

DECEMBER - JANUARY 2024-25

Glory Magazine

share good news



'TIS THE SEASON

BY ANGELA ERRETT

A CHRISTMAS PRESENT FOR YOU

BY BOB JACOBUS

FIRST LOVE

BY ANGELA ERRETT

GIVING THE WORD FIRST PLACE

BY JASON DEPOY

REVEALING GOD'S GLORY: SERVANTS OF CHRIST

BY AL TUCKER



Merry Christmas!

'TIS THE SEASON

The wonder of His love. Heaven and nature sing! Oh, what joy is in the world!

'Tis the season to rejoice over the wonders and love Jesus Christ gave to us through His miraculous birth. He found that no matter how much dirt He had to go through, nor how deep He must dig, there would never be a depth He could not descend to that would keep Him from finding you and me! His Light has overcome the darkness!

Join me in praying 1 John 1:1-10 as we move from Christmas into a New year full of wonders.

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is

with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

As we celebrate this joyous Christmas and New Year Season, let everyone find their way to the Light of the world in 2025.

Blessings and honor,
Angela Errett

ANSWERS:

S R E T W F L A P O	E R O W M A N R B R
T W I N O N S K H L	K S N T S I M E G E
H G I L S A M E T E	C A R L E T O E N A
S S S T F I T S R O	H C C T U N S S I D
T E B E C C S R E N	R S E T T I E L G E
N L A M E C I G E S	I N T O P A V O C N
E B U B D H R R T D	S T M A S E L R A A
M S R E S A N E I R	T E E R T Y C A N C
A U A L C A T I N A	O A C T O R N I D Y
N R O R E E D N G C	Y F Y L L O H B O R

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

by Bob Jacobus

A Christmas
Present for
You

Merry Christmas

This year, God wants to give you a new and fresh Christmas present. It will in no way supplant the original Gift of Christmas; however, it will be a special token of love that will be uniquely yours. It is not a one-way or even a two-way expression. It is a cyclic gift that is unending in the give-and-receive relationship that men have with God. God wants to open your own personal song.

We have the **Song of Moses** found in Exodus 15:1, "I will sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted. Both horse and driver he has hurled into the sea." We also have the **Song of Debra** in Judges 5, **Mary's Song** found in Luke 1:46-55 (NIV), and **Zechariah's Song** in Luke 1:67.

❄️ Mary's Song ❄️

And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name. His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as he promised our ancestors."

All these songs are statements from the heart of how boundless God is. They express love and adoration to the Lord and also acknowledge the love God has for the person. These songs speak of the greatness of the past and the greatness of the future. They remember the greatness of today. One's song is personal and travels within the heart throughout eternity. It is a thing of beauty, a thing of energy, a thing of faith, and a thing full of divine life. Each of us may have such a song.

So, how does one get this wonderful gift? Well, you have to unwrap it. Sit down with a pen and paper, think about the Lord, and start writing. The Holy Ghost will join right in. Let it flow. I haven't opened my song yet. This whole concept occurred to me as I asked God for a special message for you this Christmas. Isn't it fun to watch someone open their present? *Here goes...*

❄️ Bob's Song ❄️

As I sit before You in the morning, I can only think of Your greatness.

You have considered me as a son, and I know the love of a father through you, even the love of my natural father, that I did not understand in his day. Thank you for the love you have for him.

You have placed me in a wonderful family, with a brother and sisters who love me even though I was an onery big brother. I cherish them. Our mother is blessed among women. She has a quiet courage that a child overlooks; however, it is so much appreciated today.

I should have perished many times, but You kept me. Your audible voice stopped the trigger of suicide, and the same voice stopped the hot wire electrocution. Your voice and vision spared me from a terrible accident, even caught between a large station wagon and a semi-truck. Your voice made me stop and turn around when I would have surely drowned. Great is your faithfulness.

You called for me when I was a toddler, and I did not know. The church of my parents and grandparents did. We left. Twenty-five years passed, and You called me by name, and I embraced Your Glory. I returned to that church, and the elderly remembered and spoke among themselves of Your great purpose, which is never forgotten, and I still did not know.

