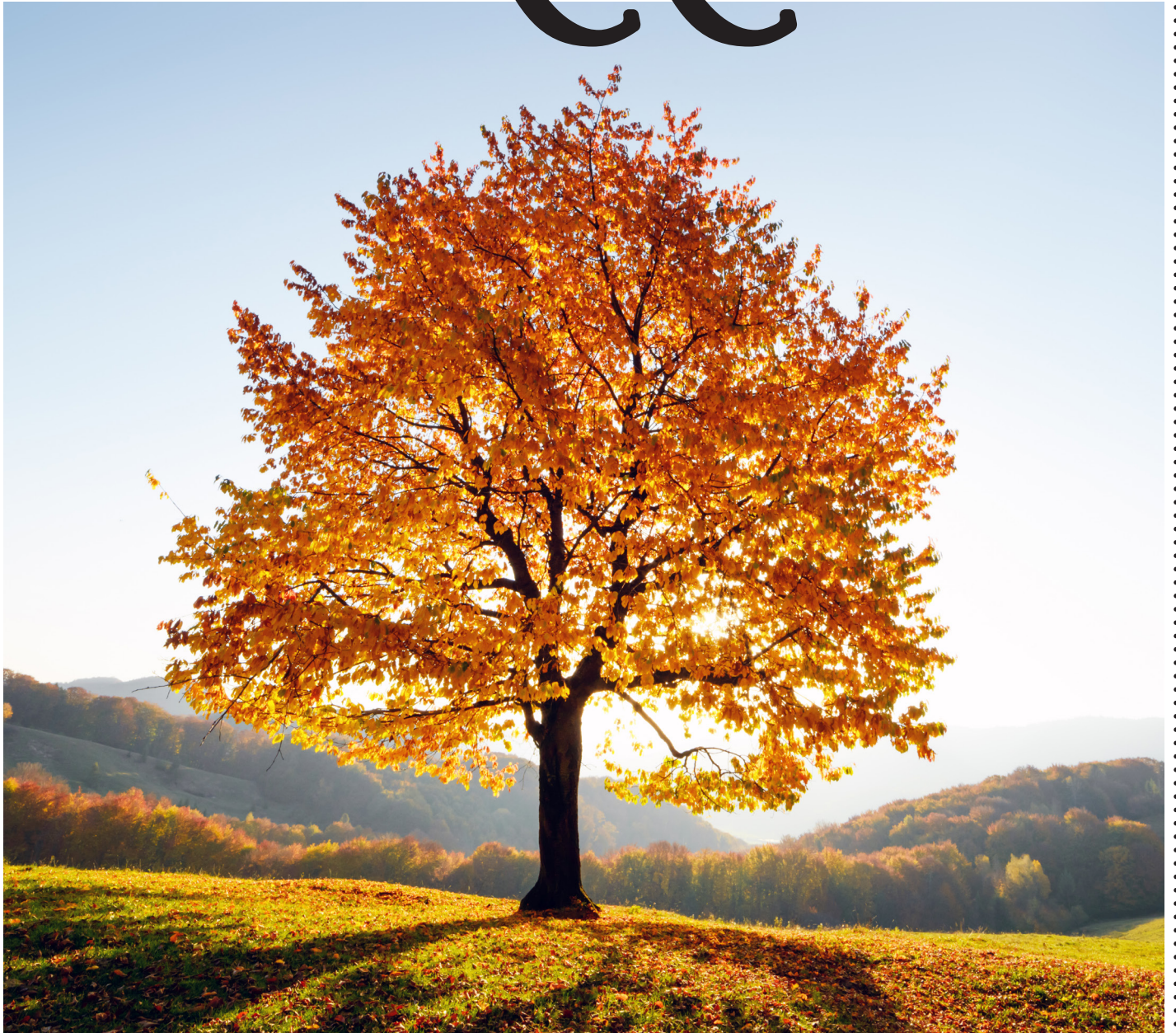


QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA

# CURRENT



1 CORINTHIANS

EVANGELISM

BY FAITH ALONE

VOL. 12/No. 3 Fall 2022



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## SUBSCRIPTIONS

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The Free Presbyterian Church of North America is a conservative, Protestant, and Reformed denomination with churches in Canada, Mexico, and the United States. We maintain a biblical position of separation from false ecumenism while seeking to stand with all who stand for Christ and the historic Protestant faith. While we are unashamedly Reformed in our theology, our Calvinism is never a hindrance to our preaching the free offer of the gospel since we always seek to keep our Calvinism Christ-centered and evangelistic. Our great desire is to preach "the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Ephesians 3:8) in our churches and throughout the world.

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**FALL 2022**

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**BUT I AM POOR AND NEEDY: MAKE HASTE UNTO ME, O GOD: THOU ART MY  
HELP AND MY DELIVERER; O LORD, MAKE NO TARRYING.  
PSALM 70:5**

**SUDDENLY!**

**FROM THE EDITOR**

**A**s eternal, God relates to time in a different way from His creatures. Moses exalts His God with these words, “For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night” (Psalm 90:4). In prayer, we approach the eternal God, asking for His action in time. We understand He knows the future and the past, but we are also to believe it is appropriate for the Lord to act in the present. God’s entering into time and acting in history is fundamental to a Christian worldview. We delight to know that God can intervene and change situations in time.

Preaching through Luke recently, I came back to the story of the conversion of the thief on the cross. Matthew informs his readers that both thieves were initially involved in mocking the Lord (Matthew 27:44). Luke then shows us that one of the thieves continued to mock while the other underwent a change of heart (Luke 23:39-40). What is striking is the suddenness of the change of heart. The Lord was crucified at the third hour, Jewish time. Darkness fell at the sixth hour, around noon. So, in those three hours the thief was changed from an unbeliever to a Christ-confessor. I say three hours, but in truth, the change of heart was instant as God suddenly gave him eyes to behold

the Savior and faith to call upon Him. This illustrates the truth that, from our perspective, God comes suddenly and everything changes.

What is true for the individual sinner was true in the storyline of redemption. Malachi was given the privileged task of announcing the Messiah’s coming. Having predicted the coming of the Baptist, he heralds the words of God, “And the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts” (Malachi 3:1). Some were waiting for the consolation of Israel (Luke 2:25, 38) but from man’s vantage point Christ’s coming into this world was as sudden as the angels’ appearance to the shepherds (Luke 2:13).

Hopelessness can easily creep into the thinking of the child of God. Many despair over a lost loved one. Others lament the wickedness of the times. Still others hanker back to times when the church enjoyed a spiritual fervency not known today. Faith must drive out hopelessness and faith is fed by truth. The truth of God’s ability to suddenly intervene will feed faith, leading us to pray the prayers of the saints. “But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God” (Psalm 40:17). “Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me” (Psalm 31:2). Faith believes in God’s involvement in

this world. Faith believes in God’s sudden interventions for the progress of His redeeming purposes and for the glory of His name!

