

On the Go Devotions

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

This text is referred to by many Christians as the Gospel in a nutshell. It is very likely the best known verse in the Bible. You probably memorized when you were little. It is still good for our lives today.

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

God’s grace is utter generosity, unselfish, spontaneous, recklessly prodigal generosity, which acts wholly out of loving concern for the other’s need, even if he is completely unworthy of the love and help thus offered him.

Our salvation is *not a result of works*. The only way good works could save us with a perfect and just God is if our whole life were perfect. God cannot accept a 99 percent morally perfect life. He requires 100 percent perfection.

Before they call I will answer; while they are yet speaking I will hear. (Isaiah 65:24)

What if God had an answering Machine?” Imagine praying, then hearing this: "Thank you for calling My Father's House. Please press 1 for a request. Press 2 for a thanksgiving. Press 3 to complain. For all other inquiries, press 4." So I press 1 and I hear: "We're sorry. Due to heavier than expected volume we are unable to make a connection with God; please try again later. Your business is important to us." [Reverend Paul Kummer](#)

God is always more ready to hear than we to pray, and to give more than we either desire or deserve.

For we do not have a high priest (Jesus) who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. (Hebrews 4:15)

From In the Eye of the Storm (Lucado) – Chippie the parakeet never saw it coming. One second he was peacefully perched in his cage. The next he was sucked in, washed up, and blown over.

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The problems began when Chippie’s owner decided to clean Chippie’s cage with a vacuum cleaner. She removed the attachment from the end of the hose and stuck it in the cage. The phone rang, and she turned to pick it up. She’d barely said, “hello” when “sssopp!” Chippie got sucked in. The bird owner gasped, put down the phone, turned off the vacuum, and opened the bag. There was Chippie – still alive, but stunned.

Since the bird was covered with dust and soot, she grabbed him and raced to the bathroom, turned on the faucet, and held Chippie under the running water. Then, realizing that Chippie was soaked and shivering, she reached for the hair dryer and blasted the pet with hot air. Poor Chippie never knew what hit him.

A few days after the trauma, the reporter who had initially written about the event contacted Chippie’s owner to see how the bird was recovering. “Well,” she replied, “Chippie doesn’t sing much anymore – he just sits and stares.”

Jesus had days like that in his life on earth. One day early in his ministry he received news that his relative and friend, John the Baptist had been beheaded. As he was grieving, the disciples came back from the mission trip he had sent them on. They were full of joy for the things they had accomplished including casting out demons. Jesus tried to take them to a quiet place for reflection, but was followed by large crowd of as many as 25,000 people whom he taught and fed. He followed all that with a night of prayer with his Father. There were many

other days when He was severely tempted by the devil, the religious leaders, and even his own disciples. Good Friday was obviously the worst of those. So you can see that Jesus knows how you feel.

He (Jesus) said to them, “Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.” (Matthew 17:20)

On one occasion Jesus told his disciples that a faith like a mustard seed (very, very small) could move mountains. There is comfort here. Faith that is little but not yet like a mustard seed is still Christian faith. It will carry us to the very presence of Jesus in heaven.

The LORD said, “Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by.” Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. 12 After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. (1 Kings 19:11-12)

God is speaking to Elijah. Elijah had performed an incredible miracle to defeat the followers of Baal. Afterward Queen Jezebel threatened to kill Elijah. He goes into a funk and flees. After hiding out God comes to him and reminds him of the great power has to bring peace and strength to Elijah.

Keep me as the apple of your eye. (Psalm 17:8)

David, the psalmist, appeals to the Lord as Judge, when he is under attack by ungodly foes. Possibly another of David’s cries for deliverance during the time King Saul was trying to kill him, as recorded throughout 1Samuel.

We are probably not in danger as David was but we treasure being “the apple of God’s eye.” We as Christians are God’s chosen people, and are precious in his sight. We are so precious that Jesus left heaven and came to earth to suffer and die for us.

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. 2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, 3 though it s waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. Selah 4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. 5 God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day. 6 Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts. 7 The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah 8 Come and see the works of the LORD, the desolations he has brought on the earth. 9 He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear, he burns the shields with fire. 10 “Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.” 11 The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. (Psalm 46)

This psalm has its setting during the time when Assyria had conquered Israel (ten northern tribes) and many surrounding nations and even the countryside of Jerusalem. They had now set their eyes on the two southern tribes known as Judah.

The city of Jerusalem was surrounded the Assyrian army led by Sennacherib. (He was probably one of the most ruthless leaders in the history of the world). He thundered many threats about the might of his army and what they would do to Judah. He even resorted to speaking the language that was common to the everyday Jew. By this he hoped that the people inside the walls would not listen to Hezekiah and give up.

Hezekiah was King of Judah. He placed his trust in the Lord and responded in prayer to the Lord. God answered Hezekiah's prayer in this psalm, silencing Sennacherib by having an angel kill 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night.

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. 2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. (Isaiah 40:1-2)

The Israelites had for many years vexed God by serving the gods of nearby nations. God had patiently sent prophet after prophet to warn them as well as encourage them to return to him. All during their 70 years in exile God had never for one second given up on them, forgotten them or stopped loving them.

God always has a message of comfort for His people, even in times of deep affliction; the end of all His dealings with them is their establishment in holiness and happiness including us.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. (Philippians 4:6)

If you have ever tried not to do something, you have experienced how nearly impossible it is. A better approach is do or think of something quite the opposite. You can dwell on the mercies of God in your life.

But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. (Isaiah 43:1)

The Israelites were at the end of their 70 year exile in Babylonia. They had deserved every minute of banishment by their idol worship. They had reason to be afraid. Into this situation comes the Lord with incredible words of comfort. We, too, sin much and deserve nothing but punishment. BUT, God has redeemed us from our sin and even calls us by our name.

O LORD, you have searched me and known me! ² You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. ³ You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. ⁴ Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether. (Psalm 139:1-4)

God is *all-knowing*. That phrase might send shock waves through our system. That means that God knows all of the sinful and stupid acts that we have ever committed in our lives and all that will follow. He knows all of our thoughts before we even give expression to them.

The fact that God is all-knowing can also be of great comfort. He knows all of our needs. He knows all of our weaknesses. Not only does he know all about us, he also provides everything we need even before we realize it. He knows our need for a Savior and provided one in Jesus. We can with Peter say "Lord, you know all things."

"I am God Almighty." (Genesis 17:1)

God Almighty in the Hebrew is *El-Shaddai*. It could perhaps mean "God, the Mountain One," either highlighting the invincible power of God or referring to the mountains as God's symbolic home. It was the special name by which God revealed himself to the patriarchs (see Ex 6:3). *Shaddai* occurs 31 times in the book of Job and 17 times in the rest of the Bible.

This verse is a part of God addressing Abraham that Abraham and Sarah were going to have a son despite their old age. They had not trusted God to keep his promise by having Abraham fathering a child with Sarah's maid as the supposed Abraham heir.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. (Hebrews 13:8)

Christ's changelessness is of incredible comfort to us his dear children. It means that he will always be ready to forgive us our sins. It means that he will always love us. It means that he will always be with us no matter where we are. It means that he will always take care of our earthly needs. It means that he will honor that faith he worked in our hearts and take us to heaven when we die. It means that in him we have all that we need for this life for the world to come.

Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. 2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. (Psalm 90:1-2)

God is everlasting. He is without beginning and without end. He is the Eternal One who created the world and initiated time. God has called the world into existence and is our dwelling place. In the everlasting mighty God we are secure. From eternity He will continue to watch over His people forever.

If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. (1 John 3:20)

"If our hearts condemn us," means to find fault with or to blame and condemn. Sometimes we are our own worst enemies. As we are still pretty much isolated, our consciences can become over-active. What this shows is that we continue to live under the burden of the Law when God has already freed us from that load.

When our verse says "God is greater than our hearts," it tells us that the action of God brings a divine assurance to our troubled souls. He takes our weakness, faults and failures and covers them up with the blanket of Christ's righteousness.

Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the LORD. (Jeremiah 23:24)

God is *present everywhere* – This, like God being all-knowing, can also make us shake us in our boots. There is nowhere to hide. Jeremiah expresses it well when he asks two self answering questions

On the flip side to know that we always have God with us can be very comforting and empowering. It means that it is always there to comfort us in times of trials. It means that he is by our side during scary times. It means that we are never alone.

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? 33 Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? 36 As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:31-39)

The assurance, hope, and comfort from the grace of God revealed through Jesus Christ is nowhere stated with greater confidence and exuberance than in this text. It should lift every believer's heart!

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us. (Ephesians 2:4)

Mercy is a positive quality that certainly has much in common with love. But it is also somewhat different. Mercy is the attitude in the mind and heart of God that moves Him to take pity on us when He sees our lost and wretched state. Mercy prompts Him to action.

The Greek *eleos*, which means "pity," "compassion," moved by the troubles of others. They convey the idea of compassion or sympathy, pity, pardon or forgiveness, and showing favor.

God is *rich in mercy*. For no other reason, God has rescued men and women from death and given them life. God's mercy is his overflowing active compassion, freely exercised, excluding all idea of merit on the part of the object.

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. (Jeremiah 29:11)

Plans are made and goals set every day. But because of lack of preparation on the part of the planners and poor execution not many plans succeed. Because we are sinful people living in a sinful world we may have plans that are selfish and not necessarily good for others. But God's plan for us are always good as expressed in Romans 8:28 where says: **We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him.**

Because Jesus suffered, died and rose again our sins are forgiven and forgotten. Some of our days may be filled with frustration and pain but, we have been given the promise that we will never be given more than we can handle. Our future is even better than that of the returning Israelites. Our future is an eternity with Christ in heaven.

so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. (Isaiah 55:11)

God's Word is more powerful than armies, treaties, chariots, horses, as well as every other human might. Only his Word directs history, and this proves that he alone is the true God. It will accomplish what God desires and that is the salvation of his people.

22 Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. 23 They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22-23)

In these verses God comes to us with His sure and certain promise of encouragement and hope. The two word phrase great love in the Hebrew is plural and represents the Lord's loving faithfulness to his covenant promise. It demonstrates that God cannot end his desire to have good come to his people. And we are his people because of the faith he has given us through his unending grace.

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. (Matthew 9:36)

When Jesus sees these crowds, Matthew says that "he had compassion on them. Having compassion refers to the inner organs – heart, kidneys, liver, intestines, and lungs – and later spoke of them as the seat of emotions such as anger and anxious desire. The Latin literally means to "suffer with, to feel the pain and suffering of another." Compassion comes from identifying closely with another.

The reason for His compassion is that “they were harassed and helpless.” Harassed has the meaning “to be flayed” – skin torn off. This is similar to the story of chippie the parakeet mentioned earlier.

20 But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself. (Philippians 3:20-21)

We, in whom God worked faith, are citizens of heaven. As such, we should not regard this world as a place to put down permanent roots, nor should we fix our hearts on the things of this world or regard them as permanent possessions. We should consider ourselves strangers and pilgrims on earth, and our greatest concern should be with heavenly, spiritual things.

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever. 2 Give thanks to the God of gods, for his steadfast love endures forever. 3 Give thanks to the Lord of lords, for his steadfast love endures forever... (Psalm 136:1-3)

This great psalm of thanksgiving praises God for His acts of creation and redemption, both in history and in the lives of His people. Every detail, at every stage, is a sign of God’s steadfast love, which, throughout human history, endures forever. The psalm is all about God’s action, not ours. (TLSB)

God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” (Exodus 3:14)

Just as God did not forget the Israelites in their misery of being mistreated slaves in Egypt, He never forgets us in the things that may afflict us in our daily lives. He is always right there beside us as we go through our lives.

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. (Isaiah 41:10)

Even though the people are walking through the valley of the shadow of death, God commands them not to fear. “Do not fear” appears in a variety of settings in the OT. It’s used when Israel was about to cross the Red Sea with the Egyptians breathing down their neck. It’s used when they were about to enter the Promised Land and all the unknowns that faced them.

Many churches are named “Immanuel.” It means “God with us.” That means God is with us through our pain and suffering, our confusion about what is going on in our world and reminds us of his promise to never leave or forsake us.

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)

Jesus is speaking this passage on Maundy Thursday eve, just before He will be betrayed in the Garden of Gethsemane. The disciples did not know what was ahead concerning Jesus’s suffering death and resurrection. But, Jesus knew, and He is giving them comfort and encouragement for the time that it will happen.

I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you. (Isaiah 42:6)

My wife Donna and I chose for one of our wedding hymns “Lord Take Thou My Hand and Lead Me” (LSB 722). Some phrases from that hymn are “direct, protect and feed me,” “when the tempest rages, I need not fear, for you, the Rock Ages are always near,” “Lord when the shadows lengthen and night has come, I know that you will strengthen my steps toward home,” and “So take my hand and lead me unto the end.” This hymn continues

to be of great comfort to us as we have just celebrated our 60th wedding anniversary of walking together with God.

I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)

God's right hand fights for His people in power, while with His left hand He holds the right hand of His child Israel. (TLSB) Any Christian can read these words and find rich comfort.

Luther says that this is like saying, "I am your strength. Your strength amounts to nothing; it will easily evaporate. I am your strength and your authority." He does not only say, "I will strengthen you," but also, "I will help you," that is, "I will attend you incessantly, so that you do not go soft."

lift up my eyes to the hills— where does my help come from? 2 My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. 3 He will not let your foot slip— he who watches over you will not slumber; 4 indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. 5 The LORD watches over you— the LORD is your shade at your right hand; 6 the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. 7 The LORD will keep you from all harm— he will watch over your life; 8 the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore. (Psalm 121)

In our world wars and rumors of war are a part of our every day lives. There is turmoil everywhere we turn. World leaders make great efforts to be helpful. However, because they are sinful human beings they often fall far short of expectations. For us as Christians, we can take heart in fact that our loving Lord never ever falls short because He is the Maker of heaven and earth.

You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me. (John 16:32)

On this eve of Jesus' Passion, the disciples would flee in every direction. Their own interests, their life and safety would claim their first consideration. So they would fail Him in this most critical hour.

The Father would briefly forsake Christ on the cross as Christ became sin. That was the price that Jesus willingly paid for the world's sin. As soon as that moment passed the Father remained faithful to His Son and His mission. Our Father in heaven will never desert us in times of any kind of need. Our Father will always be at our side in every situation and delights in our prayers in our time of need.

15 "Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. 16 Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands before me. (Isaiah 49:15-16)

What wonderful picture of God's constant attention to the affairs of His people! Just as we see the palms of our own hands so often each day, so God thinks of us. We need to mark well how the love of God for us burns in His heart. What a comfort to know that He has pledged to love us so!

29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. 30 But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. (Matthew 10:29-31)

In this chapter Jesus is sending out his disciples for some missionary work. He goes on to give them instructions on how to proceed. He lays out some the hurdles they will encounter and he doesn't sugar coat his message. Their ministry will bring out the worst from their enemies. But in the verses which include our text, he assures them that as his chosen ones they have nothing to fear.

44 “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. 45 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, 46 who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it. (Matthew 11:44-46)

So has Jesus done what needed to be done to possess His holy Christian church on earth today. Though we disciples may often feel buried under the challenges and dangers presented by our own sinful flesh, by the hostile world around us, and by the great enemy and father of lies, there need be no doubt that we belong to Jesus. WE have been acquired. Christ has purchased us at the price of everything that He had. In the breathtaking reckoning of grace, we are as a treasure to him. Secure in that confidence, we can continue to follow Him. (CC – Gibbs)

19 On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” 20 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” (John 20:19-21)

The setting of this text is the evening of Easter day with the disciples locked in a room in fear of the Jews. When Jesus appears to them, their initial reaction is greater fear still. But their fear begins to give way to the peace that Jesus brings them.

