

QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA

# CURRENT



FASTING


NOT AFRAID  
TO DIE

LIONS

VOL. 14/No. 2 Summer 2023



# CONTENTS

- 
- 3 **Editorial**
  - 4 **Fasting**
  - 6 **Not Afraid to Die**
  - 8 **Lions**
  - 10 **Presbytery Report & New Moderator**
  - 12 **Bible Study: 1 Corinthians**
  - 14 **Book Review**
  - 17 **Blessing During Life's Final Journey**
  - 18 **Kids' Corner: How to Talk to God**
  - 19 **Crossword**
  - 20 **Available Publications**

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

*Current* is published quarterly by the Free Presbyterian Church of North America ([www.fpcurrent.com](http://www.fpcurrent.com)). The annual subscription price is \$15.00 (US). To subscribe, please go to [www.fpcna.org/subscriptions](http://www.fpcna.org/subscriptions). You may also subscribe by writing to Rev. Derrick Bowman, 5865 Woodsway Drive, Pfafftown, NC 27040. Checks should be made payable to *Current*.

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.

For a complete listing of our congregations, contact information, and instructions on how to listen online to sermons from our ministers, please go to [www.fpcna.org](http://www.fpcna.org).

The editor may be reached by email: [malvernfp@yahoo.com](mailto:malvernfp@yahoo.com) or by phone: 610-993-3170 or by mail: 80 Malin Road, Malvern, PA 19355.

© 2023 Free Presbyterian Church of North America. All rights reserved.

**SUMMER 2023**



**READ  
CURRENT  
ONLINE**

[www.fpcurrent.com](http://www.fpcurrent.com)



REMEMBER THE DAYS OF OLD,  
 CONSIDER THE YEARS OF MANY GENERATIONS:  
 ASK THY FATHER, AND HE WILL SHEW THEE; THY ELDERS,  
 AND THEY WILL TELL THEE.  
 (DEUTERONOMY 32:7)

## USING THE PAST

### FROM THE EDITOR

The believer may feel he has a somewhat uneasy relationship with the past. On the one hand he feels the need to press forward leaving the past behind. As Paul says, “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before” (Philippians 3:13). Or as the Lord said to Moses, “Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward” (Exodus 14:15). We all understand that we cannot live in the past and that our reflections on the past may well be through rose-tinted spectacles.

During our recent week of prayer in Toronto, I was struck by the recurrence of the importance of the past in preaching and in prayer. Several men referred to God’s work in past days—even His working in our own denomination. A neglect of the past will always be harmful to the child of God. Simply recognizing that history is the story of God’s working should be enough to provoke serious interest.

By reviewing history, we glean insights into the character of God. A brief survey of the Bible and church history reveals God’s delight in doing His will through weak instruments. From the records of Gideon’s depleted army and Christ’s little band of fearful disciples we see the wonderful truth that God advances His cause when defeat would seem more likely than victory. Our denomination is small and characterized by weak-

ness. But history encourages us that it does not preclude the working of God through us earthen vessels “that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us” (2 Corinthians 4:7).

The power of God is revealed in the passing of history. We read about the landmark events in redemptive history—the Rea Sea, the virgin birth, the resurrection of Christ, Pentecost—and we behold the power of God at work in human history. But the power of God also operates on the heart of the individual when they come to faith in Christ. Paul speaks of the “exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power” (Ephesians 1:19). Considering the history of the Free Presbyterian Church will hearten us as we remember how God worked in saving sinners. The same God with the same power is able to save souls today.

We are not the first generation to serve God in difficult times. Our forefathers in the Free Presbyterian Church faced tremendous opposition to their stand for Christ. It is never easy to preach Christ to a fallen humanity at the same time as seeking to maintain personal godliness and a witness separate from religious compromise. We can certainly learn from past mistakes as future generations will learn from ours. But we must humbly acknowledge that our forefathers sought to be faithful to their Savior. The decisions they made were made with an open Bible, while on their knees in seasons of prayer. We would do well to remember that the burning within the hearts of our founders was evangelistic. They longed for and prayed for the conversion of the lost.

May the Lord grant us the grace to value the past in a proper fashion—to humble us and encourage us. As Rev. John Greer observed while preaching in Toronto, “We want to see God doing again what He did for our fathers!”

### FROM THE PAST

[There is] no subject more affecting than the remembrance of past mercies. It is the sweetest of all subjects, the most improving of all plans of education, when a father can take his children by the hand and recount unto them the mercies of his GOD and their GOD, to him and to them, and to their fathers before them. And especially when a parent can speak of mercies in grace, as well as providence: of redemption, as well as preservation. Oh! the joy of an awakened parent, thus to relate the LORD’S dealings with his soul. The church doth this, after recounting a long series of mercies (Psalm 107:43). Reader, can you say anything of the like in your own experience? If so, you will not need my advice to tell it to your children, and your children’s children (Psalm 103:17).

Robert Hawker,  
*Poor Man’s Commentary*

# ..... HAVE WE FORGOTTEN ABOUT FASTING? .....

**A** special day of prayer and fasting was held in Ravenhill at the conclusion of which the way of God was plain as day and the brethren knew that God had called them to tread where the saints had trod outside the camp and then by the way of the cross, to the upperlands of God.

So read *The Revivalist* as it recounted that pivotal event in 1951 which paved the path for the formation of the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster.

To link fasting with prayer seems an almost fascinating concept today. Prayer is still perceived as a current necessity, but just how frequently is it coupled with fasting?

## IDENTIFICATION

### The Principle

In the Old Testament, the main Hebrew word that is used for fasting is *tsum*, which means “to abstain from food.” In the New Testament, the corresponding Greek term is *nesteuo*, which means “to abstain from eating.” In both Testaments, fasting is simply going without food in order to seek God for some special reason.

### The Partnership

Biblically understood, fasting partners an intensification of prayer. It is the decision to set aside a period of time to focus in intercession for a particular issue before God.

### The Purpose

It is removing every distraction, including the necessary pleasures of eating and drinking, to seek the face of God with a specific petition. Fasting is for focusing on God. It is a mindset of persistence that Jesus commends (Luke 18:1–8). Fasting coupled with prayer desires to see the purposes of God come to pass (cf. Matthew 6:9–18).

Evidently our Lord expected that

His followers would fast (Matthew 9:14–15) and said that if they did so with proper motives, God would see and reward them (Matthew 6:16–18; cf. 6:5–6).

## INTENSITY

While it may seem ridiculous to many that anyone would want to go without food, the basic truth is that we are weak and needy people and life is sometimes extremely difficult—fasting is God’s appointed way for us to cry out to Him in situations of special need. If, as many have suggested, Jesus’ exhortation to “ask, seek and knock” when we pray (Matthew 7:7) indicates an ascending scale of urgency, we may view prayer with fasting as knocking loudly on the gates of heaven. Fasting is a response of faith to God’s promise, “And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:13): we engage in it out of a deep sense of our weakness and need in order to seek God in a more urgent, earnest, and heartfelt manner for something of great importance to us or to His kingdom.

## ILLUSTRATIONS

### (a) Examples in the Bible

Examples of fasting are not scarce in either Old or New Testaments. Bible people fasted for a range of reasons, including to subdue the flesh and humble ourselves before God as we draw near to Him (Psalm 69:10; 35:13); for protection of the nation in times of emergency or disaster (Esther 4:16; 2 Chronicles 20:3); for national repentance and mercy when God’s judgment of sin is at hand (Jonah 3); as part of a life of worship and devotion to God (Luke 2:37); to express sorrow and repentance for our sins and ask God’s help in breaking their power in our life (Leviticus 23:27–28); for help in sickness or difficult situations (1 Samuel 1:1–20); for

power to resist evil temptation and attack (Matthew 4:1–11); for the Holy Spirit’s vision, guidance, and empowerment in ministry (Ezra 8:21–23; Nehemiah 1:1–2–8; Acts 13:1–4); to focus on God when we feel far from Him (Matthew 9:14–16); for the purpose of receiving divine revelation (Exodus 34:28; Deuteronomy 9:9–10:10; Daniel 10; Acts 9:1–19); to seek the revival of God’s church (2 Chronicles 7:14); to assist in our mission to evangelize the lost and establish churches to the glory of God (Acts 13:1–2; 14:23).