**FROM THE PAST**

**“[God] works at all times without weariness, and does the greatest things with ease. As there is nothing too hard for God, so there is nothing hard to God. He does the hardest things that are with the greatest ease. Indeed, the great God does the greatest and hardest things with the same ease that He does the least things. It is all one to Him whether his work be small or great, easy or hard to others; all is easier alike to him.”**

**“He delivers his people with the greatest ease. Whatsoever their straits be, though various and difficult, yet He helps them out with ease. When they were in captivity, scattered up and down as exiles out of their own country, He brings them home... If he will it and command it the work is done.”**

*From George Swinnock,  
The Incomparableness of God*



# COMMUNITY EVANGELISM

The history of the Free Presbyterian Church is entrenched in fervent evangelism. The early ministers were evangelists at heart, and the congregations they pastored had multiple evangelistic ministries: reaching children in the community; door-to-door outreach; open-air preaching with street evangelism and tract distribution; or annual multi-week gospel campaigns in which God's people would exert themselves in prayer and invitations to nightly gospel preaching, often lasting from two to six weeks at a time. In short, the Free Presbyterian Church was brought from birth to maturity through intense community evangelism.

In light of that history, when the Free Presbyterian Church of North America was formed in 2005, a Statement of Purpose was approved which included the following aim: "To labor for the salvation of the lost by the preaching of the gospel of Christ and calling them to repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."

While this is an important part of pulpit ministry, and while we must support foreign missionaries engaged in such work, this "labor" for the salvation of souls must begin at home. Since the providence of God governs where we are located, it also commands where we must primarily engage in evangelism.

It is extremely easy to lose this kind of zeal and our flesh loves to lean upon excuses to justify anything that would cause it to diminish. Not to mention our adversary, Satan, who uses what he can to hinder us (1 Thessalonians 2:18).

I consider this subject a matter of urgency for every Christian. Oswald J. Smith said, "The church that does not evangelize will fossilize." If we fail in evangelism, we communicate a message of irrelevance. How can we justify our existence by claiming to be entrusted with the gospel (or

good news) but we do not share it with our community? Even the lepers outside Samaria concluded that their silence was not justified, "We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace" (2 Kings 7:9).

## 1 EVANGELISM IS CHRIST-LIKE.

Evangelism is the eternal purpose of God and highest calling of the Christian to be conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 8:28-29). While a list of attributes—referred to by theologians as communicable attributes—may be given to reflect Christ-likeness, few things exhibit Christ-likeness like a love for sinners that moves us to seek them in order to see them reconciled to God.

This is the entire mission of the Son of God. Jesus said, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Paul summarized the mission when he declared, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15).

Even if there were no imperative to evangelize, it would be logical to conclude by implication that those with "good news" must share it with those that need it. Since Jesus sought out sinners, so must His people.

## 2 EVANGELISM IS LOVING.

It is basic Christianity to endeavor to love your neighbor as yourself (Leviticus 19:18; Mark 12:31). Although there is more involved in this commandment than sharing the gospel, it would be hard to say we love our neighbor rightly by neglecting to share the gospel. If we fail to see evangelism in the law of God, then it is easy to argue against it, for there is no sin if the law is not broken.

The reality is, if we find a reluctance in our hearts to share the gospel with our neighbors, it exposes a lack of love and evidences blatant sin. Without love, there is no profit in anything (1 Corinthians 13:3). So what

can be done? Since love is an attribute of God (1 John 4:8), we do not look inside ourselves for more of it. Nor do we guilt ourselves into duty. We go to God and confess that it is a lack of His love in us that is the problem, and plead with Him to remedy the coldness of our hearts. A lack of love for my neighbor that withholds the gospel from him is not just a tragic treatment of my neighbor, but a sin against God that must be confessed and forsaken by His grace.

## 3 EVANGELISM IS OBEDIENCE.

In Luke 14, our Lord Jesus speaks of a man that made a great supper inviting many people. When some of those originally bidden make excuses for their absence, the servant is sent to gather "the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind." Because there is still more room, he is sent out "into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." Many comments could be made about this passage, but at the least we see that our Lord won't stop until there is no more room, the servants are sent to bid them come to the supper, and the servants are sent to all types of people.

The application is obvious. First, the Church must not stop seeking to reach people until all the elect are gathered. Second, that the Church is sent to reach sinners, i.e., we don't just pray, we must go. Third, there may be demographics we are not naturally inclined to reach that we must go to.

We are commanded, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). This is not just for the apostles. We are told that the persecuted Christians in Acts 8:4, "went every where preaching the word." The imagery of the language is that they "gossiped" the gospel everywhere they went. This is obedience.





**“THE CHURCH THAT DOES NOT EVANGELIZE WILL FOSSILIZE.” OSWALD J. SMITH . . . . .**

**4 EVANGELISM IS ATTRACTIVE.**

One of the easiest ways to lose a generation in a local church is to ignore the concerns of young people. Youth and activism go hand in hand. Part of the reason for this is not just due to targeted messaging, but because young people are drawn to energy. Whether it is social justice, climate change, or something else, it is likely that the bulk of the activists are young. Young people long to be inspired and feel compelled to make a difference, and there is no better way to disciple that energy than evangelism.

For this reason, a church that lacks any meaningful energy for evangelism will always struggle to keep or attract young people. If there is nothing of the power of the Holy Ghost in our worship, and no passion for lost souls in the life of a congregation, a local church that is otherwise biblical will die. There is nothing attractive about a lack of evangelism.

Sometimes I wonder if we removed from reformed churches those brought to faith in Christ by the instrumentality of Arminianism would there be anyone left? This phenomenon is an indictment against reformed churches, and it was not true of the best of our forefathers.

**FALL 2022**

**5 EVANGELISM IS HONEST.**

If we really believe that men and women spend eternity in God’s hell, suffering endlessly without reprieve or hope of deliverance, it is impossible to be an honest Christian and neglect evangelism. Either we admit we don’t actually believe what we claim to believe, or our knowledge that Christ is the answer drives us to witness to souls.

One of the most impressive aspects of the life of Robert Murray M’Cheyne was his emphasis on eternal matters. Though he died at 29, he left a legacy of a man that lived on the brink of eternity, writing the well-known words of “When This Passing World is Done.” It is said that he sealed most of his letters with words from John 9:4, “The night cometh.” This kind of spirit drove him into his community to win souls. After he died, it was said of him in a local newspaper that in M’Cheyne “Jesus Christ walked the streets of Dundee.” Can this be said of anyone unless they evangelize?

And this is what Jesus wants for us. The woman Jesus spoke to in John 4 immediately returned to her community and said, “Come, see a man...” (John 4:29). To the demoniac, Jesus instructed, “Go home to thy friends,

and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee” (Mark 5:19).

So what must we do? Preach on the streets, knock doors in your community, conduct a Bible study in your neighborhood, visit the local senior care facilities, juvenile detention centers, or other community programs and ask if they would like a Sunday afternoon worship service. The point is, have a regular ministry of getting the good news out.

I know a man that felt a burden for souls, but being introverted, he felt he could not talk to people. But he did not let it stop him. Instead, each Saturday he would take a bundle of gospel tracts to the center of his town and give them out.

If the Free Presbyterian Church loses its evangelistic zeal for the communities into which God has placed us, then we have no right to exist at all. Some measure the health of the church by its giving. It would be wiser to measure the health of a church by its going. May God help you and me to be goers.

.....  
Rev. Armen Thomassian  
Minister, Faith FPC, Greenville, SC  
.....