Instead of rebuking the disciples for their conduct on Good Friday, Jesus bestows his peace on them. The blessing of peace, which Jesus extends, is never simply a pious wish. This is full Gospel. It is an absolution. The first thing He does is to forgive their sins and declare that all is well. In those words of peace alone, hearers have been given every blessing of a reconciled, all-powerful and all-loving God to his people.

25 “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? 28 And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, 29 yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (Matthew 6:25-33)

What might this mean in practical terms today, this invitation to “first seek indeed the reign [of God] and his righteousness?” It means to go to the places where Jesus is reigning with his gracious presence, to receive his gifts of forgiveness and righteousness, to learn his truth, and to respond to his call. Jesus’ invitation is holistic. To seek the reign of God is to seek the Gospel, which comes to us in the Scriptures and the Sacraments. In seeking that Gospel, we will also experience the sustaining community of fellow disciples, who are our brothers and sisters. With them we are joined to Christ in Holy Baptism, and with them we gather to hear God’s Word and receive our Lord’s Supper. In those places God’s saving righteousness is found; there God is at work forgiving and making things right. That is what life is for; here is the purpose and goal of the body. Jesus is drawing, wooing, and inviting

his disciples thus to orient their lives and so to be free from worry over life's other needs. The Father will supply those needs as well (6:33b). (Gibbs)

But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. Everyone gets tired and weary at some time or another. Verse 30 says, "even youth grow tired and weary." (Isaiah 40:31)

In the summer of 2008 while on vacation with my family, I was sitting at the pool looking up at the sky. I saw three eagles (parents and a young eagle) flying high in the sky. I noticed that every once in a while, the young eagle apparently needed a rest and would fly up on the mother's back and sit there for a while. After a brief respite, the young eagle would resume flying on its own. This cycle of events was done a number of times until they eagles flew out of site. (Site – Eagle Resort on Eagle Lake just outside of Eagle River, WI – EWB)

God gives us opportunities to try our wings so we might learn to fly on to greater and higher experiences. Often these flights are adventures together with our Lord in ministry to others. Our Father is always in prayer reach and always watches over us and spreads His wings of protection beneath us.

"But Jesus immediately said to them: 'Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid.'" (Matthew 14:27)

The situation is Jesus walking on the water to catch up with the disciples who are crossing the Sea of Galilee in a bad storm. This event is preceded by Jesus hearing about John the Baptist's beheading, followed by Him feeding over five thousand people with five loaves and two fish. This was quite a rollercoaster ride of emotions for Him. Jesus, therefore, follows up the feeding by sending the disciples to the other side of the sea and going up on a mountainside to pray. All alone with his Father, Jesus must have spent at least eight hours in prayer.

Jesus, in his all-knowingness, knew their plight. He neither is ignorant of, nor indifferent to, the situation of his disciples or us. Nothing escapes his eyes. The disciples fright comes when they see someone walking halfway across a rough body of water. It is at that time that He urges them to "not be afraid." That is a phrase that Jesus uses often in His life on earth. AND, each time He does something to remove the fear. So His assurance can be trusted.

As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" 3 "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. 4 As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. 5 While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." 7 "So the man went and washed, and came home seeing. (John 9:1-4,7)

The rabbis had developed the principle that "There is no death without sin, and there is no suffering without iniquity." They also held that terrible punishments came on certain people because of the sin of their parents. This is the kind of thinking that leads to the disciples' question.

There is no one-to-one correlation of sin and punishment. Bad things happen in this world because sin causes problems and even death. We need to repent of all our sins in this life. For all the evil in this world, our lives at times can be very frustrating. BUT Christ's death on the cross has won for us forgiveness of sins and life and salvation.

For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? (Matthew 16:26)

Jesus is speaking of spiritual (heavenly) matters while they are focused on worldly issues. His dying on the cross brings forgiveness of sin as well as eternal salvation. The disciples were depending on many human powers to bring them salvation. This is where Jesus asks “*What can a man give in exchange for his soul?*” The answer is “nothing.” By his death and resurrection Jesus has paid the price.

“³³ Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! ³⁴ “Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?” ³⁵ “Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?” ³⁶ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.” (Romans 11:33-36)

These verses are the doxology that ends this section of Romans. It is the natural outpouring of Paul’s praise to God, whose wisdom and knowledge brought about his great plan for the salvation of both Jews and Gentiles who believe.

The wealth of God’s grace and glory, the wisdom of His purposeful actions in history to save, and His intimate knowledge of us are too deep for human beings to fathom. (TLSB)

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:10)

This verse comes on the heels of Paul telling the Ephesians unequivocally that only by grace they can be saved and good works have absolutely nothing to do with salvation. At first glance this text seems to contradict what was said in verses 8 and 9. But, God has nothing against good works done by a Christian. In fact a Christian will do good as an outgrowth of his faith. And, that is what this verse is about.

As children of God we are God’s workmanship. The Greek for this word sometimes has the connotation of a “work of art.” To be the product of someone who has very lovingly crafted something. We say that a craftsman communicates with his work so God continues to do so with us.

But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. (1 John 2:1)

Asking the question “does anyone sin?” is like asking “Is the pope Catholic?” The obvious answer is a resounding “yes!”

BUT, BUT, all is not lost! There is perfect help available 24/7. The word “advocate” in our text refers to someone who speaks in court in behalf of a defendant.

Jesus Christ is our attorney at the highest court of justice. He is in heaven with the Father to make intercession for us. This is His ongoing business at the throne of God. He causes the Father to look, not upon our sin, but at His own perfect atonement.

21 Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” 22 And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.” (John 20:21-23)

The title comes from the hymn “How Great Thou Art.” The hymn writer extols God’s greatness in a number of ways. He begins with God’s hand in nature and concludes with Christ’s second coming.

Our text above is a reason for the bursting out in song of this hymn. The setting is the day of Christ’s resurrection (Easter evening). The disciples were in hiding behind locked doors for fear of the Jews who had crucified Jesus.

“Be strong and courageous, for you shall go with this people into the land that the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall put them in possession of it. 8 It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.” (Deuteronomy 31:7-8)

Moses, after many years of leading Israel, had come to the end of his time on earth. His leading Israel out of Egypt through the red sea, his leading them for forty difficult years in the desert including receiving the Ten Commandments would be a hard act to follow. The Lord had determined that Joshua would lead the nation of Israel into the Promised Land. He had been Moses’ assistant for many years and had witnessed many of Moses’ actions. Still this was a mammoth assignment.

The Lord has a plan for our lives as well. What is more, he is fully committed to help us get it done. We may not feel up to it and may even try to avoid it. The Lord puts mentors and role models into our lives who will help us succeed just like he did for Joshua. Even in our quiet and alone moments, the Lord is with us. When we think that we seem to be forsaken the Lord may come in a quiet whisper reminding us that we have nothing to fear or be dismayed over.

As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. (Romans 8:36-37)

In sports when one team totally dominates another and the score is really far apart it is called a blowout. In Romans 8 Paul is addressing a group Christian Romans. Their situation was very dire and they were threatened on every side. To this Paul says: *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.*

The word “conquerors” means “to prevail completely.” Paul literally says that they and we will be “hyper-victorious” or “super-conquerors.” When difficult and scary situations surround us we can be “blowout winners” because God loves us. He loved us so much that he died for us. That makes us blowout winners no matter the situation.

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. (1 John 3:1)

We are God’s children now by the declaration of the Father acting in Christ to restore us to himself. In Baptism, we have the seal of that promise applied to us by water and the Word. That means we have membership in God’s family is by grace alone. It is the gift of God [Eph 2:8-9]. This means our names are in the Lamb’s Book of Life (Rev. 21:27).

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:1)

God’s Law declares that all people are guilty of sin and deserve to die (cf 7:5, 10-11, 13, 24). Paul now concisely summarizes God’s reverse declaration for those in Christ: “Not guilty!”

