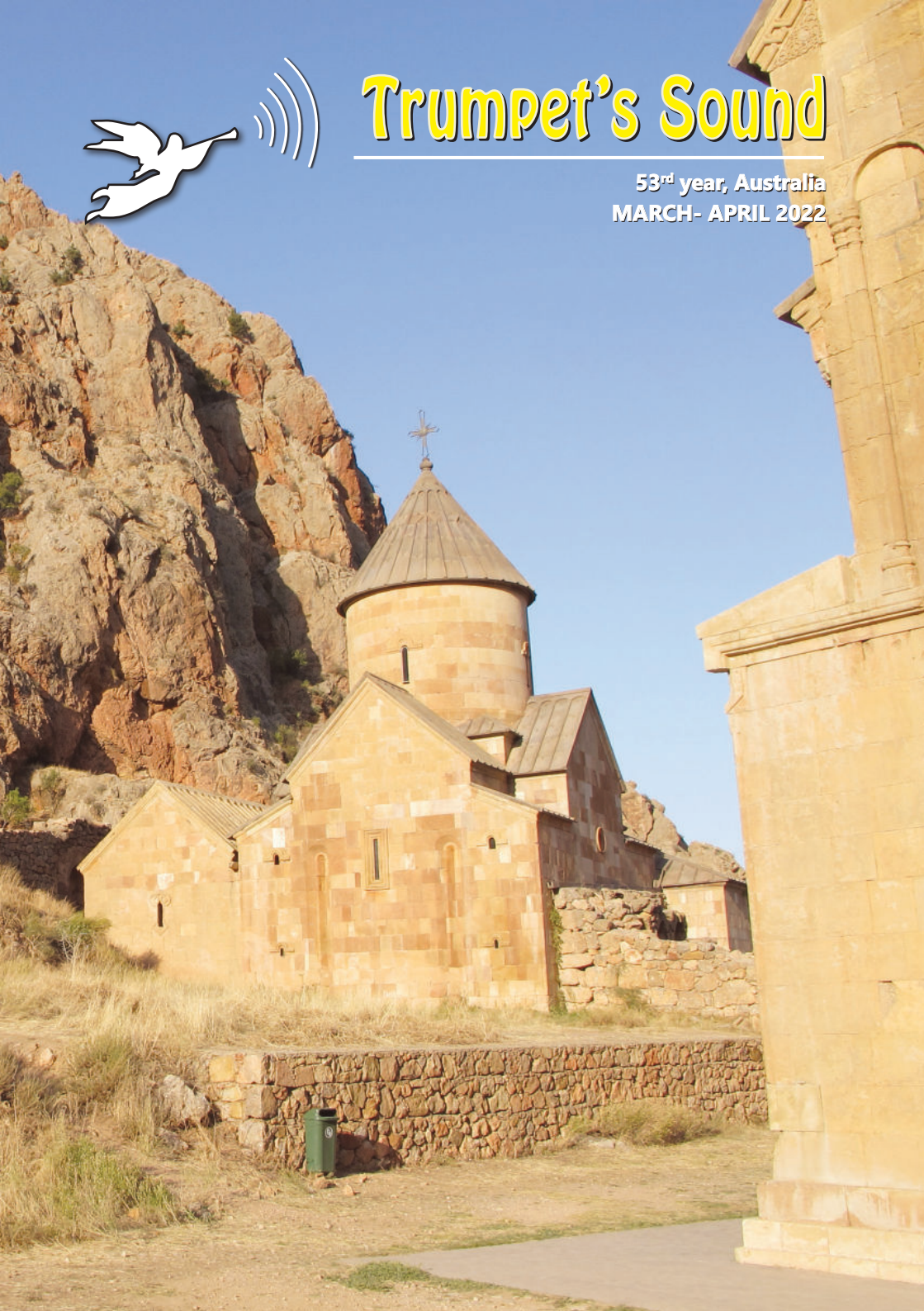




Trumpet's Sound

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Cover photo: Noravank - a 13th-century Armenian monastery. ACM, January 2015



Please pray for

- the many people who are suffering with COVID
- the many children who need to hear the Gospel
- the preaching of the Word of God
- all who will visit Armenia this year to serve in some ministry
- the container ministry, both in the packing of goods and in their distribution, that there will be blessing
- the families in need of support
- peace in Armenia
- Trumpet's Sound that it will be a blessing to many

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

Victory over death

"But now I am going to him who sent me. None of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' Rather, you are filled with grief because I have said these things. But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you" (John 16:5-7).