# BY FAITH ALONE

When Martin Luther finally understood the meaning of Romans 1:17 that, “The just shall live by faith,” he testified that the gates of Paradise opened before him. He felt that he was reborn. From that time forward, his life was a testimony to the doctrine of the gospel that became synonymous with him—justification by faith alone.

Luther’s passion for that truth underscored much of the content of the 95 *Theses*, published on October 31, 1517. In retrospect, it became the launching of the Protestant Reformation. His experience as a Roman Catholic monk taught him the frustrating futility of trying to follow church teaching by accumulating merits through which to secure God’s favor.

He received a vivid lesson in that futility during a 1511 visit he and another monk made to Rome regarding business for their monastic order. Luther expected that he would find the visit to Rome a boost to his spirituality and piety. Instead, he encountered the crassest corruption. Everything was for sale in Rome, including decrees of indulgences. As he stood at the top of the *Scala Santa*, the so-called sacred stairs, after climbing them on his knees with the repetition of appropriate prayers at each step, he looked back and wondered whether the promised pardon for his relatives was valid. He wondered whether anything in Rome was valid.

With the truth of justification by faith gripping his soul just a few years later, the principal German Reformer began a war against the heretical idea that not only could Christians contribute their acts of obedience as additions to Christ’s merit but that they must do so. He pointed out the absurdity of the church teaching that not even the most virtuous life could escape the requirement for millions of years in the fictitious place Purgatory. According to that heresy, no one could be certain of having done enough good works to make justifi-

cation final. But the church taught, despite that uncertainty, that the people still had to do good works as a supplement to the grace of justification. Luther, however, laid the groundwork for the statements of Protestant confessions in the ensuing generations that underscored the truth that justification is entirely the act of God’s free grace, and that believers receive justification solely through faith.

On the bedrock of that gospel truth, the proclaimers of Reformation theology have taken their stand for centuries. False religion, however, never sleeps. During the 20th century and into the 21st century, professing Protestants in some quarters have suggested that Luther and the other Reformers erred in their definition of justification. Some have begun to insist that good works are a necessary complement to God’s decree of pardon for sin.

The Protestant Reformers understood that the gracious act of God in declaring His people righteous in His sight did not provide those people the license to behave as reprobates. Reformation leaders urged those under their charge to follow the Scriptures. Such urgings, however, did not amount to the repudiation of gospel truth. The Reformers were clear. The good works of believers in Christ were not the cause of their justification; they were the result of it. Their position was far from the efforts in more recent times to undermine the gospel message with the goal of returning Christianity to the religion of merit.

The Council of Trent (1545-1563) was Roman Catholicism’s response to the Protestant Reformation. That council was part of the movement that historians have designated the Counter-Reformation. The declarations of the Council of Trent codified Roman Catholic teachings on the subjects that the Protestant Reformers highlighted. Several statements in partic-

ular targeted Martin Luther who died the year after the Council of Trent began its sporadic meetings. The first statement on justification, Canon 9, set the ground for other statements that followed. “If any one saith, that by faith alone the impious is justified; in such wise as to mean, that nothing else is required to co-operate in order to the obtaining the grace of justification and that it is not in any way necessary, that he be prepared and disposed by the movement of his own will; let him be anathema.”

Additional statements expanded the Council’s position and extended the reach of the anathemas. Roman Catholicism maintained those statements through the centuries that followed, even in the so-called ecumenical council that the world knows as Vatican II (1962-1965). The division between the Protestant Reformers with the confessions that expounded their work and the steadfast adherence to the traditional Roman Catholic position could not be any clearer.

The persistent Roman Catholic efforts to undermine the doctrine of justification by faith alone began to produce fruit during the 19th century and gained growing impetus during the 20th and 21st centuries. Paul M. Elliott, the director of Teaching the Word Ministries in Manchester, MD defends the biblical gospel of justification by faith alone. He publishes printed materials along with audio and video, including a radio and Internet ministry. In his book *Christianity and Neo-Liberalism*, he described what he called, “the neo-liberal pseudo-gospel of justification by faith-plus-works.” “It teaches that justification is not a once-for-all judicial act of God, but unfinished business whose outcome depends on the believer’s obedience. It teaches that justification is not brought about solely by the unilateral action of God. In this false gospel, the sinner does not come to God empty-handed, either at conversion or at the Judgment, because faith is not mere



belief. Faith, according to this pseudo-gospel, is really *faithfulness*.<sup>1</sup>

Elliott continued, “This false gospel teaches that God’s ‘not guilty’ verdict remains an open question until the Day of Judgment. On that day, say the neo-liberals, the Lord Jesus Christ does not at the outset openly acknowledge those who were declared not guilty at their conversion, by placing them at His right hand and giving them the inheritance of a kingdom that is rightfully theirs in Him. No, in the neo-liberal teaching Jesus evaluates men’s works on the Last Day for the purpose of making the final decision as to their eternal destiny.”<sup>2</sup>

A companion effort to revise the doctrine of justification by faith alone is what some call a New Perspective on Paul. There are differences between the main versions of this teaching. However, there is in any case the attempt to redefine the terms of justification away from faith alone in Christ to a substitute emphasis on union with Christ through the application of water baptism. Such efforts reflect the drift back to the experience of the early centuries of church history. The apostles warned against the efforts that they knew would arise to dilute and even replace the gospel of justification by faith alone. While those whom the apostles

trained directly were active, there was a restraint against the incursions of heretical views. When the so-called Apostolic Fathers were off the scene, however, some who succeeded them became more interested in what it meant to be Christian instead of what it meant to be a Christian. There was a shift away from Christian theology and the doctrine of salvation to the ethical concerns of doing good works and the way in which those good works gained favor with God.

The fear that the apostolic doctrine of justification by faith alone would encourage laxity in Christian behavior produced increasing emphasis on the necessity to do good works, not as evidence of faith but as productive of it. The apostles of Christ inveighed against such false gospels. Paul argued in Galatians 2:16, “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”

Against the departures from the true gospel that Paul expounded in that text, he, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, leveled anathemas that extended so far as to any departure that even Paul or any of his col-

leagues would make from the truth. Nevertheless, the ensuing centuries yielded the deepening spiritual darkness into which Martin Luther was born and in which he sought the way of acceptance with God.

When the light of gospel truth dawned in his soul, he resolved to challenge the false gospel so that others could live in the liberty of justification by faith alone. Such was the stirring effect that the truth of the gospel had on his enlightened mind that he took his pen to add a personal note in the margin next to his copy of Romans 1:17—*Sola Fide!* Faith Alone! Let this Reformation remembrance, 505 years after Luther posted his *95 Theses*, encourage Christ’s people to renew their commitment to the truth that justification is by faith alone.

.....  
Rev. David Mook  
Retired FPCNA minister  
.....

<sup>1</sup> Paul M. Elliott, *Christianity and Neo-Liberalism: The Spiritual Crisis in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and Beyond* (Unicoi, TN: The Trinity Foundation, 2005), 124.  
<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*





# NEW

## GOD'S CALL TO NEW ENGLAND

recent polls. The most religious state is Mississippi deemed 61% "religious." But four of the New England states rank as the least religious in the union: #4 is Massachusetts at 28%; #3 Maine at 27%; #2 New Hampshire at 24%; and #1 Vermont at 22% "religious." New England has become a post-Christian region, according to NETS (New England Training and Sending Center for Church Planting and Revitalization): "Roughly 2-4% of New Englanders attend an evangelical church. And with just one church for every 4000-8000 people, it's home to many of America's most churchless cities. Along with Mormon Utah, the Northeast is the most gospel-parched region of the nation." If these stats are true, out of the 18 million in New England, just over half a million attend an evangelical church, but are not necessarily born again. So, there are still over 17 million that need to be reached with the gospel.