Oh God, I have seen good times and bad times, but You have always been the same. You have been there through thick and thin, and You have sustained me. You have given me a wife who loves me, children who honor me, and grandchildren who tickle me. Great are the treasures of the Lord.

I have trophies but none to keep; nothing compares to You. Any accomplishments that I might have achieved, I gladly lay down at Your feet. I declare Your name, Jesus, to the heavens and the earth without shame. To Your majesty, may I bow down. May I have the privilege to do this one thing, follow You.

Great are You, Lord. May my praises reach Your ears. Worthy is Your Son who receives Your scepter and inherits Your people and the hosts of heaven. May His light shine brighter in the hearts of men and His enemies be put to shame. Vindicate your Son with wonders, miracles, and every soul that calls out Your name. Let all the creatures of the earth rejoice in Your justice, fairness, and everlasting love. May I know the joy of Your salvation every day. Amen.



First Love

After the election, we're at a distinct turning point in our country. Truth has been revealed, and some are still unable to see it. Don't look at what's in front of you; look to the spirit from where all life is established. Now, ask this question: Do we return to our first love, or do we continue on a path that leads to destruction? What do I mean by that, you ask? Let me explain.

Since, well, forever ago, the world has been in a great depth of sin. For thousands of years, the stories, the prophets, the wise of the day have been foretelling the coming of Jesus Christ and His return.

God is a God of order, and He has ordained all the steps of those who are willing to bear witness to His Son. From before Jesus—the embodied Christ—was born into the physical world to well after His death, those stories, the accounts of His existence recited and written down, have endured. He was with God before the world was founded and remains with Him always. This is the circle of life that He never strayed from—His edict of Truth—even as He walked among sinful men.

Jesus was attracted to those who did not know Him yet. Even though those stories about Him were well known then, and now, many still don't really know

Him. By choice or circumstance, their life is made more difficult when relying on only themselves or others. As we see in the news, some pretty nasty things are happening right now in the world. It is not limited to Hollywood but includes those in the higher echelons of all industries and political spheres. The number of disturbing events being revealed in conjunction with those who are intent on destroying the hedge of justice around a man-made system are the same ones hellbent on seeing the Biblical definition of morality, judgment, and inheritance taken down and redefined.

The sad thing is they are caught in this vicious cycle, believing that the threats being cast upon them by these incredulous tyrants of industry and influence cannot be overcome. The people they surround themselves with take on the belief that pleasing others is the standard by which to live. It reminds me of a high school clique whereby if you speak out of turn from what the leader deems as the standard, you are ostracized, made fun of, demonized, and if not repentant to the leader's correction of your "false belief," will be threatened with shame and made an example of. Once they have them in this state of fear, they are much easier to control. I chose the word *clique* intentionally because, even though this could be

“NEVERTHELESS, I HAVE SOMEWHAT AGAINST THEE,
*because thou hast left
thy first love.*”

Revelation 2:4 (KJV)

The Parable of the Sower

Matthew 13:18-23 (KJV)

Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.

When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;

Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

characterized by such things as Marxism, Fascism, or Socialism, I won't because, to me, it is more like a child having a temper tantrum and trying to gain control of their emotions. It's as if the children are trying to run things without their parents' advice. But Daddy's coming!

The stakes, of course, are incredibly more substantial in this worldwide "clique-a-fication" that has presented itself over the last twenty years. It's not new, but I don't think anyone has seen this sort of intensity before. It has roared into our communities over the previous two election cycles. That's a big sign that we should be paying attention to.

All of us are going to suffer in this life, some more than others, by directive, but Jesus Christ came to die as an offering to redeem our sinful nature, therefore making way for the Holy Spirit to guide us. In Matthew chapter 13, we see this played out as the sower places seed, which is the word of God, in the ground. (*See sidebar*)

Your heart is the ground. Do you hear the word and dismiss it? The wicked one has stolen it from you. Do you hear the word and know it's true, practice it, but haven't made it first place in your life, and it fades away when the times get tough, or the cares of this world and deceitful riches become the focus of your

heart bearing no Godly fruit? Then the root of the word was not set in you, dare I say, yet. So, how do you cultivate your heart and make it good ground? Put God's word first! It is the litmus test for all things.

