



Trumpet's Sound

55th year, Australia
JULY - AUGUST 2024



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

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Cover photo: Banksia prionotes, (Acorn Banksia), Western Australia



Prayer points

- Give thanks for ACM children’s ministry in the villages
- Give thanks for CEF camps and the many who came to the Lord
- Pray for our mission team starting August 31
- Pray for the distribution of goods from Australia for the refugees
- Pray for peace for Armenia
- Pray for peace in the world
- Pray for the Lord to come and that His will be done

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

Holliness

Holliness is a word that is not used commonly, but is often found in the Bible. It is a word that is affiliated with God. *“Exalt the Lord our God. And worship at His holy mountain, for the Lord our God is holy.”*

Romans 3 talks about us as sinners who have fallen short of God's glory. We need to be cleansed; the Father wants to see us purified. The Lord Jesus is the only one and the only way, the question that comes to mind: are you cleansed by the blood of the Lamb? Is there anything purer and cleaner than that?

Being holy means being put aside for God's use, being set apart or sanctified for God (1 Corinthians 6:11). We need to come in God's presence daily to examine ourselves and be cleansed. Think how many times we wash our hands in a day!

Peter wrote *“But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do”* for it is written *Be holy, because I am holy*” (1 Peter 1:15-16).

At times we are satisfied with our Christian life and content by going to church on Sundays. But the verse that speaks about this is Hebrews 12:14: *“Without holiness, no man shall see the LORD.”*

David asks the question and gives the answer: *“How can a young person stay on the path of purity”?* It is *“by living according to your word”* (Psalm 119:9).

Do we have the courage like David to go to the Lord and ask Him: *“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting”* (Psalm 139:23-24).

May the Lord give us humility and wisdom as we live in the last days.

“You are to be holy to me because I, the Lord, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be my own” (Leviticus 20:26).

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Paul's prayer in Colossians

For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light (Colossians 1:9-12).

Though Paul hadn't visited Colosse, he had heard from Epaphras, and perhaps others, of the believers' faith and their love for all the saints. What an encouragement to the apostle who was in prison for his faith and facing so much hardship! Indeed, wouldn't we also be greatly encouraged to hear of a gathering of the Lord's people with such a fine reputation?

But Paul knew that, wonderful though it was, there was much more for them to know and experience, and that burdened him to pray for them constantly. His prayer, recorded in Colossians 1:9-12, allows us to see his desire for them, and it can also guide us as we pray for ourselves and for those around us.

Paul's first request was that they might be "*filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding*". This is also how David instructed his son Solomon, as we read in Proverbs 4:3-7. "*Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom.*" Knowledge is important, but wisdom is even more important. We can't be ignorant of God's word, but we need spiritual wisdom and understanding to discern His will. That is how Paul's prayer for the saints in Colosse begins, and in this he is laying the foundation for his next request.

This was that they "*may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God*". What a glorious prayer! Does your heart respond,

“Yes, yes, yes, that’s all my desire”? By the grace of God this prayer can be answered in your life and mine. We can learn to walk worthy of the Lord and be fully pleasing to Him. Think of it! What a privilege! What a joy! Yes, there is a price to pay. Yes, there will be some hard times. But such things are nothing compared to the glory that shall be revealed when the Lord Jesus comes.

In Psalm 1 we see a beautiful picture of fruitfulness, and the Lord Jesus taught that our fruitfulness glorifies the Father, and it becomes His disciples (John 15:8). The experiences we have along the way, as we learn and grow, will be ordered by the Holy Spirit so that we shall be “increasing in the knowledge of God”, and that will deepen our faith and our zeal to press on.

Paul knows full well that this is a narrow and difficult path, so he prays that the believers will be strengthened with God’s power – the power that enables the weakest saint to persevere patiently and to persevere with joy and much thanksgiving.

