

Kadosh Marian Voice

Holiness Firmness Truthfulness Faithfulness



Our Lady of Sorrows

Q3 2023 Edition

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ABOUT KADOSH MARIAN MINISTRIES

“Kadosh” In Jewish thinking, “The Holy One, blessed be He” (hakkadosh, barukh hu) is one of the most commonly used designation for God. **“Marian”** is a given name, the Hebrew meaning of Marian is “the precious one” or “unique from the word” or “Mariam”

Kadosh Marian Ministries is a non-profit organization with its roots across the world. It is also established since 1994 as an approved charitable trust in UK, subsequently in India and New York. Kadosh Marian Ministries obtained approval for the area of operation to include USA, Canada, Europe, Asia, Middle East and Africa with the following objectives: -

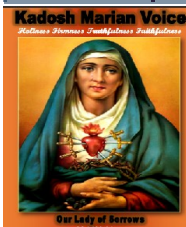
- Conducting certificate oriented theological courses duly awarded by Catholic Dioceses, and various international accredited universities.
- Conducting Charismatic Renewal services to revive the trooping spirit of the flagging faithful.
- Administering Sacraments by ordained Catholic Priests and Bishops.
- Promoting devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary.
- Conducting guidance, counselling and healing through deliverance services to the needy, lonely and the afflicted ones.
- Participating to feed 200 poor people daily.
- Participating to provide pension to 75 widows monthly.
- Participating to provide scholarship for 302 children annually.
- Visiting refugee camps and providing food, clothes and medicines.
- Contributing to build five homes for poor families in a year minimum.

We welcome you to join us, slake the thirst, and enjoy the abundance of Spirit of the Sovereign Lord – Immanuel. All the above charitable activities are routed in consultation with Catholic Priests and Bishops.

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Front cover is dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows. In September we celebrated the feast of Our Lady of Sorrows. We have included a beautiful write up on page 5 about the feast and its origin by Rev William Saunders

EDITORIALY

Points to ponder

Anyone who happens to read this editorial will agree with me that every moment of our life is new start or a fresh beginning. The Lord whom we praise and worship is fond of new beginning and fresh start and is certainly as well as constantly looking forward to improving the quality of our life and to add a new dimension to our spiritual growth and material prosperity. Do the will of the Lord and you will have your reward not only hereafter but here as well.

It is needless to mention that we love Mondays. Why? Because each Monday provides us a new start and fresh beginning. God has given us Mondays, Birthdays and New Years. Every single day represents fresh start. The Bible is suffused with numerous epic incidents as to provoke our thoughts and commit ourselves for reformation and transformation. God transformed the life of Joseph, Moses, Noah, Jonah, Jeremiah, David, Ruth, Mary, Peter, Paul, Matthew, Zacchaeus, the woman at the well and many others. If a metamorphosis is possible with those men and women, why not with you or me? Why not here and now?

God is waiting on us and we are ignoring him and on the other hand, we quite often think the other way round. Whenever we think that we are at our wits end or lost our bearing, remember we have a safe sanctuary in the august person of Jesus and recite the serenity prayer:

God, grant me the **Serenity** to accept the things I cannot change
Courage to change the things I can do and **Wisdom** to know the difference.

One of the cardinal points of our Christian faith is that our God is the God of second chances, fresh starts and new beginning. We don't fail. Because it is: FIRST ATTEMPT IN LEARNING. (FAIL). According to Mathew Kelly, a famous Christian writer and preacher Jesus is the ultimate new beginning. We will certainly progress despite the pitfall, if we cling close to our constant companions who is none other than JESUS. An unconditional offer the scripture is heralding you and me: Ask and it will be given to you; search and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you (Mathew 7.7)

God the father wants us to know Jesus .If there is one person whom we should get to know in a deeply personal way , it is Jesus, the carpenter from the Nazareth, the itinerant preacher, the Son of God, the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the Lamb of God, the new Adam, the Messiah, the Alpha and Omega, the chosen one, the light of the world, the God-man (theanthropic), who wants good things for us more that we want them for ourselves, the healer of our souls.

Think about all the people in your family--- your immediate family or extended family, your friends, your close circle of colleagues and comrades or people whom you happened to meet by chance or by choice and ask a question to yourselves: where is the place for Jesus on the spectrum of people in your life? The answer will be "I don't know Jesus anywhere near as well as I should and my relationship is not as dynamic as it should be."

How would you describe Jesus to someone who has no idea about Jesus? Our response will be lukewarm and the story of Jesus will not be suitably presented nor could we say: "my life is my message". When we remove ourselves from the story of Jesus Christ, we become immune to the life-changing message of the gospel and become slaves to consumerism, commercialism, syncretism, relativism, materialism etc. etc.

It is time to rediscover Jesus. Whenever we make an effort to rediscover he surprises us. He confounds the stereotypes, reveals unconsidered possibilities, rearranges our priorities, liberates us from the chaos of the world, reminds us what matters the most and what matters the least, and brings order to our life. Jesus fills us with the light-heartedness that comes from knowing the fact that our Father in heaven does have a plan- even when we are too blind to see, too arrogant to trust it or too foolish to surrender to it.

Finally who is Jesus? The answer is: Jesus is God's invitation for us to live an incredibly rich, abundant and fulfilling life. He is a Good Shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. Therefore be Christo centric to avoid being eccentric. Jesus wants to have a deep and dynamic relationship with you and me for sure. All the baptized Christians are gifted with Holy Spirit and therefore our voice should be the voice of Jesus.

Our hands should be the hands of Jesus and our hearts should be the heart of Jesus. And certainly we must put in all our endeavors to seek God's blessings for their realization in an attempt at imitation of Christ.



ADV EARNEST PETER
MANAGING EDITOR
LONDON



The Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows

In September we celebrated the feast of Our Lady of Sorrows. Would you please explain for me this feast and its origin?



The title, Our Lady of Sorrows, given to our Blessed Mother focuses on her intense suffering and grief during the passion and death of our Lord. Traditionally, this suffering was not limited to the passion and death event; rather, it comprised the seven dolours or seven sorrows of Mary, which were foretold by the Priest Simeon who proclaimed to Mary, This child [Jesus] is destined to be the downfall and the rise of many in Israel, a sign that will be opposed and you yourself shall be pierced with a sword so that the thoughts of many hearts may be laid bare (Luke 2:34-35). These seven sorrows of our Blessed Mother included the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt; the loss and finding of the child Jesus in the Temple; Mary's meeting of Jesus on His way to Calvary; Mary's standing at the foot of the cross when our Lord was crucified; her holding of Jesus when He was taken down from the cross; and then our Lord's burial. In all, the prophesy of Simeon that a sword would pierce our Blessed Mother's heart was fulfilled in these events. For this reason, Mary is sometimes depicted with her heart exposed and with seven swords piercing it. More importantly, each new suffering was received with the courage, love, and trust that echoed her fiat, let it be done unto me according to Thy word, first uttered at the Annunciation.

This Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows grew in popularity in the 12th century, although under various titles. Granted, some writings would place its roots in the eleventh century, especially among the Benedictine monks. By the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the feast and devotion were widespread throughout the Church.

Interestingly, in 1482, the feast was officially placed in the Roman Missal under the title of Our Lady of Compassion, highlighting the great love our Blessed Mother displayed in suffering with her Son. The word *compassion* derives from the Latin roots *cum* and *patior* which means to suffer with. Our Blessed Mother's sorrow exceeded anyone else's since she was the mother of Jesus, who was not only her Son but also her Lord and Savior; she truly suffered with her Son. In 1727, Pope Benedict XIII placed the Feast of Our Lady of Compassion in the Roman Calendar on Friday before Palm Sunday. This feast was suppressed with the revision of the calendar published in the *Roman Missal* of 1969.

In 1668 the feast in honor of the Seven Dolours was set for the Sunday after September 14, the Feast of the Holy Cross. The feast was inserted into the Roman calendar in 1814, and Pope Pius X fixed the permanent date of September 15 for the Feast of the Seven Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary (now simply called the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows). The key image here is our Blessed Mother standing faithfully at the foot of the cross with her dying Son: the Gospel of St. John recorded, Seeing His mother there with the disciple whom He loved, Jesus said to His mother, 'Woman, there is your son.' In turn He said to the disciple, 'There is your mother.' (John 19:26-27). The Second Vatican Council in its *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* wrote, A...She stood in keeping with the divine plan, suffering grievously with her only-begotten Son. There she united herself, with a maternal heart, to His sacrifice, and lovingly consented to the immolation of this Victim which she herself had brought forth (#58).

St. Bernard (d. 1153) wrote, Truly, O Blessed Mother, a sword has pierced your heart.... He died in body through a love greater than anyone had known. She died in spirit through a love unlike any other since His (*De duodecim praeogativis BVM*).

Focusing on the compassion of our Blessed Mother, our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, reminded the faithful, Mary Most Holy goes on being the loving consoler of those touched by the many physical and moral sorrows which afflict and torment humanity. She knows our sorrows and our pains, because she too suffered, from Bethlehem to Calvary. 'And thy soul too a sword shall pierce.' Mary is our Spiritual Mother, and the mother always understands her children and consoles them in their troubles. Then, she has that specific mission to love us, received from Jesus on the Cross, to love us only and always, so as to save us! Mary consoles us above all by pointing out the Crucified One and Paradise to us! (1980).

Therefore, as we honor our Blessed Mother, our Lady of Sorrows, we honor her as the faithful disciple and exemplar of faith. Let us pray as we do in the opening prayer of the Mass for this feast day: Father, as your Son was raised on the cross, His Mother Mary stood by Him, sharing His sufferings. May your Church be united with Christ in His suffering and death and so come to share in His rising to new life. Looking to the example of Mary, may we too unite our sufferings to our Lord, facing them with courage, love, and trust.