Now, the enemy must FIRST steal the word from you before he can have access to manipulate your emotions and feelings, creating anxiety and confusion and putting you in a constant state of fear. That enemy will come through people you have in your circle, those who don't know Christ (and even some who do), working with the anti-god spirit, and your own thoughts. Are you tired of that existence? Righteous anger would be helpful here...get a little angry with that spirit of fear. Tell it to hit the road! Say, "I have NOT been given a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind!" (See 2 Timothy 1:7) Change your circle of friends, talk to a pastor, and maybe find a good therapist who believes in God. You can be on the way to change your life! Even Jesus rebuked Simon Peter and called him Satan because he spoke against the will of God for His life and death. Peter may have strayed for a moment, but the risen Jesus forgave him, and he went on to preach the truth of the Gospel. Just because you don't understand something you read doesn't mean it's untrue. Keep reading it and ask the Holy Spirit for guidance. Get with that new circle of friends and learn more about it. It will feel strange, as if you are a hypocrite at first, but keep filling your ground, and the seeds sown will start to produce fruit!

Discipline must be engaged for your ground to turn from rocky to fertile. A root only grows after it has been planted, fed, watered, and pushed to the surface. Persecution arises from the word; however, once a root takes hold, no devil in hell can steal away your knowledge of who God is for you!

Thorns pierce. They hurt. They can bring the blood, and they are the stiff part of the stem on a bush or rose. Are you among a bunch of stiff people? If you bring up the subject of the Bible or quote something, do they squirm? Do you get distracted or think, "Just this one time, I'll take a bribe?" Or maybe, "You can't go to *that* place because my friends might say something." Or even, "I have to do this event because if I don't, all those things I've done that my circle of friends know about will be made public." Well, my friends, if that hits the mark with any of you, you have some thorns in your life that you need to prune! Cut them off and begin to grow in your faith in the word of God for your life!

Now, let's talk about some good ground. The more words you get into your heart, the more you will understand. Having a personal relationship with the

Holy Spirit and surrounding yourself with like-minded people who also want to learn the word and are dedicated to being a follower of Christ help to keep the soil fertile. That fertile ground produces understanding, and the fruit will come! Jesus was never threatened by being in the presence of worldly people because who He was was not dependent on their beliefs; it was dependent on HIS!

Jesus and those who follow Him believe in redemption. There is no sin too low for Him to bring you out of. No depth He will not descend to bring you back into relationships with Him. He bore ALL of the shame of whatever you did and will be faithful in getting you through whatever trials occur. He made a way for all those who would choose to believe in what He did on the Cross to be free of those past sins and to never remember them again. Won't you join us on this incredible journey of redemption? Just ask Him into your heart and start today. Seek out those who can help you bring forth all the good fruit from within!

Here is a brief list of some do's and don'ts to get you started on this journey:

- ***Don't be a people pleaser***
- ***Don't live by your emotions***
- ***Don't give a place in your life to those who try to manipulate you***
- ***Don't be fooled by those who THINK they have power over you for past sins. They don't! Jesus Christ redeemed us and took away the shame!***
- ***Do unapologetically become a friend of Jesus***
- ***Do cast down imaginations and every high thing and everyone that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.***
- ***Do find those who will help you on your journey to knowing God***
- ***Do read the Bible every chance you get***
- ***Do speak to the Holy Spirit asking for guidance***
- ***Do work through your emotions with faith in what you are reading. Knowledge will come.***

Above all things, place God's word first place in your life and return to your **First Love**. The Father is coming, and when He does, the unruly will be dealt with accordingly. No longer can the childish spirit remain. However, the children of righteousness, redeemed from sin, will abide with Him forevermore. **Amen.**

I am the true vine,
and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch
in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and
every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it,
that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are
clean through the word which I have spoken
unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the
branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide
in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in
me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that
abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth
forth much fruit: for without me ye can do
nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth
as a branch, and is withered; and men gather
them, and cast them into the fire, and they are
burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in
you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done
unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye
bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

John 15:1-8 (KJV)





Giving the Word FIRST PLACE

As we approach the Christmas Season, I have been reminiscing about years gone by. One family tradition I cherish most occurs on Christmas Eve. Since our girls were very small, Pam and I would gather our girls together on the night of December 24 and read “Twas the Night Before Christmas,” and the story of Jesus’ birth found in Luke chapter 2. We wanted them to grow up understanding the real reason we celebrate Christmas and teach them to keep Him at the center of all the festivities.