Twenty centuries have not changed the ways of God, nor His heart for His people. Let us follow Paul’s example and boldly pray this prayer for one another. It was inspired by the Holy Spirit, and He wants to accomplish great things in the lives of God’s servants for the glory of Christ, who is our life. Onward!

Neil Buckman



“Next to praying there is nothing so important in practical religion as Bible reading. By reading that book we may learn what to believe, what to be, and what to do; how to live with comfort, and how to die in peace.”

Happy is that man who possesses a Bible! Happier still is he who reads it! Happiest of all is he who not only reads it, but obeys it, and makes it the rule of his faith and practice!”

— J.C. Ryle

The message of Jonah

God is compassionate

When we read the prophecy of Jonah we are impressed by two important truths. The first concerns the truth of God and His ways. The second is about the nature of man – particularly those who are the servants of God!

The truth about God

Many aspects of the nature and ways of God are revealed to us in the book of Jonah. The prominent themes of the prophecy include God's sovereignty, His mercy and His forgiveness. His sovereignty is seen in the way that He controls nature to display glory, as well as in the way He expects His servants to obey Him. When they are disobedient He has the right to take action to ensure that His will is done.

The God who controls the universe directs His servants to be where He wants them to serve Him and expects them to obey Him wholeheartedly, even if this means doing something they do not like, such as taking His message to the national enemy. And if He has decided that a message will be taken to Nineveh, as it was in this case, it will be taken. What God wants done will be done. In a similar way, on the day the Lord rode into Jerusalem and the Pharisees complained about the noise the people were making, the Lord's reply was very definite. If the people did not acknowledge Him as the Messiah the stones would cry out His praises (Luke 19:40). This was the day the Messiah was to be proclaimed and nothing would, or could, prevent God's will from being done!

God is one who punishes disobedience and rebellion. Jonah disobeyed God's instruction to go to Nineveh, attempting instead to go to Tarshish. He had to learn that one does not disobey the Lord with impunity.

The punishment methods which God uses are designed to teach us His ways. Sometimes the methods are drastic as when Jonah was

thrown overboard and swallowed by a large fish. At other times they are less severe, but God's methods are still intended to teach us His ways. Thus God provided a shady plant for Jonah to ease his discomfort and then quickly removed it to teach Jonah about his mercy. Jonah was angry that the plant was removed even though he had had nothing to do with its creation or growth. God wanted Jonah to learn that the people of Nineveh were among those whom He had created and He had a right to be concerned for them. This includes His right to be merciful to those who repent.

God's message of forgiveness does not stop at national boundaries. This is in contrast to Jonah's lack of love for the enemy. God is gracious and forgives those who repent. He is merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in mercy. Jonah knew this and didn't like it. But we can be thankful that God will forgive all who turn to Him in repentance. The message the Lord proclaimed to Moses in Exodus 34:6-7 remains true:

The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation.

The forgiveness given to the people of Nineveh is a good example of the truth spoken to Jeremiah (18:7-10):

The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it, if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it. And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it.

God is also sovereign and has absolute control over nature. His sovereignty is seen in the things He had prepared for Jonah. Five

things are mentioned. The first was the storm (1:4) sent by God to stop a disobedient prophet who was running away from Him. God's intention was that eventually Jonah would do what he was told to do. Second was the great fish (1:17) designed to save the prophet's life in order that at a later date he would indeed do God's will. Next was the vine (4:6), a provision from God to make the prophet's life more tolerable while He was setting the stage to demonstrate His mercy. Almost immediately God prepared a worm (4:7) to destroy the vine to place Jonah in a position where he have to give deep thought to God's merciful character. Finally the east wind (4:7) was sent as the final step by which Jonah was shown that God is a merciful God. Each of these items was provided at the time God wanted them.

What are the lessons for us?