The image is that of a criminal who awaits the judge’s just penalty, but then hears instead that the sentence has been commuted. Every charge was silenced at the cross. The Christian’s life is marked by this freedom and this certainty of God’s mercy in Christ.

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. 27 And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. (Romans 8:26-27)

How about the best prayer partner of all – the Holy Spirit Himself! If anyone know how our prayer ought to be said, He does! If anyone knows the mind of the Lord, He does! If anyone knows our real needs, He does! What a prayer partner to have! What a prayer partner we have as we wait patiently for our dreams to come true, for our hope to be fulfilled!

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5 and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. (Romans 5:1-5)

Paul is not listing virtues that his readers will achieve by their own will. These are effects of the Holy Spirit's work in Christian lives. As God helps us through suffering, He teaches endurance, He develops character in us, and He gives us hope. Suffering is transformed by our relationship with God.

The believer's hope is not to be equated with unfounded optimism. On the contrary, it is the blessed assurance of our future destiny and is based on God's love, which is revealed to us by the Holy Spirit and objectively demonstrated to us in the death of Christ.

Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last. (Luke 23:46)

All-State Insurance advertises itself as the insurance that has you in good hands with the best protection.

Jesus presents a better example. The Son entrusts himself into the hands of his Father whose will he has done.

The words are from Psalm 31:5, used by Jewish people as a bedtime prayer. The Son entrusts himself into the hands of his Father whose will he has done.

Little children gladly put their tiny hands into bigger, stronger hands of their parents to feel safe. We would well to put ourselves into the mighty protective hands of our heavenly Father as Jesus did.

Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out. (Acts 3:19)

Peter uses the concept of erasing to describe the totality and beauty of God's forgiveness of our sins in Christ. Those of us still troubled with guilt over past sins are making ourselves miserable over something God simply cannot understand. As impossible as it is for us to make erased words on a blackboard reappear, so impossible is it for our God to remember sins that have been erased with the blood of Jesus.

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! 2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, 3 who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases. (Psalm 103:1-3)

David goes on to list a great many benefits in verses 3-14. The forgiveness of sins is the first and greatest of God's benefits, for without this none of the other benefits matter.

A few of the benefits are: "Heals diseases" or to help us learn from them. "Redeems our life from pit." "Crowns us with steadfast love and mercy." "Works righteousness and justice for all." "Does not deal with us according to

our sins.” “Shows compassion to those who fear him.” The psalmist’s message here is: Do not forget them (almost, stop forgetting them) – that is, start acting on them. Think on them.

But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. (Genesis 8:1)

Forgetfulness is a fact of life. It happens to all ages. It can be a result of old age or it can be the result having too many things on one’s plate. God does not forget. There are 75 texts in the OT alone that have the phrase: “God Remembered.” That did not mean that he had forgotten the people connected with that expression.

“To remember” means to bring to mind something or someone from the past and then to respond with action. Remembering always leads to an action in response. God remembers us every second of every day. He remembers every one of our needs and acts on them.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9)

The deepest thinkers of the ages cannot achieve the high and lofty ways of God or understand God. Left alone and without God’s Word no human can imagine that God would send a Savior to die for unworthy sinners. God’s grace remains a mystery to human intelligence and research. Yet God, does make it known to us in his Word.

How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?

²How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day?

How long shall my enemy be exalted over me? ³Consider and answer me, O LORD my God;

light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death, ⁴lest my enemy say, “I have prevailed over him,”

lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken. ⁵But I have trusted in your steadfast love;

my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. ⁶I will sing to the LORD, because he has dealt bountifully with me. (Psalm 13)

Ever feel like you are at the end of your rope and there seems to be no knot at the end? That’s how the psalmist felt in Psalm 13. Such language of impatience and complaint is found frequently in the prayers of the psalms. It expresses the anguish of relief not (yet) granted and exhibits the boldness with which the psalmists wrestled with God on the basis of their relationship with him.

As his dear children we can also boldly approach God with our anguished plea. We can be assured that God has not forgotten us and that he will answer our pleas.

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. (Genesis 1:26)

So rich in meaning is this short phrase, that it is difficult to explain fully. Our imagination and intellect, our souls and spirituality, our place and position in creation – all are derived from the image of God.

This image was lost in the fall into sin. The presence of original sin has also corrupted that likeness.

HOWEVER, through Christ’s innocent blood and righteousness, we as children of God, regain a likeness of God.

But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life. (Revelation 21:27)

Have you ever arrived at a motel wanting to check in and much to your alarm you are not in the registration book? Well, I have and its a real helpless and sinking feeling.

We might ask how might we, covered with sin, be included in this precious ledger. Thankfully God has sent his son Jesus to take all of our filth with him to the cross and has placed a saving faith within us thereby writing our names in his book of life.

Incline your ear, O LORD, and answer me, for I am poor and needy. (Psalm 86:1)

Our verse expresses the idea of having God stoop down and listen. In our loud and noisy world it is hard to get someone to listen just when our need is the greatest. Many people are in such dire need to be listened to that they pay for someone to hear their needs.

David speaks with confidence when he says *You are my God*. This is not that David has chosen him, but that God has chosen David to be his servant. We are also chosen by God and therefore know that he is always ready to listen to us no matter the size of our need. And he is abundant in his love for us.

The LORD bless you and keep you; 25 the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; 26 the LORD look upon you with favor give you peace. (Numbers 6:24-26)

This phrase is a segment of the blessing we hear and receive at the end of our worship services. It means that we are assured of God's acceptance and favor. God's face beams with gentle kindness so that His people are not harmed but blessed. Through the mercies and promises of the covenant, the people who were terrified by the Lord's presence now begin to see Him for who He is.

When his face shines on a person, blessing and deliverance come. It means that that God will not forget us and our needs. We can depend on him as we go into the week ahead.

and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. (Revelation 21:25)

Lack of locks usually indicates a high level of safety and trust. Night is usually when crimes and evil take place. With evil once and for all vanquished, there is no need for security measures in heaven.

Heaven is a place where the saints who go there will find total protection. It will always be day because they will be in Jesus' eternal light and presence.

As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace to you!" (Luke 24:36)

The disciples were probably talking about the confusing events of Jesus' crucifixion and what it all meant. There is no doubt that they carried much guilt about how they had acted during Jesus' arrest and death.

Into this setting, Jesus pops in on them with the words "Peace to you." The Hebrew for peace is *shalom*, here seen in its most expressive fullness. It is a positive state of rightness and well-being. Jesus also comes into our messy lives and offers that same peace.

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. (Romans 5:6)

The world Jesus was born into was at a very low spiritual ebb. The nation of Israel was in tatters and being ruled by the cruel Romans. It was in that setting that God chose to have Jesus come and save the people from their sin. Sin still fills the world, but God continues to intervene with his saving message and his timing is always perfect.

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. (James 5:16)

A “righteous person” is one who is made righteous by faith. When God the Father looks at us through the blood of Jesus he sees people are declared innocent from all their wrongs.

The power of prayer of a righteous person can bring about miraculous results. This especially so if it pertains to spiritual desires. If it pertains to physical needs, these requests will be heard and answered in a way God’s will determines best for that situation or person.

For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; 12 as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. (Psalm 103:11-12)

The Scriptures clearly tell us that we human beings are sinful. We were born sinful and continue to daily sin much. What is more is that we deserve nothing but punishment for what we have and continue to do. Thankfully, Jesus took our sin with him to the cross. Thanks to the huge price he paid, he continues to forgive us when we repent.

Psalm 103:11-12 expresses the full dept of that forgiveness when it states: For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; “as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. God’s mercy and forgiveness are immeasurable. AND, where there is forgiveness of sin there is life and salvation.

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. (John 10:10)

Probably most anyone we encounter is seeking “the abundant life.” Just what that means is as different from one individual to another. For many it is riches, for others power, and yet for others emotional and physical security.

