



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 cross-stone", Republic of Armenia. Photo by John Noble, ACM team.



Praise points

- Give thanks that God is a merciful and loving Father
- Give thanks for His guidance and leading

Please pray for:

- the mission team from LA which will visit Armenia in July
- the mission team from Australia visiting in October
- our sponsored families and students
- Syrian refugees in Armenia
- the preaching of the Word
- the distribution of literature to be a blessing to many
- many to be encouraged and renewed
- our co-workers
- our ministry in Armenia at large

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

Jesus, our mediator

"For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus." (1 Timothy 2.5)

Many times in our lives we look for mediators. People even blame their friends for not helping them as mediators when they are in difficult situations.

At times we may need mediators when we want to borrow money from a bank, or when we are in need of medical attention, or when we have difficult court cases, or when we apply for a new job. In some countries we need a mediator to be able to continue our education.

But how do we feel when we have sinned and the guilt is hurting us, when we feel cut off from God and sense a desperate need to be loved by Him? How do we feel if we want to be spiritually comforted, if we are searching for inner peace, if all else has failed us and we have nothing to hold on to, or if we are on our death beds and fear the unknown.

My dear friends, this is why Jesus came to this world. This is why He gave His life for mankind. This is why He has died; it was so that we may live.

God is a holy God and no man can see God and live. God's plan of salvation was to send us His Son so that whosoever believes in Him will have everlasting life.

Jesus became our mediator, and it is by faith we are saved through Him. The gap between God the Father and us has been met by our mediator the Lord Jesus, who intercedes with the Father for each one of us.

This is what Jesus prayed for us.

"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we

are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. “Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.” (John 17:10-26).

Are we surprised? This is God in His mercy and love, this is our loving Lord Jesus our Saviour, our mediator between God the Father and us, praying for our unity and love in Him, not only on this earth but also with Jesus and God the Father in eternity.

May the love of the Father fill your heart with gladness and joy.

HK

Timeless quotes

- “We are too busy to pray, and so we are too busy to have power. We have a great deal of activity, but we accomplish little. Many services, but few conversions; much machinery, but few results.” – R.A. Torrey
- “It’s not our business to make the message acceptable, but to make it available. We are not to see that they like it, but that they get it.” – Vance Havner
- “Out of 100 men, one will read the Bible, the other 99 will read the Christian.” – D. L. Moody
- “God save us from living in comfort while sinners are sinking into hell.” – Charles Spurgeon
- “The Scriptures are given not to increase our knowledge, but to change our lives.” – D. L. Moody

When God won't co-operate

There is a discovery that each one of us inevitably makes as we move along the Christian path. It is the discovery of how amazingly uncooperative God seems to be in helping us with what we have planned for our lives. Many of us as young Christians, set out in our new-found relationship with God with an enthusiastic naivete. We thought, "Now that God is in my life all will go exactly as I want it. How exciting it is to know God!" In the deepest possible sense this is true, but not in the way we think.

For some, disappointment with God comes through some devastating tragedy in which God seemed totally absent. For many others, it comes more as a creeping sense of despair as the number of disappointments in life and unanswered prayers begin to mount up. Eventually they conclude that God is either not to be trusted with the really important things, or that they are somehow missing out on some secret formula, that will hopefully engage God's co-operation and support in life. Book after book and speaker after speaker offer so much but things do not really seem to change. In frustration some finally wonder, "Just what do I have to do to get God to cooperate in helping me make life work? After all, everything I want in life is good and reasonable."

There is a very dangerous theology that presents God as a kind of genie like Aladdin had in his magic lamp. Aladdin merely had to rub the lamp for the genie to pop out and obey his every command. For some people, the Christian life consists of looking for the right technique or formula to make God fulfil their wishes. In this theology God is perceived as simply useful. How often do people who are disappointed with God cry out "If God can't help me with this or that need what use is He?" This attitude sees God as a useful stepping stone or means to achieve the really important things they think they need. They forget that "our God is in heaven, He does whatever pleases Him" (Psalm 115.3).