Father William Saunders is pastor of Our Lady of Hope parish in Potomac Falls, Virginia. He is dean of the Notre Dame Graduate School of Christendom College. The above article is a "Straight Answers" column he wrote for the Arlington Catholic Herald. Father Saunders is the author of *Straight Answers*, a book based on 100 of his columns, and *Straight Answers II*.





WHAT IS EXPECTED OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH AND EVERY ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ?

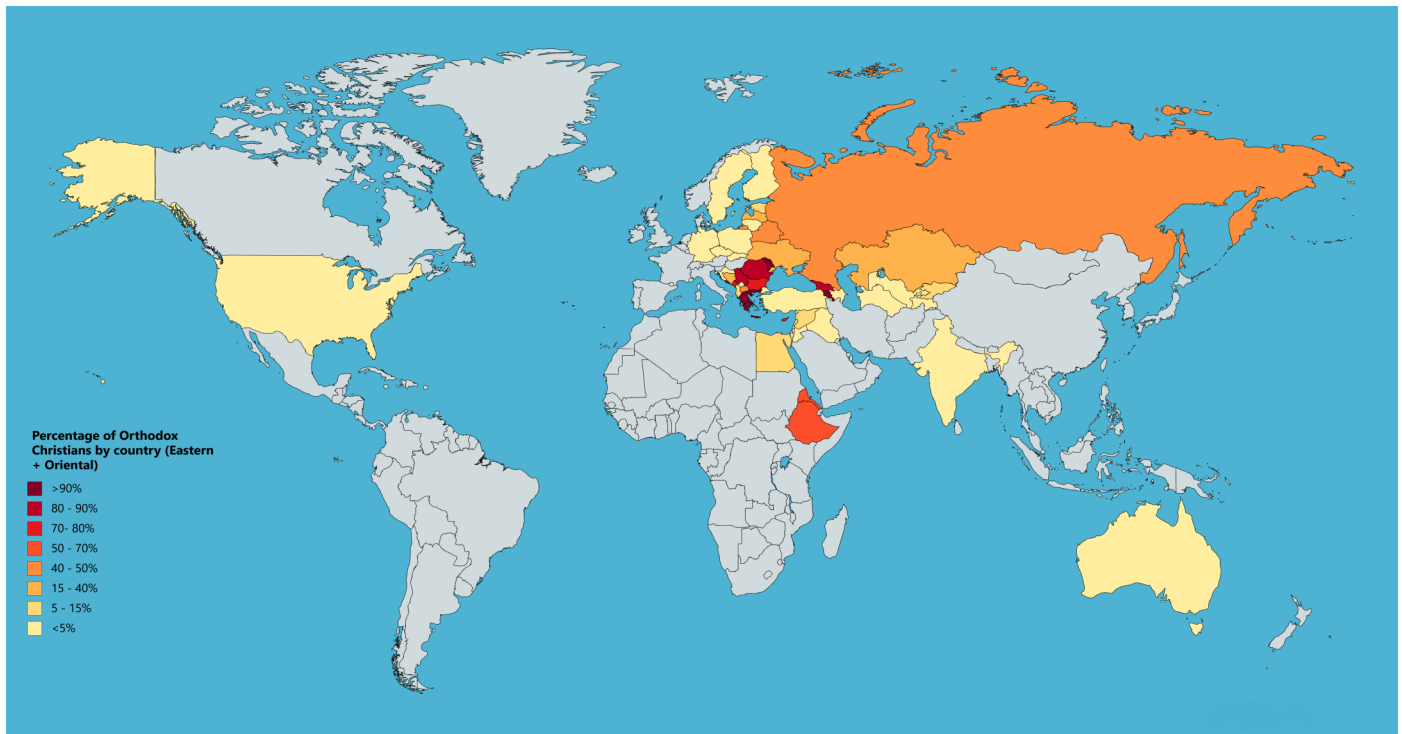


H.G. Dr. Youhanon Mar Demetrios Metropolitan & President, Catholicos of the East & Malankara Metropolitan

His Grace was Born on 18-12-1952 as the son of Palamoottil Mathews and Mercy. Home parish is St. Thomas Orthodox Cathedral, Kollam Diocese. After completing the formal education, Joined the Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam secured GST and BD degrees. His Grace took his Ph. D - Fordam University and M. R. E - Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, America. His Grace is well versed in different languages such as Malayalam, English, Greek, Hebrew, Amharic, Syriac and also took several key positions of the church. He is elected as the Metropolitan candidate on 17th February at the Malankara Association held at Sasthamkotta. He is consecrated as Metropolitan on 12th May 2010 at Mar Elia Cathedral, Kottayam. His Grace is serving the Delhi Diocese as its Metropolitan.

The subject “*Called Out to Serve: A Mission to Fulfill*” is a rather heavy topic, considering the terms in view. While space constraints preclude a full-scale study, a preliminary investigation locates three major issues that have to be investigated. The first is the issue of being called out, no doubt referring to the fundamental nature of the Church, the second would be the challenge “to serve” pointing to the nature of the Church’s task in the world, and finally, the realization of this task in the scope of how the Church functions and the role of every Christian in this task.

In a context where relationship with God is seen substantially as individualized, it must come as a reality check that the concept of salvation and redemption involves families, communities and all peoples. Thus, the call to Abraham to separate himself from his family and community serves as the primer for the eventual inclusion of *all* peoples within the promises given to him. We read in Gen 12:3: “*I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you, I will curse; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*” The same holds true for the election of Israel to become God’s chosen people, for in that election God intended it to be a light to all the peoples (Is 42:6; 49: 6). In both instances, that of Abraham and of Israel, the special identity bestowed on them originated in a separation from their immediate situation to be conferred with a different and specialized



identity- in the case of Abraham, it was the mark of circumcision, and for Israel, along with circumcision, God's Law. In both cases, it was a special calling given by God to leave the security of their immediate situation and to go out into an unknown future that God would guide- for Abraham it was to leave behind his parents and family and for Israel to forsake Egypt with its idolatry and immorality associated with this culture. Let us recall that it was Israel's experience of being led out into the arid Sinai desert that led to its being purged and purified of its dross to become a chosen people of God.

This principle applies to the Church, which fundamentally is a body "called out" from the world, for this is the meaning of its Greek term *ekklesia*. It is compounded of the preposition *ek* meaning "out of" and *kaleo* meaning "to call." Therefore, the basic character of the Church is established in its being called out from the world, to be a different and distinct entity. This does not entail a rejection of the world and all that is in it; rather what is intended is that the Church *always* keeps in view that it is One, Holy and Apostolic, as stated in the Nicene Creed. The High Priestly prayer of Jesus best describes the Church's matrix: *I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask that you protect them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world* (St. Jn 17: 15-16). The Orthodox Church does not consider Creation to be an addendum to be jettisoned in the final redemption in Christ's second coming, but an intrinsic and integral part of God's final design of a final transformation resulting in a new heaven and new earth (Cf. Is 66:22; Rev 21:1). But Jesus' words do underscore the fact that the Church **MUST** maintain its fundamentally different and distinct identity, one that separates it from the idolatrous and immoral culture of the world, a sphere of existence which in its present condition stands in recusant rebellion against God.

In so calling out the Church into a wilderness experience, the only security is provided by God through His Son Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit. From a theological perspective, the Church is seen as an existing from, and enduring to all eternity since it is the means for the redemption of **ALL Creation**, not just of humankind. Recall St. Paul's words in Ephesians 1: 20-23: *"God put His power to work in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. And He has put all things under His feet and has made Him head over all things for the Church which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all."*

Therefore, every act of prayer, every service, every liturgical celebration, in fact everything that the Holy Church, in which every Orthodox Christian participates, is not for Orthodox Christians alone, nor for Christians alone, but always for **ALL CREATION**. In all these acts of worship and adoration, the Church is participating in the ministry of Jesus Christ, who ministered to unite all Creation so that God's original design could be fulfilled. To cite the words of the late Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios, *"The whole church, participating in Christ's priesthood, offers itself on behalf of the whole world, not just on behalf of itself"* ("Christ's Ministry to the World" in The Kingdom of 'Diakonia' (Bible Studies), [Mar Gregorios Foundation, Kottayam, 2014] p.84). This process of being called out from the world, to be separate, to be holy, is what enables the Church to be constantly purged and purified of all the evil that it accrues in consequence of human involvement. It is in returning to the desert, as in the case of the renewed Israel, can the Church hear and listen to the voice of its Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and thereby be energized by the power of the Holy Spirit to pursue its commission of being

the Sacrament of the World.

We arrive at the second aspect of our theme, which is the Church's task of *diakonia* or service. If Christ's ministry can be summarized, in His own words, it was to bind Satan and to free humankind and creation from the ravages and slavery to corruption and decay (Cf. Mk 3:27; Rom 8: 16-23). The task entrusted to the Only-Begotten Son by the Father was to destroy the visceral hold of Death and Hades on humankind, the corollary of sin (Gen2:17; Rom 23). It is as part of this liberation that the healing of humankind's illnesses must be seen, an outstanding characteristic of Jesus' earthly ministry, and one that has been assumed by the Church. Just as Jesus Christ came to provide authentic life, and life in abundance (St. Jn 10:10), so also it now devolves on the Church to provide life to the world. Consequently, every aspect of the Church's work ultimately is with the objective of proffering authentic life to the world. Whether it is offering the Holy Eucharist, in its prayers and services, in its Sacraments, in its evangelization, healing and educational ministry, all of it is with the aim of providing this life to the world. Here it must be stressed that the world does offer an ephemeral and transitory illusion of life to its residents; so, the objective is always to distinguish between the inauthentic life the world offers and the true, eternal and authentic life found in Jesus Christ.

