

February - March 2024

# Glory Magazine

*share good news*

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***Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, THAT WE SHOULD BE CALLED THE SONS OF GOD: THEREFORE THE WORLD KNOWETH US NOT, BECAUSE IT KNEW HIM NOT. Beloved, now are we the sons of god, AND IT DOTH NOT YET APPEAR WHAT WE SHALL BE: BUT WE KNOW THAT, WHEN HE SHALL APPEAR, we shall be like him: for we shall see him as he is.***

1 John 3:1-2 (KJV)

## BE WILLING TO DO HIS WILL

We are at a crossroads in human history. Only a few moments in our existence have had the impact that the next year and the years to come will have on the lives of everything on Earth. God's perfect will has set the stage and called forth all the events He has set in motion since the beginning. He is in integrity with all good, and His will prevails.

We may not see what is happening now as good; however, if you read the book of Revelation and accept that when we see such evil, such wickedness in the world, we are to rejoice! As wickedness increases, the goodness of God increases to overflow!

God sees His children and will not let them flounder in the wash of evil. He will provide an everliving flow that will overcome even the most egregious acts.

The enemy comes as light, but his light is not a resurrecting light. It is a magnificent light with no real power that only increases the desires of the flesh and cannot overcome the death to come upon it. Only the light of the all-powerful, everlasting God of Truth overcame death. He proved the Father's love and all

the Goodness within His Maker.

Christ resides in the shadows as a groom in waiting, longing for His bride. As the dirt is removed from the vessel of learning, the bride can see His light. That tiny speck of rainbow found in the smallest particle of light. To her, it is the most beautiful light. Small yet the most powerful of all light because it has the power of the God of Truth within it.

It is not obtuse. It does not hurt her eyes as she gazes upon it. It exists only for her. She makes her way each day, longing, seeking the smaller magnificent light full of God's glory. She holds fast to the promises the Father has declared and knows, as she continues to be in His will, that light will break forth, the everlasting life of the renewed spirit within, and the lesser light containing the power of Truth will reveal Himself to her and the world.

Come to the Father. Worship His Son, and see the mighty light of all creation as the translation to a new existence occurs. God's will be done. Amen.

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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2024  
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## Be Willing To Do His Will

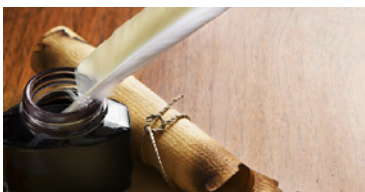
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*Content in each issue is inspired. We do not know what will be on the pages until it is completed.*



# A Loaded Question

“BUT WHAT ABOUT YOU?” HE ASKED.  
**“Who do you say I am?”** PETER  
ANSWERED, “YOU ARE THE MESSIAH.”

*Mark 8:29 (NIV)*

**J**esus often asked loaded questions. He did this to teach, preach, and provide eternal answers. After all, He was called teacher (Matthew 8:19), went about preaching (Mark 1:38), and was called Messiah (Matthew 27:22). Jesus is a master educator. The many great principles taught in modern university-level cognition courses (the study of thinking, learning, and reasoning) were in His repertoire. He used these fundamental concepts very deftly in His ministry two thousand years ago and still practices them today through a legacy of the written word and in the witness of those who have embraced Him.

As a teacher of divine certainties, Jesus used object lessons in the

world of His day that would communicate these truths that earthly words could not. For example, agriculture was something many people could relate to. Jesus spoke of shepherds, sheep, soil, seeds, plants, and so on. Preachers today do the same thing using the same narrative material of the first century, relating today's stories and experiences to some topic God wants to emphasize. Shepherds still manage flocks, soil still needs care, seeds still need to be planted, and mighty oak trees are still standing on deep roots. Today, a five-hundred horsepower tractor rising up on

ten-foot tires, billowing smoke, and launching with a thirty-foot tiller is a picture of majestic power. All those things preach, don't they?

**“However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?” Luke 18:8 (NIV)**

Now, then, let us look at a loaded question. Son of Man was a title given to Messiah in the New Testament. This question should provoke some thinking. If Jesus, the Messiah, asks the question, then He has come. This question



implies that He will come again. The only conclusion one can make if the Bible is truly inerrant is that there are two divine arrivals. In the second advent, God is not looking for sheep to take care of, but He is looking for faith or a belief in a trustworthy God.