Why do I want to go to New England? I am a child of New England, having been raised there. I know firsthand the needs in these places. I grew up with friends in school who never once opened a Bible. They had never heard of Jonah, let alone the gospel of Christ. The millennial generation in New England is a generation that does not know God. And now millennials have given birth to Generation Z with even less knowledge of God. The foundations of Christianity have crumbled in New England. The voice of the church lies silent in the grave. This area must experience awakening! There needs to be a shaking and a rattling of the dry bones, as Spirit-blessed preaching of the gospel blows across this barren land once again. May the cords that are broken vibrate once more to offer praise to our God.

These are my people! These cities are my cities! When I view the destruction that sin, Satan, and self

**W**hen we think about mission stations, our minds normally go to parts of the 10/40 window: Africa, Latin and South America. While these places need the gospel, and we must pray for men to go there, there is a mission field right under our nose in America. Within this mission field live eighteen million people in an area that was once a bastion for the gospel. White steeples point toward the heavens in their cities. Great preachers of the past once graced their pulpits like John Cotton, Increase Mather, Isaac Backus, and Jonathan Edwards. But now these same churches fly rainbow flags and social justice propaganda on their buildings. These church buildings have become condos, bars, and daycares. The mainline denominations have abandoned the fundamentals of the faith and embraced liberalism. This mission field is New England.

New England has the least churchled states in the union according to



have wrought in the northeast, I know that God's grace is able to super-abound over it all. For where sin abounds, grace does much more abound! (Romans 5:20) God delights to save sinners and delights to shine His light in the darkest and most hopeless areas. Many see New England as a lost cause, but when New England was deep in sin in the 1700's and 1800's, God sovereignly sent revival and awakening. Is God's arm shortened and His ear deaf in our century? God is still a God of revival and awakening! By God's grace, I will lay hold on His promise and trust by faith that He will build His church in New England!

Here is the situation in New England. There are cities in Connecticut and Massachusetts of 30,000-plus without any gospel witness. But the further pressing need is the small, scattered New England towns. There are literally hundreds of little towns with no witness for Christ. I know this firsthand having been a church planter in remote northern Maine.

Vermont is the state with the greatest need for small towns to be reached. The state has a total population of 645,000. Approximately 61.3% of Vermont's population live in towns of 2,500 people or less (395,000 people). It is not realistic to go to a big city, because there are no big cities in Vermont. These small towns must be reached! You could literally take out a map of Vermont, close your eyes, and point anywhere on the map and there would be the need of a church to be planted. I was recently in Vermont and surveyed an area north of Montpelier. Within a 30-minute radius of where I was, there were 30,000 people and not a single church that preached the gospel! Our hearts break at such a condition. For the knowledge of God to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea these small towns must be reached! I fear there has been such an emphasis on reaching the urban centers that our rural communities have been left in the dust. Are not the souls in Johnson,

VT (pop. 3,500) as valuable as those in Boston, MA (pop. 4.8 million)?

Also, there is a pressing need on the islands off the coast of Maine, mostly inhabited by lobstermen and unreached with the gospel. One such island is Matinicus Isle, twenty miles off the coast, with a population of 53 people, uninterested in the gospel. On their town website they boast of their ungodliness. And while they boast, there is an unused Congregational church building on the island just waiting for someone to go and preach Christ to the people. Can we say that to go to 53 people is an unworthy endeavor? We need men to pray and believe God that the whole island would come to Christ.

Another island in great need is Peaks Island, ME. With a population of about one thousand, this island is near Maine's largest city, Portland, and lacks any gospel witness. The churches that are on the island are liberal and do not preach the biblical gospel. This island must be reached for Christ! Who will go?

The Lord has burdened my heart for this great need in New England. Everywhere I drive in the southern states I see churches and many of them preach the gospel of grace. I drive through towns of 8,000 that have more than 10 Baptist churches and a couple of reformed churches. But then I see towns in New England the same size with nothing. Why would a person not want to go to a town of 2,500 people and pour their lives into a community and die there? If God calls you, you could go to one of these small towns and be the first to speak to them about the gospel.

To reach this vast mission field, there needs to be a pioneering spirit and a holy ambition in men to preach Christ where He is not named, trusting that the Lord will convert sinners (Romans 15:20,21). In these towns, there are likely

no believers and to start a church, there needs to be much evangelism. There needs to be a word publicly spoken for Christ door-to-door and on the street. One cannot simply put a shingle sign up over a door and expect people to come. We must "go" with the gospel. We must go out and beat the bushes, investing our lives and pouring ourselves into the work. There must be the cultivating of relationships with others. The Lord builds His churches, but He uses means to accomplish His sovereign purposes in the earth.

The Lord has directed my family and me to go to New England. As we go, I ask you to pray. Pray for the conversion of sinners. Pray for churches to be established. Pray that the Lord would have you come alongside such a work to help. I echo the words of the Macedonian call, "Come over and help us!" (Acts 16:9) I long within my lifetime to see multiple churches planted all over New England for Christ, but I cannot do this alone. I first need the help and strength of God, and we also need others to come and labor in the fields that are white already to harvest.

.....  
 Rev. John Kelly  
 Licentiate of the FPCNA  
 .....

**The reapers in the field are few,  
 With willing hearts, and brave and true;  
 Help must be summoned speedily;  
 My Father's work is pressing me.**  
 William Sleeper





# GENEVA REFORMED SEMINARY GRADUATION



Graduates: (L-R) Rev. John Kelly, Mr. Benjamin Thomas, Mr. Frank D'Addurno and Mr. Logan Elder



With the President, Rev. R. Kimbro and faculty members, Dr. M. Sidwell, Rev. M. Mooney and Rev. J. Wagner

## CHURCH EVENTS



Browyn Boyd, Prince George FPC, receives a certificate for reciting the Child's Catechism. Pictured with her teacher, Mrs. Naomi Simpson.



Mrs. May McClelland retires after faithfully playing the organ for 46 years, since the beginning of Toronto FPC.



# ELDER ORDINATION



Ordination and installation of Dr. Jim Messer as ruling elder of Grace FPC, Winston-Salem, NC.  
Pictured here with family and below with participating ministers:  
Revs. Bowman, Thomassian, Pollock, Banister, Boyle and Kimbro.





# THE CHURCH IN CORINTH

## BORN TO BE A TESTIMONY

### KEY VERSE:

**“Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you...” (1 Cor. 1:6)**

These Corinthian Christians became living witnesses for Christ. They were nothing less than what Christians are called to be in any part of the world, in any generation. They became personal and public testimonies that the gospel is truly the power of God unto salvation, no matter what the powers of sin did around them.

## SUMMARY OF THE CHURCH'S FORMATION AND WITNESS

**A** Christian church in the city of Corinth? Impossible! Corinth was everything that Bible Christianity is not. Situated on a bridge of land six miles wide that linked Europe with Asia, Corinth was a trading hub for the Roman world and a pleasure city, the Paris of the first century.