Each year, as we’d all gather together (sometimes with grandparents, uncles, and aunts included) and read through the story of our Savior’s birth, I’d always enjoy the poetic nature of how the King James Version was written. Specifically, verses 7-11: *“And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the*

angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” Can’t you just hear the beautiful rhythm of Truth in that passage that overflows with Joy and Hope?

This last month, as I was going back through the scriptures about the birth of our Lord, something stood out in

“LOOK NO FURTHER, LORD, *I believe, and I receive.*”

Luke chapter 1 that I believe will give you a fresh perspective on His birth and how we receive His promises.

When the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary, he said something that caught her off guard. He said, “Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!” What verse 29 says caught my attention. It says Mary was “troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was.” Sometimes, we can get even more out of a scripture based on what it isn’t saying. It doesn’t say that she was frightened at seeing the angel. Her first response was confusion at Gabriel’s words. It troubled her that he called her ‘highly favored’ and told her that ‘the Lord was with her’ and that she was ‘blessed among women.’ She found this difficult to understand because she didn’t view herself this way. This shouldn’t be too surprising to us as many times we, too, have a hard time seeing ourselves how God sees us. You see, angels are messengers of God. Gabriel was speaking the words that God had instructed him to speak. God saw Mary as someone who was highly favored and blessed among women. It’s comforting to know that God sees us way more favorably than we often see ourselves. We tend to be hard on ourselves and believe the perspective of others and the lies of the adversary. But if anyone would have a proper perspective of us, wouldn’t it be the One who created us and sacrificed everything for us?

As we continue through this passage, we see that after Gabriel tells Mary that she will be the vessel by which God would bring forth His only Son into the earth, Mary still remains confused about how this could take place, considering she was still a virgin. This is understandable, right? If we were in her shoes, we’d likely have questions about how this promise of God could come to pass. I mean, we do it today in our own circumstances. We see in the Word that it’s God’s will to save, bless, heal, help, prosper, comfort, strengthen, and deliver us, etc. We tend to look around at the conditions surrounding us and our qualifications. Perhaps we consider what others have said about us, and we quickly resist and sometimes reject the idea that we could be benefactors of what God has already promised and paid for us to receive.

I think this is where many believers today get stuck. They know God loves them, and they know He can fulfill His promises in their lives but they get stuck in a state of doubt as they put more stock in their feelings, current circumstances, and their own shortcomings than they do God’s desire to bless and help them. As such, they fail to receive what He has sacrificed for them to have.

Jesus was born to save you. He left His heavenly home and entered this world to take up residence inside your heart so He could help you navigate every day of your life and then help you to overcome and have victory over all the challenges that arise.

We can all learn a lesson from Mary. Although she was confused and found it difficult to understand, she says something in verse 38 that made all the difference as to whether she would receive this promise from God or miss the greatest opportunity ever afforded mankind. She responded, “I am the Lord’s servant; let it be to me according to your Word.” Wow! This is the part that really stuck out to me as I was reading through this passage. Mary was able to set aside her confusion. She was able to overlook her own insecurities about herself, and despite not fully understanding how all of this was going to play out, she chose to make the Word of the Lord her truth. This is how we receive the promises of God. This is how we get to enjoy all the great things Jesus paid for us to have. This is how miracles take place!

We all need to get to the place where we give the Word of God first place in our lives.

We all have situations that confuse, hurt, and catch us off guard. We all face challenges we don’t understand and can’t imagine how God could ever see us through and give us victory. I call these “Days of Contradiction.” Where it seems all of your emotions, all of the conditions around you, and everything others are saying seem to contradict the Word of God. Despite all that natural ‘evidence,’ we need to move past those observations and make what God said our reality. *This is how we walk by faith.*

If God said it, I believe it, and that settles it!

2 Corinthians 5:7 says that as believers, we are to walk by faith and not by sight (or any of our other four natural senses). That means that we are to navigate our lives by what God has said, not by what we see, feel, hear, understand, or can rationalize.