The thing is, the Bible details all sorts of calamities just before the second advent. Those who have faith, or those who put their trust in the Son of Man, are rescued from the terrible troubles of the day (See 1 Thessalonians 4:17 and 1 Corinthians 10:13). People who had predetermined in their hearts and minds to trust Jesus with their lives and future are caught up in the air to meet Him. This event is referred to as the Rapture. Those who believe and have not given their lives to Jesus at this point still have an opportunity to make it to Heaven; however, they are not spared the Great Tribulation of the Last Days. John the Revelator saw some of these believers before the Throne of God.

**“When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained.”  
Revelation 6:9 (NIV)**

God will find faith, but it will be from a people nation that did not acknowledge the first coming. These people still believe in the promise of Messiah and have trust in the God of their ancestor, Abraham. They just missed the connection between a baby born in a sheep shed and the man who healed people, delivered poor souls from demons, and raised people

from the dead. The Bible says there will be 144,000 of them. You see, they believed the promises that there would be a King in Israel, a son of Juda (Genesis 49:10) that would rule forever, and he would put everything in order, with justice.

The parable associated with Luke 18:1-7 is about persistence and justice. There are different levels of faith and different implements of faith. The person who hopes for tomorrow operates a different set of tools than the one who casts out the demons of today. The parable of persistence has two main participants, a widow and a judge. There is the woman's adversary but only functions as a contributor to the plot. Here is a rabbit trail thought: the Devil and his troubles are not the main characters in the interaction of a person and The Judge.

The widow had been wronged, and she was asking a judge to execute justice. The judge in this story was resisting; however, after the widow kept coming back, he chose not to fool with her, even to the point of fear that she would take justice into her own hands and attack him first. He did it not because he feared God or out of an obligation to righteousness; He didn't want to fool with the consequences and outcomes of a mad widow who goes mad.

Jesus explains that The Judge, God, will quickly provide justice for those who cry out to Him “night and day.” God rewards those who keep believing and hoping and are not afraid to keep asking, especially in the arenas of fairness and truth. There will be justice.

Abraham is identified as a man of faith. He trusted and believed in God's justice, one that flows from the well of salvation and mercy.

In Genesis 18, there is a story of Abraham's persistence in asking for a pardon of a city-state full of evil. Abraham kept returning to the Lord on behalf of the righteous, or those who were virtuous, good, and worthy. God relented several times and assured Abraham that He would spare the city if he found fifty righteous people there, then forty-five, then forty. Abraham kept asking six times, incrementally reducing the required number of qualified people to ten. God didn't find that many, and Sodom was destroyed; however, God honored Abraham's persistence by rescuing his nephew, Lot. The Judge dispensed justice, mercy, and faithfulness all at one time. Attention, there is more to answered prayer than one simple outcome.

The judgments and justice that the righteous cry for day and night for today's world have no simple outcome. God cannot ignore the penalty for wrongdoing. He has provided a way of rescue through trust and belief in the promise of salvation for those who accept that provision, the life of Jesus Christ. Those who sit under the trees as Abraham did and saw God coming will be covered by a divine exodus from this world. These faithful believers in mercy also have an opportunity to intercede for others caught in the spider web of evil; God will execute judgment, and those found worthy will have a last chance to repent and cry out to God for mercy. This last chance will have to stand an uncommon test of fire, for they will be martyrs, ones who will not recant faith in Jesus in the face of death.

The loaded answer is that the Son of Man finds faith before He returns, not when. Jesus was and is straight up; He will return. Shalom.



# The Secret Place

*Kept By The  
Power Of God*



“SATAN ACTS MOST MISCHIEVOUSLY WHEN HE APPEARS AS AN ANGEL OF LIGHT:  
**the colour of the greatest good is often the cover of the greatest evil.”**

*~Matthew Henry*

Something is constantly vying for our attention. Whether external or internal, there is a myriad of distractions to keep us in chaos throughout our day. Why is that so? I contend it is so we will not focus on the gifts, talents, and abilities that God gave us to use on His behalf to overcome the world (the flesh). If you were the enemy of God, what would you do to keep your reign over His property—the Earth and all that is within it? Create a multitude of idols that appeal to humanity? Create distractions, interruptions, and place workers of iniquity among His people to persuade them there is another way—their way—to save the world or live forever? Create a system using a web of deception that by its very existence—they believe—can control nature and the things of God? Yep...that's what an enemy would do, and then some. But, God...