Some clothing was in an empty tomb, and a stone had been rolled away, but where was Jesus? Jesus had spoken to his disciples many times about His death and resurrection, but His words did not make much sense until after His resurrection. The resurrection brought hope and joy to the disciples. They gathered as if they were celebrating a victory. Indeed, Christ was victorious over Satan.

But what about ourselves? What does resurrection bring to us today? If there were no resurrection there would be no forgiveness of sin and no hope. There would be no victory over Satan. The Holy Spirit would not have come to indwell believers. And the prospect for eternity would be bleak.

What is the promise?

"And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life." (1 John 5:11-13).

My question is, Do you have the Son? Do you have Jesus in your heart?

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." (John 14:1-4).

These are Jesus' promises for us today.

We thank the Lord for the faith that we have, and for the promises He has given us. The resurrection has brought comfort to our hearts, joy in our lives, hope that enables us to keep pressing on and a bright future to look forward to.

You too can come in repentance today and receive free salvation and know you will spend eternity with Christ. You too can have victory over death.

Happy Easter to you all.

HK

From Egypt to Canaan (4)***God reveals Himself to Moses - part 2***

In our last issue we learned that God revealed Himself to Moses after he had been in Midian for 40 years. God was commissioning Moses to return to Egypt to lead the Israelites out of bondage and take them to the Promised Land. Moses made excuses for not doing as God instructed him to do. First he asked the question: "Who am I?" He was pleading an inability to do the work. Next Moses asked how he would answer anyone who wanted to know the name of their God. God fully answered both objections. This time we think about the third and fourth objections he offered.

The third excuse – they may not believe me

Moses' third excuse was that no one would believe him. Now it is true that we all have a fear of not being believed. Few people are prepared to take a stand on an issue if they feel that they will only be ridiculed and humiliated; they want to be absolutely convinced of the truth of the message they are proclaiming.

However, Moses was not in an ordinary situation. Rather, he had

been given a message by the God of Abraham. Did he believe what God had said? And if he believed, was there any reason why the rest of the Israelites would not believe? We wonder why Moses asked this question.

God was gracious and gave Moses signs to demonstrate that it really was God who had spoken to him. One thing that is needed with a new revelation is evidence that the message does really originate with God. The only way in which we can have confidence that an entirely new message is from God is if that message is accompanied by miracles.

What was the nature of the signs that Moses was told to demonstrate to his own people? By changing a rod into a serpent and then reversing the action, God was authenticating His message through Moses. God would also use signs to show His supremacy over the gods of the Egyptians. The hand that became leprous and then was healed showed God's control over human life. Both these signs made it clear to the Israelites that this was a question of believing God and not just Moses.

Was there a further significance to these signs? The Egyptians worshipped a number of gods. These signs were to be the beginning of a series of miracles showing God's superiority over the gods of Egypt.

The fourth excuse – I am not eloquent

When Moses said he was not eloquent, was he looking for reasons to say he was unable to do the appointed task? He was clearly trying to avoid the commission God was giving him. Several questions come to mind. Did he feel inadequate? Did he remember the earlier rejection when he was asked who made him ruler over the people? Was he afraid of Pharaoh, even though God had told him that those who sought his life had died?

We notice carefully the answer that the Lord gave Moses. Who makes people the way they are? And if God made us, He will give us the ability we need to do the work He wants us to do for Him.

How do we react to God's commands? Do we try to avoid doing

the work He wants us to do? If there is something He wants us to do for Him, He will give us the ability we need to complete the task.

Send someone else

Moses had not yet finished his attempt to avoid going to Pharaoh. He asked the Lord to send the person of His choice. In effect, he was saying “Oh, Lord, please send someone else”. In saying this, he revealed his unwillingness to do what God was asking him to do. But the question we must answer is whether God would ask us to do something we cannot do unless at the same time He gives us His strength to do the work.

It was at this point that God became angry with Moses, one of only two occasions when God was angry with him. The second was when Moses struck the rock instead of speaking to it. Two things that arouse God’s anger are an unwillingness to obey, and deliberate disobedience. This is something about which we must always be very careful. Refusal to obey Him is something that our God can never accept.

However, God did not release Moses from the task to which He had called him. He still intended Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, but Moses would have to share the honour of representing God before Pharaoh with his brother Aaron.

