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“Eternal Father, Strong to Save”

by William Whiting

“Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.” (Psalm 121:4)

Psalm 121 has been called the “Traveler’s Psalm” because it requests God’s watch-care over the comings and goings of His people: “The LORD shall preserve your going out and your coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore.”

Nineteenth century hymnbooks usually had an entire collection of hymns echoing prayers for God’s protection of travelers, especially for sailors. *Hymns for Christian Melody*, for example, published in 1832 by Rev. David Marks, contains 24 hymns under the section: “Mariners.”

The most famous mariners’ hymn, *Eternal Father, Strong to Save*, was written in 1869. It is called the “Navy Hymn” because of its association with the Naval Academy in Annapolis. It was Franklin Roosevelt’s favorite hymn and was sung at his funeral.

The deeply moving melody was written by the famous composer, John B. Dykes, who named it *Melita* after the island where Paul was shipwrecked in Acts 27.

Little is known about the author of the words, William Whiting of London. He was Master of an Anglican school for musicians, and he wrote several hymns, but only “Eternal Father, Strong to Save” is widely sung today. William reportedly wrote this hymn as a prayer for a friend who was preparing to sail for America:

*Eternal Father, strong to save, whose arm hath bound the restless wave,
Who bid'st the mighty ocean deep its own appointed limits keep;
Oh, hear us when we cry to Thee, for those in peril on the sea!*

*O Christ! Whose voice the waters heard, and hushed their raging at Thy Word,
Who walkedst on the foaming deep, and calm amidst its rage didst sleep;
Oh, hear us when we cry to Thee, for those in peril on the sea!*

*Most Holy Spirit! Who didst brood upon the chaos dark and rude,
And bid its angry tumult cease, and give for wild confusion, peace;
Oh, hear us, when we cry to Thee, for those in peril on the sea!*

*O Trinity of love and power! Our fam'ly shield in danger's hour;
From rock and tempest, fire and foe, Protect us wheresoev'r we go;
Thus evermore shall rise to Thee, Glad hymns of praise from land and sea.*

In more recent years, other verses have been added by various writers:

- *Lord, guard and guide the men who fly, through the great spaces in the sky...*
- *Eternal Father, Lord of hosts, watch o'er the men who guard our coasts...*
- *God, Who dost still the restless foam, protect the ones we love at home...*
- *O Father, King of earth and sea, we dedicate this ship to Thee....*

[information taken from *Then Sings My Soul* by Robert J. Morgan]



FROM THE PASTOR'S HEART

The Contentment of Joy

...I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. ...I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.

I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. (Php 4:11-13)

It is not easy to have contentment while living in this fallen world. Our hearts want to live in a perfect world where everyone loves each other, all our felt needs are met, and our children will be guaranteed a happy future. But that is not the sin-infected world we live in. When things go wrong, it is hard to be content, at peace, thankful for the present, hopeful for the future.

Yet, Paul in jail learned the secret of how to be content in any and every circumstance; how to be happy and at peace of mind in spite of trials. This enabled him to live a joyful, loving life to God and man, instead of being unhappy with either.

I see too many professing Christians, including myself at times, who carry a worried look on their face, who are trying to be faithful, but who are not very happy and joyful. They are not content with their life. Yet, this was not Paul's attitude in jail. So, what was this secret of contentment he found?

1. First, you have to understand that contentment does not produce joy; rather, joy produces contentment.

The worldly market tells us that we must have contentment in our circumstances to have inward joy and happiness. The marketing strategy is to persuade us that we are not happy and content without the product it is selling. Then it shows happy faces who finally get their product. They are finally content, so they are happy. But this is a sham, a false hope.

This is one reason why are children are desperate to have the right shoes, the right clothes, the right car, the right friends, etc. This is why adults often are unhappy with the house they live in, the car they drive, the salaries they make. We are told that contentment with circumstances brings joy.