It has to be added that in realizing this objective, there is an immeasurable cost. The blood of the Church's witnesses (*martyrs*) reminds us that life itself has been spent in providing this authentic life to the world. The realization dawns on us that in so making available eternal life to all, Jesus Christ Himself suffered and died on the Cross. Just as the Church participates in Christ's victory over sin and death, so also it shares in this ministry of suffering. Constantly harking on this, the Church reiterates the message that without suffering there is no actual transformation—every act of love involves some sacrifice or another. Hear the words of the hymn in the *Shehimo* (Book of Common Prayers) for Wednesday Vespers:

*O Martyrs, you saw Him who hung on the Cross
Sitting at the right hand of God weaving your crowns
Therefore, you thought nothing of every torture
And cleansed your limbs in the blood, which flowed from
your necks
Blessed are you who trampled all pain
And did yearn for the love of Christ
Your memories are honoured in heaven and on earth.*

It is as a part of sharing in Christ's suffering (cf. Col 1:24) that the Church has undergone persecutions, the killing of its faithful, whether bishops, priests, evangelists, nuns or lay persons, whose blood now witnesses before God that they sacrificed their lives for the life of the world. And we are left in no doubt that this legacy has not been concluded, but is an ever-repeated experience of the Church.

How this is worked out is determined by how each Orthodox Christian perceives his/her ministry in this world. The commission received by Jesus Christ is now entrusted, not only to His Apostles whose doctrine we follow, but to all who are His disciples: "Jesus



File Photo : H.G. Dr. Youhanon Mar Demetrios meeting Pope Francis at Vatican

said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you'' (St. 20:21). All who are baptized are incorporated into the priesthood of Christ: "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty act of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (I Pet 2:9). Every Orthodox Christian in actuality is raised to three offices as a result of Holy Chrismation—Priest, Prophet/Prophetess, King/Queen. It is through these positions conferred by the Holy Spirit (*charismata*) that an Orthodox Christian works out his/her vocation in this life; for our purposes here, we focus on his/her priestly vocation. Every Orthodox believer is called by God to offer his/her life as an oblation on the heavenly altar before God on behalf of the world. This is the priestly vocation entrusted by Christ to each person.

For an Orthodox Christian seeking to fulfill his/her commitment to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, a quintessential requirement is be "in Christ", to be so connected to the Saviour that they operate as one. Without this essential connection, no person can produce any fruit whatsoever. Recall Jesus' words in St. John 15: "I am the Vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing." The corollary of this statement is that an Orthodox Christian is disciplined to work out his/her life in a deep and meaningful participation through the Church, the Body of Christ. It entails a prayer life that is nourished by the Sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist and sustained by the reading of the Holy Scriptures. Thus, sustained in a symbiotic relationship with the Vine, the believer is empowered and energized to undertake the onerous task of making life available to others—the liturgy after the liturgy, an very necessary aspect of the priestly service of each person to the world.

Most of St. Paul's letters are directed to difficult situa-

tions encountered in the various churches in the Roman Empire. While these complex situations differ from one place to another, their common agenda he prescribes for their solution is the upbuilding of the Church, no matter what the nature of the gift the Holy Spirit has gifted. If the Church is the Sacrament of the World, then it is in being devoted to building up the Church in each parish that the believer can make meaning of existence. Listen to the words of St. Paul in Ephesians: *The gifts He gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God. To maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ*” (Eph 4: 11-13). The primary locus, then, for each believer is to discover what gift (s) the Holy Spirit has endowed him/her, not for self-glorification, but to translate this into service of other members in a parish. And one should not view St. Paul’s catalogue of the gifts of the Holy Spirit as exhaustive; they are instances of what the Apostle to the Gentiles considered as examples. In fact, every talent vested in an individual could be considered as a divine gift. Elaborating on the necessary conditions for an authentic (Orthodox) Christian diakonia, Met. Paulos Mar Gregorios enumerates four characteristics:

1. The willingness to suffer with those whom one serves and to give of oneself
2. Humility as opposed to superiority about oneself, and respect as opposed to condescension towards those to be served;
3. Not using diakonia (service) as an occasion for domination, privilege and rank;
4. Willingness to identify with the served to the point of laying down one’s life for others.

(Excerpted from “To Serve and Not to Serve,” The



John 13:13-15 "You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you."

Kingdom of Diakonia, p.47).

Disciples entails walking in the footsteps of Jesus, the Pioneer and Perfecter of our faith (Heb 12:2). It is instructive to study this cited text in its entirety: “...[L]ooking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.” The disciple is not above the Guru (cf. St. Jn 15:20), which means that the promised glorification that awaits us has as its prelude suffering and persecution in this world. From the perspective of the teachings of the Orthodox Church, this is what is to be anticipated as each believer denies himself/herself, takes up the Cross given by Christ and follow after Him. Just as in the case of Jesus Christ, every disciple endures this life of shame and suffering in pursuing the glorious crown of righteousness that awaits every successful completion of the course set before us (Cf. II Tim 4:7-8). The graduated steps in this path of discipleship have been clearly set out- there is the call for self-denial on a daily basis, then to assume the burden of the Cross in whatever form it comes to each believer and then to follow after Christ. Along the way, what the Orthodox Christian has to encounter is shame, suffering and persecution. Such a lifestyle in effect showcases a veritable counter-culture to the world, since there is no room in the disciple’s life for personal retribution, revenge or seeking after joy here in this world. One has only to carefully consider the demands of the Sermon on the Mount (St. Mt Chaps.5-7) to appreciate how differently a Christian has to pattern his/her life, which stands in stark contrast to the culture advocated by this world. That experience of joy and glorification, therefore, awaits our reunion with Jesus and God the Father in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

The challenge presented by our chosen theme is, thus, both corporate and individual, both being two sides of the same coin. As God has envisioned the process of redemption and sanctification of the world through the Church, it calls for our indissoluble participation in the Body of Christ to make this vision a reality. Simultaneously, it is incumbent on every Orthodox Christian to hear this call and to make his/her life a channel of loving service to others, both within and outside the Holy Church. It is in this transformed life that we can visualize the fulfillment of this evangelistic summons given by our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory and honour, for ever and ever. Amen.

Met. Youhanon Mar Demetrios





“To have found God and still to pursue Him is the soul’s paradox of love, scorned indeed by the too easily satisfied religionist, but justified in happy experience by the children of the burning heart.”

- A.W. Tozer (1897-1963)
The Pursuit of God, pp. 14-15

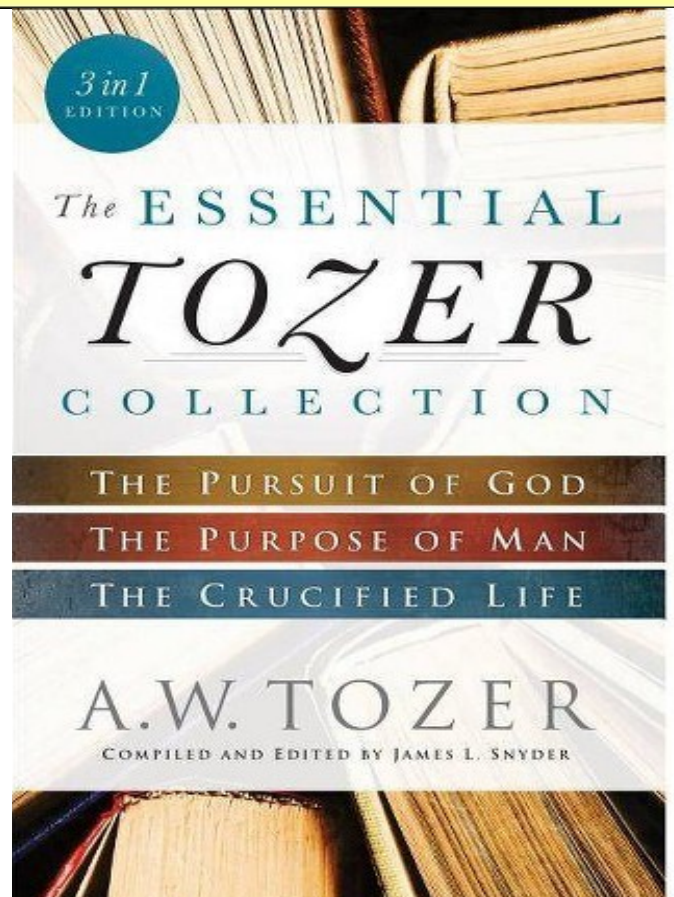
TOZER



John Thomas Pazhayidathu
New York

This presentation is based on one article from the book, *Essential Tozer*. This article is focused on people who are very skeptical about their faith. Many people believe because they are born in that faith community. They are not giving many thoughts to their faith as they are indulging themselves to their day to day materialistic needs. Those who give little thought find it difficult to believe. They are expecting an answer for their questions in a material realm. The faith is working in spiritual realm, and it can be experienced in action as we believe. Faith becomes real only when we engage our mind and spirit. But most of us are not engaging the mind and spirit into this equation. I hope that this presentation would help people to engage mind and spirit in their faith Journey.

Aiden Wilson Tozer (1897—1963) was an American pastor in the Christian and Missionary Alliance



and an author who emphasized the need for a deeper knowledge of God and development of the “inner life.” For this reason he has been described as an “evangelical mystic.” A.W. Tozer was extremely influential in evangelical Christianity in his generation and was often called a “*twentieth-century prophet.*”

Tozer, as he preferred to be called, was born April 21, 1897, in western Pennsylvania and lived in poverty during his youth. When he was about 15, his family moved to Akron, Ohio. Before he was 17, he heard a street preacher who challenged his listeners to call on God, saying, “Be merciful to me a sinner.” This stuck with Tozer, and he went home and did just that, accepting Christ by faith. He began studying the Bible and reading good books, and he grew in his faith. He had no formal education (neither high school nor college), but he taught himself and would eventually receive two honorary doctorates. Throughout his life Tozer read in a wide variety of subjects including religion, philosophy, literature, and poetry.