When the Bible says in 1 Peter 2:24 by His [Jesus'] stripes you were healed, and Exodus 23:25 says that He's the God who takes sickness and disease from the midst of us, and Psalm 103:3 says that He heals ALL your diseases, then that's God's promise, and so that's His perspective.

When the Bible also says in Psalm 103:3 that He forgives you of all your iniquities and Jeremiah 31:34 that He no longer remembers our sin, then that's His promise, and that's His perspective.

When Psalm 23:1 says that He is your Shepherd, so you won't lack anything, and Ephesians 1:3 says that He has already blessed us with every spiritual blessing (empowerment to prosper) in Heavenly places

in Christ. If we're already in Christ and, therefore, have access to this spiritual empowerment to prosper, then that's His promise, and that's His perspective.

When Isaiah 54:17 says that no weapon formed against you will prosper and Psalm 91 is full of God's promises of protection, that's His Will for our life.

We could go on and on outlining God's promises for us but walking by faith and receiving victory requires minimizing how we feel and maximizing His Word. It requires that we make His perspective our perspective, allow His Word to become our reality, and refuse to be denied.

We must grow to the place in our faith walk where we can boldly declare, "If God said it, I believe it, and that settles it!"

We see this power when Mary's relative Elizabeth says to her in verse 45, "Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord." Mary's ability to overcome how she saw herself, disregard the conditions, situations, and limitations, and believe the Word of the Lord spoken by the angel Gabriel is what positioned her to receive the fulfillment of that Word. Look at that verse again. "Blessed [empowered to prosper] is she [Mary] who believed [the Word of the Lord]." When we choose to believe God's Word, His Blessing comes upon us to empower us to receive the very thing He promised us. That verse concludes by saying, "There will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord." I love that! God is faithful in ensuring His Word comes to pass. He watches over His Word to perform it. All He is looking for is someone who can believe it beyond their own perspective, doubts, and feelings.

Come on, say this with me, ***"Look no further, Lord. I believe, and I receive."***

So, as we enter this Christmas Season, let's not only remember to keep Christ at the center of CHRISTmas but also learn to give the Word first place in our lives, especially when we don't understand, and there are contradicting feelings and circumstances. By responding like Mary, "I am the Lord's servant, let it be to me according to Your Word," we can position ourselves to receive all that He was born, lived, and died to give us.

Look for *We Have Snow: A Christmas Miracle* online on **AMAZON**

We Have Snow
A CHRISTMAS MIRACLE
ANGELA ERRETT

We Have Snow
A CHRISTMAS MIRACLE
ANGELA ERRETT

Perfect For Christmas!

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Words go left, right, up, down, not diagonally, and can bend at a right angle.
There are no unused letters in the grid, every letter is used only once.

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T	W	I	N	O	N	S	K	H	L
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M	S	R	E	S	A	N	E	I	R
A	U	A	L	C	A	T	I	N	A
N	R	O	R	E	E	D	N	G	C

- BAUBLES
- CANDY CANE
- CAROLS
- CHRISTMAS LIGHTS
- CHRISTMAS TREE
- DECEMBER
- ELVES
- GIFTS
- GINGERBREAD
- GREETING CARDS
- HOLLY

- MISTLETOE
- NORTH POLE
- NUTCRACKER
- ORNAMENTS
- POINSETTIA
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- ROBIN
- SANTA CLAUS
- SNOWFLAKES
- SNOWMAN
- TOY FACTORY
- WINTER

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By Al Tucker

REVEALING God's Glory



“JOIN WITH ME IN SUFFERING LIKE **a good soldier of Christ Jesus.** NO ONE SERVING AS A SOLDIER GETS ENTANGLED IN CIVILIAN AFFAIRS, BUT RATHER TRIES TO PLEASE HIS COMMANDING OFFICER.”