- God is in control of nature. All elements of nature – the storm, the fish, the vine, the worm, the wind – are at His disposal and He can and will use them for His glory.
- God expects obedience from His servants. If we disobey Him we cannot expect Him to overlook our sin.
- If God intends a message to be sent to a nation or group He is able to make the disobedient obey, or He can use another method. Mordecai knew this when he said to Esther (4:14) "If you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"
- God does not desire the death of the wicked. It is His will that people repent and serve Him. He is compassionate, and we can thank Him for His grace.
- God is both sovereign and gracious. He is merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in mercy. Those who repent are forgiven.

Don Stormer

The Fruit of the Spirit is Gentleness

It is generally agreed that "kindness" is a more accurate rendering than "gentleness" for the central grace of the Spirit. So it is translated by the RV, JND, Weymouth, and others, and the AV translates the word this way on four of its occurrences, and in this place only by the word "gentleness".

We have noticed in studying some of the other words in this passage that they describe attributes of God Himself. So it is with kindness. Three times in the Old Testament we read that God is "*gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness*" (Nehemiah 9:17; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2). The Psalmist spoke of "*His marvellous kindness*" (Psalm 31:21), and Isaiah of God's "*everlasting kindness*" (54:8). Frequently our translators have used the word "lovingkindness", and the Psalms abound with such references, e.g., "*How excellent is Thy lovingkindness, O God*" (Psalm 36:7), "*Thy lovingkindness is better than life*" (Psalm 63:3).

Now, God's kindness to us is a strong reason for our being kind to one another. A story is told of a shame-faced employee who was summoned to the office of the senior partner to hear his doom. The least he could expect was instant dismissal; he might be sent to prison for years. The old man called his name, and asked him if he was guilty. The clerk stammered out that he had no defence. "I shall not send you to prison," said the old man. "If I take you back, can I trust you?" When the surprised and broken clerk had given assurance and was about to leave, the senior partner continued: "You are the second man who has fallen and been pardoned in this business. I was the first. What you have done, I did. The mercy you received, I received. God help us all!"

That is the thought of the apostle in Ephesians 4:32, "*Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*" An unkind Christian is a monstrosity, as odious as the man in Matthew 18:23-35.

The two chief ways of expressing kindness are in words and in deeds. It has been said that kind words are the music of the world. On the other hand, unkind words are one of the most fruitful sources of discord. Let us illustrate the point with another quotation: "On one occasion the genial but sad-faced Eugene Field sat at a table in a New York restaurant. The voluble waiter rattled off a number of dishes that were ready for service. Field looked at him solemnly for a moment, and then remarked: 'Oh, friend. I want none of these things. All I require is an orange and a few kind words.' There was more pathos than humour in the reply. To men and women of toil and travail, how welcome are the few kind words! Without them a banquet is a famine; with them an orange is a feast."

To speak a kind word in season, without patronage or unreality, is a most difficult art, and is more effective than zeal, learning or eloquence.

But if kind words are not accompanied by kind deeds they are insincere. James wrote *"If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, 'Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled'; notwithstanding, ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit?"* (2:15-16). Again, John in his first epistle wrote: *"My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth"* (3:18).

As we would expect, the Bible is full of encouragements to kind deeds. In Leviticus 25:35 we read: *"If thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee, then thou shalt relieve him; yea, though he be a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with thee."* Remember, too, the Lord's words to His sheep in Matthew 25: *"Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was a hungered, and ye gave Me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took Me in; naked, and ye clothed Me; I was sick, and ye visited Me; I was in prison, and ye came unto Me."* (25:34-36).

The New Testament also provides us with striking examples of kindness. One is found in Acts 28: *"The barbarous people showed*

us no little kindness ... for they kindled a fire, and received us every one because of the present rain. and because of the cold . . . who also honoured us with many honours; and when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary".

That was the way the people of Malta treated Paul and his companions. Alas! that the "barbarous people" often outstrip the disciples in the matter of kindness! The latter, however, were not behind in Acts 11:29, for *"then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea."*

Might we pause to make the obvious application? Many brethren in the world are in the condition of the saints in Judaea and Christian magazines have published information concerning their dire distress. We thank God for what has been done, but surely we should abound still more and more, and show the kindness of God unto His children. *"Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward"* (Matthew 10:42).