In 1919, A.W. Tozer became the pastor of a small church in West Virginia and later of churches in Indiana and Ohio. In 1928, he became the pastor of the Southside Alliance Church in Chicago, with a congregation of about 80. Tozer was of slight stature, not very fashionable, and not a forceful speaker. However, the spiritual content of his messages along with his choice of words and clear presentation of ideas captivated his congregation. The congregation grew steadily, and eleven years later a new building was built to accommodate 800. In 1950, Tozer became the editor of Alliance Weekly (now Alliance Life), the official magazine of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. His editorials and articles gave him a nationwide platform and made him a popular spokesman for evangelical Christianity. In 1951, he began a weekly radio broadcast, which extended his influence. After 31 years as pastor of the Southside Alliance Church, Tozer accepted a call to the Avenue Road Alliance Church in Toronto, where he served until his death on May 12, 1963.

At his funeral, his daughter said, “I can’t feel sad. I know Dad’s happy. He’s lived for this all his life.” Tozer’s ministry was marked by an emphasis upon knowing God. He had the ability to get at the heart of what was truly important, putting the superficial and extraneous to the side. Tozer believed that he needed to challenge both intellect and soul, both mind and heart, and he did this consistently and with eloquence.

The ministry of A.W. Tozer continues today. Audio recordings of his sermons are readily available online. However, he is best known through his books, two of which are considered spiritual classics: *The Knowledge of the Holy* and *The Pursuit of God*. Some quotes from A.W. Tozer will help to illustrate the passion of his life:

“We are saved to worship God. All that Christ has done . . . leads to this one end.”

“I can safely say, on the authority of all that is revealed in the Word of God, that any man or woman on this earth who is bored and turned off by worship is not ready for heaven.”

“The reason why many are still troubled, still seeking, still making little forward progress is because they haven’t yet come to the end of themselves. We’re still trying to give orders, and interfering with God’s work within us.”

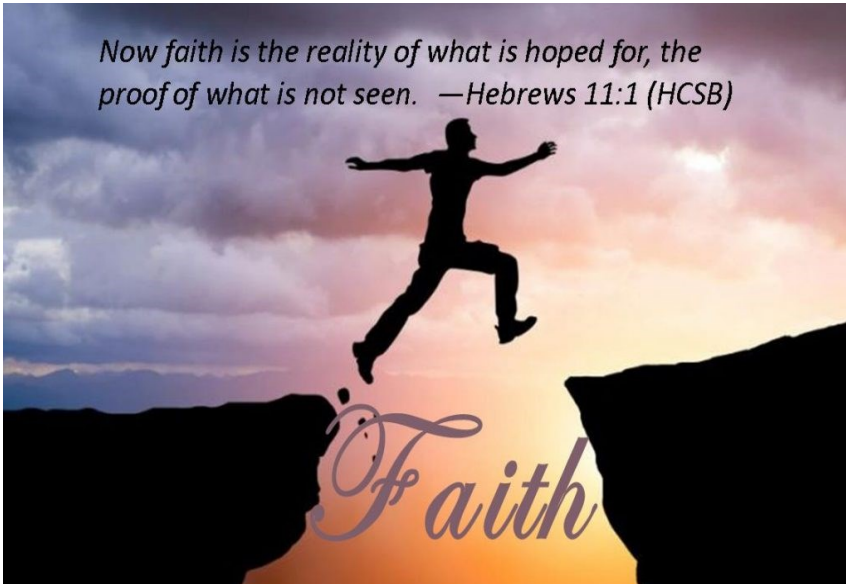
“Go back to the grass roots. Open your hearts and search the Scriptures. Bear your cross, follow your Lord and pay no heed to the passing religious vogue. The masses are always wrong. In every generation the number of the righteous is small. Be sure you are among them.”

“What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us. . . . Always the most revealing thing about the Church is her idea of God, just as her most significant message is what she says about Him or leaves unsaid, for her silence is often more eloquent than her speech.”

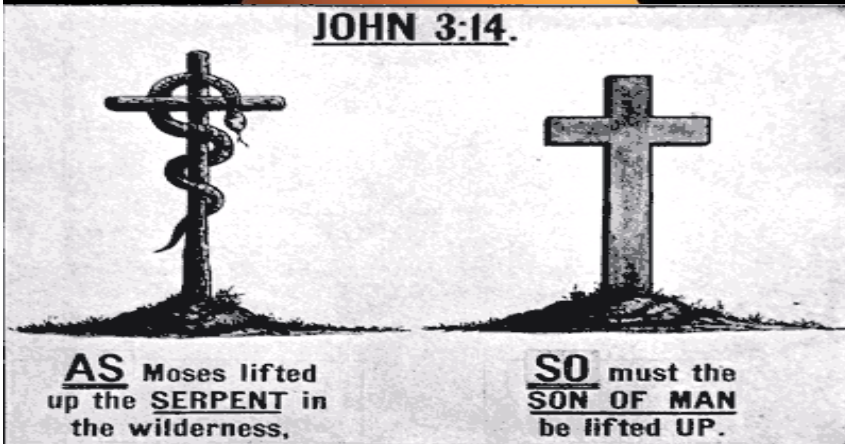
“We cannot grasp the true meaning of the divine holiness by thinking of someone or something very pure and then raising the concept to the highest degree we are capable of. God’s holiness is not simply the best we know infinitely bettered. We know nothing like the divine holiness. It stands apart, unique, unapproachable, incomprehensible, and unattainable. The natural man is blind to it. He may fear God’s power and admire His wisdom, but His holiness he cannot even imagine.”

An independent person who will have no prejudice against the Bible, will notice that certain hardware of plain truth standing out from the pages, as he reads the Bible—a divine road map. They are the spiritual principles behind God's dealing with people and these principles are woven into the writings of the holy men as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. As he reads on, he can summarize a number of these biblical truths as they become clear to him. The summary of these biblical truths will be the tenets of his biblical creed.

As we examine this summary, high on this list will be the '**Doctrine of Faith**'. This independent reader will conclude that faith is all important in the life of the soul. Faith will get us anything, take us anywhere in the kingdom of God. Without faith we cannot approach God, no forgiveness, no deliverance, no salvation and no spiritual life. By the time this independent reader reaches Hebrew chapter 11, faith will not seem strange to him. He will have read Paul's powerful defense of faith in Romans and Galatians epistles. From Church history he will understand the amazing power in the teachings of the early Church fathers.



Now if faith is so vitally important, one must ask what is faith? Simply put it, it is believing a promise, that it is taking God at his word, that it is believing bible and stepping out upon it. In the Old Testament, we have stories of persons who have had their prayers answered as a result of their faith. But in the New Testament there is practically no effort made to define faith other than what is written in Hebrew 11:1. It assumes the presence of faith and shows what it results in rather than what it is. Faith is a gift of God and faith comes by hearing and hearing the word of God. Thomas A. Kempis put it this way, I had rather exercise faith than know the definition of faith. Here we must think about faith as it may be experienced in action.



In the book of numbers faith is seen in action when Moses raises the serpent of brass. Serpent raised by Moses is anticipatory of the cross in Calvary. Many people were dead by the bite of serpent and Moses sought Lord for them. God gave them remedy against the bite of the serpent. He commanded Moses to make a serpent of brass and put it on a pole in sight of all people. Everyone that is bitten when he looks upon it shall live. Moses obeyed and whoever looked upon the brass serpent lived.

Jesus in his ministry is explaining to His listeners how they may be saved. He tells them that it is by believing. Then he refers to the above story in the book of Numbers "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the son of man be lifted up; that who so ever believe in Him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:14-15) Here we can notice two words 'look and believe' Looking in the old testament serpent is identical with believing in the new testament Christ. While Israel looked with their external eyes, believing is done with heart. Here we can conclude that faith is the gaze of a soul upon a saving God.

Many references we can see in the bible for looking unto God (Ps 34:5, Ps 123:1-2, Mathew 14:19) In Hebrew It is summed up for us that we are instructed to run life's race looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith. From all this we learn that faith is not once done act, but a continuous gaze of our heart at the triune God.

Believing is directing our heart's attention to Jesus and lifting the mind to behold the lamb of God, never ceasing for the rest of our lives. Distraction may hinder, but once the heart is committed to him, attention will return again upon Him. Faith by its very nature is scarcely conscious of its own existence. Like eyes which see everything never sees itself, faith is occupied with object upon which it rests. While we are looking at God, we do not see ourselves. The one who struggled to purify himself will fail to do so, but when he stops tinkering with his soul and looks away to the perfect one, will find real relief. It will be God working in him and walking with him.

Faith is redirecting our sight getting out of the focus of our own vision and getting God into focal point. Sin has

twisted our vision inward and made itself regarding. Faith looks out instead of in and whole life falls in into line. God's word induces us to lift our eyes unto the lord. The blessed work of faith begins when we lift our inward eyes to gaze upon God, God gazing back at us. When the eyes of the soul looking out to meet the eyes of God looking in, Heaven has begun right here on the earth.

Now the question is how and where we can start this process. What are the things we need to accomplish it. Most of the time people turn away because of the intensity and hardship of the process. But here God made it so simple that it is hard to believe.

If faith is the gaze of the heart at God, then observing it is one of the easiest things possible to do. It would be like God to make the most vital thing easy and place for the weakest and poorest of us to follow.

Now let us examine the salient features of this process. Several conclusions can be drawn from all of it.

It's simplicity.

Since believing is looking, it can be done without any special equipment or religious paraphernalia. Materials are subject to breakdown, but looking of heart can be done by anyone standing up or kneeling or lying down away from church.

It can be done at any time.

