was a prince in Egypt – very privileged and very important. Before that he was nurtured by his own Hebrew mother who would have taught him the traditions of his people. And he never forgot that it meant something to be a Hebrew – one of God's people. He never left his roots.

The day came when Moses deliberately chose to side with his birth people against the Egyptians (Hebrews 11:24) but it was not God's time for him to become their leader. Instead, he became a fugitive and then a refugee. He lived with a foreigner in a foreign land minding his sheep. To an Egyptian, this was the most menial of jobs and Moses did it for 40 years.

Exodus 3 begins when Moses was 80 years old. For 40 years he had had all that life could offer him. But, for the past 40 years he had lived as a shepherd: out in all weathers, lonely on the hills and plains. What on earth was God doing in his life? If God had a plan for his life, how did this make sense? Have you ever asked that question?

Moses had learned to be great and of necessity he learned to be humble. But he had also learned to survive and he had learned to lead, and now there was one more lesson. He had to actually know the God who was directing his life, although he did not realise it.

Confronted and called by God

Moses came to "the mountain of God" – the place where he met with God Himself (v1). There he was amazed to see a bush that burnt but was not consumed. He was curious, but had no idea of the momentous events his curiosity would set in motion.

And by the way, neither do we, when God comes into our lives. Our God is a God of purpose. He makes it clear in the Bible that He has a plan for this world, and He has a plan for our lives in this world, and

He is working both out. We need to be in the journey with Him.

Through the bush, God called to Moses. And Moses responded, perhaps out of curiosity. But then God spoke to him. For 80 years I think Moses had believed in this God, but never had God spoken to him. But now God speaks to teach him who He is and what He is like.

What did Moses know about God? We don't know what his mother taught him. But if he knew about God, he certainly did not know God. There is a major difference. Knowing about God does not change anything in our lives. Knowing God does.

God reveals His nature to Moses

1. God is Holy

The first instruction God gives to Moses is that he can't approach Him just any way he likes (v5). He tells him to take off his shoes. It was a symbolic act, because they were the most obviously dirty part of him. God is first and foremost holy – different from us, and totally free from anything impure. We are not like that. We are impure physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. Does this mean anything for us? It does.

God is the same today as He was back then. He is the only One who never changes. So, like Moses, when we come before the Lord, we need to realise that we are not worthy to do so. That is one reason we confess our sin before Him when we come to hear His word and pray. But it should apply every time we come to Him. The gods of the nations were not holy in the same way. And the gods of our society are not holy at all. They are impure and they do not matter. The Creator of everything matters infinitely and eternally. We need to approach Him with great respect and awe. That's not an archaic view; it is what the writer to the Hebrews tells us. We should approach Him "with reverence and awe. For our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 13:28-29).

2. God is Compassionate

Then God reveals Himself as compassionate. He is not far from us,

and He is not indifferent to our difficulties. "The LORD said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering" (v7). For 400 years, God's people had been foreigners in a foreign land and then slaves in that land. Though they had multiplied, they had not inherited the land they were promised, and certainly they had not become a blessing to all the nations of the world.

After all those years, why not? Because God has a plan for eternity, not just for our lifetime. Our lifetime is but a blink of an eye in the vastness of God's eternity, though we think life is long. His salvation will happen because He promised it, but it will be completed in His time.

Nevertheless, His plan does also include us in our moment of time. And now we see that the next stage of His great plan is about to come about because His people have been suffering and God cares. So He reiterates His promise "I will bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey..." (v8). Whatever you may think, God does care.

3. God is Immanent

I imagine that God's people had often wondered whether God was really interested in them as they laboured under really heavy burdens. An angry man confronted his pastor with the question "Where was God when my son died?" It is a question we all want answered at some time. The answer was simple but profound. "God was where He was when His son died."

It is likely the Hebrews had come to think of God as somewhere "out there" or "up there", but certainly not "with us". Maybe you still think that way about God. No doubt there were people in those days who had experienced God helping them personally but, for most, He was not really "with us". So now God reveals Himself as the One who is there to help His people. This must have been thrilling and awesome and troubling to Moses. Here he was, a fugitive from justice, having long ago given up all hope of a better life, or of helping God's people (if in fact he ever thought of doing that). At any rate,

God had never before told him to attempt that. And now God is telling him personally that He, God, will deliver the whole nation. That is amazing, and I guess it was a great relief, until. . . until. . . verse 10: "So now I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt." God has revealed Himself as Personal and Purposeful, and now as Moses waits to hear how God will deliver the nation he hears those awful words: "Now go! I am sending you to Pharaoh."