For nothing will be impossible with God. (Luke 1:37)

It echoes the question God asked Abraham while announcing that Sarah would bear Isaac in her old age. The reference here is to the conception of John in Elizabeth’s old age and especially to the miraculous conception of Jesus in the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus himself says the same thing regarding salvation (Mt 19:26). Jesus himself says the same thing regarding salvation (Mt 19:26).

God’s wisdom in the Word and the work of His Spirit lets us welcome the experiences of life in ways that benefit us and others. Paul’s time in the Philippian jail and his current imprisonment are perfect examples.

A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he. (Deuteronomy 32:4)

God constantly told his people that there should be great care for the fatherless and widows. God proved over and over that he was no respecter of persons. But, the leaders of both his OT and NT leaders did not heed that. And, that is true still today.

The Lord is entirely just. God is more than just in that he is extremely generous in his treatment of his creatures. He rules the world with perfect justice. He always does what he says he'll do. Human beings leave a trail of broken promises as they go through life; God never does.

if we are faithless, he remains faithful— for he cannot deny himself. (2 Timothy 2:13)

There is a lot of unfaithfulness in this world. Many of the huge number of divorces are caused by unfaithfulness. Many are the broken promises between couples, friends and employers. There are many who are unfaithful to their confirmation vows including us at times.

God is faithful when it comes to keeping his promises. If we are faithless, what then? Will the Lord also then become faithless toward us? Not so. Never. He would not be God if he were to become unfaithful.

The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made. (Psalm 145:9)

He is kind, desiring our welfare. Psalm 145:9 states: A child when once asked to be good asked: *what is good?* The child probably wanted to know what he could get away with.

God's good never has any parameters. It is right and helpful. The only true good is from God. Psalm 145 also includes the word "mercy." The Hebrew means God's undeserved favor and love. "Compassion" is a NT word that means pity moved by the troubles of others. It conveys the idea of pardon or forgiveness and showing favor. There is nothing greater than the goodness of God.

God is love. (1 John 4:8)

It is *agape* love which is love that gives without requiring anything in return. It is a love that represents God's undeserved love for sinful people. The apostle John uses it often in his gospel and epistles.

There is a huge amount of hate in today's world. Some of its roots go back thousands of years and will continue until the end of the world. God's love has been from before the world existed and will continue into eternity for all time.

I the LORD your God am holy. (Leviticus 19:2)

God is *sinless and hates sin*. He cannot tolerate sin and requires that his people be holy also. This should make us sit up and take notice because we are sinners. As long as we live we will always be sinners.

There is a saying that states: *God hates sin but loves the sinner*. God knows how stuck we are the muck of sin. One writer (Lucado) once stated *that when Eve took a bite of the apple, Jesus packed his bags for Jerusalem*. Jesus was sinless and his perfect sacrifice saved us from sin. When he looks on us his children, he sees us through the blood of Christ and we are his perfect children.

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. (Psalm 51:7)

purge me – Lit. "Un-sin me." By God's hand alone, the stain of sin is removed.

The cleansing with hyssop was part of the cleansings required by the OT ceremonial law. Hyssop was a plant the priest used as a sort of sponge or sprinkler to apply the cleansing blood or water of OT ceremonies to the worshiper (Numbers 19:18, Leviticus 14:6). The application of blood with hyssop symbolized the cleansing David received in the reality by the application of the blood of Christ to him before the throne of God.

they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified. (Isaiah 61:3)

Oaks are tree of great strength and endurance. They are often a haven for all kinds of wildlife. They were rare in that climate just as Christians are the minority in much of society. God plants them and helps them to grow. He does the same with us as Christians. It is his intervening action.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. (Romans 1:16)

The Gospel (the good news of Jesus saving us) appears foolish to the world, which may ridicule or persecute Christians, but we are proud of what Christ has done.

Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. (Matthew 24:35)

Though the delay of Christ's second coming might lead some to conclude that He will not appear, His promised return will indeed come to pass. Then, everything else will fail. In contrast, Jesus' Word will stand forever vindicated. Jesus' Word will be with us forever right into heaven.

“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us). (Matthew 1:23)

This is quote from Isaiah 7:14. The incarnation of Jesus is central to salvation. It means that Christ is really “with us” to take our place.

Jesus said to him (Thomas), “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (John 14:6)

This teaching is exclusive. What a contrast to the popular teaching that says all religions reach God, but just follow different paths. God teaches that there are no other paths. No one comes to the Father except through Jesus. Anyone ever lost in a forest or other wilderness knows that taking the wrong path makes a person even more hopelessly lost. So it is with the spiritually lost. Only one way leads to safety, to salvation – Jesus.

66 After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. 67 So Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you want to go away as well?” 68 Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, 69 and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.”(John 6:66-69)

We sing this verse when we about to hear the Gospel lesson as a part of our worship service. Like Peter, we are saying that this is the only word that counts and we want to hear it.

Peter's reply shows that Jesus is not just one religious option among many others of equal value. He is the only one who reveals the Father. He is the only one who gives everlasting life. Any other place that the disciples might go would only offer false teaching and false hope. Jesus alone has the words that are Spirit and life. Having been brought to faith in Christ, they will follow no one else.

And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. (John 17:3)

Jesus summarizes two key points: (1) to know God is eternal life, and (2) knowledge of the true God cannot be separated from Christ, who is the only access to such knowledge. (TL5B)

And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. (Acts 4:12)

Christianity is the one true faith because Jesus, the only source of salvation, rescues us from the evil one. He delivers all people from a verdict of damnation and heals ills of body and soul. "Christ's name is received only by faith. Therefore, we are saved by confidence in Christ's name, and not by our own efforts.

The name of "Jesus" means "Savior." What his name means is what he does. Salvation is surely found in him. It is found in him alone. Without this conviction there can be no evangelism, no home missions, no world missions. Without this certainty the church would lose its reason for being.

And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. (1 John 5:11-12)

John gives a summary of God's witness: And this is the witness, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. That is the testimony of the Gospel; that is the wonderful news which we find on every page of the apostle's letter; that is the message which all the apostles proclaimed, that God has given us eternal life, that this life is a free gift of His grace and mercy. For there is nothing in us that should merit such a reward; the only reason why God has given it, why He is holding it out to all men, is His divine love in Christ Jesus; for it is in His Son that we have this eternal life, if we place our entire trust in Him, if we rely on His perfect atonement in life and in death.

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. (Psalm 119:105)

Luther notes that the Word's light is not for our eyes and our seeing but for our feet and path. But our feet cannot be lit and our paths cannot see. So this verse describes the Word's work of faith. "It guides the feet and the heart, and faith does not require understanding.... Thus faith does not enlighten the understanding, indeed, it blinds it, but rather the heart. Faith leads it where it will be saved, and it does so through the hearing of the Word"

In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. (John 4:9)

God sent His Son into the world that we sinful men, who deserve death, should have life through Him. God is Love, and He has manifested His love particularly in this that He gave us His Son. That is the highest evidence of God's love: He sent His Son into the world which by nature was hostile to Him, so that we might not die, but live.

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. (Psalm 19:1)

In this verse we read that everything that exists in the heavens reveals the work of a creator and that all creation tells us that there is no one as important as he.

Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases. 4 Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands. Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases. 4 Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands. (Psalm 115:3-4)

Even as Christ has ascended far above all heavens that he might fill all things, so this claim is the equivalent of saying: He sits enthroned on high, where only he may sit who rules all things in heaven and on earth.

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. (Proverbs 3:5)

The Hebrew for “trust” means “to feel safe.” It demonstrates complete reliance on God’s grace and guidance.

True wisdom consists of listening to God, even when His Word goes against what we might think is best. By itself human wisdom simply is not capable of understanding life’s great tragedies and dealing with death. To trust in Him is to commit our lives entirely to Him. To lean on Him means just what it says. Of course to do this we have to be confident that God isn’t going to pull away and let us fall flat on our face.