### (b) Examples in Church History

Church history provides many instances of fasting. Even in the second century, Tertullian, an early church father, wrote the first Christian book on fasting, simply called “On Fasting.” Augustine was another prominent proponent of the benefits of fasting; however, with the rise of the Roman Emperor Constantine and the end of persecution of the church in the fourth century, a watershed was reached for the practice of fasting. The rapid increase of worldliness and institutionalism meant that, with an emphasis on form, ritual, and liturgy, fasting for many became more legalistic and works oriented.

During the Middle Ages, many additional obligatory fast days were added that further damaged this holy practice. Though a godly remnant continued to advocate for the proper use of fasting, it was left to the Protestant Reformers to reject obligatory Catholic fast days while cautiously retaining fasting as a valuable practice. Martin Luther and John Calvin praised its value and encouraged its proper use. Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley strongly commended it to everyone, especially to those in ministry. In England in 1756, Wesley praised God’s remarkable response to the king’s proclamation for a national fast that averted an imminent invasion by the French. In his survey of



..... ARE WE NOT PREPARED TO DIE TO SELF IN ANY RADICAL WAY? .....

church history, Princeton theologian Charles Hodge summarized the story of fasting in these words: “All eminently pious persons have been more or less addicted to [i.e., often practised] this mode of spiritual culture.”

**IMPEDIMENTS**

Common spiritual dangers in fasting have been identified as: developing spiritual pride, which makes us imagine that we are better or more spiritual than those who do not fast; formalism, which turns fasting into a routine stripped of its true meaning and purpose; and hypocrisy, in which we try to impress others with our fasting—a constant problem that our Lord specifically warned against (Matthew 6:16–18). Another common danger is legalism, which encourages us to view fasting as a means of earning a better standing before God. John Wesley cautioned against the false notion that fasting was a meritorious work before God, to atone for our sins and obtain grace: “Let us beware of fancying that we merit anything of God by our fasting. We cannot be too often warned of this; inasmuch as a desire to establish our own righteousness, to procure salvation of debt and not of grace is too deeply rooted in all our hearts.” The rather excellent *Irish Articles of Religion* (1615), penned by James Ussher, open Article #51 by reminding us that it is not fasting, but

Christ, who gets us to heaven: “We must not fast with this persuasion of mind, that our fasting can bring us to heaven, or ascribe holiness to the outward work wrought.” The same article proceeds to emphasize the value of the discipline: “It is therefore requisite that first before all things we cleanse our hearts from sin, and then direct our fast to such ends as God will allow to be good: that the flesh may thereby be chastised, the spirit may be more fervent in prayer, and that our fasting may be a testimony of our humble submission to God’s majesty, when we acknowledge our sins unto him, and are inwardly touched with sorrowfulness of heart, bewailing the same in the affliction of our bodies.”

**IMPLEMENTATION**

In 1792, Christmas Evans received “a providential intimation” that he should leave the scene of his then current labors and move to the island of Anglesey. He arrived on Anglesey on a frozen, snowy Christmas Day to take up lodgings in a dilapidated old cottage. The ten congregations he was to serve were in exceptionally poor state—divided and demoralized. Evans called for a day of prayer and fasting and the Lord began to bless the work. Many were converted, and in two years the ten congregations had become twenty.

Questions that pursue our conscience are: Do I respond with a heavy heart in a way that would take away my appetite when I look within and see the abominations within my own breast? Or do I detect a reason to fast when I gaze around on the dark deeds that swamp our modern world—abortion, perversion, and a hundred other ills. Would it be a good practice to deny ourselves some food (for a meal or for a day) so that we could devote a little time to pleading with God to purge our vices, and to preserve the human race’s smallest, most defenseless, voiceless members who are the victims of life-ending violence?

When confronted with a spirit from the kingdom of darkness, our Lord declared, “This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting” (Mark 9:29). Perhaps this is one reason why there is so much anemia in our spiritual lives: we are not prepared to die to self in any radical way; we have set aside this sacred art and discipline of fasting and prayer? For us today, as for our founding forefathers in 1951, “a special day of prayer and fasting” may be long overdue, to take us “by the way of the cross, to the upperlands of God.”

.....  
Rev. Ian Brown  
Minister of Martyrs Memorial FPC,  
Belfast, N. Ireland  
.....

# NOT AFRAID TO DIE—A PERSONAL WORD OF TESTIMONY

by Greg Munger

In August 2021, when I was diagnosed with stage 3 colorectal cancer, my first thoughts were “How long do I have to live, and how will the end come?” I learned all I could about the cancer, and turned to God’s Word for comfort and hope.

Current statistics show that my type of cancer has been the third most frequent type of cancer diagnosed in both men and women and is the second leading cause of cancer death in the United States. Furthermore, records tell us that in the United States, approximately 2.6 million people die from various causes each year—over 7,000 each day, 300 each hour, and 5 each minute.

One vital fact that is not often written down is what a person says or does or writes before his death. Yet we know that how a man finishes tells you much about his character, the condition of his eternal soul, and what he thinks about God and life after death.

Some have little concern or hold erroneous views of eternity and the state of their eternal soul. Mark Twain, morose and weary of life shortly before his death, wrote, “A myriad of men are born; they labor and sweat and struggle;...squabble and scold and fight...scramble for little mean advantages over each other; then age creeps upon them; infirmities follow;...those they love are taken from them, and the joy of life is turned to aching grief. The release comes at last—the only unpoisoned gift earth ever had for them—and they vanish from a world where they were of no consequence...a world which will lament them a day and forget them forever.”

In stark contrast, consider the death-bed testimonies of some of God’s choicest servants of the past.

**Martin Luther:** “Our God is the God from whom cometh salvation: God is the Lord by whom we escape death.”

**John Calvin:** “Thou, Lord, bruise me; but I am abundantly satisfied, since it is from Thy hand.”

**Hudson Taylor** (founder of China Inland Mission): “I am so weak that I cannot read my Bible or even pray. I can only lie still in God’s arms like a little child and trust.”

**Fanny Crosby** (blind from infancy): “When I get to heaven, the first face that shall ever gladden my sight will be that of my Savior! ‘And I shall see Him face to face and tell the story—saved by grace!’”

How can they be so unafraid of death? They had the assurance of God’s blessing, promised in his Word, “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.” (Revelation 14:12–13)

In these verses of Scripture, we can note the following:

## I. A Cheering Comfort

Here is a blessing from God in the midst of a book and chapter of terrible judgments and woes, of punishments and eternal damnation. C.H. Spurgeon described it as “a picture grim and black to mortal eye. No sounds of music, no consolations of friends, but quite the reverse; all is painful, terrible, and the very opposite of blessed, so far as strikes the eye and ear. Hence it became needful that there should be a voice from heaven to say, ‘Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.’”

The word “blessed” is plural, so it could be rendered, “Oh, the multiplied happinesses.” This is one of seven named blessings recorded in Revelation. Revelation 1:3, 14:13,



16:15, 19:9, 20:6, 22:7, and 22:14, “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.”

These cheering words echo the multiplied comforts the Word gives believers when they face the last enemy, death.

Their death is precious to God (Psalm 116:15). They go immediately to be with the Lord—“Absent from the body...present with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:1–8). They are asleep in Jesus (1 Thessalonians 4:13–18). No purgatory, no annihilation, no soul sleep, no waiting for reincarnation—only safety in the arms of Jesus! They will come with Christ when He returns. “The dead in Christ shall rise first” (1 Thessalonians 3:13; 4:13–18). They will receive a new glorified body. “This mortal shall put on immortality...This corruption shall put on incorruption” (1 Corinthians 15:16–28, 35–57).

