

April-May 2023

Glory Magazine

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IN THIS ISSUE

HAPPY EASTER!

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BREAD OF LIFE

KINGDOM MARRIAGE

REVEALING
GOD'S GLORY

HAPPY EASTER!

For Christians, Easter Sunday is considered the holiest of Sundays. It is the appointed day to celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Paschal lamb who was slain for our transgressions on Good Friday and rose again on the Third Day.

God gave of Himself so that we could live, those who are the Church, the Ecclesia, the called ones. Those He chose to perform His will here on earth for His purpose.

Yes, we have dreams and desires, but without God giving first, we would not be here! He formed us, gave us His breath, and made a way for us to have eternal life with Him by choosing His Son and accepting our mission to be here. As a believer, sometimes we view it as an impossible mission, yet with God—All Things Are Possible.

Who knows a Son but the Father? And who knows His children better than anyone—The One who created you and me!

He formed us in our mother's womb. Do we think that He would not provide for His own children? Of course He did! He knows you have needs here on the earth.

Having more faith in His abilities than the gifts, talents, and lot He supplied you with is a foreign concept to some. Yet, if you step back from fear (which is not of God) and trust His Word and instructions, yielding to the Holy Spirit's prompting, that faith arrives! He is TRUSTWORTHY!

He is our source for all things because He is all things. He is the Great I AM.

He has always existed and given His children exactly what they need. And we *need* to have simple, child-like faith that no matter the situation, no matter what the world says we must do, as Christians, we must follow Him!

May you receive the holy gift of supernatural faith and genuinely believe ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE through Christ who strengthens us.

Wishing you a blessed and Happy Easter!

Blessings and honor,

Angela Errett

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*That I may publish with the voice
of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy
wondrous works. Psalm 26:7*

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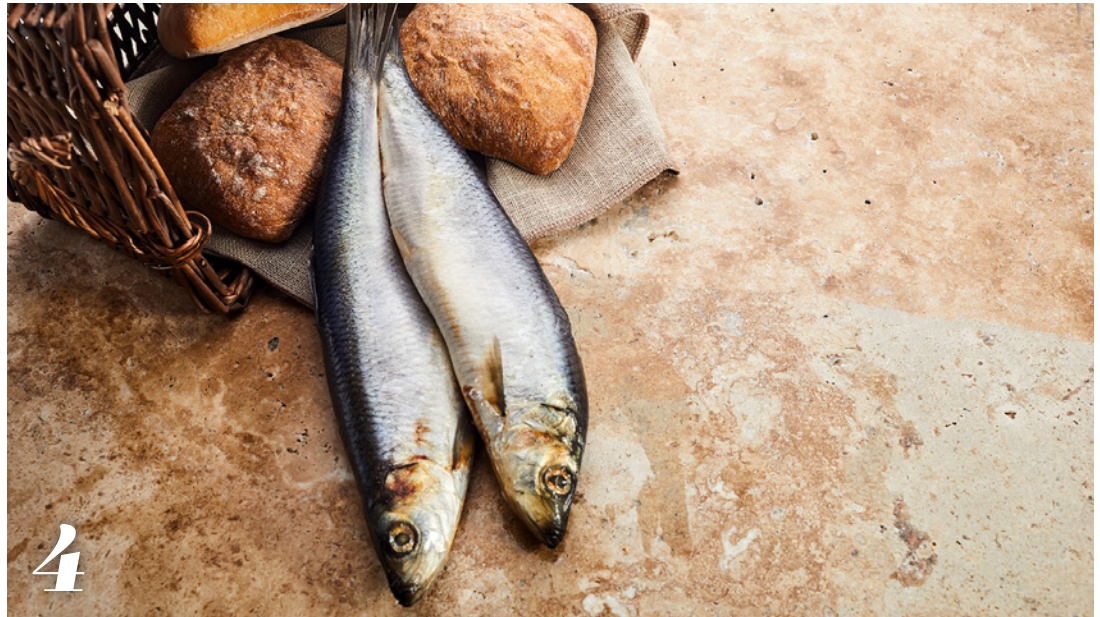
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ON THE COVER

Carriage ride in front of The Greenbrier Chapel, White Sulphur Springs, WV. Alan Tucker/Backyard Photography