For centuries Corinth had a history of falling and rising again. In 146 BC, because of the Corinthians' stubborn loyalty to all things Grecian and their public loathing of all things Roman, the city of Corinth came under the wrath of the Roman authorities and was totally destroyed. Its men were put to death. Its women and children were sold as slaves. Corinth was left deserted.

But, as in previous times, the city of Corinth rose again. In 44 BC, Julius

Caesar recognized the city's strategic location for military purposes and for trade, and had the city rebuilt and repopulated with settlers from around the Roman empire. These settlers brought their riches, their languages, their idols, and their vices. By the time Paul reached Corinth to preach the gospel, less than one hundred years after its restoration, Corinth had become a sink of sin, where the worst of unclean practices in the name of religion and culture were paraded with pride. On the hilltop of the Acropolis close to the city, Corinthians worshipped at the temple of Venus, the goddess of love. Shamelessly their priests mingled open prostitution with depraved devotion. Contrary to today's popular social doctrine, the riches and love of learning that flourished in Corinth did nothing to curb the corruptions of Corinthian living. They only served to deepen

their degeneracy to greater excess.

Miraculously, in corrupt Corinth a band of born-again Christians held forth the light of the gospel. Real people redeemed and regenerated through faith in the living Christ formed a New Testament Church in that unlikely city. This church was *in* Corinth, but not *of* it. It was made up of believers in Christ who had repented of their ungodly lives. They had been washed in the blood of Christ and enjoyed complete pardon from the worst of sins. Through grace they repented with godly sorrow over their sins and turned to serve and worship the true and living God. Through grace they experienced God's power to live above hellish evils that would have stamped out their witness for Christ.

## OBSERVATIONS

**1. We must not miss the impact of God's grace at work in His redeemed people.** In the introduction, Paul stated, "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 1:4). J. Campbell Morgan (who preceded Martin Lloyd-Jones at Westminster Chapel, London) defined the power of God's grace at work in His people. He stated:

**"The whole conception of grace is included in this greeting. The word 'grace' first refers to the whole realm**

**of order and beauty. It was an intellectual word, an artistic word, beauty as against ugliness, health as against disease, order as against chaos, all the realm of that which is beautiful. That is its first meaning. Then in the Greek language this word, in process of time, as is so often the case in our own language, gained new significances and meanings; and grace came to mean a desire on the part of God – for it is postulated of Him all through – to impart these things of order and beauty and life to others. That is grace, a giving. Until, finally,**

**the ultimate meaning of grace in the New Testament, and in no other Greek literature, grace became not merely the realm of order and beauty and loveliness, and the desire to impart to others, but also the activity that carries out the desire. That is the grace of God, the activity of God. Grace is ultimately the activity of God which puts at the disposal of sinning men and women all the things that give delight to Him."** [J. Campbell Morgan, *The Corinthian Letters of Paul*, Fleming H. Revell, p. 14]



Paul the apostle attributed the new life displayed by these Corinthian believers to the power of God’s grace at work in them. The power to live as a Christian is given by Christ to those who trust and rely upon Him. Christianity, therefore, is Christ. It is not a set of rules, nor techniques developed through self-discipline. It is new life in Christ, whereby believers are empowered to live a life of repentance turning away from the world and relying on the faithfulness of God (See Paul’s reference to the faithfulness of God to call believers “into the fellowship of His Son” 1 Corinthians 1:9). To be saved and enjoy this new life, a sinner must bow the knee to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. This is what made the Corinthian believers to be Christians and to live in the power of the gospel, even in such a sinful city.

**2. The church in Corinth presented all the problems that a modern-day city church will face.** With its diversity of people bringing their different levels of education, their different languages and their different levels of maturity in spiritual things, it is no surprise that personality issues arose within the ranks of the Corinthian congregation. As you read through Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians you will be humbled, and, I trust, prayerful about the type of Christian you ought to be in your local church. You will also learn that no church will prosper without good pastoral leadership and ministry to correct the errors that arise and to encourage the growth that is required for believers to abound in faith and love. Paul’s primary purpose of writing was to respond to the letter he had received from the Corinthian believers regarding fornication (Ch. 7:1). What the greater Christian church understood by example, the Corinthian church seemed to struggle over while living in such a depraved city and culture. We should note the apostle Paul’s pastoral heart in this letter. Before he addressed that issue of fornication, he made every effort to assure the Corinthian believers of his acceptance of their interest in Christ. He treated them as “the church of God”, as “called to be saints”, as “sanctified” (Ch. 1:2) and as recipients of “the grace of God” which was given them by Jesus Christ (Ch. 1:4).

An outline of the book will highlight Paul’s burden to build up the testimony of God’s church in Corinth.

**Chapters 1–11 Carnalities Corrected**

Paul found that while the Corinthian believers boasted in their own achievements, their pride was unfounded, and they needed to be treated as babes in Christ.

**Chapters 12–16 Spiritualities Straightened and Strengthened**

Paul had been alerted to confusion reigning in the Corinthian church over professed spiritual powers. His antidote was to give priority to the transforming grace of love (Ch. 13).

**APPLICATION**

**1. Consider the vision of your own local church to raise a testimony for the Lord Jesus Christ in your community.** Such a testimony has great value to God as His instrument to call out His people from the depths of sin to fellowship with Himself. Remember that everything that you do to strengthen the witness of your church as a witness for the Lord strengthens your own testimony for Him.

**2. Thank God for His grace at work in you and in your fellow believers.** Paul thanked God for the triumph of Corinthian believers over sin and worldliness. Let us never belittle even the smallest triumphs of grace that our brothers and sisters enjoy in Christ. Rather let us thank God for each evidence of God’s grace at work in them. To do so in the church prayer meeting would both honor the Lord and encourage His people.

**3. Learn to depend more on God’s grace in every aspect of Christian living.** To sustain a life of prayer, to evangelize the lost, and to live godly in a sinful world requires a continual supply of God’s grace in your soul. Be much in prayer asking God to pour His grace into your life.

.....  
Rev. Ian Goligher  
Retired FPCNA Minister  
.....





Fifty-four campers and almost 30 staff members gathered at Rock Mountain Bible Camp from July 16–23, 2022. Along with games and activities, worship services are held during the Lord’s Day and each evening. This year various ministers preached on themes out of Philippians. In the mornings the campers have personal devotional time to examine the Scriptures under consideration. A booklet is produced to help the young people. **Rev. Adam Eshleman, pastor of Reformation Bible Church**, wrote an edifying devotional on being heavenly-minded. What follows is an edited version of that devotional. It will be of benefit to a wider readership and will provide insight into the spiritual focus of Youth Camp.

# TC TEEN CONNECTION

## Heavenly-minded

**F**or our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Philippians 3:20-21).

The first thing to note is that the sentence begins with “for.” That means there is a connection to what the apostle wrote previously. Verse 17 tells us that we are to be followers of Paul’s example. The “for” informs us that this sentence is explaining to us the reason and the way to follow Paul. “Those things, which ye have both learned, and received,

and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you” (Philippians 4:9). If I will follow Paul’s example, the God of peace will be with me. We need God’s help to be more heavenly-minded and less earthly-minded. Many spiritual defeats come from losing this focus and misplacing our priorities.