No season is superior to other seasons. God never made salvation depends upon new moons or holydays Also a person is not nearer to Christ on easter Sunday than any other days. As long as Christ sit on mediatorial throne, every day is a good day, and all days are days of salvation.

Not location specific.

No matter where you are you can do the blessed work of believing God. Lift your heart and let it rest upon Jesus and you are instantly in a sanctuary, no matter where you are. You can see God from anywhere, if your mind is set to love and obey Him.

As we constantly practice this habit of inwardly gazing upon God, we know that something inside out sees God. Even when we are engaged in earthly affairs, there is within us a secret communion always going on.

This doesn't mean that the ordinary means of grace have no value. Private prayers, bible meditation have its own value in our Christian life. Church attendance will enlarge our outlook and increase our love for others. Service, work and activity all are good and should be engaged in by every Christians. But at the bottom of all these things will be the habit of inward beholding God.

When worshippers gather and each one looking away to Christ, they are in heart nearer to each other than the one those who are consciously strive for closer fellowship.

Social religion is perfected when private religion is purified. The body becomes stronger as its members become healthier. The whole church of God gains when the members that compose it begin to seek a better and higher life.

When the habit of inwardly gazing at Godward becomes fixed within us, we shall be ushered into a new level of spiritual life.

The great test of faith is to
wait on God. . . not
expecting to push a button
and get whatever we want
now.

A. W. TOZER



TEACHER'S DILEMMA



By Prof Prem Elias

I am teaching; are they listening?
I think they are, but really are they?
I smile at the screen, but are they grinning?
I marvel at their silence; studious, aren't they?

Never have I to raise my voice
I hope they prick their ears
I don't mute my audio, but they do, don't they?
I am online but they never come on screen, do they?

I am striving, maybe they are yawning!
I call out a name, another replying
"Network issues sir!"
They always rescue their friends in distress!

"What an amazing, friendly, loving teacher!"
"How intelligent my students are!"
I am a teacher, no more a preacher
How clear-headed my students are!

Classes commence with "Good Morning sir!"
Classes come to a close with "Thank you sir!"
At times I hear "What's for lunch?"
Or a phantom voice "Where's my 'Munch'?"

My sixth sense tells me
'Big Brother' is watching.
Is he looking for the teacher's flaw?
The thought freezes my thought-flow.

My invisible students have no doubts to clear
Their body language, I cannot analyse
That's my dilemma "to teach or not to teach".
'The Hamlet' in me is on the prowl

One day I hope to see you in person
But how I can make out it's you?
You were always my "Ekalavyas"
With masks on, how to spot your "Dhrona"?

All is not bleak on our way;
A new dawn is not far away.
The pandemic has taught us many a lesson;
We have learned the hard way many a lesson.

Let's hope for the best
"If winter comes, can spring be far behind?"
"All's well that ends well"

*Prem K Elias is Emeritus Professor of
Fatima Mata National College,
Kollam, Kerala, India*





Nisha Jacob
Swindon, England

SOME FACTS ABOUT SAINT LUKE'S GOSPEL

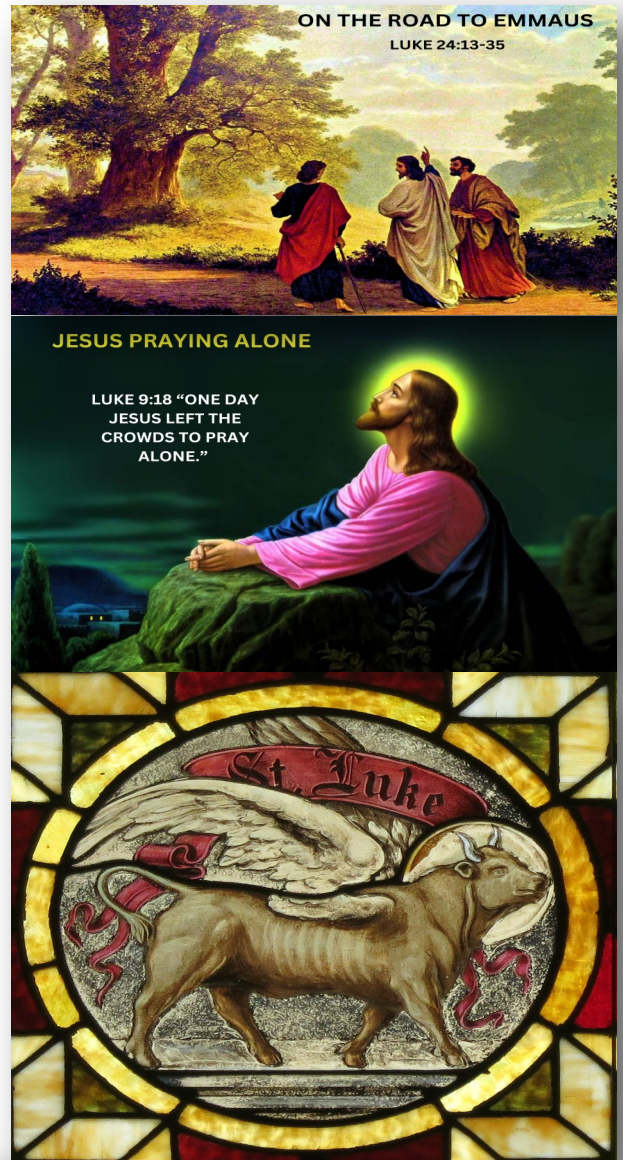
Saint Luke, whose feast we celebrate on 18th October is honoured by the Church as the writer of the Gospel which bears his name and the Acts of the Apostles. He was also one of the Paul's companions on his missionary journeys. St Paul mentions Luke three times in his letters.

- 1) **Philemon 1:24** mentions Luke as one of the fellow co-workers - "23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you, 24 and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and **Luke**, my coworkers."
- 2) In **2 Timothy 4:11** Paul mentions Luke was his only companion at that time. "11 Only **Luke** is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me in ministry."
- 3) In **Colossians 4:14** Paul mentions **Luke** was a *Physician*. Luke is therefore a patron saint of medical doctors. "14 Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas greet you."

Luke's Gospel has much in common with that of Matthew, but with some distinctive features of its own. Like Matthew, Luke seems to have borrowed much of Mark's Gospel, but adds plenty of teachings and sayings. Here are some facts or unique features about Luke's Gospel:

- * Some parables are very well know and very unique to Luke. For example "Parable of Prodigal Son" (Luke 15:11–32), "Good Samaritan" (Luke 10:25-37) and the "Lost Sheep" (Luke 15:1-7).
- * Luke alone tells the whole Christmas story (apart from the few bits in Matthew Gospel)
- * Luke's Gospel might have probably written in Antioch, for Gentile (non-Jewish) Christians around AD 80-90.
- * Luke aimed to show how Jesus reached out to all people, not just the Jews and the elite of society.
- * Women have a more important role in Luke than in the other Gospels.
- * Luke emphasises the kind, gentle compassionate nature of Jesus.
- * This is the Gospel which draws most attention to the presence and action of the Holy Spirit.

- * Only Luke includes the account of the journey to Emmaus, after the resurrection. (Luke 24:13-35)
- * The framework for the later part of the Gospel is Jesus's journey towards Jerusalem, knowing that His passion, death and resurrection await him there. Among the accounts of teachings and miracles, Luke often mentions this journey.
- * It shows importance of personal prayer. (Jesus spending time alone in the presence of His Father).
- * Luke is the only Gospel writer to have provided with a sequel. The Acts of Apostles, also by St Luke, tells of the coming of Holy Spirit on the Apostles, the first Christian communities, and the missionary work of St Paul and his companions, Luke himself projects as one of those companions.
- * There is a belief that Mary was one of Luke's sources of information - especially as he alone narrates the parts of the Christmas story involving her.
- * From the literary point of view, of the four Gospels Luke's has the most elegant, refined, and polished Greek - clearly written by someone who was a master of his own language.
- * The symbol of Luke's Gospel is a winged ox or bull, an animal used in ritual sacrifices. Near the opening of the Gospel, Zechariah the father of John the Baptist, is described as making sacrifices in the Temple. And this Gospel is the one which most emphasises the life of Jesus offered as a sacrifice.