God is the ultimate and only satisfying end of all our journeyings

and searchings. If God is the ultimate end, He cannot be used as a means to achieve some other end beyond Himself. There can be no greater end than knowing Him. Any attitude that reduces God to a useful ally to be manipulated to achieve what you really believe will bring life is bound to be disappointing. God loves us far too much to bow to that immature game. He quietly waits for us to realise that Christian growth only occurs when we give up seeking to manipulate Him, and surrender to the mystery of His loving and infinitely superior plan. Opportunities to learn this lesson come in darkest, most painful and disappointing times of our lives.

In each of those moments, we make a decision whether we will reject God because He will co-operate with us, or we will surrender to the mystery of a God who is too big to be understood or controlled. These are the moments of true growth and insight.

Giving up on the things we think we really need feels like dying but this is the first step to really living. As you move through the disappointment of discovering that God refuses to be manipulated, you actually move towards the marvellous God who is really there with loving plans you could never have imagined. Christ summed it up perfectly: "Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you" (Matthew 6:33).

Rex Dearlove

Apply daily to look good on the inside

When it's high in the sky, the sun's beauty is fierce. However, as it sets, your gaze is far less difficult. From a rooftop late in the afternoon, something more beautiful and more terrifying held the gaze of King David. Most men experience turmoil at the sight of a beautiful, naked woman. A primal, instinctual urge turns interest automatically into desire. Only a forceful act of the will can turn the gaze. But David kept looking. On an adjacent rooftop a woman bathed. The teller of David's story tells us, "She was very beautiful". Yet, although Bath-

sheba was married, David took her anyway. Then, when she became pregnant and the sin couldn't be concealed, David organized for the murder of her husband, Uriah.

When you read the fuller version of this Bible story you'll notice many lessons. Chiefly, that God sees who we really are. And He's angry when we behave badly. With David, God's anger burned. He cursed his household with evil, further adultery and the death of the child conceived with Bathsheba, promising that "the sword shall never depart from your house".

David and Bathsheba's story also has lessons for us about beauty. Firstly, contrary to popular opinion, beauty is no modern obsession – it's always been a thing, because every society believes that good-looking people have more worth. Secondly, beautiful people get ahead in life. Bathsheba's husband was not an Israelite. Yet her beauty overshadowed this stigma. David simply couldn't resist her. Later, their son, Solomon, reigned as king at the highest point in Israel's history. Thirdly, we learn that outward beauty is no guarantee of anything nice on the inside. The Bible tells us that David was also good looking. Specifically, "he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome". But God made it clear that this wasn't the reason He chose him. He said "man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart".

As we've seen, David's heart became a corrupt mess. Later in the Bible (Psalm 51) he pleaded with God for help to make him beautiful on the inside. He cried, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a loyal spirit within me".

So now, a disturbing question remains. "What does God see when He turns His fierce gaze upon me? Deep down we know the answer. Yet when we read the Bible we discover that God is willing to help. He's willing to forgive and to come into our hearts so that we may become beautiful to Him.

Prayer: Dear God, please forgive those things that I've thought, said and done that are ugly. Please help me to be beautiful on the inside.

George Hawke

Mary visits Elizabeth

Read Luke 1.39-56

Elizabeth

Mary decided to visit her relative Elizabeth, a visit which would have been a strong confirmation of her faith. Elizabeth's faith was strong and she had begun praising God for what he had done in removing her reproach. She happily welcomed Mary, recognising Mary's privileged position as the mother of her Lord. She blessed Mary as one who had believed the Lord's message to her.

The babe leaped in Elizabeth's womb when Mary greeted her. This may have been an emotional reaction within Elizabeth, but we do not know. We do sense Elizabeth's excitement as she spoke in a loud voice, possibly even shouting. She blessed Mary as "one who had believed what had been said to her".

Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit; this enabled her to speak the message which God had revealed to her. Because this visit occurred so soon after the angel visited Mary, there was no way that Elizabeth could have received the news about Mary from any human source. The Spirit revealed what had happened to Mary and therefore Elizabeth exclaimed that both Mary and the fruit of her womb were blessed. She realised who was in Mary's womb, unhesitatingly speaking of Mary as "the mother of my Lord". She wondered why she should be honoured by such a visit.