## II. Confirmed Certainty

“And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write ...Yea, saith the Spirit.” A Christian enjoys the certainty of final salvation as it is confirmed by the Father’s decree, accomplished by the Son, and confirmed by the Holy Spirit.

The voice from heaven is the voice of the Father (2 Samuel 22:14; Matthew 3:17) who has determined eternal redemption for all those in Christ. “Ev-

erlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away" (Isaiah 51:11). This redemption was accomplished by God the Son. He by "himself purged our sins" (Hebrews 1:3). He took on our humanity that "through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14-15). The Holy Spirit confirms these truths. "Yea, saith the Spirit." The word "yea" can also be translated "verily" or "most assuredly" and conveys a strong, solemn, and emphatic affirmation.

The believer can sing:  
*A monument of grace,  
 A sinner saved by blood:  
 The streams of love I trace  
 Up to the Fountain — God,  
 And in His sov'reign counsels see  
 Eternal tho'ts of love to me.*

**III. Critical Condition**

Though all will die, only some will "die in the Lord." The blessing promised is not upon all that die. A brief survey of Revelation reveals many verses that speak of death and eternal judgment on those who do not know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. The blessing promised is only for those that die "in the Lord Jesus Christ." C.H. Spurgeon said, "To be blessed when we die we must be saints. By nature we are sinners, and by grace we must become saints if we would enter heaven; for it is the land of saints, and none but saints can ever pass its frontiers. Since death does not change character, we must be made saints here below if we are to be saints above."

No one can ever know either the comfort or the certainty of the promises of this text unless they meet this critical condition of being "in the Lord." Those in Christ have been "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24). They persevere in their faith in their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by and through the grace of God's Holy Spirit. "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12).

**IV. Confident Consequence**

Those that die in the Lord also know confidently that they will experience the consequence, "they may rest from their labors." Labors are united with trouble and produce deep fatigue and extreme weariness. But those who die in the Lord shall rest, experiencing refreshing after all the necessary work and toilsome labor is done. Since all the work is done, there is nothing left to do but rest forever. The final rest promised by the Lord, "Come unto me...I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

All Christians will be free from suffering the many sicknesses, sorrows, faults, and failings of this earthly life. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Revelation 21:4). They will be free from struggling against sin, self, and Satan. They will cease in their striving for sanctification and holiness for they will join the company of "the spirits of just men made perfect" (Hebrews 12:23).

**V. Christian's Crown**

The final observation from this verse in Revelation is that the Christian's crown is that "their works do follow them." Their works do not proceed them to plead the merits of self-righteousness or procure admittance to heaven. They are not "ignorant of God's righteousness" and hence don't seek to "establish their own righteousness." They know that "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Romans 10:3-4).

Furthermore, their works do not accompany them. The Christian does not take his works along with him to add anything to his faith in Christ. "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" (Galatians 2:16).

The Christian's works simply follow as evidences of genuine saving faith and God's grace at work in their life. Works are a proof that the person is Christ's indeed. "I will shew thee my faith by my works" (James 2:18).

The Lord will be pleased to reward the believer. "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Revelation 22:12; 2 Timothy 4:7-8).

My final testimony is this:  
*Jesus lives, and so shall I.  
 Death! thy sting is gone forever!  
 He who deigned for me to die,  
 Lives, the bands of death to sever.  
 He shall raise me from the dust:  
 Jesus is my hope and trust.*

.....  
 Mr. Greg Munger was a man of God, a family man, who served as an elder in Grace FPC, Winston-Salem, NC. He went home to be with the Lord, April 29, 2023.  
 .....



# Lion—The King of Beasts?

Its small mane has been described as just a “ruff.” Its not-so-regal mane may be why this characteristic is not mentioned in Scripture.

Although the lion’s mane and hierarchical position may not be scriptural topics, actual lions have roles in biblical accounts (1 Kings 13:24–28; Daniel 6) and lion characteristics form analogies for many biblical events and characters. The Asiatic lions’ strength, teeth, claws, care for young, predatory nature, hunting methods, and other characteristics were well known in Bible times and thus were good illustrative material. Today, however, it is extinct except in zoos and a few wild prides in India.

Analogies to lion characteristics can be positive or negative. A lion’s strength, for example, can describe either godly or evil uses of power. Lions also appear as Temple decoration (1 Kings 7:29) and in what some see as “biblical humor” (Proverbs 26:13).

A lion’s roar can be heard up to five miles away. It is intended to communicate its location, show strength, and intimidate lions from other prides. Hosea 11:10 speaks of God roaring like a lion and his wayward children tremble as they return to Him. Later, in Hosea 13:7–11, when his children do not seek Him, God describes Himself with another lion attribute: devouring prey. Probably the most famous biblical reference to a lion’s roar is Peter’s comparing Satan to a “roaring lion . . . seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8). Lions may roar as they begin the hunt and when they have downed their prey, but they rarely roar while hunting. It would warn prey of their presence, diminishing the chance of a successful kill. Peter tells us we need to be listening. Hearing Satan’s activities should frighten us, for he is hunting with plans to destroy us. Do not wait till we see him. While he is far off, we should seek God’s protection and prepare for battle (Ephesians 6:11–16). There is no archaeological evidence



Although Scripture has nearly 100 references to lions, it does not call the lion the king or lord of anything. Lions generally live in grasslands, savannas, and rocky hills. Although some Ethiopian lions appear to migrate through a rainforest, the title “king of the jungle” does not apply.

Where they live lions are the top predator, but calling them the “king of beasts” is not accurate. A pack of hyenas can prey on a lion, and there are animals in other parts of the world that could overpower a lion. The stately bearing of a lion surveying its surroundings and its confident pacing give it an air of regality. There is something about the face of a staring lion that speaks of wisdom, but the title “king” implies rulership or leadership. The fact that it can generally have what it wants for dinner, that it appears regal, or that its face looks wise does not mean the lion leads or rules anything.

Most cats live solitary lives, but lions live in family units called prides. A pride typically has a mature male, a couple of younger males, 6–12 females, and various aged cubs. The mature male is generally the pride’s largest and strongest member, and thus the dominant lion of the pride. But the idea of a lion leading anything other than a few pride members is only found in fanciful stories.

The male lion’s mane adds to its regal appearance. The size, color, and thickness of the mane reflects its health and standing in the pride. The long, stiff hair of the mane is protection. An attacker going for the vulnerable neck gets a mouthful of hair rather than blood vessels. The now extinct Barbary lion sub-species had the largest mane. The African lion, the sub-species often seen in zoos and illustrations today, comes in second. The mane of the Asiatic lion, the sub-species found in Palestine during Bible times, is a distant third.



that lions were kept in zoo-like enclosures during Old Testament times. But 2 Samuel 23:20, 1 Chronicles 11:22, and Ezekiel 19:4,8 speak of lions being kept in pits. These references deal with hunting or killing lions, not maintaining them. Many biblical-era kings saw lions as a symbol of strength and royalty and often had themselves depicted with lions. Killing such a ferocious beast spoke of the king's valor and power. The lions they fought, however, were generally corralled and released just before the king killed it. It is highly probable that the den Daniel was cast into was populated by King Darius' potential status builders.

Daniel was condemned to the lions' den because of his righteous stand (Daniel 6:1-28). Darius probably could subdue those lions one at a time with arrows or blades (and if needed, the assistance of powerful attendants with instructions that the king should not be seriously hurt). Daniel knew that God could control lions. Darius, not so sure, spent a fitful night. That an angel of God closed the lions' mouths greatly increased the stature of Daniel and his God in that Persian kingdom.

One Israelite built his stature by killing a lion before he became king. David was shepherding when a sheep was taken by a lion. David "smote him . . . caught him by his beard . . . and slew him." He prevailed in hand-to-paw combat with major predators. Some would claim this was a miraculous event, but Scripture does not attribute it to God's intervention. It does, however, speak to the kind of person David was. Beware Philistines! This youngster is not yet on the throne, but having slain a wild lion and your giant, he is on his way to being a great king (1 Samuel 17).