Even as I am writing these two paragraphs, for some reason, a loud car decides to race down my road, not once but twice as I type them in. My dog, of course, begins to “protect against the incoming noise threat,” tear through the house and attack my throw rug. This has been the enemy's MO for the last three weeks as I have been trying

to write what I am about to write. Whatever comes next is truly from the Spirit and not me (including the Editor's Letter)...I have no idea what it will be. But, God...

Ever sit around and wonder where the time has gone? I know I do, especially since the whole world shut down for COVID-19. It's as if we are unable to get back to where we were. But, just maybe, the plan of God is not to go back but forward. Many have a perspective that all the odds are stacked against them. Everything necessary for life is either being degraded, eliminated, redesigned, or literally removed from existence. We can go around and blame this person, this political party, or those big companies, but have you ever thought about the verse below?

**“Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails.”**  
**Proverbs 19:21 (NIV)**

Step back for just a moment and place wonder and awe into your thinking. Even the wicked are used by God for HIS purpose. Humanity remains in the original

sin, yet we have been redeemed through God's grace, mercy, and steadfastness. The very existence of one person (let alone millions upon millions) who can, against all odds, believe what God did for His people proves to the enemy that He is more excellent. The righteous give Him great joy, and He is their surety. However, the wicked, who turn from this great gift of salvation, keep us from His terrible wrath by their very existence. Would you not be thankful to an enemy who, unbeknownst to them, receives the punishment meant for all humanity, including believers? Did not Jesus die for ALL who would recognize His great sacrifice for humanity? Turn the other cheek...He did. Forgive your enemies? He did. Bring peace in the midst of chaos...He did. But, a man's free will determines his station in the Kingdom of God.

Didn't Christ also reveal to the Apostle John, whose name literally means “Jehovah is a gracious giver,” to write down how this would all end in the book of Revelation, giving us insight into His purpose that would prevail? There have been many voices in the wilderness, preaching and teaching things they ought not (See Titus 1), and mixing



“FOR THE LAMB WHICH IS IN THE MIDST OF THE THRONE SHALL FEED THEM,  
AND SHALL LEAD THEM UNTO LIVING FOUNTAINS OF WATERS:

***and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”***

*Revelation 7:17 (KJV)*

the simplicity of the message of our God and His unwavering love for His creation. The creation that has His heart, alone, as no other thing He had ever formed. Zion is His true love, and He will forever hold steadfast to the promises He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. HE will speed up time for His elect to save them from His wrath (See Matthew 24:22).

Oh, how He holds so close to those who adorn Him in the secret place inside with praise, worship, and all the thoughts of His glory. He is one whose adoration for His people cannot be matched by any human love between two people. He is the fullness of Love. He resides on clouds of pure gold that can never lose their value. All prosperity is found in Him, His Son, and all those who make fellowship with Him. Too many believe that just repeating a prayer, spending time at a place of worship, or reading His word in a devotional is where He is at. New flash: HE IS IN YOU, KNOCKING ON THE DOOR OF YOUR HEART! There is no place on this Earth where He cannot touch His creation. His very breath runs within each and every person. He is present in His grand creation, in a place no man was to enter...yet humanity did. The one place, hidden behind the veil, left only for God, His tithe within humankind, has been breached. How His heart aches that we cannot see the pain it has caused Him. “Jesus Wept” (John 11:35) is the shortest verse in the Bible, yet as I write this, tears are

welling up in my eyes for what we have done. We all should be face down, crying out to God for the abomination that will result from going within to the secret place, beyond a veil meant only for our God, and thinking WE are gods. WE ARE NOT. Only the Lamb slain before the foundation of the Earth can wipe away our tears and lead us to living waters where there is no more pain and suffering.

Now that scientists and humanists are on the verge of succeeding in enough computing power to “create” fake miracles within a human body, using light and frequency, no less, we must press into knowing what God said would happen and turn from participating in it. ***This is imperative to note: those who have no will set towards God that try to save, manipulate, or “create” life shall lose their own.***

You must take up your own cross and follow Him. However, the alternative is valid as well. Just as the gallows set up by Haman to kill Mordecai, the Jew, in turn, killed Haman; it will be those in league with the false light that will hang from it (See Esther 7-10).