The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil. (Proverbs 8:13)

The more we lovingly revere God, trusting exclusively in His wisdom, the more we will hate and shun evil. In this sense, we take on God’s own character in detesting what is evil in His sight.

34 But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. 35 And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. 36 “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” 37 And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 22:34-40)

The word “love” is not brotherly love but *agape*, the commitment of devotion that is directed by the will and can be commanded as a duty.

Jesus sees these twin commandments at the heart of the OT revelation.

Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. ²⁶ My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. (Psalm 3:25-26)

The psalmist was a Levite, the Lord was his portion in the promised land in that he lived by the people’s tithes dedicated to the Lord. Here he confesses more: The Lord himself is his sustainer, his preserver—his very life.

It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man. (Psalm 118:8)

There is no comparison between the Lord’s ability and that of mortal man.

and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me. (Psalm 50:15)

It should be a source of great comfort to God’s people that their pleas for help during difficult times are valued very highly by our Lord. To encourage God’s people to pray freely in evil days, God adds a divine promise: “I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.” So one act of true devotion (calling on him) produces an act of deliverance, and that, in turn, leads to glorification of the Deliverer; and thus a kind of godly chain reaction has set in.

7 “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? 11 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him! (Matthew 7:7-11)

Jesus emphasizes the blessings and importance of prayer. Most important is our heavenly Father’s eagerness to give His children “good things.” Because we are evil, we do not always recognize that God answers every prayer for our good. Jesus guarantees that we receive God’s mercy and blessings.

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! (Psalm 103:1)

Bless has a distinct meaning of expressing joyful gratitude as an enrichment of God (s.v. Ps. 5:12). The praise given will make more people aware of the person and works of the Lord, and so God’s reputation will be enriched.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. (Colossians 3:16)

He is the center and chief content of the Word, which is to be preached and taught. The present tense of the imperative “let dwell” points to a continual presence of the Word. It is not merely to be read, commented on, and the like, but it is to be internalized so that it is continually present. Believers are to live, think, and exist in relation to the Word of Christ. It is to empower and norm everything about their existence.

Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” (Romans 12:19)

A Christian repaying evil for evil is a sorry witness to the world; he is also denying his God, the God of hope. The wrath of God will judge God’s enemies at the end of days, after God’s mercies have had full scope to do their work.

To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” (Romans 12:20)

Doing good to one’s enemy, instead of trying to take revenge, may bring about his repentance.

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (Romans 12:21)

If the Christian allows his natural impulse to carry him away and responds to evil with evil, that is a defeat for him; he is overcome by evil.

If he is led by the Spirit and requites evil with good, that is a victory for him; the victory of Christ, who loved His enemies and interceded and died for them, is being realized in his life.

Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and give no opportunity to the devil. (Ephesians 4:26-27)

Anger is not forbidden in the Scriptures. Christians are characterized often by a righteous anger at sin, sickness and injustice. What is forbidden, however, is to let anger carry us into sin or to allow anger to go unresolved, leading to bitterness and resentment.

For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. (Matthew 15:19)

Spiritual inner being of a person. The mouth speaks what is in the heart. The heart is the moving force that leads a person to commit the other sins that Jesus mentioned. “Original sin is born in us because of the sinful seed and is a source of all other actual sins, such as wicked thoughts, words, and works. When we feed our heart the Word of God different behaviors will come out.

but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (Matthew 6:15)

To understand these words of Jesus aright, it must again be emphasized that they are spoken to those who are already the disciples of Jesus and who have already received from the Father the limitless forgiveness of their multitude of sins. That prior divine forgiveness, procured by Christ’s universal atonement, then can and will produce in us as Jesus’ disciples the willingness and ability to forgive others. To turn away from the responsibility to forgive is ultimately to turn away from being forgiven.

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. (Ephesians 4:32)

Instead of being bitter and angry with our neighbor, or using loud and insulting speech, Paul urges God’s people to be kind, compassionate, and forgiving. That’s not easy! After all, we’re talking here about a fellow Christian who has committed real sins against us. She has lied about us and spoiled our reputation; he has defrauded us in a business deal. Her abuse of alcohol has deprived our family of the support it needs. Don’t we have some rights? Doesn’t he or she deserve some of the anger and bitterness we feel?

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. (Philippians 4:8)

Paul understood the influence of one’s thoughts on one’s life. What a person allows to occupy his mind will sooner or later determine his speech and his action. Paul’s exhortation to “think about such things” is followed by a second exhortation, “put it into practice” (v. 9). The combination of virtues listed in vv. 8–9 is sure to produce a wholesome thought pattern, which in turn will result in a life of moral and spiritual excellence

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. (Ephesians 4:29)

Controlling the tongue is not an easy task. James acknowledges that when he writes, “No man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison” (James 3:8). Natural man can’t tame the tongue, but the Holy Spirit can. And he does so in the new man, who is active in the Christian. Paul is appealing to that new man.

If there is any talking at all, that is good and useful for edification – let that proceed out of your mouth. Wherever it is necessary, we should instruct, admonish, comfort, encourage, strengthen our brethren, so that they become edified and furthered in faith and in all that is good.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. (Psalm 51:10)

The verb “create” is always a work of God; it describes God’s creating or renovating to produce something fresh and new. Here it means “to renovate.” This is supported by the parallel verb “renew.” The prayer is for spiritual renewal, a change of heart attitude or way of thinking.

“Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; 38 give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.” (Luke 6:37-38)

After a great climax in the sermon: “Become merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (6:36), there come practical examples of how this mercy is to be shown to others. The prohibition against judging or condemning is not about legitimate judicial decisions in a court of law, but rather, it refers to judgments of believers against unbelievers, and particularly those judgments in the Christian assembly among believers.

But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. (1 Timothy 6:8)

The word for “clothing” means “covering” and includes not only what directly covers the body but also shelter. Food and covering take care of our most basic needs. The necessities of life come from God.

Matthew 6:31-32 ³¹ So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

Philippians 4:12 “I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.”

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. (Romans 10:17)

The message is the meaning here. “Although the work is done and the forgiveness of sins is secured by the cross it cannot come to us in any other way than through the Word.” It is God’s will that His Word should be heard and that a person’s ears should not be closed (Psalm 95:8). With this Word the Holy Spirit is present and opens hearts, so that people (like Lydia in Acts 16:14) pay attention to it and are converted only through the Holy Spirit’s grace and power, who alone does the work of converting a person.

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. (Hebrews 11:1)

It is the confident trust in the unseen reality of God’s present help. It occurs 24 times in this chapter. Only by faith are we in a right relationship with God. Only by faith can man live according to the invisible realities of God.

casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7)

It means to “throw them” because it is a care to Him concerning you. The Christian attitude is not negative self-abandonment or resignation, but involves one’s self-humbling to trust God with your troubles. – It is not always God who smites us down, but it is always God who lifts us up.

Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9 Resist him, firm in your faith. (1 Peter 5:8-9)

Do you wonder why you still find certain sins so fascinating even when you’ve been burned by them before? Well, says Peter, wake up and realize what you’re up against in your life: you have a fearsome enemy, one of the greatest of the spirit world, a dragon whose spiky tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky, that is, seduced other angels to join his rebellious conspiracy (Revelation 12:3-4). What a dreadful thought – this evil, worldwide, powerful spirit is committed to dragging you off to hell too.

I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. (Psalm 139:14)

God created the body and soul of Adam and Eve before the fall. But He also created our bodies and souls after the fall. Even though they are corrupt, God still acknowledges them as His work.

The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. 16 You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing. (Psalm 145:15-16)

God provides for and sustains His creation. The image is of a person feeding doves. This King providentially cares for and sustains each of His creatures, from the amoeba to the angels.

As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him. (Psalm 103:13)

This compares God's manner of dealing with us to that of a loving father. Good parents love the children and hope for the best from them, but they do not expect or demand more than their children are capable of performing at a given age and level of ability. God knows the limitations imposed on us by our present physical and spiritual weaknesses. He does not demand from us more than we can perform. What we are incapable of doing Christ has done for us.