Paul Whiting
(To be continued)

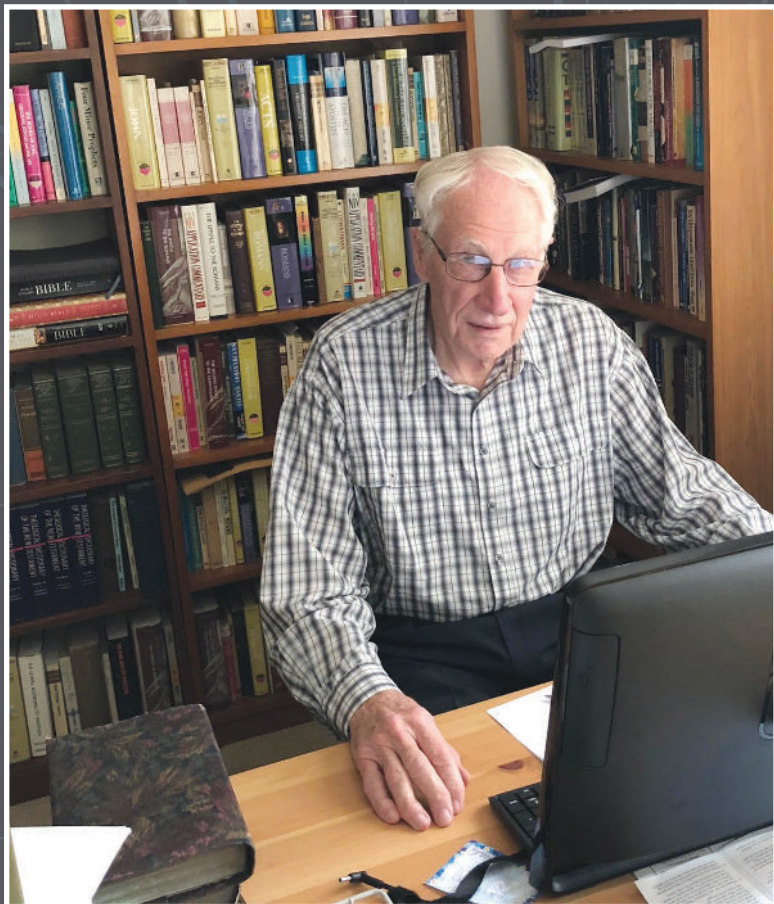
"Visit many good books, but live in the Bible"

"The man who never reads will never be read; he who never quotes will never be quoted". This, as well as the title of this article, are quotes from a man who was called the Prince of preachers: Charles Haddon Spurgeon. He loved reading books and his personal library contained 12,000 volumes! The fact that I am quoting his saying is a proof of his statement.

There is a story of a woman who was converted through reading a single page of one of Spurgeon's sermons in which some butter she had bought had been wrapped.

While almost everything has been digitized, and phones and tablets have replaced human communications and people prefer spending their leisure time doing activities other than reading, a question comes to my mind. Is it worthwhile publishing literature, particularly Christian literature?

The answer is a profound YES. And how we thank God for His providence in supplying Armenia with good Christian literature through the ministry of ACM. Actually the magazine you are reading now is one of those precious seeds, which had its beginning in Armenia in 1995.



But I want to single out the commentaries which Brother Don Stormer has been writing and printing for Armenia for almost 7 years. He has already covered 13 epistles in 8 volumes. With the Lord's help we have printed the commentaries on 1st and 2nd Corinthians in the first part of this year. Romans and Galatians should be ready by the end of the year.

Brother Don does not just write books, but visits Armenia almost every year and preaches the Gospel. Pastors and ordinary Christians are very encouraged by these messages and are encouraged to study the Word of God themselves.

These commentaries are one of the tools that train the Christians to live out their Christian life and rightly divide the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15).