**“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a**



**"FOR GOD HAS NOT GIVEN US THE SPIRIT OF FEAR;  
*but of power, and of love, and  
of a sound mind.*"**  
2 Timothy 1:7 (KJV)

**man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom."**  
**Matthew 16:24-28 (KJV)**

In Matthew chapter 24, Jesus gives us direction against those stealing and trespassing into the secret place. Time will be shortened so the elect can be saved from this event. Some will tell you Christ is in the desert or in some private backroom teaching but don't believe it. The coming of the Son of Man will come immediately after the tribulation, and no one can deny His power and great glory.

**"Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not."**  
**Matthew 24:26 (KJV)**

In our humanity, we must give ourselves grace and mercy—every day. He knew we would fall, but His will is to help when we get back up. Never doubt that. The

Bible is full of examples of His great love for us. One scripture I know helps me daily is 2 Timothy 1:7. It has been on my bathroom mirror for over fifteen years. He gave each of us portions to carry on our own cross as we occupy the land until the fullness of His plans are revealed with the coming of the Son of Man. Do not fear. Rely on His power residing within you to accomplish what He placed in you. Rely on His unwavering love for you when you feel unloved, and very importantly, keep all vigilance to have a sound mind, not relying on man's creations to make you a "superhuman" and forfeiting your soul to the humanistic idols of this world. These things will stack up quickly if we allow them to become our focus. Focus on Him instead because the world will only make available what it wants you to know, forsaking Truth for its own version.

May joy overtake you as you realize time is speeding up because God loves you. He believes in you as His child. He will return to receive His reward and will be known to every person in the fullness of the glory of God. As Valentine's Day looms, think about His love for humanity and pursue that kind of love. And when Easter comes in a few more weeks, know that, for you, He gave everything He had. Nothing was left on the table. He is with us always. Have faith in His power and might to bring this world into the fullness given to a Son who pleases His Father in Heaven. *Amen.*







# *Love* Prefers Others



**T**his month, people worldwide will celebrate love, or at least some version of love, on Valentine's Day. It's estimated that Americans will spend \$26 billion dollars<sup>1</sup> this February 14 to communicate their love for their significant other. I remember those early days when Pam and I started dating. I didn't have much money,

but what money I did have, I wanted to spend it on her. So much so that I sold my car and my motorcycle to buy her an engagement ring. I went for several months borrowing my parent's moped just so I could get groceries and have some means of transportation (other than walking). Oh, the things we'll do for the one we love.



# love ♡ love ♡ love ♡ love ♡ love ♡

Although celebrating Valentine's Day is fine, as Jesus' followers, we must be diligent to not adopt the world's definition of love. That word has been watered down to mean just about anything. We love ice cream, and we love sunsets. We love walks on the beach, and we love fishing. I've even heard people say they love the smell of skunk!

The world loosely defines love as an emotion. Like our other emotions, they ebb and flow based on the conditions and circumstances surrounding us. But love is not an emotion. 1 John 4:16 tells us that GOD IS LOVE. He is love personified—Love *IS* God. And since He never changes (Malachi 3:6), then Love never changes. True biblical Love never waivers, wanes, changes, or fades. Since God is the Alpha and Omega, the One who has always been, is, and forever shall be, then Love has always been, is, and forever shall be. Love is faithful and consistent. Love is eternal.

Second, true biblical Love is a commitment to prefer others above yourself for their benefit. John 3:16 tells us that God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son so that those who believe in Him wouldn't perish but have everlasting life. Father God, His Son Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are a Triune being, meaning they are Three in One. Although they are three separate beings, they are also one in unity. This is one of the greatest mysteries, but that means when Father God gave His Son, Jesus, He was actually giving Himself for our benefit.


We see this echoed in John 15:13, where it says from the NLT, *"There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends."* Now, at a quick glance, that scripture would seem to say that we must die to demonstrate the highest kind of Love, but that's inaccurate. Jesus already demonstrated that great Love when He went to the cross on mankind's behalf. Although we don't have to physically die to demonstrate the God kind of Love, we do have to die to ourselves. When you look at the word *life* in the original Greek, it means *psyche*, which does mean *breath of life* but also means *the soul* or *the seat of your feelings, desires, affections, and aversions*. The highest form of Love we can demonstrate to those around us is the willingness to prefer them above ourselves. To lay down our feelings, desires, perspectives, opinions, and

plans and choose to put them first place in life. That's the God kind of Love.