What shall I render to the LORD for all his benefits to me? (Psalm 116:12)

Israel was freed from the chains of slavery in Egypt for a purpose, so that they could serve the Lord in the land he would give them. We have been freed from the chains of slavery to sin for a purpose, so that we can serve the Lord by proclaiming his glory in the presence of others. We can never repay God in the sense that we can do enough to compensate the Lord adequately for what he has done for us. But we can "repay" him in the sense that we honor him with love and gratitude which is an appropriate expression of thanks for what he has done.

behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. (Matthew 28:20)

He promised to be not only with these disciples but also with all who would subsequently believe after them. Jesus speaks to all believers as if to one body. Do not speak to me, he says, of the difficulties you will face, for 'I am with you,' as the one who makes all things easy

The blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. (1 John 1:7)

Only Christ's blood could atone and has atoned for the sin of the world. He alone is righteous. This is true not only according to the merit of Christ's blood that was once attained on the cross.

"This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." (Matthew 17:5)

Keep on hearing him. We too are directed to the voice of Christ, to Christ's Word, which is God's Word, and not to wonderful visions. We have enough in his Word. That is a bright light, which gives light to us in this dark world, and shows us the way of salvation. Refusing to listen to the Prophet Moses (Deut 18:15) as he speaks to us through Scripture (Jn 5:39) and those who proclaim his message (Lk 10:16), is a serious matter indeed, for it signifies that one is not a child of God (Jn 8:47)

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich. (2 Corinthians 8:9)

Christ took on Himself the poverty of our sin in order that we might share in His royal treasures. He gave up divine riches during His earthly life in order that we and all who trust in Him would be made eternally wealthy.

Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:7)

Every military strategist knows that warfare is waged not only with weapons but also with psychology. Breaking the enemy's confidence and will to resist can be just as effective in defeating him as a frontal assault. Satan knows this. He floods us with propaganda that his evil ways are inevitable, good, harmless, irresistible, and fulfilling. Resist him! Fight! Armed with God's Word, you are stronger than he, and he will flee from you!

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

A summary of the gospel and its logic. Christ, the only entirely righteous one, at Calvary took our sin upon himself and endured the punishment we deserved, namely, death and separation from God. Thus, by a marvelous exchange, he made it possible for us to receive his righteousness and thereby be reconciled to God. Our standing and our acceptance before God are solely in him (cf. 1Co 1:30). Again, all this is God's doing; all this is freely available to us because of the initiative of divine grace.

and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. (2 Corinthians 5:15)

True life is life with a new motive ... We cease to live for ourselves, our own interest, advantage, or success, and to begin to live for Him. Our object is to be used by Him in His work of redemption, and in the fulfillment through fellowship with Him of the purpose of God. It is often objected that there is no difference between Christians and non-Christians. There ought to be. The difference may not show itself in outward actions or habits. The non-Christian may do his work, or care for his family as the Christian. The real difference will be in motive. The motive for the Christian is the love of Christ. Whatever he does, he does for Christ.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

The one who is in Christ is the person who by faith had made the death and resurrection of Christ his or her own. God no longer sees the old, pre-Christ person. That, says Paul, has gone, and a new person has come. The word translated has come has in it the idea of something that started in the past and continues to be a new creation in the eyes of God.

And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. (Philippians 1:6)

The apostle certainly is not advocating overconfidence here. Nor is he implying that once a person has been brought to faith he cannot lose the blessings God has given. In the very next chapter he urges believers to use diligently the spiritual weapons and powers the Lord has given them to fight against sin and temptation and to grow in faith.

God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:4)

God's desire to rescue us from sin and death embraces everyone and excludes no one. All people are not saved, however, because many reject the Word and resist the Holy Spirit.

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, 3 who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases. (Psalm 103:2-3)

In one sense every sickness is a result of sin. If sin had not entered the world, there would be no sickness. Every sickness reminds us that we are sinners living in a sinful world. Sometimes a specific sickness is the result of a specific sin. Sickness transmitted or caused by drug abuse or sexual immorality are examples of such disease. However, we cannot draw the conclusion that every sickness is the result of a specific sin. God may have other reasons for allowing sickness to enter our life.

If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? 4 But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared. (Psalm 130:3-4)

God has perfect knowledge of our sins, but he does not charge them against us, because Christ paid for them. Knowing God's forgiveness increases our sense of awe before Him.

that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5:10)

When the Savior died, God's justice was satisfied. His anger was appeased. God was reconciled to the whole world. This does not mean, however, that all the world has received the benefits of Christ's atoning sacrifice. The sinner enjoys peace with God only when he comes to faith.

Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. (Romans 8:33)

Only God himself could bring charges against his elect, but he himself has justified us by the sacrifice of his Son. The Judge is himself the Redeemer! Because of Christ, our record before God is clean. We are exonerated!

that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5:19)

When the Savior died, God's justice was satisfied. His anger was appeased. God was reconciled to the whole world. This does not mean, however, that all the world has received the benefits of Christ's atoning sacrifice. The sinner enjoys peace with God only when he comes to faith.

And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, 27 whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. (Job 19:26-27)

Job is certain that there will be a glorious resurrection of the body on the Last Day, that the very skin that clothed him during his mortal life will again cover the flesh that has become subject to decay and corruption. From this very same body, Job knows that he will see God.

pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

It is not possible for us to spend all our time with words of prayer on our lips, but it is possible for us to be all our days in the spirit of prayer, realizing our dependence on God for all that we have and are . . . Where there is such an inward state it will find outward expression in verbal prayer.

Who can discern his errors? Declare me innocent from hidden faults. (Psalm 19:12)

So that he will not lose these blessings, David prays that the Lord will preserve him from sins of every sort. He recognizes that sin is so deeply ingrained in his nature that he often sins without realizing it. He asks God to forgive even those sins which he fails to confess because of his ignorance.

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 Corinthians 1:8-9)

This is not so to be understood as if our confession were the condition which moved God to forgive. He is and remains the same. One should never think that daily confession of one's sins should annoy or weary Him.

a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. (Isaiah 42:3)

Someone who is weak. The servant (Jesus) will mend broken lives.

Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life. (Revelation 2:10)

Here is signifies eternal life. The crown is not earned by any effort or striving, but is a pure gift of God's grace and favor. First the cross, then the crown.

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. 14 Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. 16 In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; 17 and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, (Ephesians 6:10-17)

This famous picture sums up the Letter. The armor represents both a promise of divine protection and an exhortation to battle. Like a general encouraging his troops, Paul tells us that the victory is certain because Christ has already won the war, and He has made us well-prepared to stand with Him to face any last-ditch assaults. In ancient legends, the weapons and armor of a hero could give certain victory to anyone who wore them (cf 1 Sam. 17:38). The armor Paul describes is not simply from God; it is God's own armor, what He Himself wore in battle. Dressed in Christ's armor, we look remarkably like Christ (Is. 49:2; 59:17; Rev. 1:13-16), for through Baptism we are clothed with Him.

The next page(s) will unpack the individual concepts included in the above verses.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God. (Ephesians 6:10-11)

The word “strong” means to “be made powerful.” The means of this strengthening are to be found in the vital energy which comes from union with Christ.

The complete outfit of a heavily armed soldier. The image may have occurred to Paul in prison by looking at his Roman guard, though the details are closer to OT models (the typical shin armor and spear of a Roman soldier do not appear in the list). A Christian must be encased in the armor of God from his head to his feet.

that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. (Ephesians 6:11)

Particularly false doctrine, designed to lead us away from God. Our chief enemy does not engage us in open warfare, but deals in wile (cleverness and subtlety) and stratagems.