However, this is not the way Paul found contentment. He had nothing but jail. He was cut off from friends, forgotten by the Philippians whom he led to Christ, facing possible death. What did he have to be content about? Really, nothing.

And this was one of Paul's greatest challenges spiritually. For before he was saved by Christ, he coveted other people's possessions, success, reputation,

and circumstances (Rom. 7:7). He had to repent of discontent and coveting when he came to Christ. Yet, confined in jail, he had learned to be content in all his circumstances. How did he do it? What did he learn? The answer is this secret: contentment with circumstances does not produce joy, but, rather, joy produces contentment in circumstances.

2. Second, you have to find joy in order to have contentment in any and every circumstance.

Throughout Philippians, Paul exhorts Christians to "rejoice in the Lord always." This was not an empty platitude ignoring the sorrows of life. It was his secret of contentment in all circumstances.

When he was of humble means and suffering, he learned to be rich in Christ. When he was prospering, he learned to be humble for mercy. To have the love of the invisible God, the forgiveness of sins at the cost of Jesus' bloody death, God's Spirit, eternal life at death, and the future resurrection of the body (Phil. 3:11). To Paul, Jesus Christ's "good news" was good news. He rejoiced in the Lord Himself in any and every circumstance. So, his joy in Christ gave him contentment and peace of mind in any and every circumstance. Is it so with you?

Paul exhorted the Philippians to overcome grumbling, disputing, discontentment, and quarrels with a greater joy:

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. (Php 3:17-21)

In other words, Paul lived by faith in the truth of God's blessings, presence, and purpose in every circumstance he faced. His jail became a palace because Christ was there with him and planning great things for his future. This is what he meant when he said: "I can do all things (jail included) through Him who strengthens me (Phil. 4:13)." Through Christ's undeserved blessings to Paul, he found a joy which no one could take away (John 16:22)...no matter the circumstance. And that secret of joy in Christ gave contentment, peace, happiness to Paul.

Before He left earth, Our Lord Jesus gave His disciples a truth to think about, to learn, while living in a fallen world. To those who believe it, a whole world of joy and contentment and thanksgiving opens up in trials:

"These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world." (Joh 16:33)

--Pastor Malone



ARBCA Missionary Focus

Meet one of our missionaries we support with our tithes and offerings:
The Favres – Switzerland – Olivier, Denise, Loic, Sylvain and Joel

Items for thanksgiving from the church life at Payerne:

- First, we thank the Lord for His provision of a better paying job for Emil Dumitru. This means that he will be able to continue his work of evangelization at the churches of Payerne and Neuchatel while at the same time earning some much-needed extra income. Please also pray for his wife Barbara, who is looking for a part-time job as a nurse.
- Several Christians who appreciate serious preaching of God's Word have begun to attend our worship services since autumn – two families, a couple and a single lady. This increases our problem of lack of space in our meeting hall. We rejoice about this and ask that the Lord would provide for our needs in this situation. Pray that the anointing of the Spirit may be on the preachers that they may really edify the church and that the new people may hear and accept the "doctrines of grace" with obedience and joy.

At Neuchatel, we have been tested in various ways and we are counting on the Lord to help us through these times

- After some tension between different people, we have decided to take more time for prayer so that the church can learn to support one another better and to beseech God's help together. That is why at the beginning of 2009 we have reviewed the organization of our meetings so that we may have two regular times of prayer as a church. Pray that the Lord would grant us a spirit of prayer and brotherly love.
- As a church we were deeply saddened by the dramatic death of a 40 year old man who had started to come to the services along with his family. Pray that we will know how to support and care for the young widow and mother of two small children who must now reorganize her life.
- During the first three months of the year I will have the privilege of having a young man, Stefan Zurcher, working alongside me. He is trained as a doctor and is considering his long-term future in church life. Pray that the Lord would give me wisdom to help him in his reflections and that his placement would be a useful one.

On a more general level:

A second meeting is planned with a delegation of pastors from a union of evangelical churches who oppose my Calvinistic teaching to young camp monitors. I hope to be able to approach doctrinal questions in depth with them and show them the biblical foundation for the doctrines taught. I need much wisdom, boldness, and love.