When we choose to live this way, not only does it make everything and everyone around us better, but it also empowers our faith. Galatians 5:6 tells us that our faith works by Love. Operating in a lifestyle of biblical Love powers our faith so that we can receive victory over every challenge that comes our way. 1 John 5:4 tells us that faith is the victory that overcomes the world. So if it takes faith to overcome the world's challenges and our faith is powered by Love, then how we choose to love others plays a significant role in our experiencing victory on this side of Heaven. Can you see the importance of learning to prefer others and put them first? Love and faith work together hand in hand to produce the victory we all desire when challenges arise.

So this February and every month moving forward, let's choose to focus on Love Himself and purpose to demonstrate Love as He does—by preferring others and putting them ahead of ourselves. Let's make this our new lifestyle.

We celebrate the perfect example of this in March as we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus.

 ***"For the joy set before Him,  
He endured the cross"***  
***Hebrews 12:2 (NIV)***

You are the joy He was focused on when He took all your sins and paid the price for you so you could have eternal life. He could have gotten Himself off of that cross, but He preferred you above Himself.

Let's use Him as our example and choose to love others as He loves us.

Not only will we experience more victory, but when we choose to consistently demonstrate God's kind of Love, He is faithful to surround us with others who will prefer us above themselves so we can benefit. The more people that live this way, the better the world will be, and it almost gives us a glimpse of what Heaven is like.

<sup>1</sup> McNair, Kamaron; "Americans plan to spend nearly \$26 billion this Valentine's Day—here's what they're buying," Cnbc.com, January 29, 2023, <https://www.cnbc.com/amp/2023/01/29/americans-plan-to-spend-nearly-26-billion-this-valentines-day.html>. Accessed 02/06/24.



By Al Tucker

# REVEALING God's Glory



"THIS IS WHAT THE LORD SAYS: ***Stop at the crossroads and look around.*** ASK FOR THE OLD, GODLY WAY, AND WALK IN IT. TRAVEL ITS PATH, ***and you will find rest for your souls...***"  
*Jeremiah 6:16 (NLT)*



top: Cass Railroad 'Crossroads' Tracks, Pocahontas County; above: Fairmont Roundabout/Crossroad, Marion County

***Happy New Year!*** By the time you read this, almost 10% of 2024 will already be in the rear-view mirror. I always enjoy each new year as I treat it as a time for new beginnings, a fresh start where I look for opportunities to grow and new challenges to explore.





left: Kay Lake, Northern Ontario; above: Al holding a Northern Pike

Photos: © Backyard Photography, Alan Tucker

In some respects, I treat this time as a crossroads where I take time to think about where I've been and where I'm heading to help me decide how to approach the new year and determine what new things to undertake. Before being saved, my thoughts and subsequent plans for the year revolved around what remote lakes to fish, what golf courses to play, what landscape projects to undertake, what photography skills to learn, and other self-centered personal or family goals I may wish to pursue. Spiritual growth and serving the Lord did not play any part in my yearly planning. Frankly, there was little room for Jesus as God was on the fringes of my life, only to be brought out when it was convenient for me. It didn't mean I never tried to do some worthwhile or less selfish projects once in a while. But to do things for the glory of God just never entered the equation. And I was one of your go-to-church-every-Sunday kind of people. My annual planning, which I learned in the military, and how I approached a new year served me well in my career and early

retirement as I became a master gardener, a respected photographer, and a valued contributor in various organizations, among other things. Plus, I made sure I got to fish some amazing bodies of water each year. Life was good...so I thought.

As time went on, I realized something was missing. My life felt empty and meaningless. Fortunately, a couple friends got me involved in some Bible studies. I resisted initially but eventually relented and attended, which was one of the best things I ever did. I believe God steered me down this new path to show me that I was lost and that there was a more important purpose to my life, serving Him. After more Bible study and prayer, He led me to my most important crossroads experience: the foot of the cross. Here, I came face-to-face with the most life-changing choice I had ever experienced: accept Jesus as my Lord and Savior and follow His path, or continue my empty, self-centered, worldly existence. I wanted so much to change my dead-end life, so it was an easy choice to make room for Jesus,

even though I had no idea what that would mean. I can tell you that committing my life to Him and getting saved changed everything. I honestly believe making room for Jesus *"gave me a new heart and put a new spirit within me"* (See Ezekiel 36:26), and with Christ, I became a *"new creation, old things have passed away; behold all things have become new."* (My translation of 2 Corinthians 5:17.) I look back at my "cross" road commitment and am still amazed how quickly God steered me in a totally new direction. He promised He would (John 3:16). I learned quickly that He keeps His promises. Always has and always will.