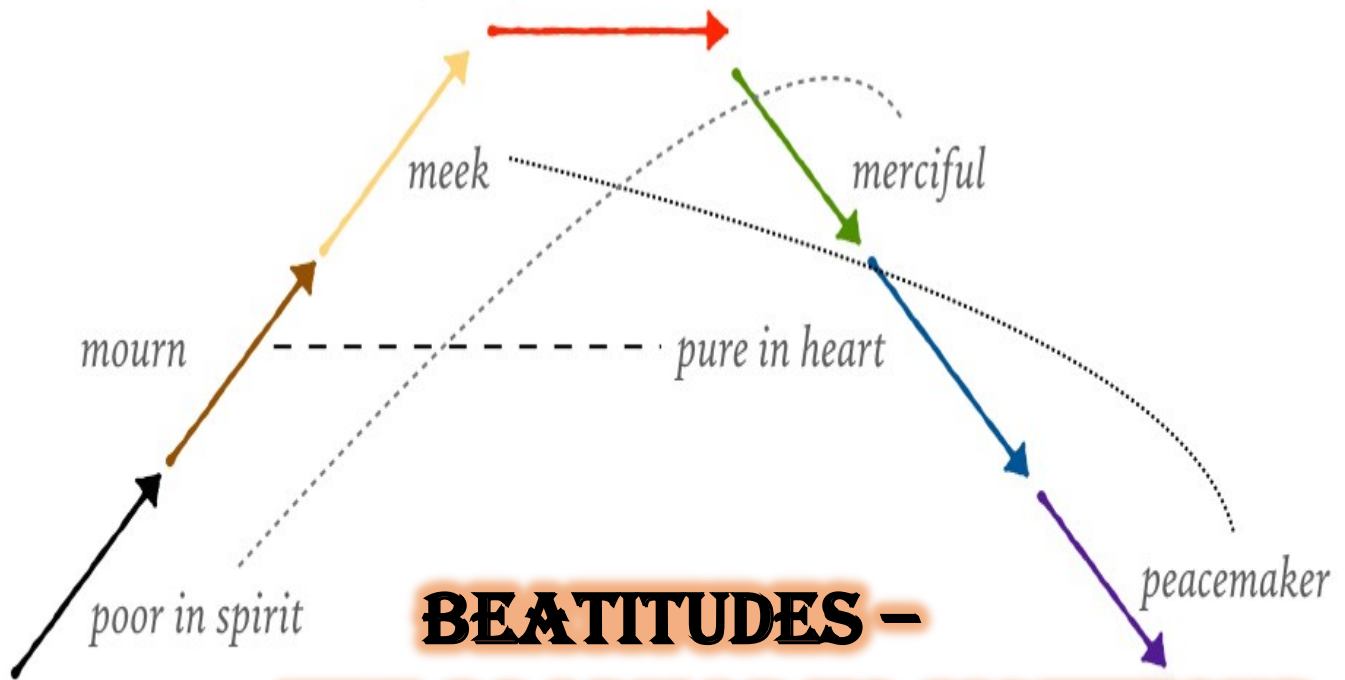


Male/Female Parallels in the Gospel of Luke

Male		Female	
1:5-25	annunciation to Zechariah	1:26-38	annunciation to Mary
1:67-79	song of Zechariah	1:46-56	song of Mary
2:25-35	prophecy of Simeon	2:36-38	prophecy of Anna
4:27	man from Syria	4:25-26	woman from Sidon
4:31-37	demon in man rebuked	4:38	fever in woman rebuked
5:19-26	desperate man forgiven	7:35-50	desperate woman forgiven
6:12-16	list of male followers	8:1-3	list of female followers
7:1-10	man's servant saved from death	7:11-17	widow's son saved from death
11:32	men of Nineveh	11:31	queen of the South
13:18-19	man with a mustard seed	13:20-21	woman with yeast
14:1-4	man healed on Sabbath	13:10-17	woman healed on Sabbath
15:4-7	man loses a sheep	15:8-10	woman loses a coin
17:34	two men asleep	17:35	two women at mill



hunger & thirst for righteousness "those who pursue the heart of God"



BEATTITUDES – THE ROADMAP TO RIGHTEOUS LIVING



SHIBU JOSEPH
Bahrain

THE MEANING OF BEATITUDE

The Beatitudes describe the blessedness of those who have certain qualities or experiences special to those belonging to the Kingdom of Heaven. The word beatitude is a state of utmost bliss. The Beatitudes are therefore, the roadmap Jesus gives to us to help us find the utmost bliss in this world and in the next.

They encourage humility, compassion, and a strong desire for justice. By following these teachings, Christians can strive to live a life that is not only pleasing to God but also makes a positive impact on those around them.

Each beatitude declares that a group of people usually regarded as afflicted is actually blessed. As we step into God's kingdom, we shall become more like those named as blessed—more meek, more merciful, more hungry for righteousness, more apt to make peace etc.

BACKGROUND

During the time of Jesus, the Jewish people were given a long list of strict rules and regulations taught by the Scribes and Pharisees through the law of Moses.

But no one had ever been able to fulfil all the requirements of the law and obtain righteousness.

Jesus was taking these impossible laws, bringing them down to their truest essence, then giving the proclamation with promises of provision from God, rather than judgment. He spoke to His audience as if these collective traits were not only attainable but theirs for the taking subject to conditions.

Jesus says in Matthew chapter 5 that “unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven”. The whole purpose of Jesus's message was to offer a new way—revealed truth—and everlasting life.

In contrast to the 10 Commandments given to Moses, Jesus gives the encouraging promises of the Beatitudes, listing the values in life which will lead to prosperity and salvation. The Beatitudes are seen as a key component of Christian teachings, and they offer guidance on how to live a blessed life.

OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES OF BEATTITUDES

Jesus' Beatitudes shows a great continuity with the Old Testament. For example,

Isaiah 61:2 is almost certainly alluded to in the second beatitude (Matt. 5:4), as it seeks “to comfort all who mourn.”

Also Matthew 5:5 alludes to **Ps. 37:11**. The pious Israelites who inherit the land have become the meek

followers of Jesus who inherit the whole earth.

Isaiah. 55:1-3 calls for the spiritually hungry and thirsty to come to the Lord to eat and drink.

Exod. 34:6 talks about God’s nature, highlighting his mercy (Ref. Matt.5:7)

Psalm 24:3-5 reminds us of Matthew 5:8 with its call for clean hands and a pure heart as a requirement for those who would come into God’s presence and receive his blessings

Psalm 34:14 reminds us of the blessing of peacemakers in Matthew 5:9

Matthew 5:12 alludes to the persecution of the prophets, described in the Old Testament,

Deutonomy 28:14 describes the blessedness of those who obey God.

Deutonomy 28:15-68 describes the curses for those who disobey God

BEATITUDES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

You will find Beatitudes mentioned in Matthew 5:3-12, Luke 6:20-23, Matthew 11:6, Luke 7:23 and John 20:29

The Beatitudes mentioned under Matthew 5:3-12 are eight profound guidelines Jesus revealed to His followers during His Sermon on the Mount. In the Gospel of Luke, it is the Sermon on the plains, in Jesus also pronounces the woes.

Beatitudes according to Matthew 5:3-12 are :

- Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Verse 3)
- Blessed are they who mourn: for they shall be comforted. (Verse 4)
- Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land. (Verse 5)
- Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill. (Verse 6)
- Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. (Verse 7)
- Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God. (Verse 8)
- Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. (Verse 9)
- Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Verse 10)

The Beatitudes according to Luke 6:20-23 are :

- Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom

of God.

- Blessed are you that hunger now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you that weep now, for you shall laugh.
- Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, on account of the Son of man!
- Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.

These are followed by the woes:

- But woe to you that are rich, for you have received your consolation.
- Woe to you that are full now, for you shall hunger.
- Woe to you that laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.
- Woe to you, when all men speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.

The Beatitudes unique to Matthew are the meek, the merciful, the pure of heart, and the peacemakers, while the other four are similar in Luke, but are followed almost immediately by four woes.

Jesus teaches us that if we live according to the Beatitudes, we will live a happy Christian life. The Beatitudes fulfill God’s promises made to Abraham and his descendants and describe the rewards that will be ours as loyal followers of Christ.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains that The Beatitudes “are the paradoxical promises that sustain hope in the midst of tribulation”. They provide directions for righteous living. These focus on characteristics believers need to possess. These beatitudes are not singled out for specific people. They are blessings applicable to all Christians.

The beatitudes encourage us and give us hope as we face each day knowing that we are called blessed!

No matter our age, job, or family role, if we apply the beatitudes to our life we will experience a joyful, fulfilled life.





SALT OF THE EARTH & LIGHT OF THE WORLD



Richard Alappat

Bahrain

Following the beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount in Mathew Chapter 5 Verses 13-14, our Lord Jesus teaching is on the Salt of earth & Light of the world.

Salt & Light

13 “You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.” 14 “You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. 15 No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”

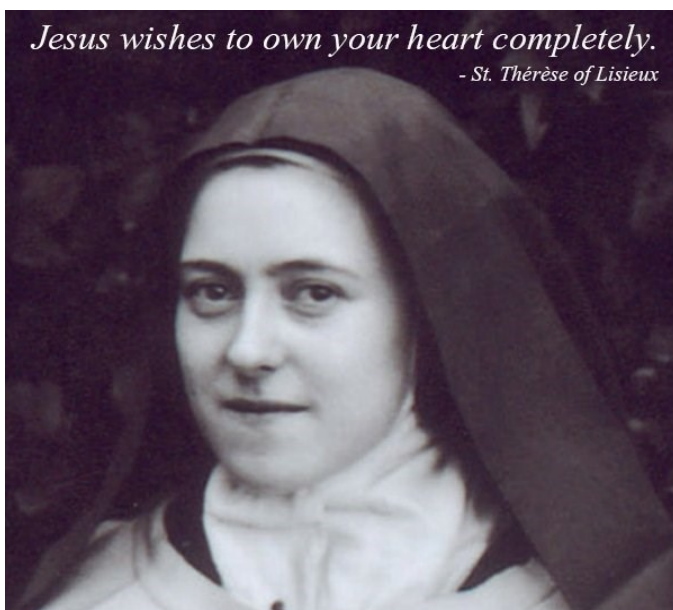
Notice in verse 13 Jesus addresses us as the “salt of the earth”. Consider salt, what are the roles of “Salt”?

- ◆ Salt as a **preservative** – it preserves food from becoming stale or corrupt. We must invite our Lord to enter our lives and preserve us from the corruption of sin. Our life must do the same for others by grace.
- ◆ It also adds **flavour** to food. We must help bring out Christ in others’ lives.
- ◆ It adds flavour by entering the food and, in a sense, disappearing. So, it must be with us. When our Lord enters our lives, He will also bring out our goodness in a way that the “flavor” of holiness is evident to others. In this way, we will be used as salt for others. This is especially done by our works of charity.

Notice in verse 14 Jesus addresses us as the “light of the world”.

- ◆ Christ is the **true** Light of the world.
- ◆ Light shining forth from you is Christ. Look at Psalm 34 verses 5 “Those who look to him are **radiant**, and their faces shall never be ashamed.”
- ◆ Our thoughts, words and actions must **reflect** the Light of Christ.

Every Christian has two primary duties in life. First, we must strive for personal holiness. And second, we must work to help others achieve this same degree of holiness. This is what it means to be the “salt of the earth” and the “light of the world.”