The lessons for us

There are some important questions we need to think about. It is good to realise our inabilities and weaknesses. But we are not to use our perceived lack of ability as an excuse for not obeying the Lord’s commands. We must realise that if God gives us a task to do, He also gives us the strength to do it.

If we do not do the task ourselves, God will have someone else who will do the work because God’s work will be done. But it will be someone else who receives the blessing that follows obeying the Lord.

The question to us is “Are we prepared to serve the Lord fully?”

Don Stormer

Peter and the Angel

Acts 12

Peter was difficult to keep in jail and a deliverance seems against all the odds here. He had already escaped from prison before. Herod was determined that Peter should not escape again, so he doubled the guard. Four squads of four soldiers. But Peter has two soldiers, one chained to each wrist in addition to two sentries on the cell door. Herod was going to make sure there were no miraculous escapes this time.

Herod was the family name of a large family. The name of Herod was well-known in New Testament times. This Herod was Herod Agrippa. His grandfather, Herod the Great, had ruled at the time of the birth of Christ and was responsible for the slaughter of the children. Herod Agrippa's uncle was Herod Antipas who had tried Jesus. Just to give you a slice of family life in the Herod's: Herod Agrippa's father was murdered by his father. Various Herods had assassinated their own wives and children. One of the Herods, just before he died, had applied to Augustus Caesar for permission to kill his own son. Augustus Caesar remarked that it was better to be Herod's pig than Herod's son. Anyway, that is just some family background of this man who now held Peter in his prison.

While Peter was kept in prison "The Church was earnestly praying to God for him" (verse 5). In Greek, this word "earnestly" *ektenos*, means stretched out to achieve a goal. Luke uses the same word, for the agonising prayer of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:44). Earnest prayer is not based on the idea that God is reluctant to do anything for us and so we have to work hard at persuading Him. Earnest prayer discerns that God is passionate to see something happen and that we care passionately also. "*Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared ... struck him on the side and woke him up. 'Quick, get up!' he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists*" (verse 7).

Do you really believe that God has angels as supernatural agents

who move about our world, involving themselves in the real lives of men and women?

This event was recorded by a Greek doctor named Luke. He wrote both the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts. As you read through these books you will notice that Luke is a very careful historian. As he begins his Gospel, he says that he checked everything with actual eyewitnesses. He is not interested in second-hand stories. All of Luke's places and dates, and kings and governors fit in with the records of secular history. During the last century many scholars were sceptical of the writings of Luke. One sceptical scholar who did extensive studies in Asia Minor was Sir William Ramsey. At the conclusion of his work, originally intended to disprove Luke, he wrote "Luke's history is unsurpassed in respect of its trustworthiness". So here we have an accurate historian, saying that an angel led Peter out of jail. Do you really believe that? People generally base what could or could not happen, on their own experience of life:

- If it is within our experience, we say it could happen.
- If it is outside our experience, we say it could not happen.

Here's a simple illustration. An Eskimo visits New York. When he returns home again, his friends questions him about New York. He tells them about the skyscrapers and the great ships in harbour. His Eskimo friends do not believe him, and they mock him. It was outside their experience! Later, a second Eskimo went to New York and saw the same wonders of the city. On his return home he remembered what happened to the first Eskimo, so he says, "People in New York live in igloos just like us and every day they go out in their kayaks to harpoon seals just like we do." And the tribe all believed him. They would rather believe a lie that fitted their experience than a truth that took them outside their experience.

Luke is telling us a truth, outside of our experience. God does actually step into the affairs of human beings by the mighty angels and take action when He chooses. Notice the partnership between the angel, God's power and Peter. Look at what the angel did and at

what Peter did: the Angel woke Peter up, caused his chains to fall off, led him safely past the guards and opened the prison door. Peter got up, put his coat on, followed the angel out of the prison and finally walked to the home of Mary and John Mark. See the pattern. Everything Peter could do, Peter did. Everything Peter could not do, God's power did.

Do you ever feel as if you are bound by chains? Sometimes the chains that bind can be guilt, anger or addictions. Even anxiety about the future can destroy the joy and peace that God wants to give you. Only God can break those chains. If you are His child, trusting in Christ, He already has. Many of the Lord's people today, don't know the deliverance they have. Christ is striking them like the angel struck Peter. "Hey! Wake up, enjoy the freedom I have arranged for you." Realise you are free and walk out in that freedom. The principle of living is illustrated in this wonderful deliverance story of Peter.