If you follow my testimonies, you will know that my first priorities are now serving the Lord and following His commands. While I still enjoy fishing, gardening, and capturing God's glory with my camera, today, "serving others for Jesus" has become my top priority. Jesus tells us, *"Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come*





I-r: Gaudineer Scenic Area Path, Randolph County; Goshen Chapel Crossroad, Upshur County

Photos: © Backyard Photography, Alan Tucker

*to be served, but to SERVE*” (Mark 19:43-45 NIV). When I got saved, He didn’t say welcome to the club; your membership card, ball cap, and tee shirt are in the mail. Go on with your life, and be sure to show your card and wear your cap and shirt now and then so people will know you are mine. He told me as He tells everyone He calls, “Follow Me,” and “Be a light in the world,” meaning show others you are My disciple by how you love one another. Once saved, you quickly learn it’s not about *me* anymore; it’s all about Him. For it to be about Him, you also realize, as I did, that Jesus **cannot** be on the fringes of your life! You must make total room for Him if He’s going to transform you and guide you in your daily walk. If we do, we have the Apostle Paul’s assurance *“that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ”* (Philippians 1:6 NKJV). To me, it doesn’t get any better than that, and for that to happen, I must keep Him at the center of my life where people can clearly see His light in me. If He’s in the fringes, He won’t be seen.

So here I sit at another crossroads in early 2024 with another year to make more room for Jesus. This time of year, I often read devotionals about “making intimacy with God or Jesus” as one’s goal for the year. The concept of intimacy is nice but seems to require more explanation. Instead, I latched on to the idea of “making room for Jesus” as it speaks more clearly to me. As I stressed above, if Jesus was going to come into my life and guide me, I realized I needed to make room for Him, a lot more room! My relationship with Him can’t be a casual, now and then, association; it must be all the way. The concept of “making room” reminded

me of an old TV sitcom in the 1950s-60s called *Make Room for Daddy* starring Danny Thomas. The show started when I first moved to the U.S. from England in 1954 and in the fourth season was renamed *The Danny Thomas Show*. It was a favorite of mine and revolved around Danny, a nightclub singer, and the challenges he faced trying to make room to become a better father, husband, and provider for his wife (Margaret) and three children (Rusty, Terry, and Linda). It was a huge hit, running eleven seasons, making it the longest-running sitcom until *Cheers* came along. It spawned several successful spin-offs, including *The Andy Griffith Show* and the *Dick Van Dyke Show*. As I think about this article, there seems to be a nice fit with the concept of “making room for.” It applies to many situations in one’s life. We always make room for what is important to us.

When we “make room for” something new, our family and friends will notice our new things, usually resulting from a decision made at a crossroads, e.g., a new job, major relationship, house, etc. It can even be a new pet. We tend to make a big deal of our new furry friends as they become family members. For example, when we get a new dog, we make sure to play with him or her and begin taking it on walks. We also love to post/share photos with those close to us, which we will continue to do at various anniversaries, trips, or even illnesses that we experience. When we make room for a new pet, we fall in love with it and end up with a new family member. It doesn’t take long for our family and friends to know all about Fido, Kitty, etc.

Similarly, we make room for hobbies, part-time jobs, new relationships, even clubs, civic organizations, etc.





Big Ditch Lake, Webster County

And, of course, there are the grandchildren when they come along. They can often become game changers in our lives, taking center stage, and again, everyone we know will learn that. The point is that when you make room for something in your life, your daily routine changes, and others will notice that about you, i.e., they will see the change brought about by making room for something new.

For me, making room for Jesus has not been difficult. Early in my new walk eleven years ago (I was 70 when I was saved), Peter's scripture (2 Peter 3:18) about "*growing in grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ*" spoke to me and guided me in those early years. In many respects, it still does as I strive to mature spiritually, which should be the goal of all Christians per Paul in his letter to the Ephesians (4:13). Other questions I have asked myself in some form or fashion since being saved are "Where does God fit in?" and "How do I make Christ the center or foundation of my life?" Over time, I've added, "Am I drawing closer to Jesus?" and "Am I pleasing God?" While these are all great crossroads questions, I find the last two worth asking much more frequently. If I'm not pleasing God, I haven't made room for Him, nor have I drawn closer to Him, and God forbid, meaning He is still on the fringes of my life.