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Content in each issue is inspired. We do not know what will be on the pages until it is completed.



by Bob Jacobus

An Easter Tapestry

A tapestry is a work of art woven into a fabric, often telling a story or recording an event. God, on purpose, wove a great tapestry depicting Easter using threads of history, prophecy, traditions, and royal promises, which this essay only partially describes. Easter is a basic fabric of the Christian Faith. People are well-versed in the immediate outcome of Easter...The Resurrection. The elements of the Last Supper, the humiliation and judgment of Christ, and Cavalry lay a good foundation for the record. However, there are aspects of the background that often go unnoticed. These subtle facets add to the true richness of the tapestry, The Easter Tapestry.

It is said a picture is worth a thousand words. The visual conveys so much more meaning than the limits of human words. Let it also be said that a tapestry is worth a thousand pictures. In a way, it is multiple images woven together to complete an essence, not achievable by a single statement or solitary picture. In the Easter narrative, the message of hope and eternal life is found in the Resurrection.

I am the resurrection and the life.

THE ONE WHO BELIEVES IN ME WILL LIVE,
EVEN THOUGH THEY DIE;

John 11:25 (NIV)

Resurrection is an incredible concept of the outcome of human life after death. It states that every human being will be granted an eternal body, not one that can return to dust. Did you pick up on everybody? That means that dust will be reunited, clay corpses will be breathed on again, and people will be recognized for who they are in physical form. The caveat is this; there is a second death, a living death after resurrection. Those who had previously accepted Christ are exempt from this death. The living death is personal consciousness in a realm with no hope, no comfort, and no favorable companionship.

Jesus' last celebration of Passover with his close disciples was rich in the symbolic past and also in the symbolic future. Passover commemorated the night that God delivered the family of Israel from the bondage of the political world's greatest power of that day. Jesus was getting ready to deliver mankind from the greatest metaphysical power ever, death. He paid enough ransom for everyone, His blood. That blood was a covenant sign between God and those who believe, an agreement without end. The disciples were told to remember this. Jesus also broke bread and told the twelve that this was His Body, broken to remedy sin and the diseases caused. The broken body covers the past and even future faux pas.

Shuttles with yarn: valentina/Bigstock.com

In order for Christ to be a complete savior, it was necessary for Him to suffer the afflictions that we as people suffer. Thus, a complete humiliation was in order from the authorities of the day, both spiritual and political. Jesus took a double dose of the political since He was “interrogated and judged” by the religious leaders and then by the world power of the time. It was thorough, brutal, and would have caused most men to die. Jesus never recanted, and He kept with the race set before Him, setting sites on the reward of a multitude in which to share eternal life.

Calvary, The Cross, was necessary to fulfill the salvation mission. In the desert, the Israelites were beset by snakes for backbiting their leaders. God put their problem, the snake, on a pole and required the Israelites to look at it to be delivered from their sin and the wages of that sin. The snakes in the camp were the judgment the people suffered for rebellion. In Jesus, God placed Himself on a pole, on a hill, for everyone to see. The thing is, we must look at God, who became man, a man who was rejected and abused, so we can see exactly what our sin will do. The blood had to be spilled for the covenant, and Jesus had to embody death before He was the Resurrection. God’s Glory leaves no place for shadows.

All these things are part of the whole and must be at the forefront of the tapestry. There are essential persons that we tend to downplay in all these events, one being the Father. In the Bible narratives, it is reported that darkness came over the land during the last three hours of Jesus’ life. An earthquake is described in detail at the end of the three hours. One thing conspicuously absent is thunder and lightning. Thunder and lightning most always accompany dark skies. Not here. It is possible that the sun’s light was blocked by a shadow, an eclipse. Regardless, stillness on the earth was in effect for three hours.

Many think that the weather and geologic conditions were a manifestation of God the Father’s great anger with men. No thunder, no lightning. We have a clue about the Father’s real condition at the temple, where the curtain had been torn from top to bottom. God the Father was in anguish. When fathers in Israel were distraught with family matters or important events, they would grab the collars of their inner garments and tear them from top to bottom, revealing the distress of their hearts, naked to their family and the world. God was believed to dwell behind the curtain in the temple. He ripped it and bared His heart. God was so grieved that nature responded by manifesting darkness in creation during the last hours and the breaking of His heart in

PLEASE BE AWARE

The Bible teaches two major resurrection events

- 1** *At the end of this dispensation of time, when the church age gives over to Christ’s millennial rule.*
- 2** *At the end of the great rebellion against God after the “Thousand Year Reign”*


the earthquake. There was no anger in this event. No thunder, no lightning.