With David Vaughn, we had the joy of teaching 50 young people during a ski camp that took place at the end of 2008. These young people were between 18 and 28 years old, and came from very diverse church backgrounds. We were greatly encouraged by their thirst for teaching from God's Word, as well as their great desire to deepen their Bible knowledge and apply it to their lives. Please pray for the non-Christians who were there and who heard the gospel, as well as for several young Christians who come from difficult family or church situations, that they would stand firm and persevere in the faith.

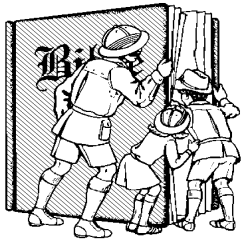
The Editions Reperes (Created by David Vaughn, Christian Benoit, elder at Lausanne, and me) have just published their second book, a translation of Stuart Olyott's book: *You Might Have Asked*. Pray that this book sells well and meets a need in French-speaking churches.

We often think back to those who we had the privilege of meeting at the General Assembly last year and the fond memories we have of our fellowship with these brethren. What a privilege to count on so great a Father who brings together a numerous people from all nations to celebrate His glory.

*Send thou, O Lord, to ev'ry place
Swift messengers before thy face,
The heralds of thy wondrous grace,
Where thou thyself wilt come.*

*Send men whose eyes have seen the King,
Men in whose ears His sweet words ring;
Send such thy lost ones home to bring;
Send them where thou wilt come.*

-- Mary C. Gates, 1890



Book Room Review

David: Man of Prayer, Man of War
by Walter Chantry

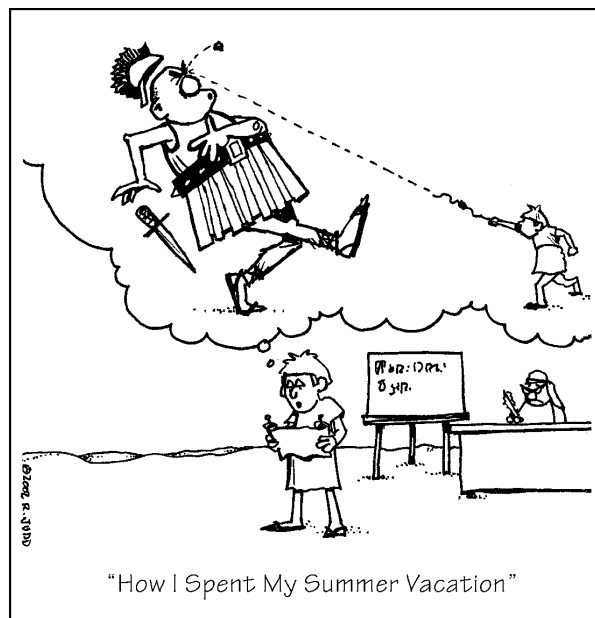
Walter Chantry's book, *David: Man of Prayer, Man of War*, is a look into the heart of David and how he was a man after God's own heart. The book shows characteristics of David's action in relation to choosing God's will over his own. Throughout the chapters, Chantry does a good job of getting the reader to stop and consider how he would have acted in the same situation or in similar situations today.

In the book you will also read how David's life was filled with many griefs caused from having more than one wife. You will find a good explanation as to why God took the life of David and Bathsheba's first born child. You will quickly see that most of King David's biggest challenges were not from his enemies across his borders, but from his own family and friends.

Chantry's book takes King David's and King Saul's life and shows how taking responsibility for your actions (King David) far out weighs blaming others (King Saul) and the world around you. David being a man after God's own heart however, did not mean that he was a perfect man. You will read in Chapter 3 that David simply had an inclination to obey God.

David: Man of Prayer, Man of War, is a good book to read after reading 1st and 2nd Samuel in the Bible. Each chapter shows where you can go in Samuel if you want to read the whole event related to what is going on in David's life at that point. The book is 293 pages long, and is easy to read and understand. The book is as much about your heart as it is David's!