It is important to reflect on your past at least once a



Blackwater Falls State Park Vista, Tucker County

year, and the new year affords an excellent opportunity to do that. It's something I have done for a long time and has served my walk with Jesus well. Why reflect on our spiritual past? Paul is very clear: "*Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you...*" (2 Corinthians 13:5 NIV). I love Paul's directness here as it highlights the importance of his command. He tells us to examine our faith according to God's truth. When we do that, we will quickly know if we have made room for Jesus to be the center of our life.

Looking back at 2023, I am incredibly thankful for God's amazing faithfulness. His grace and favor allowed me to stand firm in serving Him and trying to draw closer to Him. My significant challenges were poor health and the loss of a dear niece who was as close as any of my five siblings. She was, in many ways, my little sister. The pain and grief of losing her to cancer was eased by knowing she had tremendous faith and loved





l-r: Band of Brothers helping to feed the hungry at the Upshur Parish House, Webster Mountain Marketplace Mission, and Randolph Tyrand Ministries

the Lord. Healthwise, I've had to deal with three major upper respiratory illnesses, each requiring extended recovery periods. These kept me from worship, group Bible studies, and missed opportunities to help others. These all are crucial in helping me draw closer to Jesus. I did my best to maintain my Bible reading and studies to keep me in the word, and I found ways to help others where I could. I love how God reveals where we can help when you ask Him to do so.

In September, I faced a major crossroads decision when I was getting over a rough bout of COVID-19. Satan whispered about not leading our Band of Brothers' Help Us Help Kids campaign again this year. You're not well, you're too old, take some time for yourself for a change, etc. He loves to put doubt in your life and keep you from obeying God's will. It didn't work. Once I learned how huge the need was for helping families and children this past Christmas, I knew I had to take it on. Yes, I did have my doubts that I had the strength to endure a draining three-to-four-month project again. I prayed for God's help and endurance and trusted Him even when I began to tire. I kept leaning forward, and with the help of my "brothers" and several other friends who volunteered to help, we shattered our goal of \$45,000, raising almost \$54,000. God always amazes me how He always steers us to exceed our goals, proving again, with God, nothing is impossible. Once again, thousands of less fortunate people locally, in surrounding counties, state-wide, and in some of the world's poorer countries were assisted through our support to various missionaries. Everyone, including us, was blessed through the ministry and the kindness of people. We give God all the glory for what He does and are humbled to be His servants.

We had just finished our project a couple days before Christmas when I came down with an awful virus on Christmas Eve that lasted into the New Year. I am just now recovering as I begin my 2024 planning. At this juncture, I feel like I am at more of a crossroads than in past years. I feel exhausted and, in some sense, vulnerable to the myriad of illnesses going around. I'll be 82 in August as the aging process rolls on. I recognize how super blessed it is to be as well off as I have been. But I am realistic as I understand the limitations that advancing age brings. As I plan, I'll take those limitations in mind. My personal Bible reading and associated study is well underway. For the past few years, I've enjoyed reading the whole Bible. This year, I am focusing on the New Testament in the first six months and Psalms and Proverbs in the latter half. I have three new devotionals that I am enjoying. Plus, I look forward to our Band of Brothers' Fellowship Friday's Bible studies as I find those studies and discussions helpful in understanding God's word. I will try to make a conscious effort to get stronger