Believers were gathered to pray in the home of Mary, presumably for Peter. Meanwhile Peter, now released, was knocking on their door. These Christians were astonished to see him! They could not believe God had answered their prayers. This is evidence that it doesn't actually take much faith for God to answer prayer. Never feel as if you do not have enough faith. This church didn't have great faith, but they had a little faith in a great God and that is where the power of prayers lies.

When we come to recognise this amazing God who is alive and at work, even to this very day, we get a new perspective on life. Even the puzzles of life, like when one person dies and another is delivered, fall into a different perspective. We don't get all the answers, but we become more content to live with mystery because we are getting to know and trust the God behind that mystery.

Rex Dearlove



The Lord's Prayer

What is often called “The Lord’s Prayer” is not a prayer that He would pray. He had no need to ask for forgiveness because He had no sin. But, if it is not the Lord’s prayer, whose prayer is it? To answer that question, let us ask another, “What sort of person can pray this prayer?”

It begins, “*Our Father who is in Heaven...*”. The person who prays these words with sincerity and understanding must know that he or she belongs to that special company of people who have been born by the Holy Spirit into God’s family. We can see from what follows that these people have an uncommon longing in their heart.

“*Hallowed be Your name*”. Reverence, awe, honour, love – this is what is felt towards the One who has become their Father. They do not take this great privilege lightly.

“*Your Kingdom come*” – come and make an end of sin and the rule of man.

“*Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.*” There is nothing better for us all than that God’s will be done. His wisdom is our best and only safe guide.

Who will pray like this? The one who has committed his or her life in thankfulness to the Lord Jesus and who has determined to follow Him, come what may, for the remainder of their days. Many people feel that they would like to live such a life, but they say they are not strong enough, or clever enough, and certainly not good enough. When we hear that, we smile and say, “Listen to the rest of this person’s prayer.”

“*Give us this day our daily bread.*” Disciples of the Lord Jesus need His provision every day. They learn to live one day at a time, trusting Him for all that they need for that day. And then tomorrow, they do the same again.

“*Forgive us our debts, as we forgive those indebted to us.*” Who can

live this life without stumbling? We owe to God our whole heart and obedience, but too often we do not give Him what we owe. We seek His forgiveness, which He freely gives, day by day, as we also extend the same generous forgiveness to those around us.

“Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.” Can you hear what the heart is speaking? “I will follow you wherever You lead me, Lord, but I am not strong, I fear my weakness when I face the trials of this life. I am trusting You, Father, to deliver me from both the evil around me and the evil within me.”

What sort of person can pray this prayer? The disciples of the Lord Jesus. They are not strong, clever or good, but they have a Saviour who has, through His death, reconciled them to God, and to Him they cling.

So let us not recite the words of this prayer without understanding, but instead, let us pray in this manner as true disciples, growing in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus.

Neil Buckman

Examine your own hearts. Do you see there any habit or custom which you know is wrong in the sight of God? If you do, don't delay for a moment in attacking it. Resolve at once to lay it aside. Nothing darkens the eyes of the mind so much, and deadens the conscience so surely, as an allowed sin. It may be a little one, but it is not any less dangerous.

— J. C. Ryle

Necessity is laid upon us. We must fight. There are no promises in the Lord Jesus Christ's epistles to the seven churches, except to those who 'overcome.' Where there is grace, there will be conflict. The believer is a soldier. There is no holiness without a warfare. Saved souls will always be found to have fought a fight.

— J. C. Ryle

Who are you trying to impress?

Matthew 6:1-15

The book of Matthew was written to Jewish believers and presents Jesus Christ as their King. As the early church was mainly Jewish, the teachings in this book would have been particularly relevant to them. In chapters 1–10, Christ reveals Himself as the long-awaited King. And in the Sermon on the Mount, He teaches the principles of the King's kingdom.

Matthew 6 addresses three areas in the spiritual life of disciples: giving (2-4), prayer (5-15), and fasting (16-24). These three spiritual disciplines were important in Judaism. The main point was not to be a hypocrite in these areas of life. In particular, don't participate in these activities just to earn the praise of others.

Give with sincerity (6:1-4)

Ananias and Sapphira sold some property to help the needy and brought part of the money to the apostles, claiming it was the full amount (Acts 5:1-2). They were hypocrites.

Jesus said, *"Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven"* (Matthew 6:1 NIV).

This introduces the topic – the motivation for what we do. There is a warning about doing things to be seen by others.