The poet, Wordsworth, wrote of "that best portion of a good man's life, his little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love." Another writer, James Barry, once said: "Shall we make it a rule from tonight always to try to be a little kinder than is necessary?" It would be a good New Year's resolution to seek in God's strength during the year to reflect a little more of the kindness of the Lord.

If we are not very kind we are not very spiritual, for the fruit of the Spirit is kindness.

Tom Carson



"Let us never measure our religion by that of others, and think we are doing enough if we have gone beyond our neighbors."

— J.C. Ryle

Repentance - turning around to follow the true God (1)

In 2013 a friend and I walked through Glenbrook Gorge in the Blue Mountains to Lapstone Rail Station. I had a map to follow. Outside the gorge we reached a junction, but I didn't know where we were on the map. So I didn't know whether the station was towards the left or the right. We walked right towards the north for about 15 minutes and then repented (turned around) because we realised that the station was probably towards the south! We had to turn around 180 degrees to reach our destination. As we wasted at least half an hour because of this mistake, I decided to get a mobile [cell] phone so I could use a GPS like Google maps to show where I was on the map.

My wife had a similar experience recently. She travelled in Sydney to Norwest on the Metro to meet me and then turned left towards the south-west. After a while she repented (turned around) because she realised that I was towards the north-east. So you can still make mistakes if you don't use your GPS!

We all make mistakes, and have failures and weaknesses, and go in the wrong direction from time to time. We all go against God's will for us sometimes. We can all act as though we are more important than God is. The Bible calls this sin, which is anything we think say or do that is against God's will. The Bible tells us how to deal with these situations to receive God's eternal forgiveness and how to be restored whenever we fail. It involves turning away from our failures and turning towards God. It's like doing a U turn. Repentance is when we turn away from our failures and turn towards the true God instead.

Definition

In the Bible, repentance is turning away from a previous behaviour, attitude, or opinion. It's a change of mind. In the New Testament it is mainly used for repentance from an ungodly behaviour, attitude, or opinion (sin), and this change of mind involves both a turning from failure (sin) and a turning to God.

If you have changed your mind about a product purchased from a Woolworths Supermarket in Australia, they may provide an exchange, but they will not provide a refund. And within 14 days of delivery Samsung will provide an exchange or refund of a mobile product purchased online if the product is unused and in a re-sellable condition. So it can be OK to change your mind about something.

Old Testament examples of repentance

After God created Adam and Eve they rebelled and disobeyed God (they sinned). Because of this, humanity inherited a rebellious nature. They became self-centred and generally saw no need to respect or obey the God who created both them and the universe.

Ten generations later mankind was generally evil, wicked and corrupt (Genesis 6:5-2). While Noah was building the boat, he “warned the world of God’s righteous judgment” (2 Peter 2:5 NLT). “By his faith Noah condemned the rest of the world” (Hebrews 11:7 NLT). God preached through Noah when he was building his boat (1 Peter 3:19-20). The ungodly people of Noah’s day had a chance to turn around to follow God (to repent). Unfortunately, they rebelled against the truth and refused to enter the boat, and drowned in the flood. This shows that lack of repentance leads to God’s judgment.

About BC 1,000, King David of Israel had an opportunity to turn around and follow God (repent). Nathan the prophet rebuked David for his adultery with Bathsheba and murder of her husband Uriah (2 Samuel 12:1-19).

Then David said to Nathan, “*I have sinned against the Lord*” – he was convicted and confessed his sin. The sin was against God and not just against other people. Nathan replied, “The Lord has taken away your sin.” Because of this, God forgave his sins (2 Samuel 12:13 NIV). David’s prayer for God’s forgiveness and cleansing is given in Psalm 51. The pattern is: conviction, confession, repentance, and then forgiveness.