Another person, the Holy Spirit, played an unseen but vital role in this event. The Son of God was dead, if only for an instant, still dead. One must die before one can be raised from the dead. God the Father is emotionally compromised; think about it. His only begotten Son was on the cross, His Son whom He loved very much... dead. Men have attributes of God; what man would not have been emotionally affected by the execution of an innocent child? The Holy Ghost hovered over the face of the earth and held things together. Don’t think for one minute that Satan and the powers of Hell would not have taken advantage of an unguarded world at this crucial time.

NOW THE EARTH WAS FORMLESS AND EMPTY, DARKNESS WAS OVER THE SURFACE OF THE DEEP, AND *the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.*
Genesis 1:2 (NIV)

For all practical purposes, the earth was under darkness and in chaos at Cavalry. Just like the earth was void and without form at the beginning of the creation narrative, so, too, it was at the beginning of this magnificent age of new birth and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Easter tapestry is filled with wonderful bright colors; however, dark shading contributes to the majesty of such a work of art. For our benefit, God did not spare His Son, and for our fullness, He will not spare us from the complete picture of Calvary. Now, then, may your thoughts of Easter be filled with the glorious wonder of God’s great redemption and the keeping of His covenant with those who embrace His Son, even Eternal Life.



Bread of Life

Knowing Your Provider

by Angela Errett

Bible Study Reading:

John 6
Matthew 6
Matthew 14:13-21
Mark 6:31-44
Luke 9:12-17

Everyone needs food. Our bodies need nutrients to operate. However, being made in the image of God, we are more complex than just amebas that came to exist in a conscience state. We are physical and spiritual beings because our heavenly Father God is Spirit. We not only need to eat to supply our physical bodies with energy, but it is imperative that we also feed our spirit. And if we give our physical bodies junk food and do not exercise, it leaves us with results of our actions in a state of disease, unable to think clearly, and a place where our quality of life is limited. The same is true of our spiritual life. It can stagnate if we do not acknowledge that it exists and is more real than our physical state. And even if we recognize it but don't feed it, use it, or exercise it, we will have difficulty growing up spiritually.

FOR GOD HATH NOT GIVEN US A SPIRIT OF FEAR; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

2 Timothy 1:7 (KJV)

Knowing how to feed your body is pretty self-explanatory—we need to strive for the best food options available to us—but how do we feed our spirit and know where our physical and spiritual provision comes from? God has provided for all of our needs, including how to operate in the physical world. We are to be friends of the unrighteous mammon (see Luke 16:9-13) yet unchanged in our service to and love for God. If we are not faithful stewards in this world, how can we be trusted with true riches? We cannot serve God and mammon (Matthew 6:24; Luke 16:13). He is the provider of all things, including whatever provision is necessary to perform His

FEEDING THE 5,000 IS THE ONLY MIRACLE *Found in all four Gospels** MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, AND JOHN

will. He is God: I AM THAT I AM. He has always existed; therefore, He has always provided.

The following is a beautiful example of how God supplies everything we need. Having unwavering faith in Him, entering into His presence, and giving thanks and honor is a powerful way to live. Knowing your provider and that your source does not come from your job, 401(k), spouse, or family; it comes from your position as a child of God, which is invaluable. We must steward the wealth He provides, yet our posture must be from one where He gives us the gifts, the talents, and the ability to be instructed in the ways of operating in the natural, as well as renewing our minds with the Truth of His Word. Again, all are priceless. Especially His mercy and grace as we mess up and try again.

Did you know that Christ feeding the five thousand with five loaves and two fishes is the only miracle found in all four gospels:* Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John?