Then there is a wrong way of giving for us to avoid. Jesus said, *"So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honoured by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full"* (Matthew 6:2).

Giving to the needy is an example of generosity. "Announce it with trumpets" is a metaphor for putting on a show. That's being a hypocrite. The Greek word for "hypocrite" originated in the Greek theatre

where an actor wore a mask to portray someone else. He pretended to be someone he wasn't. Hypocrites give "to be honoured by others". Their only reward is the human reputation they gain while on earth. They get what they want – human applause and praise. Calling attention to self is the opposite of giving glory to God. Jesus called them hypocrites because they were pretending to be something they weren't.

This is followed by a right way of giving for us to imitate. Jesus said, *"But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you"* (Matthew 6:3-4).

Giving should be done in private and not so that it will be noticed by others. Not letting our left hand know what our right hand is doing is an idiom for not seeking public recognition. No believer is to let this control their giving. We are to glorify God, not ourselves.

The idea of giving in "secret" is that it is done privately. God knows our actions and that is all that is necessary. God knows what we do in private. He will reward us for right motivation at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Matthew speaks about reward three times in this section (6:4,6,18). Our good deeds should be for God the Father, not for our personal praise. This doesn't mean that all giving must be anonymous. But there shouldn't be a blatant display of giving.

In the context of revealing the next king of Israel, the Lord said to Samuel, *"Do not consider his [Eliab's, Jesse's oldest son] appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart"* (1 Samuel 16:7).

Our motivation should be to help those who need it, not to have a spotlight on ourselves. Our motivation for giving should be based on what Christ did for us. When Paul was encouraging the believers in Corinth to give generously, he said, *"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich"* (2

Corinthians 8:9). And *"Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!"* (2 Corinthians 9:15).

Why do we give? Is it to support needy believers and to help in the proclamation of the gospel, or is it to be recognised by others?

Pray with sincerity (6:5-6)

In the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector, these men went to the temple to pray. The Pharisee prayed, *"I thank you, God, that I am not like other people – cheaters, sinners, adulterers. I'm certainly not like that tax collector! I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my income"* (Luke 18:11-12). He was a hypocrite because he made out that he was better than he actually was.

Jesus said, *"And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you"* (Matthew 6:5-6).

Jesus mentions "hypocrites" again. Hypocrites pray to be noticed and approved by others. Their motivation is wrong. Once again, they are rewarded on earth, but not in heaven. Prayer expresses our dependence on God. It is not intended to bring attention to ourselves.

Instead, we are told to pray privately. Then we will be rewarded by God. This may include answered prayer. By the way, this is not a prohibition of public prayer. The New Testament shows that there is a place for public prayer (Acts 2:42; 12:12; 13:3; 14:23; 20:36; 7:35; 1 Timothy 2:1).

Why do we pray? Is it to be heard by God, or is it to be seen by people?

Avoid repetitive prayer (6:7-8)

On Mount Carmel, the prophets of Baal cried out, "Baal, answer us" for about 12 hours (1 Kings 18:26-29)! And a mob in Ephesus shouted, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians" for two hours (Acts

19:34). That's one way to pray.

Jesus said, *"And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him"* (Matthew 6:7-8).

Jesus says that they don't need to keep repeating their prayers like unbelievers. We can't influence God by bombarding Him with repeated requests. God is ready to answer prayer. He willingly answers prayer. Repetitive prayer does not impress God. Repetition does not force God to answer our prayers.

Pagans used long lists of the names of their gods in their prayers, hoping that by constantly repeating them they would call on the name of the god that could help them.

Although God knows our need before we ask Him, He wants us to trust Him in prayer. Prayer expresses our dependence on God.