Remember that our conversation is in heaven. The word “conversation” means citizenship. It refers to a colony of citizens living outside the place of their citizenship. This describes every Christian, strangers and pilgrims—temporary residents in a foreign land. I am on my way to my real, permanent home (Ephesians 2:19; Hebrews 11:8-16; 1

Peter 1:1-5; 2:9-12; Psalm 119:19).

Notice that Christ is in heaven. That is the implication of “from whence we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.” He is my Deliverer, my Sovereign Lord. He is God’s “Anointed One.” **I need to meditate on those titles.** The essence of heavenly mindedness is Colossians 3:1: “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which hare above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.” Christ is the glory of heaven. My mind is most full of heaven when it is most full of Christ.

Therefore we ought to be looking for the return of Christ. The word “look” is a colorful word used eight



times in the New Testament. Nearly every time, it refers to eagerly waiting, with great expectation, for the return of Christ. Paul uses the word three times in Romans 8:19-25. There is coming a day, when the trumpet will sound and Christ will break into this wicked world and restore it to just what it would have been had man not fallen in Adam. "He will subdue all things unto Himself."

#### **How much do we anticipate that day?**

Verse 21 appears to be calculated to help us anticipate it more.

Lastly, as we pursue being heavenly-minded, see the promise that Christ will change our vile bodies. The word "change" refers to a total transformation. The word "vile"

means lowly or humble. Here, think of how weak we are spiritually. Do you know the discouragement of failure before God? Do you know what it is to be disappointed with yourself? I do. Then there is hope for us here. Christ will change our vile body and fashion it like His. A day is coming when I will never sin again—no more temptation, no more spiritual failure. Because of my union with Jesus Christ, I will be glorified! (Romans 8:28-39; 1 Corinthians 15:35-58; 1 John 3:1-3)

**Whom have I in heaven but thee?  
and there is none upon earth  
that I desire beside thee. My  
flesh and my heart faileth:  
but God is the strength of my  
heart, and my portion for ever.  
Psalm 73:25-26**



#### **Question: "I'm an older teenager. Should I join my church?"**

Answer: Church membership is an important decision for anyone to make, especially a young person. Assuming that you are walking with the Lord and have either already been baptized or plan to be baptized at the same time you join the church, and assuming that you are in support and agreement with the various policies of our denomination, let me give you two reasons why I think it is important for you to apply for church membership even as a teenager.

First, church membership is important for your spiritual submission and accountability. As a teenager, you are already under the spiritual oversight of your parents, but in church membership you are further declaring your submission to Christ through the oversight He has established in your local church. The elders of your church have the responsibility to care for your soul and are your spiritual overseers. Read Acts 20:28 and Hebrews 13:17. In church membership you are submitting to that God-given authority.

A second reason is that church membership demonstrates a level of responsibility and commitment on your part. Joining your church is a demonstration of the fact that you are putting your hand to the plow and truly desire the advancement of the work of God in your local church. So many today want only to serve their own agenda and rarely work for anything bigger or more important than they are. Serving the Lord as a member of your church shows that you desire and want something bigger and greater than your own will. It is an outward way of proving your commitment to the Lord's work.

If you would like to submit a question, please email Rev. Derrick Bowman at [dbowman@gracefreepres.org](mailto:dbowman@gracefreepres.org). If your question is selected, it will be presented anonymously.

# BOOK REVIEW

## THOMAS CHALMERS

Thank God for honest biographers! There are still some writers that emulate the Holy Spirit, always telling the truth. Sandy Finlayson is such a writer. Though writing about the famous Christian hero, Dr. Thomas Chalmers, Finlayson does not hide all of the great man's blemishes. His excellent 150-page biography entitled *Thomas Chalmers* is a great introduction to one of Dr. Ian Paisley's favorite heroes.

As a small child, Thomas's unusual gifts were evident. At age three, his formal education began and when only eleven, he entered the University of St. Andrews. There, he commenced his theological studies at age fifteen, and he was especially intrigued by reading *The Freedom of the Will* by Jonathan Edwards.

Thomas was ordained as minister and installed in the Kilmany parish of the Church of Scotland on May 18, 1803. He was unconverted, very full of himself, and seeking worldly fame. But God has his way with His chosen vessels. "Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased" (Luke 14:11). For six years Chalmers had executed his unfruitful ministry of self-will. God touched Thomas with the often-fatal disease of consumption (tuberculosis), and two of his siblings died from it. In April 1810, Chalmers' health seemed to improve, but then another of his sisters died of the sickness. Fearful of death, Thomas began to reassess his life with earnest seeking of the Lord.

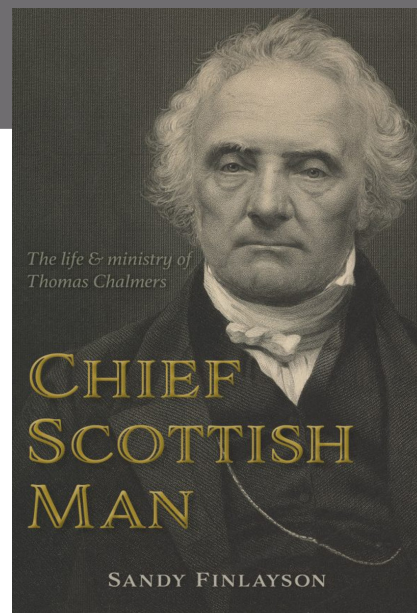
Writing to his brother, Alexander, he said, "On the system of - Do this and live, no peace can ever be attained. It is, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. When this belief enters the heart, joy and confidence enter along with it." His conversion profoundly im-

acted Kilmany. His sermons were no longer moralism, but passionate pleadings for repentance and faith in Christ. Many parishioners were transformed by saving grace. From that point on to the end of his days, Chalmers actively engaged in visiting every home in his parish to evangelize and to edify.

By 1842, Dr. Thomas Chalmers was leading the evangelical campaign to give the people of Scotland their biblical right to choose the minister for their parish. Prior to that, the wealthy patron of each parish would choose the minister and could force him upon an unwilling people. The change finally came in 1843 and was known as the "Disruption."

The annual assembly of the Church of Scotland gathered in Edinburgh on May 18, 1843. At 3:00 p.m., the outgoing assembly moderator, Dr. David Welsh, placed a document containing the formal protest of the evangelicals on the clerk's table. He then began walking down the center aisle toward the door of the assembly hall. According to plan, Dr. Chalmers stood up, putting on his top hat, and followed Dr. Welsh. Immediately, hundreds of ministers and elders stood up and followed them out.

Welsh and Chalmers, along with Dr. Gordon, led the large group of church officers along Prince's Street. Thousands of spectators lined the street cheering and applauding the marchers. The churchmen walked all the way to Tanfield Hall, and there inaugurated The Free Church of Scotland. This new denomination would allow the people of the parish to choose their minister. Dr. Thomas Chalmers was elected as the first moderator of the Free Church. As the first principal of New College, he also continued his ministry of teaching the young men



who were preparing for the ministry. A very interesting detail on page 132 states that he trained the door-to-door workers to lobby the local civil authorities to close the taverns. Robert Murray M'Cheyne, whom Chalmers trained, was one of them. He said that he would love to see all the booze-sellers in Scotland permanently shut down.