- Matthew 14:13-21
- Mark 6:31-44
- Luke 9:12-17
- John 6:1-15

We begin in the book of John, chapter six, “And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh” (John 6:4 KJV). Nigh means *near; something is imminent and will*

soon come to pass. The Passover feast (established in Exodus 12:18) commemorates the Israelites’ exodus from Egyptian slavery. The Paschal lamb was sacrificed, and its blood was used to mark the doorposts of the Jewish homes as a sign to the angel of death that they were to be spared from the death of the firstborn. And what happens next is most extraordinary.

How do you feed five thousand men with five loaves and two fish in the middle of a field? Focusing on John’s version of events, Jesus lifted up His eyes and saw a large crowd, then asked Philip, “*Whence shall we buy, bread that these may eat?*” Breaking the sentence down, I see this in the spirit: “*From where, from what condition, from what source, from what author or giver, in what market shall we purchase and redeem, the raised bread, shewbread, that these people may consume—Me?*” However, the disciples were not quite seeing in the spirit, only perceiving in the natural. Philip didn’t have the correct answer, nor did Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, but Jesus knew the answer and would prove it (see John 6:1-15).

Philip answers, “Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.” This perspective suggests the way to feed that many people was to use physical money. A pennyworth is

a denarius. It was a Roman silver coin that meant “containing ten.” It was equivalent to ten donkeys and was considered the ordinary pay for a day’s wages. Two hundred days of working and getting paid by the Roman empire would not be enough to purchase just a little food for everyone. Not even enough to satisfy. From what perception did this answer originate?

Then, Andrew says to Him, “There is a lad here, which has five barley loaves and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?” This perspective reveals a little boy holding five loaves of bread made of barley, an inferior bread, one fit for beasts, and two small, insufficient roasted fishes. In Andrew’s mind, such a small amount of food would never be enough for a group of people as large as this. What was Andrew’s mindset?

The story of Christ feeding the five thousand with five loaves and two fish, being the only miracle recorded in all four gospels, should signal all who follow Christ to pay attention to it and live by it.

In Mark’s version, the disciples tell Jesus to send the people away and for them to go into the field and into the villages to buy bread themselves. Their words reveal who they think is the source of the provision. They reply, should we go to market and pay two hundred denarii for bread to give them? Thinking they must use

* Aside from the Resurrection of Jesus Christ



The Last Rising

When preparing dough for leavened bread, a process called proving the yeast (also called proofing) occurs. After being formed to its final shape or placed into its proofing vessels, the yeast bread must be allowed to rest and rise one last time before being put in the oven. **It is also called a “dough’s second rise.”**

the money to purchase enough to feed them. He asks them how much they have and for them **“to go and see.”** In Matthew 14:13-21 again, we see the disciples saying to send the multitude away so they can buy themselves food.

The disciples’ perspective up to this point was you worked for a day’s wage in the world market and used that for provision. Jesus was about to turn their worldview upside-down!

Jesus commanded the disciples to **“Make the men sit down.”** All of them sat down, arranged in rows by hundreds and fifties. When Jesus received the five loaves of bread and two fishes, He looked up. He recovered the lost sight of the seat of order of eternal things, the gospel, and prayed to God to bless the bread and fish and cause it to prosper. Jesus broke the bread into pieces and gave the fragments to His disciples to set before them and, similarly with the two fishes, as much as they desired. *(In Mark’s version, the text states that He divided and distributed the portions among them all. See Mark 6:41.)*

Christ was restoring the divine order of the Kingdom that had been lost with the fall of Adam. We are to be engaged with what refreshes, nourishes, and supports our soul, not toiling in the world seeking things that perish. I see this as work unto the Lord and having our mind and soul set on and joined to the Son of man as our spouse, who provides everlasting life and is sealed by God. Our desire should be towards our first love. As believers, Christ is the Spirit we are bound to as the head of our thoughts, desires,

and action. When we join Him and seek the Kingdom, provision accompanies our behavior.

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you (see Matthew 6:33).

Later in John 6:29 (KJV), Jesus says, **“This is the work of God, that you believe on him whom he hath sent.”** He explains that the manna provided to them while Moses led the Israelites in the desert was not bread from heaven but that His Father gave them the truthful bread from heaven. The bread of God is **“he which came down from heaven and gave eternal life to the world.”** Give us this bread always, they reply.