About BC 710 Isaiah said that repentance leads to pardon. He told the nation of Judah: *Seek the Lord while He may be found; call on*

Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake their ways [behaviour] and the unrighteous their thoughts [mind]. Let them turn to the Lord [repent], and He will have mercy on them [forgiveness], and [turn] to our God, for He will freely pardon [forgiveness]. (Isaiah 55:6-7)

When the wicked turn to the Lord (repent), He will “have mercy on them” and “freely pardon” them. There is forgiveness. It’s repeated in the parallelism of the Hebrew poetry.

About BC 640, the book of the Old Testament law was found in the Jewish temple (2 Kings 22:1-20). When King Josiah heard it read “he tore his robes” and wept because he realised the nation had not obeyed God’s law. They had followed idols instead. And their punishment was predicted in the law. Then he renewed their covenant to follow the Lord and to keep His commands (2 Kings 23:1-24). And all the idols, the altars to idols and the pagan priests in the nation were destroyed. Here we see that repentance was evident in the actions taken by King Josiah. He had turned around from facing God’s judgment to experiencing God’s forgiveness.

Many of the Old Testament prophets issued a call to repentance to the nation of Israel. For example, in about BC 520 Zechariah said to the nation of Judah: *“This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘Return to me,’ declares the Lord Almighty, ‘and I will return to you,’ says the Lord Almighty. Do not be like your ancestors, to whom the earlier prophets [like Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel] proclaimed: This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘Turn from your evil ways and your evil practices’ (repent). But they would not listen or pay attention to me, declares the Lord.”* (Zechariah 1:3-4).

After they repented, Zechariah predicted the restoration of Israel (Zechariah 1:6, 16-17). So the pattern in the Old Testament for turning around to follow the true God (repentance) is: conviction (that you are heading in the wrong direction), confession (telling God about it), repentance (turning around to follow God), then forgiveness (from God) and then restoration (by God).

George Hawke
To be continued...

Focus on Lebanon

It was such a joyful experience for brother Rafi Chaparian and myself to visit the ancient ports of Tyre and Sidon last year. These are cities located in Lebanon on the Mediterranean coast. Sidon, the older of the two is believed to have existed prior to BC 2000.

Both are mentioned in the Old and New Testaments. The Lord Jesus mentions this in relation to judgment of the hardened hearts seen in Israel. However, others were eager to listen to our Lord.

But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judaea, And from Jerusalem, and from Idumaea, and from beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him.

Mark 3:7-8

That the heathen cities were more open to the Lord's voice is seen by the testimony of the Syrophoenician woman who came to our Lord pleading for the healing of her daughter. "And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed" (Mark 7:30).

We in ACM have been blessed to see the work grow in Lebanon. In the four years since we started our ministry there, our workers, Taline and Maral, and a handful of volunteers, have been able to oversee the support of about 36 families. Besides our regular families, we have been able to provide food parcels to others, especially during the special seasons.

About ten of the families have been attending the local Brotherhood Church and our sisters have been able to provide transport for them as well. The preaching and teaching of the word continues!

As an organisation that has been blessed to share the gospel in Lebanon since 2020. We are also very burdened about the current situation there, especially at the border with Israel. Our workers have

continued to serve in the usual way, although there have been explosions not far from their residence and work place. There have also been recent reports of uncertainty at the main airport. The Western Countries have requested their residents to leave the country. Airlines leaving Australia have taken steps to reroute some of the flights and travel warnings have also been issued by the Australian government.

The most encouraging part that we can testify is that the gospel continues to be proclaimed. Our families are being visited regularly and we are providing limited aid to the sick.

As we continue to commit the whole country to our Lord in prayer, we can be reminded of what Jesus said: *"Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you"* (Matthew 11:21-22).

Jesus names these cities of Tyre and Sidon to remind us that the self-righteous from the chosen race refused Him, while the rest of the world was willing to heed to the gospel call. Indeed, the Word of God and His Spirit will continue to be our guide as we serve the Lord Jesus Christ during these difficult times.

Dr Daniel James