In Proverbs 30:30 Agur lists things "comely in going" (i.e., moving gracefully) and describes a lion as "strongest among beasts, and turneth not away from any." This describes not only the strength and courage of a predator, but also

illuminates another scriptural analogy: the Lion of the tribe of Judah. In Genesis 49, aging Jacob prophesizes to his sons. In verses 8-12 Judah is told his brothers and their offspring will praise and bow before him. Why? Because the Lion that comes through Judah's lineage will have the strength and power to triumph over all His enemies and to unite all His people. This "Lion of the tribe of Judah" is the promised Messiah, Jesus Christ.

In Revelation 5 John weeps because no one can open the heavenly book. One of the elders says, "Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah . . . hath prevailed to open the book." The book is opened and rejoicing begins. The Lion has conquered all the enemies of His people, including death itself. Thousands of thousands then sing a new song: "Thou art worthy to take the book and open the seals thereof." But the animal imagery describing Christ immediately changes. They proclaim, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain."

Jesus is both the Lion of the tribe of Judah and the Lamb of God. Although they seem to be opposites, accomplishing our redemption requires both the Lion's strength and the Lamb's meekness. It takes the Lion's strength for the meek Lamb to willingly suffer an unbearably painful death and face the separation from God needed for our redemption. Without God's Lamb willing to die in our place, the strength of the Judah's Lion could not conquer our enemies.

Scripture does not say "the lion shall lay down by the lamb." (That wording comes from "Peace in the Valley," a 1930s ballad later made popular by Elvis Presley.) Lion imagery, however, is used in prophetic descriptions of Christ's earthly reign. Isaiah 11:6 speaks of the peacefulness of Messiah's reign, and mentions predators and their prey being led by a child. Lions and lambs are listed, but not together.

The same is true of the animals in Isaiah 65:25, but there we are

told "the lion will eat straw like the ox." Here the focus is on Christ the Curse-Reverser. The animals God created were vegetarians (Genesis 1:30), but because of man's sin God cursed the earth (Genesis 3). As part of the Curse many animals were apparently changed to carnivores. A modern lion's digestive system deals efficiently with proteins, but does not do well with high-fiber veggies. For today's lions, eating only "straw like an ox" is a biological impossibility. It appears that to fulfill Isaiah's prophecy God must reverse the physical effects of the Curse. This Curse reversal ends the travail and groaning of the physical earth (Romans 8:22), just as Christ's atoning death and resurrection have reversed our spiritual condemnation (John 3:16).

The lion may not be the king of beasts, but the Lion of the tribe of Judah is the Christian's King. He is to rule our lives and lead us in His paths as He defends us from our enemies. The peace the angels proclaimed to shepherds, watching their sheep on a night over 2000 years ago, will descend when the Lion of the tribe of Judah and the Lamb of God come as One to rule the earth. And as that Lion sits on His eternal throne, His subjects will forever proclaim to Him, "Worthy is the Lamb which was slain." Amen.

.....  
Mr. William Pinkston served as a science teacher at Bob Jones Academy for 50 years. He is a charter member of Faith Free Presbyterian Church of Greenville, SC.  
.....



# SPRING PRESBYTERY REPORT

Since the very early days of the Free Presbyterian witness in North America, ministers and elders have gathered for seasons of prayer. Technology has allowed for new opportunities as we now meet for prayer monthly via Zoom. While we value these occasions, we understand it is a privilege and a blessing to meet together in person. That privilege was enjoyed as ministers, elders, and their wives gathered in Toronto Free Presbyterian Church for the spring week of prayer and presbytery meeting, May 8–12, 2023.

I imagine that over the years there has been a consistency in the matters raised in prayer. There is the continual burden for the Lord to revive His church and to save souls. But prayers are also made for the Lord to extend the boundaries of the work, for the Lord to raise men for the preaching of the gospel and for the Lord to place men in the places of His choosing.

During the presbytery business there were several tangible expressions of answered prayer. Two men were examined and licensed to preach the gospel under the auspices of the Free Presbyterian Church of North America. Rev. Richard Craig has been laboring as pastor in Little London, Jamaica. At the same time, he has been taking a course of study

assigned through Geneva Reformed Seminary. Having completed that course, he was duly licensed. Rev. Frank D’Addurno has completed his training in GRS and an internship with Toronto FPC. He has indicated his sense of the Lord’s call in his life to take on the work of ministry in Fredericton, New Brunswick and was licensed to that end. These men are answers to the prayers of previous years. There was also time to reflect on the call of Rev. Andrew Fitton to take on the pastorate of Cloverdale FPC. Lord willing, in a future issue of *Current*, he will share the wonderful providence of God in leading him to accept that call.

At the other end of ministerial training is Mr. Daniel Sima’an, a member of Toronto FPC. Daniel was accepted under care of presbytery for training. Again, we acknowledge the Lord of the harvest answering prayer and calling another laborer.

There was also an encouraging development in the work in Córdoba, Mexico. The Coram Deo church is pastored by Rev. Lalo Peña. The church petitioned presbytery to become a constituted church of the FPCNA. That petition was granted and the constitution service, along with Rev. Peña’s ordination, is scheduled for early July 2023.

Of note, Rev. Geoff Banister’s term as moderator came to an end. He has served with wisdom and dignity and members of presbytery expressed appreciation for his work over the past two years. Rev. Larry Saunders was elected as the new moderator and Rev. John Wagner as the deputy moderator.

The Lord’s blessing was known throughout the week. Those who preached did so with clarity and authority. The presence of two delegates from the Ulster presbytery, Revs. John Greer and John Armstrong was a great encouragement. The ladies also conveyed knowing help from the Lord during their seasons of prayer.

I cannot complete this report without acknowledging the tremendous hospitality provided by the Toronto church family. Delicious food was in constant supply and there were sweet times of fellowship around the table. Some men were not able to join in person and their absence was noted. They were able to take part in the meetings via Zoom and hopefully more can gather together when presbytery is next convened in Winston-Salem in October 2023.

.....  
Rev. Stephen Pollock  
Clerk of Presbytery  
.....



# LARRY SAUNDERS'



# BIO

I was born into a Christian home and came to Christ as a boy of eight; however, in teenage years, I wandered far from the Lord and “tried the broken cisterns” of the world’s pleasures. My father took our family out of the Salvation Army because of its compromise and began attending the Bible Presbyterian Church, which became Toronto Free Presbyterian Church in 1976 with the installation of Dr. Frank McClelland. At the opening services of the new denomination, my father encouraged the whole family to attend and I was touched by the Word preached by Dr. Ian Paisley. That night began my journey back to the Lord and I thank Him for His grace in my life.

After eight years of being burdened about full-time service, the Lord finally confirmed His call to me through

Ephesians 3:8, “Unto me who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.” My wife Jill, young daughter Esther, and I left for the Whitefield College of the Bible in Ulster. Those years of training under godly pastors and teachers were a privilege which I will never forget.

After returning from Northern Ireland, I had the further privilege of assisting Dr. Frank McClelland and being involved in the administration of Whitefield Christian Schools for over 20 years. I became the senior pastor of Toronto Free Presbyterian Church in 2008. Little did I know when God impressed Ephesians 3:8 upon my heart 22 years before, that I would one day be the pastor of a church where the believers are from many nations (literal

meaning of “gentiles” in this verse). Simultaneously, I had a burden for missions, and had opportunities to visit and help to establish our works in Jamaica and the Czech Republic.

The Presbytery has placed upon me the responsibility of being moderator of the Free Presbyterian Church of North America for the next year. I ask for your prayers that God will give wisdom and help to fulfil this important task and make myself available to give any help I can to our churches. Be encouraged by what the Lord is doing by placing men in our vacant churches. There is a hunger for the Lord and His Word which we pray will increase. Let us stand true to the gospel of Christ in these days of anemic Christianity and compromise of the truth and lift up our eyes for our redemption draws near.