*And Jesus said unto them,
I am the bread of life:
 he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.*

John 6:35-39 KJV

The Bread of Life came down from heaven, the truth about how this world operates, who we are, and how we are to navigate through our time here to complete His will for us. The disciples saw lack before them, not yet knowing the truth. In other words, the bread of life, just then, had been proved in front of men before being placed in the final vessels. They saw how the world system operated, needing unrighteous mammon to purchase things, but now their minds were unveiled to their trustworthy source. Jesus' teachings provide us a road map for the strait and narrow path where opportunities for us to serve our Lord, choosing His way of operating in the natural over the systems of man, is where our provision comes from. Being obedient to the Word opens doors we could never open ourselves. It gives rise to opportunities we shouldn't have access to looking in the natural. God chose the foolish things of the world to put to shame (confound) the skilled experts, the learned. He selected the weak things to put to shame the boisterous and mighty. God has chosen even the "low born" and those treated with contempt by the world's elite. God renders what

the world deems useless to Himself (see 1 Corinthians 1:26-31).

"All these things shall be added" are not just words that were spoken, containing no power. These eight words, written in red and spoken by Jesus, contain the supernatural power of God. They perform His will. He IS the Bread of Life, our provision. Make Him your first love. Honor Him. Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and He will establish your plans (Proverbs 16:3). Eat from the Bread of Life.

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

I am that bread of life.

John 6:44-48 KJV

Mammon


Mammon is translated to *treasure, riches, and wealth*. We are to be friends with it and not marry it—be bound to it—making it our first love, personifying it in opposition to God alone as our first love. Not having more confidence that our wealth and riches can provide for our every need, having a desire only for more of it, instead of looking to God, consulting with Him on how to be a friend to mammon and how that applies to our situations in life.

We should have a giving heart, not be greedy for more, and give ourselves over to a desire to please God more than an excessive, fleshly desire for more riches. God only has one place in the Bible where He says to "prove Him" (see Malachi 3:10).

Giving a tithe, a tenth of all He has supplied to us, allows the blessing to flow down from heaven. It establishes faith in us as He keeps His promise, and placing Him first as our source of all wealth increases our faith. Jesus, as the Passover feast drew nigh, fed the 5,000 and again proved His source, His wealth, and where He was from.

Passover Feast 2023

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5 - THURSDAY, APRIL 13



by Angela Errett

Kingdom Marriage

The Wedding Feast Approaches

If you are risen with Christ, seek those things which are above. Christ, the anointed, resides in this position, on the right hand of God, in a place of honor and authority. We are to set our affection on having understanding, learning to be wise, and directing our minds to seek the higher knowledge of God's Kingdom (see Colossians 3). Our position should reflect us taking it to God and His Word first, our first love, instead of looking to the world for all the answers. His Word, the truth of our situation, was given to us to remind us of who we are in the body of Christ, and the Holy Spirit is our guide once we are born again. Yes, we must learn how to function in this world, but to be wise in Kingdom knowledge means we must submit to our assignment from God and choose Him. He provides for the fulfillment of His will.

For some in the Church (Ecclesia: the called out), that assignment will revolve around being positioned in finances, businesses, or industries. Yet, others will be set to help the body of Christ, building up the faith of the saints through other ministries, or through simply being a purveyor of light, representing Christ in less famous ways but no less important, i.e., pastors, ministers, or laity like Suzie down the street who works at the grocery store. There will be many in Heaven whose names you don't know here on earth because they followed, obeyed, and were not only good and faithful servants performing their calling; they were chosen and called out. We should not forsake those whom God assembles together as He sees fit for His purposes. (Visit 2 Thessalonians

2:1; Hebrews 10:25. The word *episunagoge* is only used twice in the scriptures. First as *gathering together* in 2 Thessalonians and second as *assembling* in Hebrews.)

The parable of the marriage of the king's son is found in Matthew 22:1-14. Let me focus on this: it matters what kingdom you choose to marry and believe is your source! Let me paraphrase the story to the best of my ability.

The king sent his servants to call "them that were bidden" for his son's marriage, but they wouldn't come. Again, he sends the servants out with a message, "tell those called, "Look! I have prepared my dinner. It's all ready. Come now! To the nuptials of my son." However, they could care less and did not regard his request. Men went back to their own lands (flesh); moreover, they returned to man's way of business (monetary/business system). The remaining men who did not return seized the king's servants, abused them and killed them.