Elizabeth addressed Mary as one blessed because of her faith. In contrast to Zechariah, Mary had believed the angel's message. Elizabeth added that the promise would be fulfilled. In this Elizabeth revealed her faith in God and in His ability to achieve what is normally impossible. She therefore becomes an example to us of a life of faith.

Mary's Song: the Magnificat

Mary's response to Elizabeth was to glorify God. Her praise showed her faith and trust in God. In her spirit she rejoiced in God her Saviour;

in her praise she reveals her knowledge of Israel's history and of God's goodness to His people. Old Testament themes are seen throughout her song. Mary rejoiced in God her Saviour because He had been mindful of her humble position. Psalm 138:6 informs us that "though the Lord is high, yet he looks after the lowly; but the proud, He knows from afar. Psalm 25:9 says "He will guide the humble in justice. He will teach the humble his way".

She recognised that in the future she would be referred to as blessed. She knew that the Mighty One had done great things for her. In fact, though angels are mighty, they are only fulfilling the Lord's word, obeying His voice (Psalm 103:20). No one can utter the mighty acts of the Lord, or fully declare all His praise (Psalm 106:2).

Mary recognised the holiness of the name of the Lord; this too is a concept found in the Old Testament. "Holy and awesome is His name" (Psalm 111:9).

There was a reminder of God's mighty deeds and goodness; deeds performed by His arm. God's arm always speaks of His strength. He had scattered the proud. The Assyrians who attacked Jerusalem during the reign of Hezekiah were decimated when God stepped in to defend His people. He has brought down rulers from their thrones. Nebuchadnezzar and his successor Belshazzar were both humiliated by the God of Israel. He has lifted up the humble. David was raised up from following the sheep while the captive Daniel became the highest man under the king. God also fills the hungry with good things; we think of Joseph's brothers buying grain from their brother in Egypt. Psalm 107:9 reminds us that God satisfies the longing soul and fills the hungry with goodness. God had already supplied manna in the wilderness. By contrast, He sends the rich away empty (empty-handed). When Mary said that God helped Israel by remembering His mercy to Abraham and his descendants she possibly had Psalm 98:3 in mind: "He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness to the house of Israel." God had always acted in accordance with His promises.

In her song, Mary looks ahead to the completion of God's prophetic promises. We see both her joy and humility as well as her acknowl-

edgment of God's power and mercy. There is a recognition of God's faithfulness in keeping His promise to Abraham. It is clear that Mary believed that the Old Testament prophecies concerning Israel, made by God through His prophets, were to be fulfilled. God had not cast aside His people, but still cared for them.

To us today

Mary displays a deep reverence for God and a deep knowledge of the Scriptures. In this she is an example to us all. How do we approach God? Do we meditate first on the greatness of His person and His work? Are we familiar with all His works as recorded in Scripture, as Mary was? Do we then come before Him to praise Him reverently and to acknowledge His goodness to us? Or do we just come to God with a list of needs and wants? If so, we need to learn from Mary's example and praise God because of who He is and what He has done.

Don Stormer

Bread and fish for 20,000 people according to John (John 6.1-14)

John wrote for all people, presenting Jesus Christ as God – God Almighty. The disciples had forgotten that they had the Lord Jesus with them, the one who is the Almighty God.

Look at this miracle through the eyes of a child. What did the boy think that morning when he was leaving home? His mother had taken care of him. She gave him what he needed for lunch.

The disciples

Philip was not ready to give 200 denarii. "We only have a little money: 200 denarii for 20,000 people". The need was 2,000 denarii. They only had 10%. It was too little for Philip to give to the Lord to buy food for the people. Philip had already seen the first miracle which was the turning of water into wine. In the meantime, he also saw two

healings: the son of a nobleman in Capernaum (John 4:46-54) and the paralytic man in Bethesda (John 5:1-8).

However, Andrew noticed that the boy had something to give. Andrew came to the right child and brought all that the child had to give to the Lord Jesus.