Rev. L. Saunders, Moderator and Rev. S. Pollock, Clerk with newly licensed ministers, Rev. F. D'Addurno and Rev. R. Craig.



**KEY VERSE - 1 Corinthians 3:11**

**For other foundation  
can no man lay than that is laid,  
which is Jesus Christ.**

## SUMMARY OF FIRST CORINTHIANS CHAPTER THREE

**E**nvy, strife, and divisions were the three big indictments the apostle Paul brought against the congregation in Corinth. He called them carnal, having resorted to human thinking and fleshly practices. This forced the apostle to treat them as baby Christians. They needed to be nurtured with milk, not meat. It didn't sound promising, but with the same resolve that ever marked this apostle, he launched into setting matters straight. He weighed in on the responsibilities of congregations and their ministers. Congregations are to receive the gospel as from the Lord, not men, while ministers are to preach the gospel with fidelity, not mixing truth with error.

Congregations must appreciate their ministers for their work without elevating them above their office, and preachers must realize the seriousness of their task to build their ministries on Christ alone. Builders know that wood, hay, and stubble are not suitable materials to build a strong, stable building. Even more so, ministers must know that the only foundation that will withstand the fires of God's eternal judgment is the plan of salvation wrought by the person and work of Christ.

## OBSERVATIONS FOR CONGREGATIONS AND MINISTERS

**1. In all generations, Christian congregations have been plagued with the problem of party spirits.**

Favoritism in church leadership is as carnal as it gets. Paul hit the nail on the head in his diagnosis, "For while one saith, I am of Paul and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?" (1 Corinthians 3:4) The conclusion was undeniable. These Christians were not acting as godly men and women endued with the Spirit of God.

**2. Congregations need to realize that ministers of the gospel are only doing their duty.**

A farmer cannot make seed to grow to guarantee a harvest no matter what he plants, nor how he waters. In the natural realm, the harvest is the result of the powers of germination, the heat of the sun, and a sufficient water supply. The labor expended in sowing and watering is nothing compared to the powers of the elements, which are in God's control.

The lesson is obvious and directed to fix attitudes among the Corinthians about gospel ministers. It was exceedingly poor judgment to ascribe powers to men for any increase in the spiritual harvest. It is the Lord who gives the increase in spiritual things.

While there are different functions of ministry, there should be no competition between the men God uses as instruments to build His church. If your minister is a faithful laborer in the gospel, put away carnal attitudes and pray for God to give the increase in your congregation and in your own soul.

**3. For good reason ministers are to follow the example of the apostle Paul, the wise master builder.**

The apostle insisted that “other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 3:11). This conviction is founded on the exclusivity of Christ.

- No one else left heaven’s glory to take human nature into union with His divine person in order to save His people from their sins.
- No one else is God and man in one person and so equipped to be the perfect Mediator between God and men.
- No one else lived a perfectly obedient life to fulfill the covenant of works which Adam broke.
- No one else voluntarily offered himself a substitutionary sacrifice on the cross at Calvary for rebellious sinners.
- No one else accomplished our redemption by shedding His own blood crying, “It is finished.”
- No one else rose again from the dead a Victor over sin, death, and hell.
- No one else promised to come again in bodily form to gather His redeemed people home to heaven.

Knowing these great gospel truths, it is unthinkable to call upon sinners to trust in any other foundation for salvation, and it is anathema to maliciously mix gospel doctrines with human notions on how sinners may be reconciled to God. When Paul referred to building a foundation of

gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, he may have alluded to adding Greek philosophies to the solid foundation of the gospel. This could not be done, for the foundation of the gospel was already laid. It still cannot be done today, no matter what human notion is devised.

Paul drove this fact home to his readers stating, “Every man’s work shall be made manifest for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man’s work” (1 Corinthians 3:12).

This is a fearful warning to all gospel ministers. All who sit under our ministries, who yet build on their own religious notions, are in danger of hell fire, because all additions to the doctrine of Christ will burn up on that great day. They will not abide the fire of God’s judgment. Sinners need to be called to trust in the one sure foundation which is Jesus Christ. It is a fearful thing for gospel ministers to hold the souls of men in their care.

How shall modernists and liberals, who preach another gospel stand on that great day? They shall give account for their denial of Christ’s deity and their attacks upon the atoning blood of Christ. Their opposition to the one true gospel of Christ will bring them and their hearers into danger of hell fire. It is fearful to think that each Sunday from countless pulpits millions of souls around the world are being told to trust on religious vanities which are as “wood, hay, and stubble”—things that will not abide.

Woe to the preacher also, who is guilty of mixing the gospel with spurious doctrines. I think of prosperity gospel preachers, who are motivated by money and offer false promises of untold wealth and unending health for those who give liberally to their respective ministries. So many souls are going down a slippery slope toward untold misery and spiritual death, because their ministers fail to call them to build upon the solid foundation of faith in Christ alone.

**4. Happy bonds of pastoral relationship are rightly formed between a minister and his congregation when the person and work of Christ are preached with fidelity.**

Where ministers labor faithfully to build their people up in the faith by opening up to them the infinite supply of grace that is in Christ, congregations should rejoice and find rest in that ministry. As Rev. Geoff Banister, our minister in Indianapolis, has often stated, “It is the preacher’s job to convince his people how blessed they are through faith in Christ.” Let the preacher be counted worthy of his office as a minister of the gospel who leads his hearers little by little into the blessings of a full and free saving knowledge of Christ. Congregations should pray for discernment to recognize this emphasis of faithful gospel ministers, no matter their personalities or gifts. Favoritism may be natural, but it can be carnal. It is faithfulness to the gospel of Christ that determines a congregation’s happy feeding in the Lord’s church, and this becomes the true minister’s delight.

**To Do:**

Ask your minister how you can hear the gospel of Christ with greater profit to your soul.

Be an example to other believers by faithfully attending a ministry that expounds the gospel of Christ plainly and personally. Encourage others to join you by speaking of the minister’s messages that exalt the Savior’s compassion for sinners. Don’t just talk about the minister. Talk about the Lord. Your enthusiasm for a Christ-exalting ministry will stir others to hear of the Savior’s love and power to save.

In your enthusiasm for the ministry of the gospel, look beyond the preacher’s strengths and weaknesses to the great truths about the Lord Jesus Christ. He is your Savior and Sanctifier. Pray to love the Lord above all. This will keep you from the Corinthian error of holding a party spirit, and following the messenger instead of the message.

Rev. Ian Goligher  
Retired Minister, formerly Cloverdale FPC, BC

# TC TEEN CONNECTION

By Rev. Derrick Bowman

## How to Have Personal Standards Without Being a Legalist

No, that's not a typo in the title. There is a lowercase "l" on purpose. Capital "L" Legalism is heresy. That form of legalism believes that personal obedience is the key to gaining favor with God and ultimately earning salvation. That was the legalism of the Pharisees and the Judaizers in Galatians that taught you had to be circumcised or achieve some level of outward spirituality to be a true Christian. A lowercase "l" legalist is the kind of person that criticizes and judges other people for not living up to certain standards they have set. This kind of legalism is proud, arrogant, and self-centered.

Sometimes we throw around the term *legalist* like it's some kind of sanctified insult to make ourselves feel better. If you see someone with a "higher standard" than you have, you just call them a legalist to make yourself feel better for not being so strict or disciplined. Calling someone else a legalist makes your actions look better than theirs. Others try to play the "Christian Liberty" card and claim their freedom in Christ as their license to do whatever they want. I want to argue that it is possible (and even appropriate) to have personal standards without being a legalist. In fact, you **need** to have personal standards. What are personal standards as op-

posed to legalistic standards? If you decide to have the personal standard to not have sex before marriage, that is actually not a personal standard at all. That is what theologians call obedience. Likewise, having that standard does not make you a legalist. It makes you obedient. Expecting obedience to God's commandments is not the same as setting legalistic standards. If you met a 90-year-old man who told you that he had never murdered anyone, you would not chide him for living such a legalistic life. Ironically, so many that throw around the term legalist do so against those who really are just being obedient. For example, it is not legalism to desire to honor the Lord's Day or to want to remain sexually pure. It is not legalism to not steal or take God's name in vain. Those are all specific commandments that God has given in the Bible. The difficulty comes when you get into situations that God has not specifically addressed. Those fall into the realm of personal standards.