When the king found out what the men had done, he was provoked to anger. He dispatched his troops and destroyed those murdering criminals, burning up their city. He tells his men, who are devoted, seeking to be at the nuptials, that those men who were called were not worthy and tells them to go to the highways and bid as many as they can find into the marriage. They did, bringing in all they found, both bad and good. The wedding was supplied with guests at the table (see also Psalm 23:5).

The king entered and looked closely at the guests. He perceived a man who had yet to invest in a covering, the outer robe for the wedding. The king asks him, "Friend, in what way did you enter here into the wedding not possessing the wedding robe?" And he was reduced to silence.

The king told his servants to fasten him with chains, hand and foot, and eject him into outer darkness. Where he cannot have access to the door. There will be a process of lamentation and grinding of teeth there. The reason is many are invited to the banquet, the wedding of the king's son, as proclaimed by the Gospel, to obtain eternal salvation through Christ; however, few are hand-picked and chosen by God.

Could it be those men who went back into the world's systems after being told that the dinner was prepared decided to serve peoples' wants and fleshly desires, fully embracing mammon as their source? Was their spirit married to the spirit of mammon to the point they began to hate God? Did they desire and trust their riches, stature, and wealth more than a relationship with God? I contend they did. They returned to man's marketplace to build what they desired and killed anyone who would say otherwise. They desired to make it easier on themselves through innovations, lessening the burdens of their assignments, not knowing it was increasing the gulf between themselves, the truth of His Word, and the Kingdom of God.

The one who was bound, hand and foot, taken away, and cast into outer darkness, ignorant of how to respect divine things and human duties, had blasphemed the Holy Spirit, trying to be at the banquet without a relationship with the King's Son. He was not covered by the blood of Jesus Christ; therefore, his spirit was in bondage, not ready for the nuptials of the Son of God.

A wise man is strong; yea, a man of knowledge increase strength.

FOR BY WISE COUNSEL THOU SHALT MAKE THEY WAR: AND IN MULTITUDE OF COUNSELLORS THERE IS SAFETY.

Proverbs 24:5-6 (KJV)

I find it very interesting that the word for *multitude* in Proverbs 24:5-6 is the Hebrew word *rob*, pronounced like the word *robe*. A wise King shall not be robbed. His battle

plan shall have rescue, salvation, and victory through a multitude, a covering, and a robe of righteousness through those called to His service, by Him alone.

The final banquet approaches and it is each person's responsibility to make a decision to believe they are a child of God and look to Him for instruction through the Holy Spirit by accepting His Son's finished works and being filled with the Holy Spirit. Are you clothed in the robe of righteousness? Are you in right standing with God having the covering of the blood of Jesus Christ upon you, being born again in the spirit, and made ready for the wedding of the Son of the King? Only you can answer this question, and only you will be held accountable for your decision to make Jesus Christ the Lord of your life now as the Wedding Feast approaches and the call to enter the King's Hall is given. If you have any doubts, we suggest you begin reading the Bible, asking the Holy Spirit to direct your path, and speaking with a local pastor so they can assist you with your journey. *-Shalom*

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REVEALING God's Glory

Three crosses, near Tenmile, Upshur County

By Al Tucker

Due to health setbacks, I wasn't sure I would have a testimony this time around. It seems since New Year's, there is always something new health-wise I have had to deal with. I have been trying to hang tough as I weather the storms.

As I write this, I am recovering from bacterial pneumonia. I was still in the hospital this time last week. Thankfully, God brought me through this illness relatively quickly. I am grateful for the huge prayer chain that kept me lifted up in prayer.

During my time in the hospital and while recuperating at home, I thought about the article a few times and wondered if I would be up to it. I did pray for the strength and guidance to be able to write my testimony. Over the weekend, I suddenly found myself up and at the computer. It felt good to be able to communicate with family and friends, and then I got a feeling it was time to write my message. I

prayed and thought about it. I kept returning to a topic I had been thinking about prior to my getting sick. It became clear to me God had an important message for us; specifically, He needs us to become desperately involved in carrying out His will for our lives. I think about how desperate He was to have a relationship with you and me. For me, for you, He sent His Son to die so brutally for our sins and then to be resurrected. If we believe in Jesus' resurrection, we can have an eternal relationship with Him. That is how much love the Father has for us. Even though He shed tears of blood asking the Father to take this cup from me, Jesus willingly went to the cross in complete obedience and love for His Father and ultimately for you and me.

