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“More Love to Thee”

by Elizabeth Prentiss

“And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ – to the glory and praise of God.” Phil. 1:9-11

“To love Christ more is the deepest need, the constant cry of my soul...out in the woods, and on my bed, and out driving, when I am happy and busy, and when I am sad and idle, the whisper keeps going up for more love, more love, more love.”

These were the words of Elizabeth Prentiss, wife of a Presbyterian minister and author of this hymn text. She was often described by her many friends as “a very bright-eyed little woman with a keen sense of humor, who cared more to shine in her own happy household than in a wide circle of society.” Although Elizabeth was strong in spirit, she was frail in body. Throughout her life she was almost an invalid, scarcely knowing a moment free of pain.

“More Love to Thee” was written by Mrs. Prentiss during a time of great personal sorrow, following the loss of two children in a short period of time. For weeks Elizabeth was inconsolable. In her diary she wrote that she had ‘empty hands, a worn-out, exhausted body, and unutterable longings to flee from a world that has so many sharp experiences.’

During this period of grief, Mrs. Prentiss began meditating upon the story of Jacob in the Old Testament. She noted how God met him in a very special way during his moments of sorrow and need. Elizabeth prayed earnestly that she too might have a similar experience. While she was meditating and praying one evening, these four stanzas were born – words that have since become a universal prayer for devout believers everywhere. [From: *Amazing Grace* by Kenneth W. Osbeck]

*More love to Thee, O Christ, more love to Thee!
Hear Thou the prayer I make on bended knee;
This is my earnest plea: More love, O Christ, to Thee!
More love to Thee, more love to Thee!*

*Once earthly joy I craved, sought peace and rest;
Now Thee alone I seek - give what is best.;
This all my prayer shall be: More love, O Christ, to Thee!
More love to Thee, more love to Thee!*

*Let sorrow do its work, send grief and pain;
Sweet are Thy messengers, sweet their refrain,
When they can sing with me, more love, O Christ, to Thee!
More love to Thee, more love to Thee!*

*Then shall my latest breath, whisper Thy praise;
This be the parting cry my heart shall raise;
This still its prayer shall be, More love, O Christ, to Thee!
More love to Thee, more love to Thee!*

FROM THE PASTOR'S HEART

“Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel.”

--2 Tim. 2:8

Many years ago, I chose this text as my life verse. That is, I chose it as the verse of God's Word which helped to keep my mind and heart on track as a Christian. Often when I sign letters, emails, or autograph a book, I write this reference at the bottom, hoping it will bless the receiver. There are many reasons for choosing this verse for my life verse.

1. First, there is a personal reason. As a Christian with remaining sins and distractions, I have to awaken each morning and focus my wandering mind on how God wants me to live that day. There are so many things that fill our minds each day. There are bills to pay, work to be done, children who live far away from us, lifelong friends and family whom we rarely see, problems to solve.

It is so easy to awaken each morning and fill our minds with the issues and distractions of our imperfect world. Soon our minds are so filled that we crowd out first thoughts of God, and Christ, and the priorities of Christian living by faith.

But Peter told us: “gird up the loins of your minds”. Paul taught us to “take every thought captive” for Christ...to “be transformed by the renewing of your minds”. It takes the effort of faith to do this in the morning. We have to “discipline yourselves for the purpose of godliness.” We have to “look unto Jesus”, the author and finisher of faith, to live out our faith each day.

This is why I have to focus my mind each morning to “remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead.” Each morning I must remember His wonderful life of love and compassion to sinners, His sinless life of obedience to qualify for the Cross, His awful death to bear the punishment of my sins old and new, and His glorious resurrection to rule the Universe for us and to prepare an eternal place for us.

Only the truth and hope that Jesus Christ is risen and ruling can enable us to focus our minds in a distracting world. Health problems lessen when we remember that He will heal all our diseases one day, now or in heaven. Financial pressures lessen when we remember He provides for those who seek first His kingdom and righteousness, now and in heaven. Work problems are reduced when we remember that He has given us this job for the time being and is with us in it each moment of the day, working for Him. Family worries are lessened when we remember that He alone can work in other's hearts and that we are called to work first on our own attitudes and behavior as a witness.

In the morning, and many times throughout the day, something happens inside me when I remember Jesus Christ, His love and sacrifice for me. Something happens inside me when I remember that in a dark world, the light of the world is risen from the dead and ruling and faithful and present with me by His Spirit. Something happens inside me when I remember

that this life is not about me and my comfort but about Him and His Honor through my salvation and daily living.