Thomas Chalmers was a hero with normal human faults, yet he was used mightily in extending the kingdom of God. Dr. Ian Paisley wrote, "The Free Church of Scotland grew in strength till it is almost as large as the church it left. So I believe our Free Presbyterian Church will go forward with the blessing of God."

**This book can be obtained from Reformation Heritage Books for \$8.**

Rev. Myron Mooney  
Minister of Trinity FPC, Trinity, AL



# GOOD THINGS TAUGHT & LEARNED

“Good” is such an interesting word! We often say, “That’s good” or “I’m good!” But how can we really define good or know what is not good? Certainly in today’s culture, the evident paradigm shift away from biblical truth has greatly confused the definition of good. Christians must clearly understand what is good because God pronounces woe upon those who call evil good and good evil (Isaiah 5:20). For older women to be teachers of good things (Titus 2:3), and young women to be good (Titus 2:5), Christian women must know how to define “good.” Looking to the One who is only good, whose “goodness endureth continually” (Psalm 52:1) is the answer!

I love what Thomas Manton wrote to help us understand the goodness of God:

*“He is originally good, good of Himself, which nothing else is...He is essentially good; not only good, but goodness itself...He is infinitely good; the creature’s good is but a drop, but in God there is an infinite ocean...of good. He is eternally and immutably good, for He cannot be less good than He is.”*

What does the goodness of God mean for us? It is “the goodness of God which disposes Him to be kind, cordial, benevolent and full of good will toward men. He is tenderhearted and of quick sympathy...He is inclined to bestow blessedness and He takes holy pleasure in the happiness of His people,” said A. W. Tozer. God’s infinite, eternal, and unchangeable goodness far exceeds the extensive expanse of a beautiful, twinkling night sky! We agree with the psalmist, “Thou art good and doest good” (Psalm 119:68). All that comes from God: His decrees, creation, laws, and providences cannot be other than good! Because God is good and does good, Christian women can sing, “The Lord has promised good to me; His Word my hope secures; He will my Shield and Portion be, As long as life endures.” God’s promised good, then, is the key that enables older women to be teachers of good things and young women to be good for the glory of God.

How amazingly good is God’s plan for older and younger women in providing a continuous flow of older women to lead and young women to be taught, thereby preserving godly womanhood for generations. Teaching includes both living a godly example and establishing comfortable friendships that make gentle, whispered encouragements as well as earnestly spoken exhortations easier to share.

The good things to teach are the beautiful, excellent, precious, suitable, commendable, genuine, honorable, noble and agreeable things. With God and His goodness as the

starting point, teaching about loving your husband, for example, becomes much more than sharing tips or lists of “this do and all will be well.” Rather, the command to love your husband is the outworking of a wife’s knowing and resting in God’s intimate goodness to her.

For young women, Titus 2:5 lists “to be good” as an honorable quality for her to embrace. Synonyms of “good” include pleasant, agreeable, joyful, happy, honorable, and inclined to goodness.

What a privilege for Christian young women to develop a pleasant, joyful attitude of life, which blesses those around her! This good attitude rests in contentment with God’s goodness to her:

The King of love my Shepherd is,  
Whose goodness faileth never;  
I nothing lack if I am His,  
And He is mine forever.

Though vast the clearest night sky,  
yet infinite and enduring continually is God’s goodness, for Christian women to teach and learn for good in the world for God’s glory!

.....  
Mrs. Barbara Mooney  
Trinity FPC, Trinity, AL  
.....



# LITTLE HEROES OF FAITH

There are a lot of stories written about heroes, but there are no heroes greater than the heroes of faith whose stories are written for us in the Bible. You have heard of men who have done miraculous things like parting the Red Sea, making fire come down from heaven, even raising the dead. These were mighty men of God who glorified Him by obeying His Word. You may feel that you can't do anything big to glorify the Lord because you are too young. **But do you know that some of the Bible heroes were children like you?** They obeyed the Lord and did wonderful things that brought glory to God, even everyday small things, but God used their obedience in big heroic ways in His wonderful master plan. Some of the heroic acts they did were acts of faith that you can do too.

Miriam was a young girl whose mother had a baby boy. That baby was Moses, and you've heard the story of how God set apart Moses to be a great hero of faith. But when he was just a baby, his sister did a great thing. She obediently watched her

baby brother for her parents when he was in danger to make sure he was safe. By faith she served the Lord in this small but great way. You can be like Miriam and use your eyes to watch ones that are smaller than you and make sure they're safe.

Another young hero was Samuel who lived with Eli the priest. Samuel served Eli by helping around the temple. He was a good helper, but he was also a good listener. When God spoke to Samuel he was eager to listen and obey. By faith you can be like Samuel and be a helper and learn to listen carefully when you're spoken to and quickly obey.

In the New Testament there was a young boy who went to hear Jesus preach. We don't know his name, but we know that he took a small lunch with him. When the great crowds of people were hungry the little boy shared what he had with Jesus. Jesus took his loaves and fishes and fed thousands of people with them. You can be like this boy and willingly share what you have with others.

In the Old Testament, there was a young servant girl who worked for Naaman, the commander of the army of Syria. She heard him talking about how sick he was. She spoke up and told him the good news about a prophet who could heal him. Naaman listened and went to the prophet for help. You can be like this servant girl and tell others that Jesus can help them by saving them from their sins.

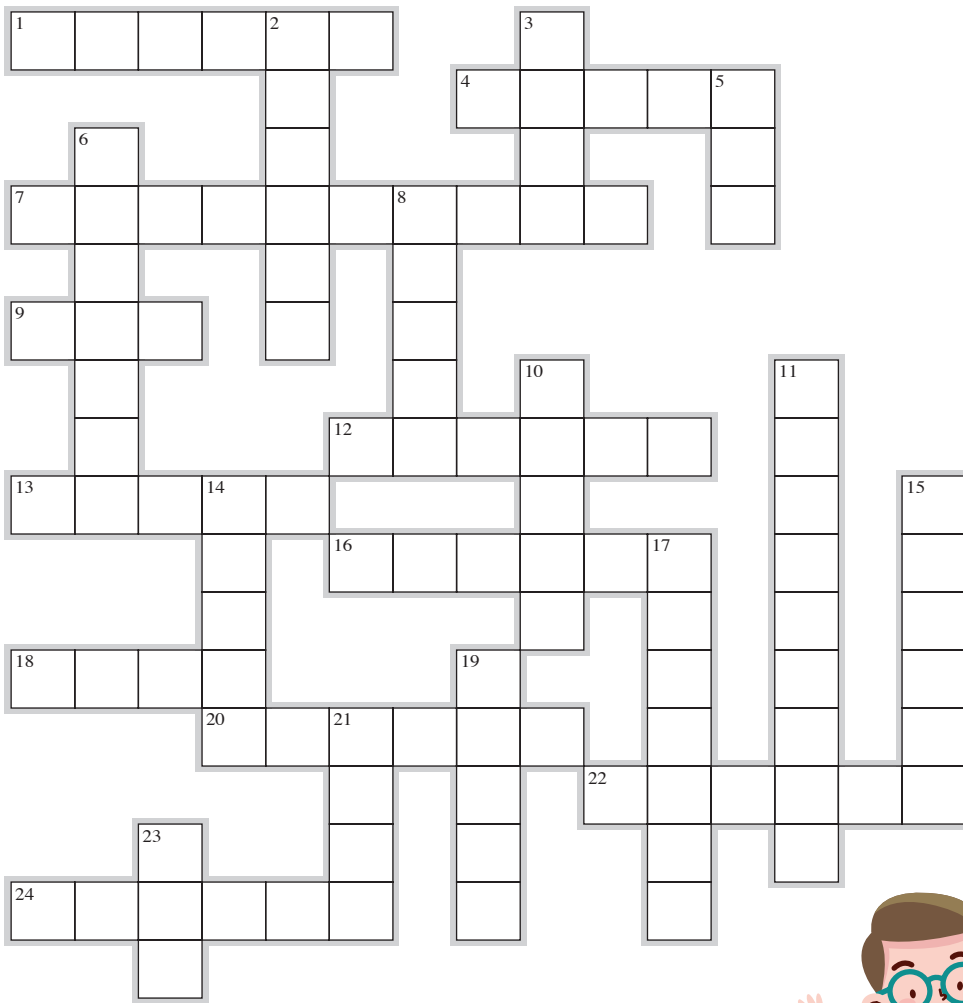
By faith Miriam obeyed and used her eyes to watch, Samuel used his hands to serve and his ears to listen, the boy with the lunch used his possessions to give, and Naaman's servant used her mouth to speak the good news. These are but a few examples of children who did mighty acts of faith by simply obeying. You can obey the Lord too. By faith you can watch, serve, listen, give, and speak! God can use you to glorify Himself. **You can be a hero of faith!**