A review written by Marcus Smith, a faithful member of FBC.



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

Newsbytes and Announcements



Congratulations to:

Our High School graduates:

Lydia Alexander - McKinley High School
Elisabeth Carline - Silliman Institute
Emily Dighton - C.H.E.F.
Ruth King - McKinley High School
Elizabeth Schindler - Silliman Institute

Our College Graduates:

Brenna Hanly, Louisiana State University, candidate for the degree of Doctor of Veterinary Medicine
Elish Phares, Mississippi State University, Bachelor of Science Degree in Interior Design, minor in art
Brian Rogers, McNeese State University, candidate for the degree of Bachelor of Science, Civil Engineering

Our prayer for you all: *"Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe."* I Timothy 4:12

Motherhood:

"Education commences at the mother's knee, and every word spoken within hearsay of little children tends toward the formation of character."-- Hosea Ballou

"A life-shaping heritage that comes from a good mother is a priceless possession, and the debt owed to her is not adequately paid by a token remembrance on a special holiday. The best tribute to a good mother is to take the heritage she passed on and be the person who would make her proud." -- Howard Coop

"For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well." -- II Timothy 1: 5

"But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. Having so fond an affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us." – I Thessalonians 2: 7-8

Fatherhood:

"By profession, I am a soldier and take pride in that fact. But I am prouder – infinitely prouder – to be a father. A soldier destroys in order to build; the father only builds, never destroys. The one has the potentiality of death; the other embodies creation and life. And while the hordes of death are mighty, the battalions of life are mightier still. It is my hope that my son, when I am gone, will remember me not from the battle field but in the home repeating with him our simple daily prayer, 'Our Father who art in Heaven.'" – Douglas MacArthur

"As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him;" Psalm 103:13

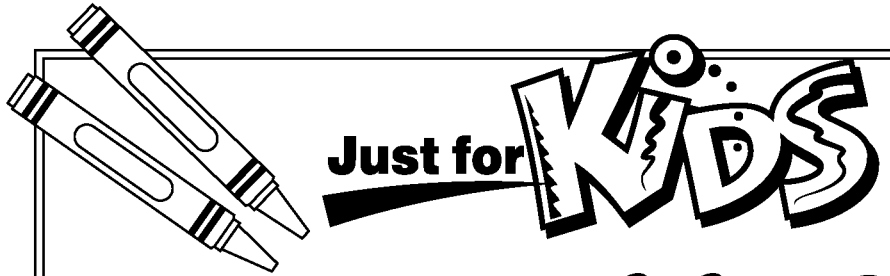
"My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline and do not resent his rebuke, because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in." Proverbs 3:11-12

"Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord." Eph. 6:4

"You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers; just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children, so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory." I Thess. 2: 10-12

On the Lighter Side, Just for Dads:

"When I was a boy of fourteen, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be twenty-one, I was astonished at how much the old man had learned in seven years." --Mark Twain



A legacy of faith

You're blessed when you have a mother, a grandmother or any relative or friend who passes down a strong faith to you. In the Bible, Timothy was influenced by his grandmother and mother.

Complete 2 Timothy 1:5 (NIV) below by filling in the blanks with the correct vowel.

VOWELS: 1 = a 2 = e 3 = i 4 = o 5 = u

“ h v b n r m nd d f
 3 1 2 2 2 2 3 2 4

y r s nc r f th, wh ch
 4 5 3 2 2 1 3 3

f rst l v d n y r gr ndm th r
 3 3 2 3 4 5 1 4 2

L s nd n y r m th r
 4 3 1 3 4 5 4 2

 n c nd, m p rs d d,
 2 5 3 2 1 3 1 2 5 1 2

n w l v s n y ls .”
 4 3 2 3 4 5 1 4

2 TIMOTHY 1:5 (NIV)

Answer: “I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.”

Let the little children come to Me...”