2 Timothy 2:3-4 (NIV)



Left: Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Arlington, VA; Above: 2017 Buckhannon Veteran's Day Parade

Happy Veteran's Day. It is the morning of November 11, 2024, as I sit here to begin writing my ongoing testimony of my walk with Jesus. Today is a special day across our country as we honor the service and sacrifice of all United States Armed Forces military veterans. Special events and solemn services occur across our land, with many communities holding parades, breakfasts, and other thank-you events for their veterans. Annually, most churches honor their vets during Sunday services, and more and more restaurants are now offering free meals for vets on this day. It is a special day, as it should be. The sacrifice for our freedom has been tremendous, and it is fitting for all to say thanks to those who served.

I would have liked to have been out there this morning with fellow vets enjoying the festivities. A friend called a little while ago to see where I was, and we were both going to ride a float in our town's parade and then head to the VFW for fellowship and breakfast. My

friend hadn't read my text from the previous evening to say I couldn't make it. I decided I needed to stay at home to hibernate and work on this article. You see, I am very late in getting to it. Most other contributors have had theirs submitted for at least a week.

When Angela, our editor, notified us of the submission deadline, I knew I was in trouble. My time was utterly booked with work towards our Band of Brothers' Help Us Help Kids Christmas Campaign. I led that project, which involved selling 1,000 calendars and collecting donations to raise \$50,000 so needy families could have a nice Christmas meal. And underprivileged children would have some presents to open. It is a project near and dear to my heart, consuming much of my time from mid-September through December. But it is vital to the people we help; I feel called to do what I can. In the past, it wasn't so difficult as I was younger and had considerably more energy and stamina. Such is not the case now that I have pushed north of 80 years old. But

Left: American Flag, by dawn's early light; Buckhannon Storefront



that is okay, as I have been and still am truly blessed, and I am more than happy to work with my Christian brothers trying to brighten Christmas for those less fortunate.

Angela responded that she understood if I couldn't submit an article this time. But she did offer that if I could get something to her by the 15th, she would include it in this edition. Now, I could have easily passed on submitting something, which would have been okay with most people. It would soon be forgotten, no harm, no foul. However, I felt that decision came with dangerous consequences. I knew if I skipped this time, it would be easier to skip the next time when the going got tough. A few days ago, God reminded me in 2 Timothy 2:3-4 (NIV) what He expected: *"Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs but rather tries to please his commanding officer."* My choices were going to the parade and receiving the respect of onlookers, followed by a nice breakfast or serving Him like a "good soldier," thereby pleasing Him. Now, enjoying people's appreciation and filling my belly with good food might seem like the better deal. But for me, it didn't; being a good, loyal soldier is more important. Following Jesus involves navigating through a maze of daily challenges presented by people and circumstances, with Satan lurking around every corner, saying, "Take it easy, have some fun, it's okay to be lazy, and so on." Each day, we must decide where our loyalty lies: to our selfish self, worldly activities, or God. Like Joshua, I choose God. Yes, those pancakes, eggs, and bacon would have tasted pretty good. However, I know I made the right choice, and it was easy to say, "Get behind me, Satan."

I love the Apostle Paul's instructions to Timothy in his two letters. Nearing his execution, Paul knew that he had finished his race by fighting the good fight and keeping the faith. He knew a "crown of righteousness" awaited him. In these letters, Paul was passing the torch of leadership to Timothy. Paul had completed the mission that Jesus had personally assigned Him: to preach the Gospel to the nations, including the Gentiles. Paul gave Timothy his mission: "Work at telling others the Good News, and fully carry out the ministry God has given you." (2 Timothy 4:5 NIV) No matter what the hardship. Few knew as much hardship as Paul, and he knew that Timothy would face it, too, like most early Christians. Paul reminded Timothy that God had called him and encouraged him to continue in his good fight. His final instruction to Timothy, which applies to all Christians, was to stand courageously for the truth, know the Word, and allow yourself to be empowered by the Holy Spirit in carrying out your calling.

Paul likened God's ministry to being a soldier, an athlete, and a gardener in his letters to Timothy. As a 23-year Air Force veteran, I can readily identify with the soldier comparison. In my day, there was a draft, and that was the calling, a letter from the draft board requiring your presence for a physical, which would determine your eligibility. Some of my friends were married like me, but they had children who got them a deferment, not me. So, I traveled to Pittsburgh with a bus load of other draftees for my physical. Even though near-sighted, underweight, and flat-footed, Uncle Sam deemed me fit for service. I had a very short time to decide

what branch of service to enter. Fortunately, my decision allowed me to earn a commission in the Air Force through West Virginia's ROTC program.