Maybe as a young person you have some of these personal standards: "I will not kiss until my wedding day; I will not watch any movie rated over PG; I will not listen to Pop, Rock, or Country Music; I will not wear skirts above the knee; I will not get

my ears pierced or wear makeup; or I will tithe 15% instead of only 10%." The list could go on and on. One important thing to consider is that all those personal standards can be directly tied to a clear principal from Scripture. Not kissing until your wedding day is an application of the principle of preserving your purity and keeping the seventh commandment. David said that he would "set no wicked thing before [his] eyes" (Psalm 101:3), so that applies to not watching movies with a bad rating. Since 1 Timothy 2:9 and other places teach women to be modest, having a standard for your skirt length makes perfect sense. The point is that all of those standards can be supported by Scripture, but none of them are directly *commanded* by Scripture. So the question is how can you keep, defend, and maintain those kinds of personal standards without judging and treating everyone else with a legalistic spirit?

For some, the way not to have a legalistic spirit is to just stop having any standards. The problem with that approach is that you need personal standards. You need them because your heart is sinful. If you understand the natural tendency of your heart to sexual desires, then setting up boundaries and safeguards for yourself

is wise. Having standards does not make you a good person, it is just a recognition of the fact that you are a sinful person, and you can't be trusted. Your personal standards are the safeguards and roadblocks to help keep you further away from sin.

What you must realize is that those standards or any others like them do not make you or anyone else holy. Just because your friends do not have the same standards as you, does not automatically make them worldly. You must deal with everyone out of a heart of charity. That does not mean that you condone or even somehow overlook sin. Of course not! It simply means that you must walk humbly before God knowing that you answer to Him and that everyone else does too. You do not define sin. God does. Sin is the transgression of God's laws, not your personal standards.

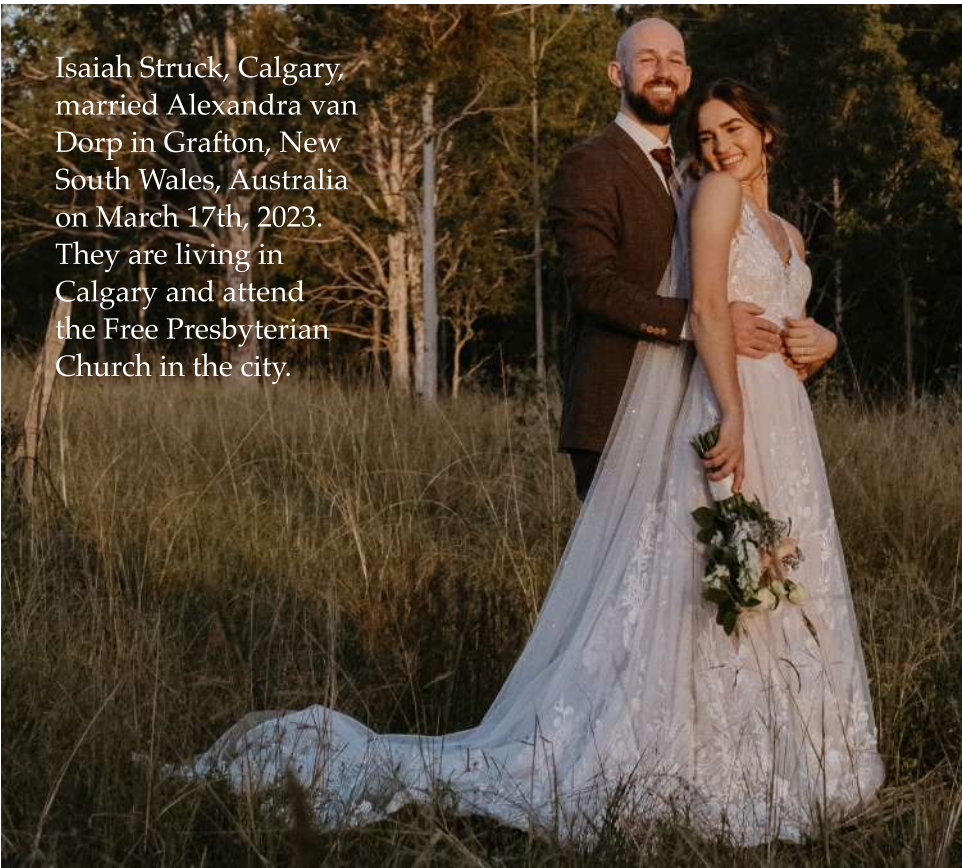
As Christians, we are to "perfect holiness in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 7:1). That means that out of a heart full of love for God, we each are to live for the Lord's glory.

In Romans 14:6, Paul said that those who claim liberty to do one thing, do it to the Lord and thank God for it. At the same time, the one who refrains from the same thing does it to the Lord and also gives thanks to God. Is the reason for your personal standard because you love God and want to serve Him with your whole heart? The question also goes the other way. Do you not have a certain standard because you love God and want to serve Him with your whole heart? Most of the time we reject personal standards simply because they are inconvenient. I would challenge you to examine your heart to see if that's the case.

Young person, you need to have standards, but you can't judge your brother or sister in Christ for not having the exact same ones as you do. You live before the Lord, and so do they. We must live with charity and encourage one another as we all desire to live holy lives perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

## Congratulations!

Isaiah Struck, Calgary, married Alexandra van Dorp in Grafton, New South Wales, Australia on March 17th, 2023. They are living in Calgary and attend the Free Presbyterian Church in the city.



# BOOK REVIEW

## TO AN ANCIENT PEOPLE: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF RABBI LEOPOLD COHN

The gospel of Christ “is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Romans 1:16). For this reason, the power of darkness delights to keep the gospel hidden. Sadly, the gospel is especially hidden from the Jewish people to whom the good news first came.

All of Adam’s descendants are born in spiritual darkness and naturally alien to spiritual truth. But the Jewish people have an additional problem. The apostle Paul calls it a “veil.” When they read the Old Testament, the veil is upon their heart. Christ was a Jew and came first to the Jews, but they received Him not. Thankfully, the Holy Spirit descended savingly upon thousands of Jewish people on the day of Pentecost. Thus, the New Testament church was at first composed entirely of Jews and Gentile converts to Judaism.

Although many thousands of Jews believed Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, most Jews refused to accept God manifest in the flesh. In fact, the Christ-rejecting rabbis worked systematically throughout the Mediterranean world to try to destroy Christianity. Much of their wasted energy and effort could have been avoided if they had simply heeded the wise counsel of their esteemed Rabbi Gamaliel. He warned them that they could be fighting against God.

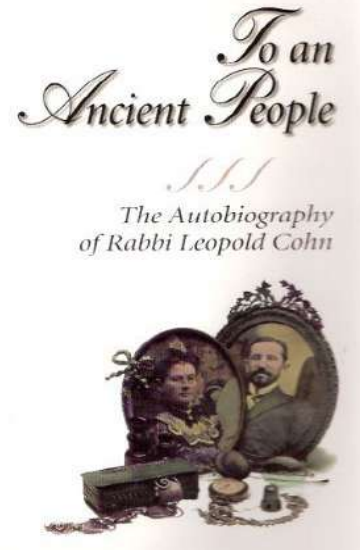
One of their secret tactics was to engender mortal fear of Messianic studies into the rising generations of rabbis. A Hungarian rabbi, Leopold Cohn, revealed in his autobiography that young rabbis were strictly taught that if they dared to read the prophecies concerning Messiah’s advent, a thunderbolt would instantly

strike them dead. The rabbi was instructed to give himself entirely to the study of the Talmud, which is the accumulated writings of the rabbis over nearly two thousand years.