Call me simple if you will. But I believe that the gospel of Jesus Christ is strong enough to overcome worry, anger, fear, bitterness, grudges, and temptation to sin. Remember Jesus Christ, His life, His Words, His Cross. Remember that He is risen from the dead and rules over all for His sheep. Remember, and you will live in a different world each day, a world in which He is risen indeed.

2. Second, there is a pastoral reason. The older a pastor gets, the longer He serves in the same church, there is greater need to “remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel.”

One of the great difficulties of persevering in faithful service as a pastor is to see, with passing years, how terribly the ignorance of God's Word and sin has infected our world. Our generation is the first one in American history which has rejected the Ten Commandments as the moral standard for all men to live by. In previous generations, even unbelievers knew it was wrong to get drunk, to commit adultery before and after marriage, to curse in public, to lie to parents, to be lazy and discourteous at work. Now, church people act that way. Pastors live in a postmodern world which thinks any moral conviction is either ignorant or heavy-handed. As a result, pastoral influence is at a record low in our society.

Another difficulty for pastoral perseverance is to see how much of the last fifty years of postmodernism has entered the minds of church people. Moral relativity and pleasure-seeking has lowered the Christian standards of most American church people. Divorce has reached 50% in our generation of church members. Children have been spoiled with freedom and pleasures and materialism instead of taught to be content with what they have, to respect the rights of others, and to honor parents, teachers, pastors and other adults. The lack of commitment to faithfully attend church meetings grieves pastors who have prepared sermons to help members whom he prayed for all week long.

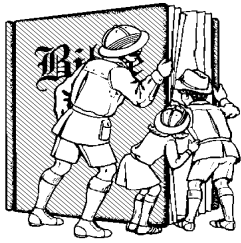
Every week, every day, many times a day, I have to “remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead” and that He is alive and building His church on earth each day...that every one of His elect are being saved right on time...that every local church is being built in His way, sometimes with sorrow because of sins ignored or tolerated, sometimes with joy in His sovereign answer to the prayers for salvation and revival...that He is more grieved by the weakness of professing Christians than I am...and that He works in others hearts through the Word of God at His own pace, not mine.

Yes, this is a command to obey which can only result in faith, hope, and love. If you don't have a life verse, try out mine for a while and see if God's Word is not a fire in your cold bones:

“Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel.”

--2 Tim. 2:8

Pastor Fred



Book Room Review

Today's Gospel – Authentic or Synthetic?

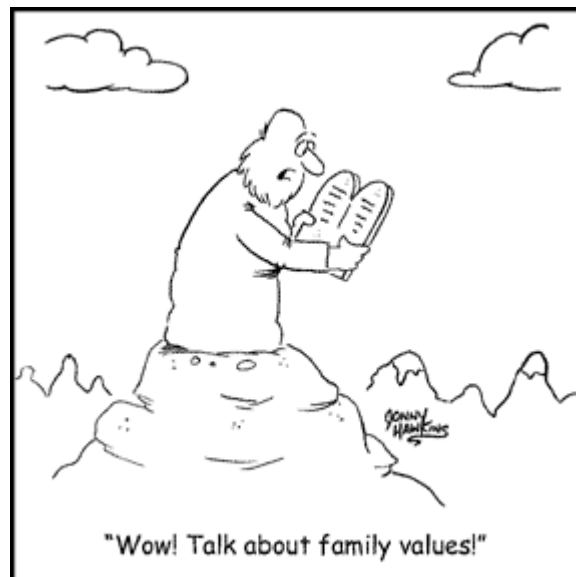
By Walter Chantry

"Differences between much of today's preaching and that of Jesus are not petty; they are enormous. The chief errors are not in emphasis or approach but in the heart of the Gospel message. Were there a deficiency in one of the areas mentioned in these pages, it would be serious. But to ignore all – the attributes of God, the holy law of God, repentance, a call to bow to the enthroned Christ – and to pervert the doctrine of assurance, is the most vital mistake."

This powerfully written book has a message which goes to the heart of the contemporary problem in a way that conferences and commissions on evangelism have failed to do. Its expository approach is particularly valuable.

Walter Chantry was born in 1938, graduated from Westminster Theological Seminary in 1963, was ordained to the gospel ministry and became pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Carlisle, PA, where he served for 39 years. Since December 2002, he has served as Editor of *The Banner of Truth* magazine. Other books by Chantry include: *Signs of the Apostles*, *The Shadow of the Cross*, *God's Righteous Kingdom*, *Call the Sabbath a Delight*, and *Praises to the King of Kings*.