Saint Thérèse of Lisieux said in her autobiography, “I see now that true charity consists in bearing with the faults of those about us, never being surprised at their weaknesses, but edified at the least sign of their virtue.” She believed that this was especially the way we function as salt and light to others. We help to preserve others from sin by being merciful to them when they are weak. We enrich their lives by seeing their goodness and rejoicing in it. And we do so in a hidden way. By our gentleness and compassion, our kindness and mercy, we preserve others and help them to grow in God’s abundant grace. And we do so, many times, without them even realizing how God used us.

Christians stop serving that purpose when we stop living in faithfulness to God. The references to the Beatitudes in Mathew Chapter 5 verses 3-11 put that purpose in context. When Jesus’ followers stop being poor in spirit, living in repentance and meekness, having an appetite for righteousness, and being merciful, they stop serving their purpose

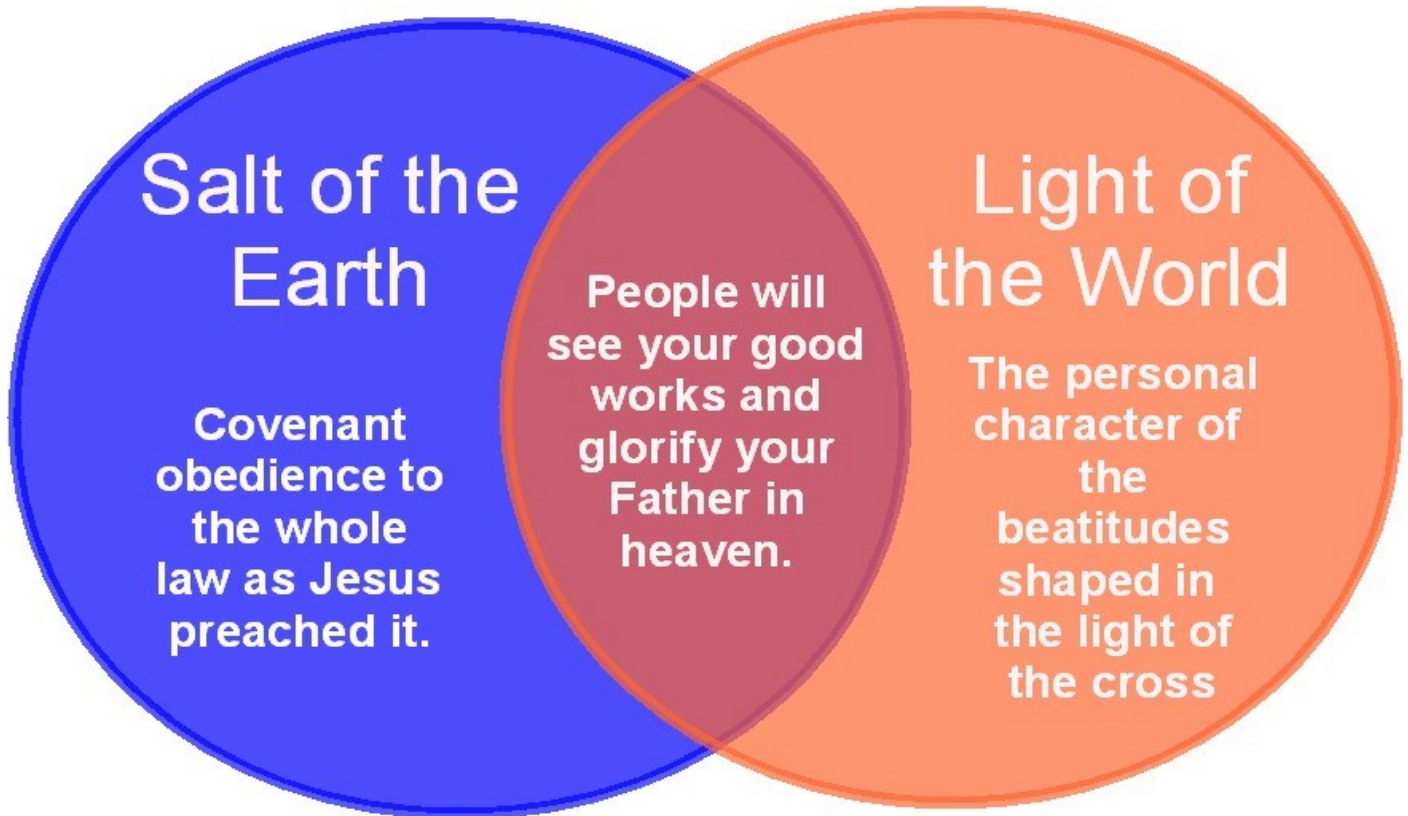
on earth. This is just as catastrophic, and unthinkable, as if salt were to lose its flavour.

The world in which we live is oftentimes quite dark and despairing. There is corruption all around us and temptations abound. Thus, the light of Christ must be made manifest everywhere. Those all around us need to clearly see the path to holiness and happiness. Again, this is possible if we first work to become light itself. Christ, the true Light of the World, must so permeate our lives that we find it almost automatic to shine brightly in a fallen world. When Christ is alive in us, we will radiate joy and peace, calm and conviction, moral goodness, and determination. And when we live this way, we will not have to “impose” the Gospel on others; rather, God’s light will simply shine and be a beacon of hope to those who come into our presence.



Both salt and light are worthless if they are saltless or hidden from view. Jesus gives these parables right after a discussion of persecution. So, we must be willing to bear our witness, even though it may bring persecution. Indeed, Paul says, “Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Timothy 3:12). It comes with the territory.

They persecuted our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. If our lives are becoming increasingly like Him, it should not surprise us if we are persecuted, too. And persecution should bring us joy, says Jesus, “for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Matthew 5:12). Persecution means that people see enough of Jesus in us to be worth resisting and persecuting, so we should count it as a badge of honour, and the portent of a great



reward in heaven.

But our purpose in witness is never to stimulate persecution for the sake of reward. That would be selfish. Rather it is to let our light shine so clearly that people can see God clearly in our works and in our deeds and evoke praise to him.

Reflect, today, upon these two missions in life. First, ponder your call to holiness. How does God want to bring light into your own life, preserve you from all sin and add spiritual flavour for holy living? Second, who does God want you to love with His love? Who needs hope and joy, mercy and kindness, words of wisdom and encouragement? Be holy and then allow that holiness to shine forth to others and you will indeed be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

Through the prophet Isaiah, God begins to delineate the role and ministry of his people and servant Israel, and their embodiment in his Servant the Messiah.

"It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth" (Isaiah 49:6)

"Give attention to me, my people and give ear to me, my nation; for a law will go out from me, and I will set my justice for a light to the peoples" (Isaiah 51:4)

"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising". (Isaiah 60:1-3).

Where once this commission was given to the nation of Israel, it is now passed on to the citizens of the Kingdom of God as our commission, too (Acts 1:8). As Jesus once said, "I AM the light of the world" (John 9:5), now he says to all of us, "You are the light of the world ... Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you" (Matthew 5:14 with Isaiah 60:1). We are to be salt for the world and light for the world -- to the glory of God!

Prayer

My Jesus, the true Light of the World, please shine brightly in my life so that I will see clearly and will be preserved from the darkness of sin. As You fill me with Your light, please use me as an instrument of Your love and mercy to a world filled with chaos and confusion. Dispel the darkness, dear Lord, and use me as Your instrument as You will. Jesus, I trust in You. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.



SHALOM



Lara J M
Bengaluru, India

“Shalom” is a common Hebrew greeting. It is translated peace in English, but its use is much broader in the Scriptures. Shalom is translated whole (**Dt. 27:6**), finished (**Dan. 5:26**), full (**Gen. 15:16**), make good (**Ex. 21:34**), welfare and well (**Gen. 43:27**), and perfect. David asked the Lord to give Solomon a perfect heart (**1 Chr. 29:19**). Solomon prayed for his people, “Let your heart, therefore, be perfect with the Lord our God. . . (**1 Ki. 8:61**), referring to a wholehearted commitment unto the Lord. The underlying thought of Shalom is “health, welfare, wholeness, and harmony with God.

Scripture is replete with God being interested in our wholeness, fullness with Him. In Isaiah 54.10 God assures us, The mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from you nor shall my covenant of peace be removed from you. Yet, it is only through the exercising of our freewill, and, in making a conscious decision of peace, that we can enjoy the covenant of peace with God in it. In the old testament, we have learnt how an offeror makes different kinds of peace offerings to God to reconcile with him. In spite of which, mankind’s efforts have remained an outward show that has led to much talking about peace, but experienced little of it throughout the centuries. It is estimated approximately that in the last 5,000 years there have been 14,000 wars and only 290 years of world peace.

Man’s heart is designed to love and long for peace! Peace is not a derivative of war but the absence of it. **Psalm 42: 7** refers to this as ‘Deep calls to Deep’ It is a longing from deep inside of us to understand what is deep inside of God. **Psalm 46.10** personifies Peace as God ‘Be still and know that I am God’ meaning be at peace and experience Him. The Covid pandemic taught all of us to experience ‘stillness’ in various ways, but how many of us experienced God? The fact that we have survived the wars and are alive to tell our tale today, is enough testimony of Gods loving kindness and reassurance of his covenant of peace with His people.



Scripture says, there are two types of war that man can encounter, the internal war inside a person - the inner conflict and, the external war in the environment. In **Prov 16:7** we are reminded, When a man's ways please the LORD, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him. And so, man constantly tries to please man and God with different kinds of gifts and sacrifices and sometimes even with the help of a conciliator, constantly, seeking the will of God for his life, family and nation. And yet things can go wrong and end up in wars. Some of the big wars that exercised conciliation were World War I, which lasted from 1914 to 1918, World War II, which took place from 1939 to 1945. Many reconciliation efforts were made and treaties signed but did peace become the world order? Political instability became a prime reason to affect peace among nations. And so we see, how the weed of politics crept even into our homes and families, affecting the purity of peace in our lives. Can man reconcile with man without God in it? **Phil2.13** says, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose. Let's ponder here on this profound truth.