My calling to become a Christian soldier was nowhere nearly as dramatic as what Paul experienced on the road to Damascus. I have shared my journey to the cross several times. I was 70 at the time and found myself at the foot of the cross, where I gave my life to Jesus as my Lord and Savior. Everything changed when I became a Child of God. The Holy Spirit does that to you. Like Paul's conversion, I was called for God's purpose for me, which would become my mission, my ministry. We are all Christian Soldiers with specific God-given purposes for our lives. He has given each of us unique talents to accomplish those missions.

As a military man, I readily identify with and understand the importance of the concept of one's mission. In the Air Force, I swore allegiance to my country as follows:

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"I, (state your name), having been appointed a (rank) in the United States Air Force, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution Of the United States against all enemies, Foreign and domestic, that I bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office upon which I am about to enter. So, help me God."



Heavner Cemetery, Buckhannon

I was assigned to various units over the years, each having a specific mission. All the service men and women in all branches of the Armed Forces collectively ensure our Constitution is protected. For each assignment, detailed rules, operations, and procedures must be followed. Everything is spelled out for you in your assigned duties. Individual judgment is allowed as long as it follows orders and regulations. These official rules, regulations, and verbal orders are

not suggestions but commands that must be carried out. That is what obedience is, total compliance, which is not only the key to faithful execution of one's responsibilities but also to the effectiveness of both your individual performance and your unit's mission success.

***"but as the servants of Christ,
doing the will of God from the heart."
Ephesians 6:16 (NIV)***

The same applies in the Kingdom of God, meaning it is no different for a Christian soldier. In its broadest sense, my calling as an airman was "to protect and defend the Constitution." As God's soldier, it is "to do God's will, not your will," not anyone else's will, but God's will. Doing the will of God is the only thing that counts! Once He calls us and we are saved through Jesus, you are meant to do God's will every day you wake up. Jesus speaks clearly in Matthew 7:21 that to enter heaven, you



must “do the will of His Father in heaven.” Referring to my opening scripture, it doesn’t mean getting entangled in “civilian affairs,” as Paul instructed Timothy. In Romans 12:2, we are told to “not be conformed to this world.” As an airman, I wasn’t to get involved in civilian matters. Likewise, as a Christian soldier, I must be about God’s work, furthering His Kingdom. Paul tells us in Ephesians 5:17 that we are to understand God’s will, and if we fail to do so, we are unwise and foolish.

What does “doing God’s will” mean? Early in my walk with Jesus, I struggled some with this. However, I soon learned it is very simple, nothing more than living according to His Word. I also learned that I had everything I needed to do His will: a willing heart, His grace, His Holy Spirit, and His Word, all of which have clarified my specific purpose to serve Him. The only thing I had to do now was to obey His Word, and His Truth today, tomorrow, forever. But it all started with a willing heart, without which I would have been saying no, not today, Lord, I’m too busy, maybe tomorrow. But His way was a choice I was willing to make, and I have never regretted it. One of the many exciting things I have learned is that obeying God’s will sustains me daily, just as Jesus said it would: *“I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”* (John 6:35 NIV)

Thanksgiving is just a couple weeks away as of this writing. If this blessing isn’t something to be eternally thankful for, I don’t know what is!

That is my testimony for this moment in time. Passing on the Veteran’s Day Parade was an easy decision as it allowed me to share with you how God sustains me and guides my

quest to obey His will. Maybe you have the hunger and desire to find your real purpose in life. Perhaps you are lost—like I once was—realizing there must be more to life than the path you are currently on. No worldly endeavor will ever fulfill you. Just remember God loves you and has the most amazing mission awaiting you. If you feel He is calling you, don’t hesitate to reach out to a Christian friend or a pastor and begin to pray by asking God to guide you and to help you find Him. He will answer.

*Until next time, hope
you’ve had a Happy Thanksgiving,
and a Merry Christmas.*

Godspeed, Al



Cunningham Memorial Park, St. Albans

Photo: © Backyard Photography, Alan Tucker

Blessings for a Happy New Year!

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