[You may purchase *Today's Gospel* from our Book Table for \$4.00]



"A merry heart doeth good like a medicine." Proverbs 17:22

Newsbytes and Announcements



Pierson Pipes Fudge, born March 5, 2009. He weighed 9lbs., 6 oz. and was 20 ½ inches long. We give thanks to the Lord that mother and baby are doing fine! Congratulations to Mallory, to Sandy and Barry, and to all Pierson's extended family!

William Kell Wicker, born March 5, 2009. He weighed 8lbs. 11 oz. He is the grandson of Dr. Joe Nesom, pastor of First Baptist, Jackson, LA, a sister church of like faith. Congratulations to Will and Julie Wicker, and to big sister, Maggie, as well as Pastor Nesom!



Redemption: Charles Colson, the founder of Prison Fellowship, received a Presidential Citizens Medal from George W. Bush on December 10. It is the second highest honor given to civilians. While Jeb Bush restored Colson's civil rights in 2000, Colson has not received a pardon for his role in the Watergate scandal. When asked what the medal meant to him, Colson replied, "Two things: The first is that redemption is possible, because it was 35 years ago this year that I left the White House in disgrace and now have come back to receive this very lovely award. And I told the President that this is a great example of redemption. He started talking about the redemption he had seen in the prisons with me. So first of all, it stands for redemption – it's possible for anybody. But what probably makes me happiest about the award is that the word will go through the prisons pretty quickly, and every prisoner can know that there's hope, which is what I've given my life to. That is the second thing that's really meaningful to me. Redemption and that message now being spread to others who are in prison or who have been in prison." Colson was also asked if a presidential pardon would make a difference to him at this point in his life. To this he said, "No, I haven't asked for one, and I won't. I've received the only pardon I care about, which is from Christ. When I was in the Marines, we had this thing called a Presidential Unit Citation, and that meant that if a unit was particularly valiant in battle, the whole unit got a Presidential Citation. The [Presidential Citizen Award] was not a recognition of me personally. This was a recognition of the movement that I am a part of, Prison Fellowship – the workers, the staff, the volunteers, the thousands upon thousands of volunteers. So I look at it as a presidential unit citation for Prison Fellowship, not for me. I take it on behalf of a lot of people who make this work possible." [Christianity Today – February 2009]



Interesting...

- 49% - Evangelicals who agree with the statement: "My religion is the one, true faith leading to eternal life."
- 37% - Evangelicals who said this a year ago.
- 1.52% - Evangelical church membership growth during recessions
- .98% - Evangelical church membership growth in non-recession years.
- 11% - The increase in probability that a Protestant will attend church if unemployed

[Christianity Today – February 2009]



"Under God": George Docherty, the Presbyterian minister credited with first proposing the addition of the phrase "under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance, died on November 27 in Alexandria, VA. He was 97. His 1954 sermon heard by President Eisenhower led to Congress's insertion of the phrase later that year. [Christianity Today – February 2009]

On the Lighter Side

Moses and the Fire Department? On a recent Sunday, Jack, a four-year-old in our church, was being questioned about the Bible story they had just learned regarding Moses and the burning bush that was not consumed. When asked what God said to Moses when he approached the burning bush, Jack replied: "Stop, drop, and roll!"

Quotes That Will Live Forever

Question: If you could live forever, would you, and why? Answer: I would not live forever, because we should not live forever, because if we were supposed to live forever, then we would live forever, but we cannot live forever, which is why I would not live forever." Miss Alabama in the 1994 Miss USA contest.

"Smoking kills. If you're killed, you've lost a very important part of your life." Brooke Shields, during an interview to become spokesperson for a federal anti-smoking campaign.

"I've never had major knee surgery on any other part of my body." Winston Bennett, University of Kentucky basketball forward.

"Outside of the killings, Washington has one of the lowest crime rates in the country." Mayor Marion Barry, Washington, D.C.



Testimonies of Grace
Joan Moody

Growing up, the youngest of six in Western New York, my alcoholic father made it clear that religion was a crutch for the weak. My mother had 'walked the aisle' as a teen, but never shared the gospel with us. I grew up a proud atheist, determined to rebel against all conventions. My health and safety were threatened many times, but my self-destructive ways continued. I married, at 22, someone I had known only a few months. We were very different, and even our daughter could not keep us together. (Young people, consider courtship – it is a blessing to truly know each other before commitment).

Back on my own at 26, I was no longer physically self-destructive, but I was looking for (and always had been) something better. I thought at the time that meant the 'right' man and a bigger family. God had already provided the 'right' man, but not the way I expected. Skip and I met through friends and had much in common. We hit it off right away, but he was not interested in marriage, so we 'dated' for four years.