Leopold Cohn was born into a Hungarian Orthodox Jewish home in 1862. He was predestined to become a rabbi. Young Leopold earnestly read his Talmud and passionately prayed for God’s blessing on his synagogue. One day while reading his Talmud, Leopold read the comments of the authoritative Rabbi Rashi. Rashi stated that, after 4000 years of world history, Messiah would come. Leopold reasoned that if this was true, why was the world still so wicked? He could not escape the question. Either this was true or it was a mere legend. The Talmud was the passion of his life and pursuit. His mind therefore demanded honest answers. That was the beginning of his journey to uncover the truth about the Messiah.

But he would have to pursue this secretly. If he were discovered, serious repercussions would follow. One Saturday he slipped and told of his discoveries while teaching in the synagogue. The people were horrified, hissed at him, and all of them walked out. A senior rabbi warned him that he could be removed from his teaching ministry. He was advised to leave Hungary and go to America if he continued seeking knowledge of Messiah. Without even telling his wife and his four children, he immediately left for New York.

Upon his arrival in New York City many Jews welcomed him. They did not know why he had come to America. One day, while walking with another Jew, he saw a sign in Hebrew letters right in front of a Christian church building. It said,



“Meetings for Jews.” He curiously stood there until warned by the other man that only apostate Jews went in that place. Later, he secretly attended. He was given a Hebrew New Testament which led him to faith in the Lord Jesus as the Messiah. When he believed on Christ, unspeakable joy filled his heart.

He sailed back to Scotland and was introduced to the Free Church of Scotland. There he was baptized and began studying in their New College at Edinburgh. His wife and children eventually escaped from their Jewish family in Hungary to join him and gradually accepted the Lord Jesus as Messiah. God called them to begin a Jewish mission in New York City. They began that work in 1894 under extreme persecution. But the mission continues to this day—winning Jews to Messiah Jesus.

*To an Ancient People: The Autobiography of Rabbi Leopold Cohn is available from Amazon.*

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



# BLESSING DURING LIFE'S FINAL JOURNEY

Christian women are the life-givers of their homes and culture. To be life-givers in encouraging and biblical ways, they must be grounded in the truth of God's Word. We naturally think of women as life-givers when a baby is born, but in all of life's seasons, godly women encourage others, even at the end of life. Although life's end seems antithetical to life-giving, death is a part of life, and for believers, is the gateway to eternal life. Recent deaths of friends, young and old, as well as serious illnesses of loved ones, have spawned my thoughts regarding end of life. While sorrow, grief, sighing, and tears are natural parts of grieving, Christian women's anchor in Christ and His truth enable them to support and encourage both the dying and the grieving.

Revelation 14:13, "I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord... Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors and their works do follow them." Matthew Henry noted that this verse shows "the blessedness of all the faithful saints and servants of God both in death and after death." This certain blessing sent by a heavenly voice and recorded by the apostle John brings sweet assurance and anchoring comfort. Dying and death are hardly thought of as a blessing, but those in Christ walk through the enemy Death's camp with a victorious step. The battle was won by our Savior Jesus Christ at the cross so that "Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Corinthians 15:54). When doubts and fears arise, McCheyne's words support the

soul, "But when fear is at its height, Jesus comes and all is light." Those who die "in the Lord" are certainly blessed, not as those unbelievers who "die in their sins" (John 8:24). We are certain that God's dear children are not abandoned at the end, for "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints" (Psalm 116:15). The Spirit's sweet word of "resting from their labors," is a new task for His faithful children, knowing their labors are not in vain in the Lord. That "their do works follow them" is a promise of hope that soon our precious loved one will hear God's "well done, thou good and faithful servant."

While many of us learn how to deal with declining loved ones when their crisis happens, learning beforehand can also bring much comfort to fearful hearts. The book *Sunsets: Reflections for Life's Final Journey* by Deborah Howard, a Reformed Christian Hospice nurse, is a treasure of practical helps with a biblical perspective to understand life's final journey. The Lord brought *Sunsets*

into my life when my mother suffered a debilitating stroke six months before her homegoing. What I learned strengthened God's truth in my own soul to trust Him more, rather than to fall into despondency and grief. The book describes the physical changes in the normal process of dying to calm fearful hearts.

Understanding that a Christian's death is the gateway to heaven's glory, we are enabled to encourage our loved one by singing favorite hymns, reading the Scripture, praying for God's grace, and tenderly loving with gentle touches and soft words. Exercising such spiritual graces around a deathbed is one of the most holy and life-giving blessings on earth. Matthew Henry notes that it is "preserved and published by writing... that the people of God might have recourse to it for their support and comfort upon all occasions."

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



# How to talk to God



In the last Kids' Corner article, we talked about spending time with the Lord each day and reading the Bible. We need to read the Bible to hear what God has to say to us. But God also wants us to talk to Him. He wants us to pray.

Think about what that means. The God who made all things, who is infinitely holy, wise, good, and all-powerful, wants us to talk to Him! But how do we talk to God? How do we pray?

To begin, we need to pray for salvation from our sins. Until our sin problem has been dealt with, we have no right to expect God to hear our prayers. But when we place our faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, we become God's children and can then come to God as children coming to a loving father.

Most earthly fathers love their children. They want to take care of them and do them good. But the best earthly fathers are only human. Sometimes they are busy or tired. Sometimes they are unable to do what they would like to do. Sometimes, despite their best intentions, they make mistakes.

But our heavenly Father is never too busy. He can do anything, He never makes mistakes, and His love for us never changes. We can come to God without fear of being turned away. We can know that He will listen to us and that He will answer us in the best possible way.

So how do we pray? Let me suggest a few simple points.

**Be quiet.** Find a quiet place where you won't be distracted. Put other things out of your mind. Think about what you are doing as you come before the holy God of the universe who is also your loving heavenly Father.

**Be thankful.** Praise God for who He is and for what He has done. Thank Him for what He has done for you. Thank Him for the promises He has given in His Word.

**Be sorry.** Ask God to forgive you for the sins you have committed. Ask Him to search your heart and show you the things that need to be changed and ask Him to change them.