The unnamed boy

He had almost nothing. His lunch cost perhaps less than 10% of one denarius. It meant that the disciples had 2,000 times more than he. The boy (perhaps he had not yet seen one of the miracles of Jesus) gave only 0.005% of the need. Little is much if God is in it. This boy became famous around the world because he was ready to give little. He started with what he had. God begins where we are and uses what we have!

God's provision

God gave an unknown couple a son who was going to be part of God's plan. God had arranged everything. He made opportunities for the boy's father to work. Most likely he was a fisherman. God made the boy's mother sensitive to the need of her son. She prepared lunch for her son. She baked the bread and smoked the fish that the boy's father perhaps caught. The boy was in the right place at the right time. It was late but he had not yet eaten his lunch. He gave what he had. He did not give much, but he gave everything. He gave everything to the Lord Jesus!

Little in the hands of Jesus

If the disciples tried to feed the people with that boy's offering without the power of Jesus, only one person would have been fed. All the others would be hungry!

Warren W. Wiersbe said "A hungry world is feeding on empty substitutes while we deprive them of the Bread of life".

The Lord Jesus multiplied

The Lord Jesus multiplied what the boy gave. He did not multiply what the disciples were not ready to give. Jesus put into practice the

principle of multiplication! The Lord Jesus as God could make bread from stones or from nothing. He is Creator of all, but He chose to make much from a little!

The simple reality:

1. *One little boy's lunch satisfied many.*
2. *One little boy's lunch made a difference.*
3. *One little boy's lunch revealed the power of God.*
4. *One little boy's lunch changed lives.*
5. *One little boy's lunch strengthened people's faith.*

Dr. Czeslaw Bassara

Not me, not now, not there

A father had a son and named him "Now". "Now" loved to please his father in everything, instantly fulfilling all his father's requests without questioning, arguing or delaying. When the father asked him to water the flowers, "Now" was ready to say "Here, I am, I will do it now". When the father asked him to cut the wood, again the answer was the same. Soon, a second child was born and the father named him "Me". "Now" and "Me" were good brothers, both were ready to do whatever their father wished. The younger son was always repeating "Send me, send me dad". A third son was born, and the father named him "There". "There" was an obedient child too. He always said to his father "I am ready to go there whatever it may cost".

The father, "Now", "Me" and "There" lived in perfect harmony, until the fourth child was born. His name was "Not". This child was different from his brothers. He soon taught his elder brothers to say "No", and he added his name in front of his brothers' names, and thus "Now" became "Not Now", "Me" became "Not Me", and "There" became "Not There". From that day on, the home turned into a hell. Every day the father was hearing such comments, "Not Now", "Not Me", "Not There".

Of course, this is a fiction of my imagination, but in it resides great truths, which I think we Christians need to be reminded about again and again. This is our story. The day we came to the Lord we were full of enthusiasm, we were ready to do everything, we gave Him all we are and all we have, and were ready to go even to hostile countries as missionaries, but something along the way happened, something hindered us and we are not likely to go everywhere, to do everything and be obedient to God without questioning, arguing and delaying.

The three elder sons represent three sins of Christians, three sins which have nested in the minds and hearts of today's Christians.

- 1. "Not Now" is the sin of laziness. I will do it later, I will visit later, I will serve later...*
- 2. "Not Me" is the sin of indifference. Let him do it, why me? Let him give money, why me? Let him pray, why me?*
- 3. "Not There" is the sin of stubbornness. I will do it my way, I won't go there, I prefer here, I don't like there, that is not according to my gifts...*

What would have happened if, to the question "Whom shall I send", Isaiah had answered "Not me, not now, not there". What would have happened if he had said to God "Dear God, I am thankful that You by Your grace have made me a prophet, but I know that You have other prophets. Send them. I am not ready to go, I don't want to go to the Israelites, to such stiff-necked people."

What would have happened if the Israelites had not responded to Moses' call to bring gold, silver and bronze to build the tabernacle and all its instruments? What would have happened if the people had said to Moses, "Not us, not now, not for that cause. These golden ornaments are ours. We received them from the Egyptians. When you reach the Promised Land, take from their gold how much you wish, but these are ours and our children's."