The fall of 1991 was a terrible, wonderful time for us. Through some awful trials, the Lord saved Skip, and our lives changed dramatically. Certain things, certain friends, were put away forever. Most problematic for me, however, was that Skip began to go to church! I didn't know why he felt the need, but if I wanted to spend Sunday with him, then I had to go, too! A more miserable experience I could hardly imagine. During the sermons, I could barely keep from storming out in protest. But at the same time, many things began to happen that pointed me to the reality of God. As I heard preaching for the first time, the word of God pierced my heart. If there was a God, what did that mean? If the Bible was His word to us, then it must be true. I began to see my true nature and my need for a savior. I did not understand why Christ would give His life for me, but I knew that He had my heart. One night in our kitchen, I asked Skip how to know if you were saved and he shared the gospel of salvation and repentance with me simply. If I had to pinpoint a time for my conversion, that is as close as I can come. Skip can tell you the exact point of his, but mine was a slower recognition of the truth of God in my life.

Skip bought me my first Bible. As I read those words, I was amazed at how alive and true they were. As Christ has grown me, new insights still jump out at me. I used to joke that it would take a 'burning bush' (one of the few Bible stories that I knew) to make me believe in God. How true that was! Only God can open our eyes to see Him, and once He does, there is no closing them. The changes in my life are many and wonderful (and rather startling to old friends). Many times I am frustrated by my lack of godliness and I pray that all would seek Him and not waste the years I did chasing that which means nothing. Seek Christ.

[Joan, together with her husband Skip, is a faithful member of First Baptist Church]



ARBCA Missionary Focus

The Maozes – Final words From Baruch and Bracha as they retire – ISRAEL

Baruch writes:

It is time to say "thank you" and "goodbye." Having completed my term of service as pastor of Grace and Truth Christian Assembly, I am no longer to be and ARBCA missionary. Thank you for the years of fellowship in the Gospel; I have been moved often upon discovering how many of you have prayed for us. Thank you for the warm welcome my wife and I have received in those of the ARBCA churches we were privileged to visit. Thank you to those of the churches who supported us financially. I warmly encourage you now to consider supporting Grace and Truth – the church will need your support in light of its added responsibility to provide for a pastor. I intend to devote the remainder of my productive life to writing and producing Christian literature in Hebrew and to editing the last two volumes of the modern Hebrew Bible. As of January 2009, ARBCA will no longer service our income. Any who wish to support us or our labors should write to bmaoz@GMX.com and inquire how to do so. Please do not send money directly to us – we wish to ensure the kind of accountability that support through ARBCA provided.


Our three daughters and their husbands are living in the USA, but we intend to remain in Israel so that I can effectively write for the Israeli scene as an insider, not as one writing from afar. We do not relish the distance between us and our family, yet we consider ourselves duty-bound to follow the course described above. Thank you for your trust and your encouragements. Some of you have written from time to time, some have visited us. Many have embraced us in other ways. Thank you for the privilege to serve alongside you, although in another country.

Above all, I give God thanks for His kindness to my wife and to me over the years and for His blessing on our labors. He has granted us more than we deserve or could have ever imagined. We leave Grace and Truth with confidence in Him Who is able to bless that church as much and more than He did so in the past. We leave with a longing for the salvation of our people and a confidence that God will yet fulfill His promises and that some day Israel will turn to the Savior and find Him to be gracious.

It has been a thrill and a privilege to watch ARBCA being born and growing. I pray God will continue His blessing on you and on your united efforts, that He will enlarge your hearts and your vision and the He would use you for the promotion of His glory in the USA and beyond the seas.

Adieu! Your brother in Christ, Baruch

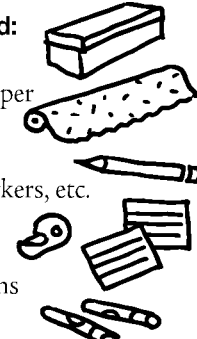
Children's Corner


PRAYER BOX

Family prayer time is a good habit. Make it fun with this activity for all family members. They can use this special box whenever they have a prayer request.

What you need:

- Shoebox
- Wrapping paper
- Scissors
- Tape
- Stickers, markers, etc. (optional)
- Index cards
- Pencils or pens



What you do:

1. Wrap the shoebox like a present. Be sure to wrap the lid separately so it can be removed.
2. Let the whole family help decorate the box. You can write Bible verses about prayer, draw pictures, glue on pictures or add stickers. Be creative!
3. Put the box in a prominent location of your house. Keep a pile of index cards and pencils or pens near the box.
4. Whenever a family member has a prayer request, he or she can write or draw it on a card and put it inside the box.
5. Family members can share the cards in a prayer circle, or people can take turns praying for all the requests. Throughout the week, family members can check the box for new prayer needs.

Let the little children come to Me..."