**Be confident.** Believe that He will

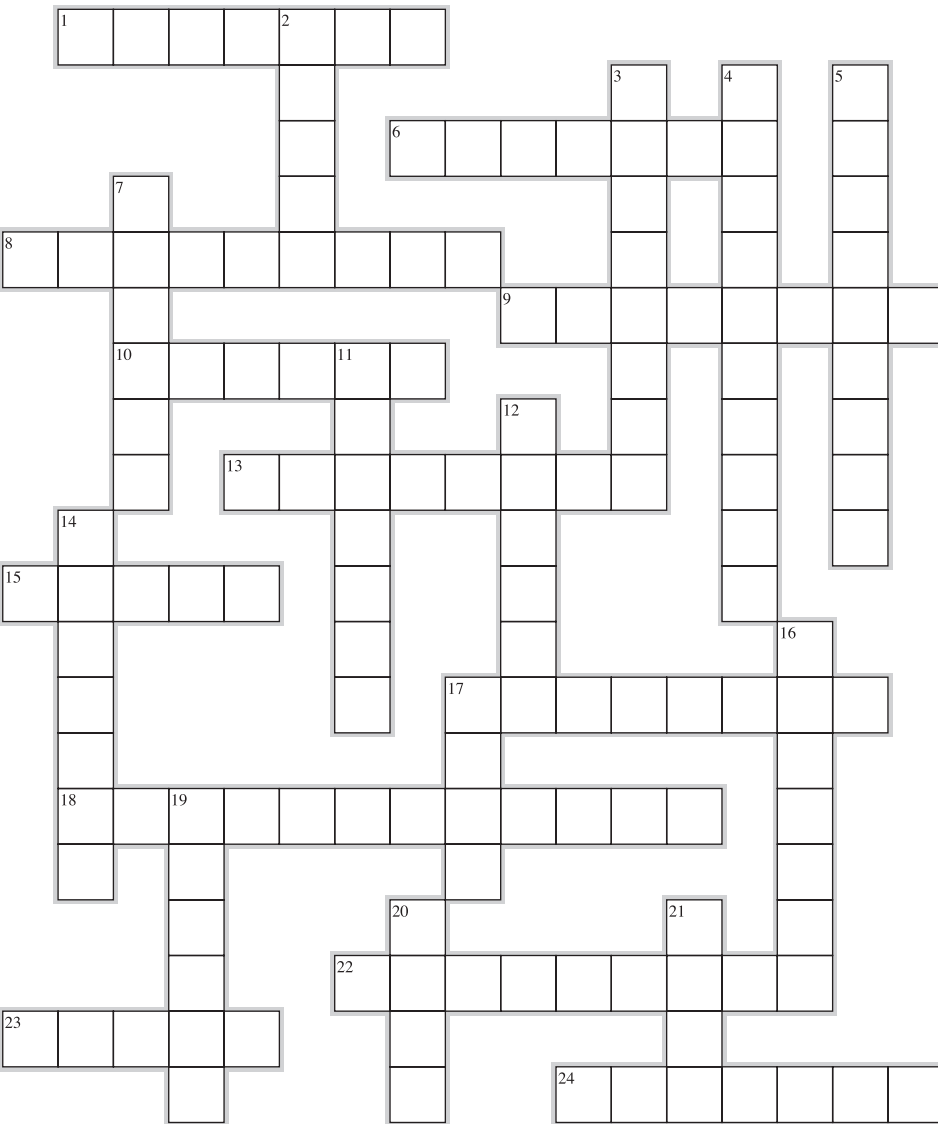
forgive your sins (1 John 1:9) and that He will hear and answer your prayers. Ask Him for the things that you need. Remember to ask Him for spiritual things (such as help to keep from sinning or a better attitude towards your sisters and brothers) as well as practical things (help with your schoolwork, healing for someone who is sick, etc.). Tell the Lord about whatever is on your heart. If you have sad feelings, if you are afraid, or if you are confused about something, tell the Lord about it, and know that He cares and that He will help you.

Let's review. When you pray, quiet your heart, and then raise your heart to God in praise and thanks. Search your heart and seek forgiveness, and then pour out your heart to your loving heavenly Father. Always remember that God knows what is best and that His answers will be the best for you even if you don't understand at the time. He is a great and good God. What a privilege to be able to talk to Him!

.....  
Mrs. Judy Brown  
Faith FPC, SC  
.....

**WINNERS**  
of the spring crossword puzzle:

Erica Fulton, Faith FPC  
Lois Thomassian, Faith FPC  
Liam Rose, Toronto FPC  
Jaden Tse, Toronto FPC  
Janel Tse, Toronto FPC



## ACROSS

1. The kind of father who makes mistakes
6. A picture of prayer in Old Testament worship (Psalm 141:2)
8. The first thing to pray for
9. Where did Jesus often go to pray? (Luke 6:12)
10. What should we ask God to do to our hearts? (Psalm 139:23)
13. The kind of father who makes no mistakes
15. How should you feel about your sins?
17. What is something to thank God for?
18. A kind of prayer (Psalm 6:9)
22. Believing God will do what He says means you can be \_\_\_\_.
23. What kind of place is good for praying?
24. If we pray about everything, we will be careful (worried) about \_\_\_\_.  
(Philippians 4:6)

## DOWN

2. God tells us to pour out what before Him? (Psalm 62:8)
3. What will keep the Lord from listening to our prayers? (Psalm 66:18)
4. Pray to be kept from what? (Luke 22:40)
5. In addition to practical things, ask God for \_\_\_\_ things.
7. A quiet place for praying (Matthew 6:6)
11. We are to pray without doing what? (1 Thessalonians 5:17)
12. God says when we call unto Him, He will \_\_\_\_.  
(Jeremiah 33:3)
14. God will forgive our sins if we \_\_\_\_ them. (1 John 1:9)
16. The prayer of the upright is God's \_\_\_\_.  
(Proverbs 15:8)
17. What should we do instead of fainting? (Luke 18:1)
19. God's house is called a house of \_\_\_\_.  
(Isaiah 56:7)
20. What kind of gifts do fathers like to give to their children? (Matthew 7:11)



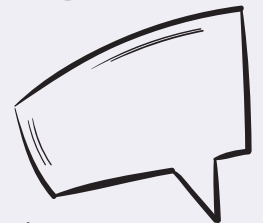
Use the article  
on page 18  
and your Bible  
to solve this puzzle.



amen



amen



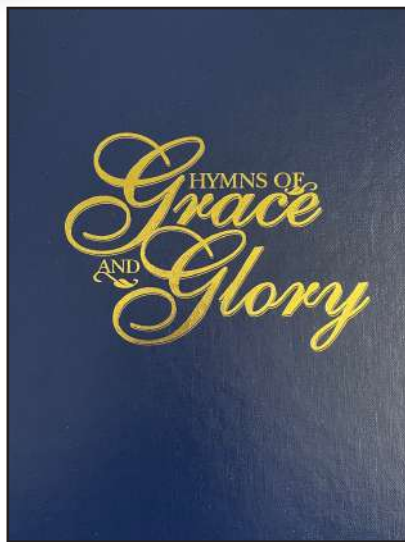
amen

# KIDS' CORNER

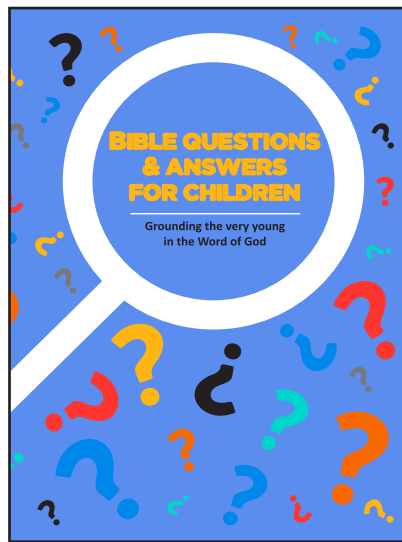


**PLEASE NOTE:** Send your completed puzzle to *Current Kids' Corner*, c/o Judy Brown, 651 Ponden Dr., Greer, SC 29650 or to [ljsbrown2@gmail.com](mailto:ljsbrown2@gmail.com) by **August 13, 2023**.

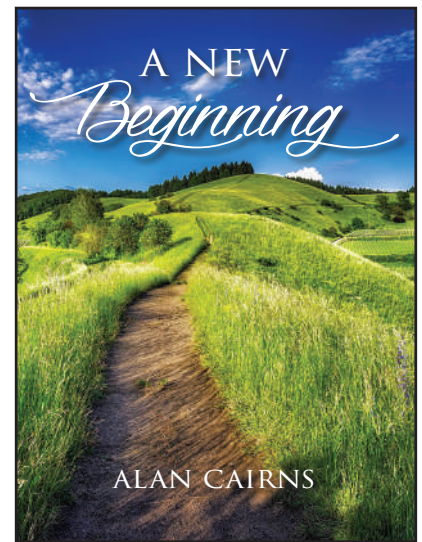
Include your name, address, age, and the name of the church you attend. Please also include an email address in case we need to contact you about your entry. Five winners will be drawn from all correct submissions received. **The contest is open to young people ages 5-12.** Winners will receive a \$10 cash prize.



HYMNS OF GRACE & GLORY  
\$20 USD



BIBLE QUESTIONS & ANSWERS  
FOR CHILDREN \$0.75 USD \$1.00 CAD



A NEW BEGINNING  
(ALSO AVAILABLE IN SPANISH)  
\$0.35 USD \$0.50 CAD

## AVAILABLE PUBLICATIONS

PLEASE CONTACT LIFELINE PUBLICATIONS TO ORDER.

LIFELINEPUBLICATIONS555@GMAIL.COM