What would have happened if the people in Nehemiah's day had said, after listening to his request to build the walls of Jerusalem and the gates of the city, "Not us, not now, not Jerusalem again. We don't

want to live with those bad memories. We are used to the Babylonian life style. Let the next generation think about it”.

We thank God that this did not happen. However, what would have happened if they had done so? The work of God would have ceased, the tabernacle would not have been built, the walls and the gates of Jerusalem would not have been constructed and Israel and the other nations would not have heard God's commands through the prophet Isaiah.

What will happen if we continue to feed the three sins mentioned above? What will happen if we won't repent from the sin of laziness, the sin of indifference and the sin of stubbornness? What would happen if we say we don't want to do evangelism now, we don't want mission work, we don't want to labour for the Lord?

And now this may shock you as it did for me. What would happen if God the Father had said “Whom shall I send for the sins of the mankind? Who is ready to go down to suffer, to humble Himself and taste the sin of all humankind?” and the Lord Jesus had said “Not me, not now, not there”. Think for a moment, but praise be to God that the Lord Jesus was not indifferent, He was not seeking His comfort, nor forcing His will.

The Word of God says about Jesus “though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2.6-8).

This message is a call for every Christian to think about. Does God ask you to do something? Does He tell you to give money for missions? Why are you looking to the Christian next you? Why are you thinking that God should have told him and not you to give to mission work? Does He send you to a special area, where you know that difficulties are certainly awaiting you? Think about Jesus. What would happen to you and me if He had not come? Think of those who will be blessed by your acts of obedience and, vice versa, of their misery and discourage-

ment if you say to God “Not me, not now, not there”.

May the Lord help us see things through His eyes and teach us to value what has everlasting value, for the glory of His name.

Vartan Sarkissian

Winter in Armenia

I remember my first visit to Armenia in 1998.

I had to leave behind my wife, our two children, family, friends, work, church, not knowing why I was going and what I was going to do in a country that I had not visited before, but the call was too strong and clear. I had to go but deep inside me I wanted to stay with my loved ones in a safe country, and enjoy the summer with 35-40 degrees of heat.

Yes, I had to make sure that I had all the right clothing with me: hat, sleeping bag, snow jacket and thermal clothing, not forgetting my special shoes for snow.

After a difficult goodbye and some tears with family and friends who joined me to the airport, I landed in Yerevan after 38 hours of traveling. I was booked to stay in a little hotel room that had air conditioning to keep me warm and I had it running all night.

We had organised with an NGO organisation to help me visit some elderly people to see their conditions. Some were receiving home care such as food and medication. At times they may have been given a wash but not in winter because they had no hot water or heating system.

There I was in a small car with a driver and a nurse for our first visit as the car stopped outside a 10 storey old Russian building. The temperature outside was about 20 below zero, a cold that I had not experienced before. The street was covered with snow and the trees looked so magical. And yes, I had my hat and gloves on.

The three of us entered the building for my first experience in the lift. It was one of the smallest I had ever been in, really only designed for one person. If four were fitted in, they would all be hugging each other! We reached the fifth level. At the door I was told to stand outside till the nurse went in to make things look good. We waited outside; I was very excited, getting my camera ready to take a shot of the first person I would meet. They had told me that he was an old man living by himself and that they visited him once a week. After a long wait during which I was getting impatient, the nurse came out, said few words to the driver and went in again. I asked if everything was ok and he said that the old man was dead. I still insisted on going in and see him, entering a room that was no more than 2 x 4 metres. There was a single bed and piles of newspapers. From his colour I realised that he had been dead for some time. I asked the nurse what has happened and her response was that he had frozen in his sleep and died of the cold.

Most of the elderly and homeless have no winter heat. After seeing some of these horrific conditions, ACM's first effort was to send 40 heaters from Australia to some of these people. Today ACM spends over \$15,000.00 per year just for winter heat to support some of the families and the children who are under their care. Some of these people are living in metal containers.

We want to thank all who have supported us in the past. In some parts of Armenia winter lasts for five months and may be 40 degrees below zero. Please keep the winter needs in your prayers. There are many ways you can help a needy family in Armenia and we are more than happy to guide you in some of these ways.

May God bless you.

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