## 2024 Crossroads: "Continue to follow the crowd," or...



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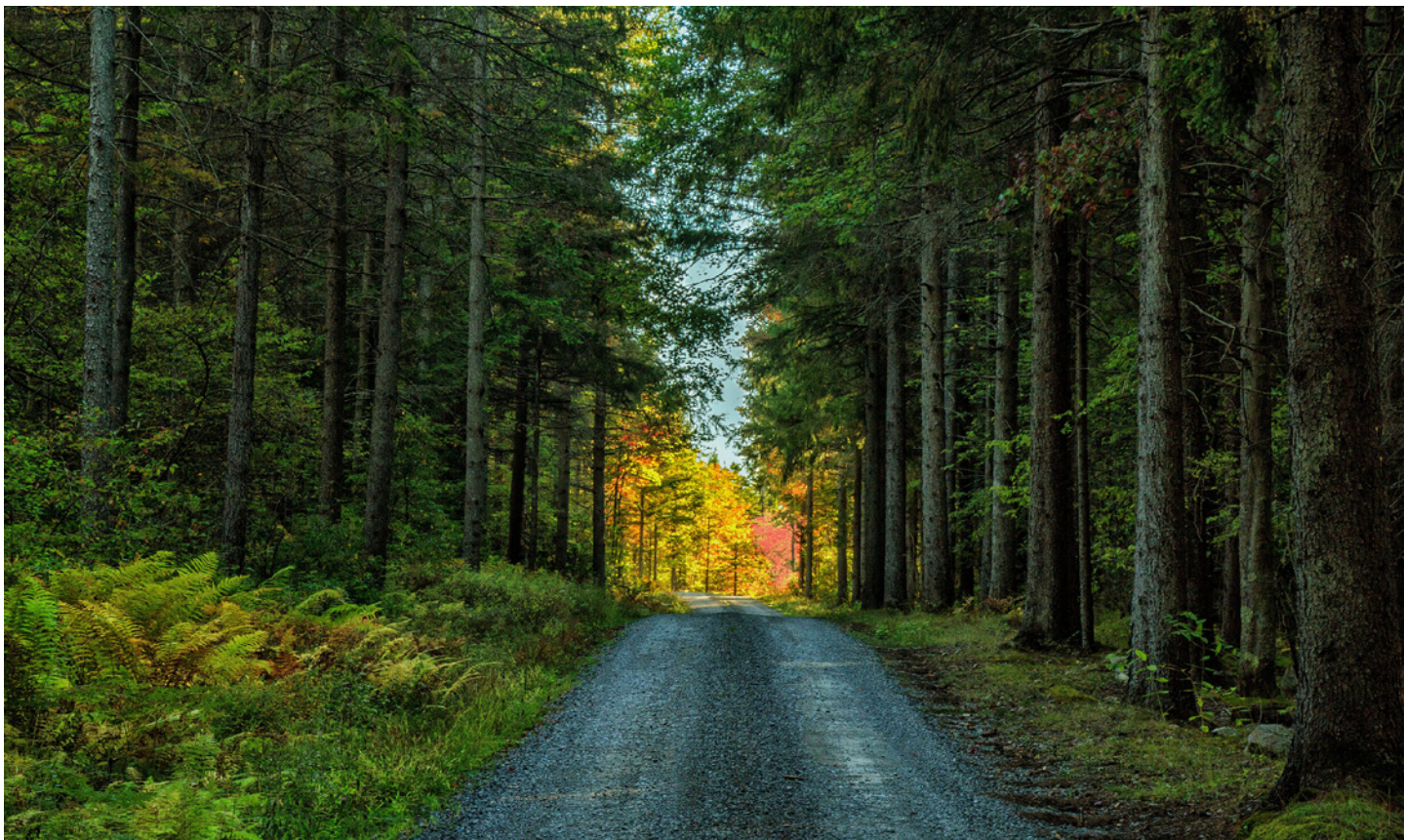


Photo: © Backyard Photography, Alan Tucker

**“Make room for Jesus and let Him take you to a brighter future!”**

and healthier to explore new, less tiring ways to serve Him. I have great trust that *“He who has begun a good work in (me) will complete it”* (Philippians 1:6), and He will reveal where He wants my focus to be this year.

I don’t want my faith to be static as in past years. I want it to reflect how I live or, better said, how I love. I believe the more you live loving, the more you will experience God’s presence. The more you experience His presence, the more you will draw closer to Him. The more you draw closer to Him, the more room you will make for Him, and “the brighter His light will shine through you.” That’s my goal for 2024, making more room for Jesus to keep me on the right path and allow His glory to shine more brightly through me.

What are your goals for 2024? Is this the year you need to make room for Jesus? Is He at the center of your life, or is He on the fringes? If He’s on the fringes, maybe you are at a crossroads, and it would be a good time for you to do as Paul tells all Christians: *“Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith!”* If you choose to do that, I hope and pray you will want to find more room for Jesus! It will be one of the most pleasing things you can do for God the Father.

*Until next time, Godspeed!*

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