So! As we travel the road to Easter, that joyous day of days, two different scriptures have been resonating with me. At this particular time, these scriptures

seem extremely relevant to my walk with God and His calling on my life. It is like God is saying, Alan, come on, double down. I desperately need you. The first comes from Paul's letter to the Ephesians in the New Living Translation (NLT):

“So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days.”

Ephesians 5: 15-16 (NLT)

Like me, you may be more of a traditionalist who prefers the King James Version (KJV). Generally, my go-to translation is the New King James Version (NKJV). But I do love to read other translations as they help me better understand the meaning of God's Word. I recommend you have two or three different translations at home. You will find them very useful. Here is Paul's warning to the Ephesians in



Photos: © Backyard Photography, Alan Tucker

Cades Cove, Great Smokey Mountains, TN

the NKJV translation, followed by the Modern English Version (MEV) wording. Take a minute or so to re-read these three different versions.

“See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”

Ephesians 5: 15-16 (NKJV)

“See then that you walk carefully, not as fools, but as wise men, making the most of the time because the days are evil.”

Ephesians 5: 15-16 (MEV)

As you can see, while the wording varies in these three translations, the message remains the same. I like the NKJV wording for several reasons. “See that you walk circumspectly,” tells me it is all about my walk with the Lord. How do I walk circumspectly? Paul tells us to walk as Children of the Light (Ephesians 5:8), and not like unbelievers do

“in the futility of their mind” (Ephesians 4:17). Before being saved, I knew all about that futility as I thought I had all the answers. I had no idea how big a fool I was. I was very strong-willed and opinionated. God’s Word could not penetrate my thick skull. Once saved, I learned there were all sorts of pitfalls, like mines in a minefield ready to take you away from God’s path. You must become circumspect (very cautious). Stay on guard, knowing where to look and how to act to avoid the mines/traps that Satan has set for

us. We can do that if we become wiser and more mature in our faith. How does one become wiser?

I have found that wisdom comes from anchoring your faith in the Word. Paul says wisdom comes from God in Ephesians 1:8. Jesus said, “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who builds his house on the rock” (see Matthew 7:24). God’s Word is the rock or foundation upon which I try to live my life. Billy Graham wrote the Bible is the source of “the unchanging truth of God.” He



Bloodroot Wildflower, Randolph County



Crocuses in my garden, Spring 2023



Top: Cardinal, Spring 2022, Marion County, Bottom: Red Fox Kit, Spring 2020, Webster County

suggests we should take advantage of opportunities to learn the Bible from others, pastors, respected teachers, fellow Christians, etc. We should never let these replace our own personal reading of the Word. In addition to reading, we should also do, as the great hymn goes, “trust and obey; there is no other way.” By trusting and obeying, I believe I have matured in my walk and become more focused on a life worthy of His calling. I know I have more to learn, trust, and obey, especially in these “evil times.” I am totally convinced that anything else is not only foolish but dangerous, as Satan would like nothing better than for me to cease and desist. I hear his whispers, “you’re 80 years old. Take it easy, relax, and let someone else do it.” But, I, like everyone else, have a choice, either try to live a life as a Child of the Light or align “with the rulers of this dark age” (see Ephesians 6:12). I choose the former, how about you?

“Because the days are evil” jumped off the page at me. Paul pulled no punches. Each translation emphasizes “evil.” He didn’t sugarcoat his words. He let the early

church know how perilous the times were for Christians. He wrote this to the church at Ephesus almost 2,000 years ago. His letter was an urgent appeal to the early Christians, letting them know that due to the pervasiveness of evil, the very existence of Christianity in that region was threatened. He would close his letter by encouraging his “brethren” to “put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” It was a full-scale war with Satan and his forces. What would Paul say about the Church and society today? At the very least, I believe his message would be the same: Evil persists! It has pursued every generation and every society since the beginning of time. Your current and recent generations are not immune. Satan loves to wreak havoc, and the war against evil still rages. Put on the whole armor of God, 21st-century Christians!