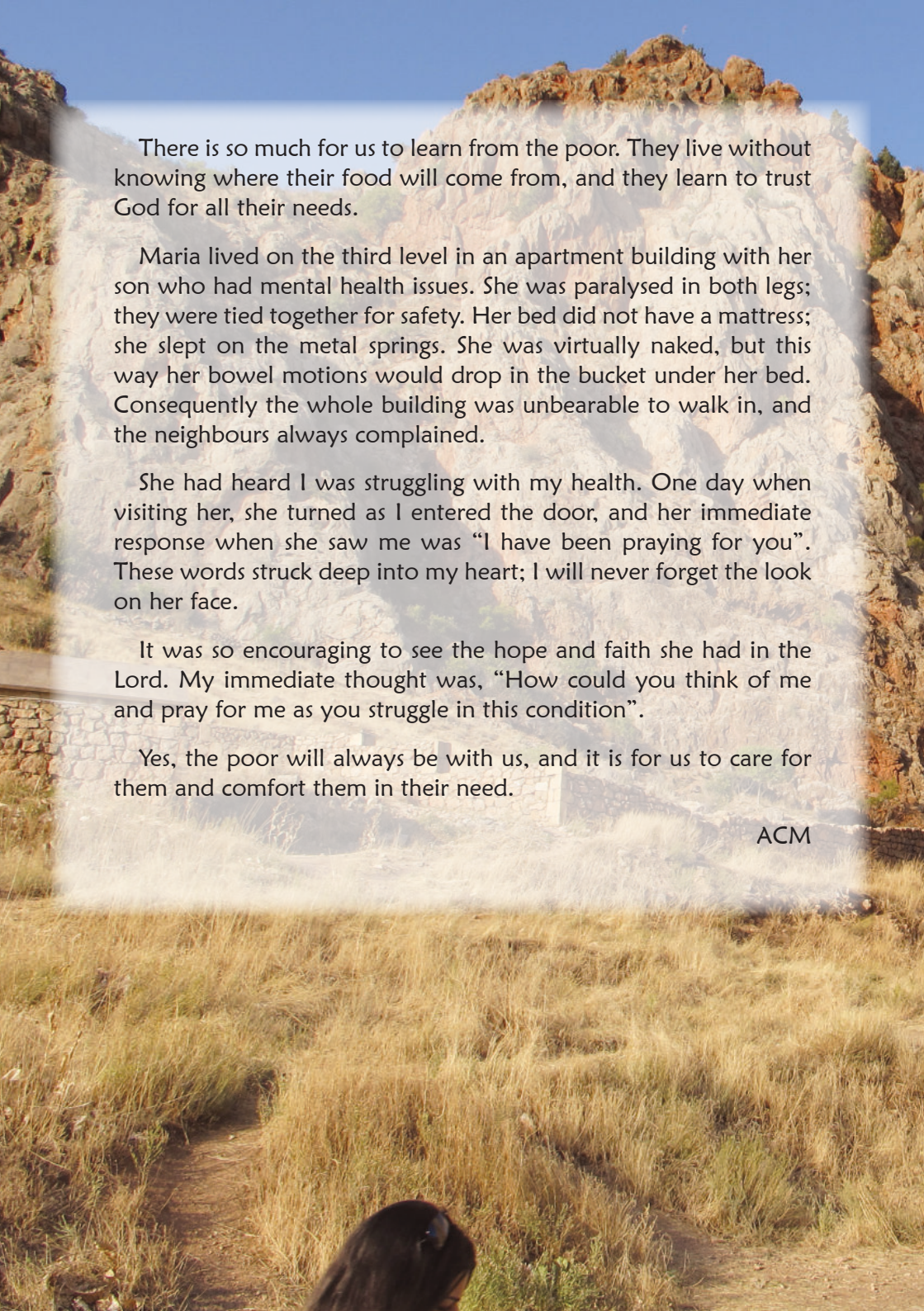
Do we bombard God with repetitive prayers?

George Hawke
(To be continued)

The poor you will always have with you

Our main reason for serving in Armenia is to take the Gospel to the poor and the needy. Jesus said, *"The poor you will always have with you"* (Matthew 26:11).

One of the most difficult situations we face is when funds are not available but there is a desperate and urgent need. The difficulty is facing the sick, the hungry, and the cold, and saying "No". This is one word I have struggled with until the Lord taught me that I am not God.



There is so much for us to learn from the poor. They live without knowing where their food will come from, and they learn to trust God for all their needs.

Maria lived on the third level in an apartment building with her son who had mental health issues. She was paralysed in both legs; they were tied together for safety. Her bed did not have a mattress; she slept on the metal springs. She was virtually naked, but this way her bowel motions would drop in the bucket under her bed. Consequently the whole building was unbearable to walk in, and the neighbours always complained.

She had heard I was struggling with my health. One day when visiting her, she turned as I entered the door, and her immediate response when she saw me was “I have been praying for you”. These words struck deep into my heart; I will never forget the look on her face.

It was so encouraging to see the hope and faith she had in the Lord. My immediate thought was, “How could you think of me and pray for me as you struggle in this condition”.

Yes, the poor will always be with us, and it is for us to care for them and comfort them in their need.

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