We are reminded of Luther's words: "Deep guile and great might are his dread arms in fight; On earth is not his equal" in his “A Mighty Fortress is Our God” hymn.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 6:12)

These demons are spirit, spirits only, without flesh and blood, conscious beings, endowed with reason and will, but spirits of wickedness, whose entire thought, effort and seeking is pure wickedness, whose sole purpose is to destroy the works of God. And because they are spirits, they are members of a supernatural, super sensible, transcendental world.

Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. (Ephesians 6:13)

There are days that are especially full of difficulty and temptation, for which full concentration of the battle and the use of armor are especially necessary. To be sure, as long as the Christian lives in this evil world, there are for him many such days. The Christian's life goes from battle to victory, from victory to new, and ever more furious battle.

Think of Satan's attacks on Job. He used the weather, his wife, diseases, his friends, to make his life very miserable. Some people suffer from physical ills. Some from mental ills. Some from emotional problems. Some suffer innocently because of terrible diseases and calamities.

Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth. (Ephesians 6:14)

A belt holds loose clothing in preparation for moving quickly. God's truth alone can counter the devil's lies.

Truth, here is used in a comprehensive sense, denoting honesty; sincerity of profession in opposition to all sham, levity, hypocrisy; and likewise the element of “truth” in Jesus (5:21), the substance of the gospel revelation. We are to wrap it around us.

and having put on the breastplate of righteousness. (Ephesians 6:14)

This is the righteousness of Christ put on by faith. No righteousness of our own could be proof against Satan. The breastplate covers the vital organs, especially the heart. Righteousness is the central part of all saving truth. The heart of the Word makes our heart invulnerable against the devil.

and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. (Ephesians 6:15)

A Roman soldier wore half boots studded with nails, to help him stand firm. The preaching of the Gospel of peace has ironically, prepared us for battle. The good news of peace keeps us upright and firm.

In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one. (Ephesians 6:16)

Arrows were dipped in pitch and set alight. In defense, Roman soldiers soaked their full-length, leather-covered wooden shield in water before battle.

A Christian armed with faith, can overcome Satan. The fiery darts here represent the doubts, lusts, temptations, fears, etc. which Satan uses against us. Sooner or later every Christian understands what is meant by these words of Paul. Fiery arrows are destructive, a frightening prospect. With Christian faith we can quench them.

and take the helmet of salvation, (Ephesians 6:17)

The helmet is very important. Think of how important a helmet is for motorcycle riding in our day. Many die because they do not wear a helmet. Likewise the helmet was very important for the soldier. Injuries to the head can be fatal. The helmet both protected the soldier and provided a striking symbol of military victory.

and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, (Ephesians 6:17)

Now comes the sword, the only offensive weapon in the list. The Holy Spirit owns and gives this sword to us. What is it? The Word of God. Paul is thinking of a variety of uses of the Word: preached, read, sung, spoken, meditated. The Christian meditates in the Word of God day and night. Where you have the Word, there you have God. Where you have God, there you have life and victory.

praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance,. (Ephesians 6:18)

Prayer is not part of the armor (which is entirely God's work), but a transition to Paul's concluding words. In our weakness, the Spirit leads our prayer.

What he is advocating is not some dramatic or showy charismatic praying. Rather he is indicating that only through Christ can anyone properly approach the triune God. An essential feature of prayer is that it comes from a heart filled with faith

Stanza 3 of the hymn "Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus" (LSB 660) says it well when it states: "Stand up, stand up for Jesus; Stand in His strength alone. The arm of flesh will fail you, Ye dare not trust your own. Put on the

Gospel armor; Each piece put on with prayer."

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. (Romans 8:37)

In sports when one team totally dominates another and the score is really far apart it is called a blowout. Paul is addressing a group Christian Romans. Their situation was very dire and they were threatened on every side.

The word "conquerors" means "to prevail completely." Paul literally says that they and we will be "hyper-victorious" or "super-conquerors." When difficult and scary situations surround us we can be "blowout winners" because God loves us. He loved us so much that he died for us. That makes us blowout winners no matter the situation.

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. 3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. (Romans 8:1-4)

Paul now concisely summarizes God's reverse declaration for those in Christ: "Not guilty!" Luther states: "We fell under God's wrath and displeasure and were doomed to eternal damnation, just as we had merited and deserved. There was no counsel, help, or comfort until this only and eternal Son of God – in His immeasurable goodness – had compassion upon our misery and wretchedness. He came from heaven to help us (John 1:9). So those tyrants and jailers are all expelled now. In their place has come Jesus Christ, Lord of life, righteousness, every blessing, and salvation. He has delivered us poor, lost people from hell's jaws, has won us, has made us free (Romans 8:1-2), and has brought us again into the Father's favor and grace." (LC II 28-30) (TLSB)

And he had to pass through Samaria. 5 So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour. 7 A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." 9 The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) 10 Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living Water." (John 4:4-7, 9-10)

Jesus knows how much God loves us just as we are. We, too, are sinful people in need of help from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Jesus knows how thirsty we are. Jesus knows we are desperate for the living water only he can give. So Jesus goes down – down, even into death, to fetch us that gift. He brings it back to us, out of death into life, at his resurrection. And now he quenches our thirst with endless love, forgiveness, and salvation.

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? 33 Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. (Romans 8:31-34)

Earthly defenders may leave once the trial is over. Not Jesus! Christ now sits at the right hand of God; He has the same power, honor and Godhead as God. Therefore, when He intercedes with God for us, when He entreats for us when we sin, the goal of this intercession is certainly also reached. Christ's intercession is the continuous urging of His bloody merit before God.

The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. (Genesis 1:2)

Our catechism tells us that the work of the Holy Spirit brings us to faith and also enables us to lead a godly life.

Our verse tells us one way that he keeps us safe from all that which would harm us. Moses uses the verb "hover elsewhere to describe the action of a mother eagle hovering over her nest, providing for her young and protecting them. The life-giving Spirit of God was active at the creation, preserving what God had created , universe for what he had in mind.

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. (Romans 8:18)

All the troubles which can come upon us Christians are with us only at this present time, for the length of this fleeting life, at the worst, for a moment as compared with the coming eternal life. And it is light, easy to be borne, comparatively speaking. But the time is coming, and that soon, when the eternal glory will be revealed to us, and this is so wonderful, so great and extensive, so weighty and endless that the slight oppression of the life on earth will be forgotten. The miracle is so great which is to follow this present tribulation as though produced by it, though it is a reward of grace, that Paul cannot find words enough to express the thought that is clamoring for utterance. Exceedingly, abundantly, from one excess to another, will God give us the glory which He has prepared since before the foundation of the world for them that love Him.

And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. (Genesis 1:31)

God makes all things good. He takes great care to place man and woman in the garden to care for the things that He created. Sin has placed the things God created, including us, in bondage to death and decay. Yet Jesus' death and resurrection has restored the things of God's creation just as it has restored us. Indeed, God even used His creation to accomplish our salvation: a cross made of wood; the water of Baptism; the bread and wine of the Eucharist; the printed words on the page in, with, and under which He reveals His Word of life to us. (TLSB)

I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. (Genesis 1:13)

After the fearsome yearlong experience on the ark, God reassures Noah and his family that he will never again send a universal flood. As time would soon tell and continues to tell, no amount of amazing rescues and rainbow sightings can keep humankind, including God's own people, from falling into sin. But God is faithful to his covenants, even when people are not. The message of every rainbow tells us he is faithful to his promise to provide a Savior. (TLSB)

The same night he arose and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. 23 He took them and sent them across the stream, and everything else that he had. 24 And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. 25 When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched his hip socket, and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. 26 Then he said, "Let me go, for the day has broken." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." 27 And he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." 28 Then he said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed." (Genesis 32:22-28)

Alone and faced with danger, Jacob finds God to be his adversary. Yet faithful Jacob wrestles and receives a new name and God's blessing. It does not always seem that God is on our side. Sometimes He causes Christians to bear trials, temptations, and suffering—i.e., the cross. Yet, this is not to destroy us, but to strengthen us and finally bless us. Christian faith clings to God's Word of mercy in Jesus Christ. (TLSB)