We only have to turn on the TV or open a newspaper to know how prevalent evil is. Yes, I believe Paul would say evil not only exists, but it is flourishing in our time. It has burned more and more out of control in my lifetime. What to do? I believe we do as Paul urged early Christians in Romans 12:2 to not be conformed to this world and to renew our minds so they can discern God’s will. I can hear Him say to us, “time is of the essence, and you must act now by redeeming the time.” What an interesting concept that is. “Make the most of every opportunity” and “make every minute count” are very clear expressions, “redeeming the time” not so much. We understand the concept of redeeming when it comes to coupons we receive in the mail. We can buy things using coupons we have received. In the context of this scripture, time is the coupon to redeem. God gives each of us a time-coupon, a special gift unique in its duration. We don’t get any extra, just what is allotted to us. When our time is up, our life is over. Abraham was 175 when he died, Moses 120, and David 70. Each loved God and obeyed His will by redeeming the time allotted to do God’s work. In other words, they made the most of their time or made every minute count living holy lives for their Lord.

I am 80 years, 7 months, and 15 days old as I write this. None of us knows how much longer we have on this earth. My recent illness was another stark reminder of James’ words, “Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes” (James 4:14 NIV).

About ten days ago, I was looking forward to graduating from a thirty-six-session cardiac rehab regimen on March 6th. Then out of nowhere, I became ill, and on that supposed graduation day, there I was,

hooked up to IVs, etc., fighting pneumonia. Fortunately, my time-coupon had not run out. He has more work for me. With me being 80, my remaining time is likely much less than most readers of this article. However, one does not know how long his or her lifetime-coupon runs, so we must be about using our time wisely.

What an amazing piece of scripture Ephesians 5:15-16 is! One worthy of being posted on your refrigerator or desk and, most importantly, in your heart.

I opened this article by saying that two different scriptures resonated with me. This second scripture, I believe, is intertwined with Paul's warning to the Ephesians. This one deals with how well we respect and appreciate the gifts we've received from God. It tells whether we have been about pleasing Him or ignoring Him. I just mentioned Jesus and some of the saints earlier. I could have mentioned Billy Graham, Mother Theresa, John Wesley, Corrie Ten Boom, etc., all of whom carried out God's will during their lifetimes, as did the Biblical saints. Each took God's gift of grace and used it to the fullest in their lives. This second scripture also comes from Paul and can be found in 2 Corinthians. To fully grasp Paul's plea, I have provided two translations again.

“We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.”
2 Corinthians 6:1 (NKJV)

“As God's partners, we beg you not to accept this marvelous gift of God's kindness and then ignore it.”
2 Corinthians 6:1 (NLT)


How could we, as Christians, take our salvation for granted? As I mentioned earlier, God was so desperate to know us that He sent Jesus to die for us. How could we ignore Him, yet we do? I did for way too long. Why do some accept the offer and then fall away, i.e., receiving it in vain? I am sure that has always been a challenge for the Church over the centuries. At 70, God blessed me with the most marvelous of gifts, His grace, and mercy. It changed my life forever. The transformation may have been slow, but it has been sure. Life for me is so much richer since dedicating myself to the Lord. But it's not about me and should never be, as that is just a by-product; glorifying and pleasing Him should take precedence. We should never take His grace in vain.

So here we are, a few days away from Easter. The churches will be a little fuller, there will be a huge focus on Easter egg hunts, and family gatherings and special meals will be the order of the day. There may be a sprinkling of local ministries feeding the community's poor. Then, the next day it will be full bore ahead with Spring and all it brings. Will anyone notice that evil pervades and that God needs His chosen people to redeem some time to His service so His precious gifts will not be in vain? Ultimately, this is a choice we each have to make: We can be a Child of the Light or not! If you choose the former, start by anchoring your faith in His word and begin redeeming your time for the Lord. It will not be in vain.

*Happy Easter and
Happy Redeeming!*



l-r: Kumbrabaow State Park, Randolph County; Welcome Sign, Tangier Island, Virginia; Yellow Wakerobin Trillium, Great Smoky Mountains



*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly
in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another
in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with
grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

Colossians 3:16 (NIV)

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