.....  
 Mrs. Jan Kimbro  
 Grace FPC, Winston-Salem, NC  
 .....

**WINNERS**  
 of the summer crossword puzzle:

Boaz Backhurst, Calgary FPC  
 Carrie Messer, Grace FPC  
 Henry Messer, Grace FPC  
 Liam Rose, Toronto FPC  
 Annabelle Stonger, Reformed Baptist Church of Coleman, Texas





## ACROSS

1. Number of brothers Joseph had
4. Josiah's age when he became king
7. Hiding place for Joash
9. Who did Daniel say is the revealer of secrets?
12. Home country of the maid who helped Naaman
13. Heard Peter's knock
16. He saved the lives of all the wise men of Babylon.
18. Number of times the Lord called Samuel
20. Said, "Speak, for thy servant heareth."
22. Said, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"
24. Joseph was sold for this many pieces of silver.

## DOWN

2. Said, "If I perish, I perish."
3. Number of smooth stones David chose from the brook
5. Number of fish the lad gave to Jesus
6. King who repaired God's house
8. His sister talked to Pharaoh's daughter.
10. Said, "The battle is the Lord's."
11. Age of Joseph when his brothers sold him into slavery
14. Samuel opened these in the house of the Lord.
15. He tore his clothes when he heard God's Word.
17. Naaman's disease
19. Age of Joash (or Jehoash) when he became king
21. Said, "My soul doth magnify the Lord."
23. Number of days Daniel and his friends ate their special diet to prove it was better than the king's food

# Young People in the Bible!



Answers are found in these passages (KJV):  
Genesis 37, 39, 42

Exodus 2

1 Samuel 3, 17

2 Kings 5, 11, 12, 22

Esther 4

Daniel 1, 2

Luke 1

John 6

Acts 12.



# KIDS' CORNER



**PLEASE NOTE:** Send your completed puzzle to Current Kids' Corner, c/o Judy Brown, 651 Ponden Dr., Greer, SC 29650 or to [ljsbrown2@gmail.com](mailto:ljsbrown2@gmail.com) by **October 30, 2022**. Include your name, address, age, and the name of the church you attend. Please also include an email address in case we need to contact you about your entry. Five winners will be drawn from all correct submissions received. **The contest is open to young people ages 5-12.** Winners will receive a \$10 cash prize.



# THE BLESSING OF ASSURANCE (PART 2)

In continuing the theme of assurance as a work of the Holy Spirit, we should consider the following aspects of the topic.

## Sealing by the Spirit

In every true believer the spirit of sonship is present. As previously observed, the believer may lose the consciousness of this fact, yet it does not affect the truth that he *is* God's child. The Bible refers to this as the "sealing of the Spirit" (Ephesians 1:13). Octavius Winslow explains: "The sealing of the Spirit is that act of the Holy Spirit by which the work of grace is deepened in the heart of the believer, so that he has an increasing and abiding conviction of his acceptance in Jesus, and his adoption into the family of God... He deepens the work of grace in the heart; He witnesses to the believer that he is born of God; He seals the soul to the day of redemption, and by His indwelling and anointing influences enables him to say: I know whom I have believed – He hath loved me and given Himself for me." Doubtless in some this comes suddenly, but in others more gradually, yet He witnesses in the hearts of all believers to the truth of their salvation. The reference to a "seal" suggests spiritual truth. Seals are sometimes used on legal documents: they are "sealed" to prove their authenticity, to confirm their genuineness. Seals are placed on containers to prevent theft. In former days, instead of signing a document, a person would put his private seal upon it, showing it was from him. A seal would often be placed upon the owner's personal property to mark and protect it. The sealing of the Spirit applies in all these ways. We are sealed because we belong to Him! We are sealed because we are the genuine article! We are sealed as an act of security: He will not lose one of us! (See 2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 4:30).

## Sanctification by the Spirit

The Spirit's transforming work *in* us confirms the truth of His Word *to* us: Romans 8:1,14. His testimony to our hearts is confirmed by the changes He makes in our lives. Of course, this is not yet a perfect work. Sanctification is on-going; the progressive work of a life-time. Yet, it is true of all God's children: we *are* being changed! As a genuine Christian, you will be able to testify: I am now different and I know I didn't make this change. God did it! Some people try to change themselves and miserably fail. They decide to be different, to turn over a new leaf, but find that it is not possible. However in the child of God there is very real evidence of a work of grace in the life. The Spirit of God transforms people. He changes them. Working repentance in them, they begin to walk in His ways: Ezekiel 36:25-27. Thus the grace that saves us, sanctifies us also.

Clearly the Christian does not look at his life to find any goodness in which to boast, but rejoices in graces that have been given to him by the Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:12). Now, ask yourself: Have I been transformed? Am I being changed? Remember, however, that real marks of grace are more discernible by others than they are by ourselves. Too often, earnest souls are brought into bondage by forever probing into their own souls, looking for too much. The godliest people are the hardest on themselves! We see this in characters like Job, Isaiah, Peter, and Paul. Someone said: "The holiest saints on earth are invariably those who most clearly perceive, and most promptly confess the vileness of their hearts and their failures in duty; and they would be the first to confess that if assurance is derived from anything found in them or done by them, it is a privilege entirely beyond the reach of their experience." Notwithstanding, there are true marks of grace that will found—in some degree—in every genuine Christian. The Spirit's work is confirmed by the evidence of a changed life. See Ephesians 2:8-10. The grace of God teaches men how to live, and not just what to believe: Titus 2:11-14; 3:8. May we not only *know*, but *show* that we belong to Jesus!

.....  
**Rev. Stephen Hamilton**  
**Minister of Lehigh Valley FPC, PA**  
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