Scripture says, It is Christ who was, is and will be the perfect conciliator to make peace between God and man, and, man and man, through His ministry of reconciliation on this earth. The name of God, Jehovah-shalom (**Jud. 6:24**), speaks of the perfect peace He possesses in Himself. God's thoughts are always of peace toward man (**Jer. 29:11**), who can experience His peace (**Isa. 26:12**) through faith and obedience to His commands. The key to continual blessing and peace for us, individually and nationally, is to walk in the statutes and commandments of the Lord Jesus: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself. (**Mt.22.37-39**).

Glory to God
in the highest,
and on earth **peace**
among those with whom
He is pleased!

— Luke 2:14 —

It was prophesied of Jesus before His birth that He would come to guide His people in the way of peace (**Lk. 1:78-79**). At His birth, the angelic host of Heaven proclaimed peace on earth (**Lk. 2:14**). He bestowed peace upon those He healed (**Mk. 5:34**) and forgave (**Lk. 7:50**) during His ministry. Near the end of His ministry Christ stood looking over Jerusalem as tears streamed down His cheeks and said, “. . . If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hidden from thine eyes” (**Lk. 19:42**). They had missed their day of peace through Him. “And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself — by him. . .” (**Col. 1:20**). The

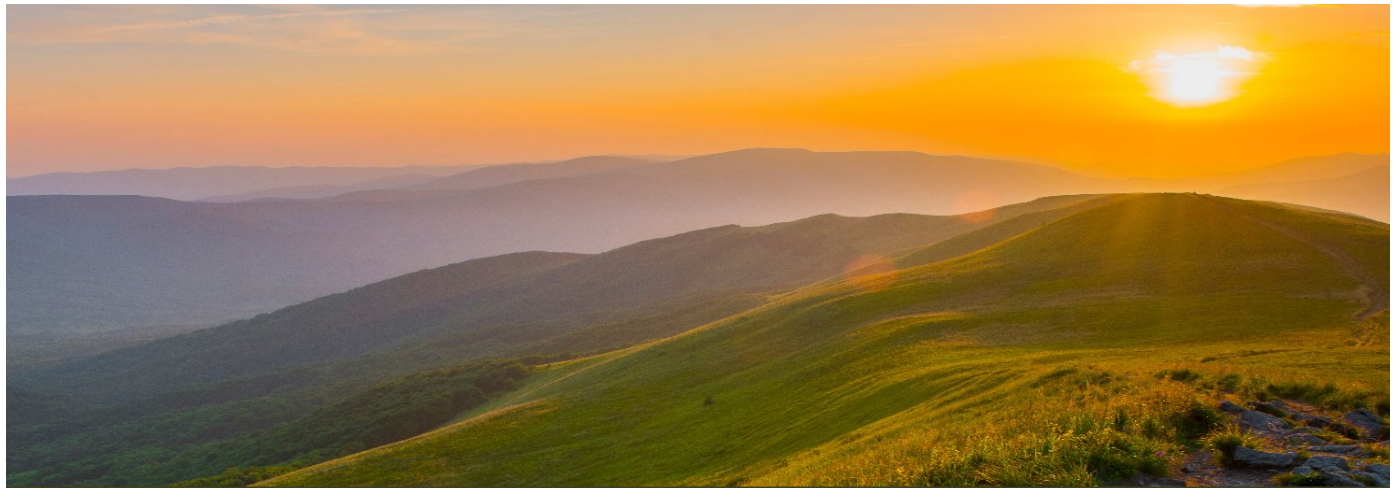
word reconciliation means to change, exchange wickedness for peace, having reference to man's relationship with God. It is not God who is reconciled to man, but man who is reconciled back to God by means of Christ's sacrificial death on the cross (**2 Cor. 5:18-20**). An individual will experience peace in life when he has been reconciled (changed from within) to the truth, the way, the life - God through Jesus Christ.

The believer's peace through reconciliation is expressed in three ways.

- First, he has made peace with God (Rom. 5:1 ; Eph. 2 :-14-17).
- Second, he receives peace from God (Rom. 1:7) – true peace only coming from God.
- Third, there is the peace of God (Phil.4:7 ; Jn. 14:27 ; 16:33) which is the portion of every believer who walks uprightly before God.

In the future there will be peace on earth to be experienced by all believers when Christ, “The Prince of Peace” (Isa.9:6), comes to establish it. Isaiah says, “Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end. . .” (Isa.9:7).

When St Peter took the gospel to the unbelievers, he went “preaching peace by Jesus Christ” (Acts 10:36). He told them that God's peace was only experienced through grace by faith in Christ's finished work on the cross. On many occasions St Paul spoke of “peace from God” in the salutation (Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor.1:2 ; Gal. 1:3) and conclusion (Rom. 15:33 ; 2 Car. 13:11) of his letters.



"Peace I leave with you, my peace I
give unto you: not as the world giveth,
give I unto you. Let not your heart be
troubled, neither let it be afraid"
(John 14:27).

Jesus showed us, the peace offering meal was a communion supper between God and the offeror. He commanded ‘do this in remembrance of me’ Likewise believing faithful as his royal priesthood, gather around the communion table in fellowship, one with another remembering Christ's sacrificial work on the cross (1 Cor. 11:23-26). It is a time of thanksgiving and joy as the offeror reflects on and rejoices in the reconciling ministry of Jesus Christ who made peace possible between God and man.

The believing faithful need to examine their heart daily, confessing known sin with God and man (1 Jn. 1:9), if he expects to walk with God in fellowship and peace. The believer who walks with a cleansed life will experience the overwhelming peace of God which passes all understanding (Phil. 4:7). 2 Corinthians 10:4 reiterates, For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.

In conclusion, Let's resound :

Romans 13:12 The night is nearly over; the day has drawn near. So let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.





POWER OF A PRAYING PARENT



Laveena Martis Rodrigues
Bahrain

As parents, we are given a wonderful privilege and responsibility of raising our children – who belong to God, not us – to know and love Him. Our responsibility as Christians is to adequately care for our children’s souls as much as we care for their physical needs. It is out of order for you not to take it as high priority. Remember dear Brothers and Sisters Satan recognizes such loop holes and strikes hard. He constantly tries to convince us to focus our attention and strength on the things that do not have eternal value blinding us to the real needs of our children. **Ephesians 6:12** rightly tells us “*For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*” The battle is not physical my dear Brothers and Sisters, it is spiritual. Do not be deceived. It’s time to re-focus and re-strategize. It’s time to make the main things, the main things. Spiritual battles and struggles must be

fought spiritually.

The only way you can win these battles is through spiritual exercises of which one of them is prayer. Regardless of how much effort we put into teaching and training our children, without prayer we won’t see the results we desire. God takes what we do and uses it in our kids to produce much fruit. It is important to pray for our children because: Prayers for our children protect and shield them from the constant attacks from the devil, the world and the flesh. We should not relent but consistently commit our Children to the hands of their maker for them to survive in this crazy world.

Each day our children are subjected to literally thousands of offensive images and words. Our children also face an enormous amount of peer pressure to become part of what is considered normal by the world’s standards. Without prayer our children will not be able to stand against the insurmountable odds they will face from childhood until they leave this world. Diligent prayer helps us focus on what is truly important in the lives of our children.

Living in a sin-stained world often directs our thinking toward earthly goals for our children. Regular, fervent prayer focuses our thoughts on what is truly

important. As we focus on the Lord, our goals for our children are more in line with God's goals for our children. Remember they belong to God. With that in mind, it becomes clear that we should seek His will through prayer on all matters pertaining to our children's lives. My dear Brothers and Sister when we as a parent pray for our children it leads to transformation in the lives of our children.

A life transformed by Jesus Christ helps protect against a life full of regrets. Good habits are best formed when young. Prayer, Bible study, the daily fight against sin, and other Christian virtues developed in youth are a powerful defense against the strategies of Satan. No one else knows our children as well as we do so no one else can pray for our children like we can. No one cares for our children more than we do excluding God. We have an intimate knowledge of our children that others lack. Our regular interaction with them gives us insight concerning their strengths, weaknesses, joys, struggles, and future goals. We are able to pray for each child according to his needs, his strengths and weaknesses. Prayer helps us talk to our children about what God desires for them to have as His children and it will give them comfort to know that they are loved and cared for by us their parents.

Praying for our children is the work of eternity right in our everyday lives.

It's going to battle to keep Jesus on the throne of our hearts and the hearts of our kids. It's humbling ourselves before the Lord, knowing that we cannot change our children, only God can bring about salvation and the fruit of the Spirit in their lives. You are being cheated by the devil if you are not praying for your children. If only for a moment we could glimpse through the corridors of time and see the results of obedient, fervent prayer through God's eyes, we most assuredly would fall face down and pray. Knowing our God is sovereign over all things, there is no need to worry the future.

Parental prayer should be a daily reminder to parents that God has entrusted them with the rearing and training of their children. Parental prayer is an integral part of the loving relationship parents have for their children. Praying for your children is not a privilege that we have as parents it is a necessity.

Praise be to Jesus Christ at all times!

Laveena Martis Rodrigues



BIBLE VERSES TO PRAY OVER YOUR CHILD

Use these verses to pray for your child's salvation, protection, friendships, heart, and more.



Find the full list at [My Joy in Chaos](#)

1 SALVATION

Lord, I pray that _____ it is with his/her heart that _____ would believe and be justified, and that with his/her mouth that he/she would confess and be saved.

Romans 10:10



2 PROTECTION

Lord, keep _____ safe and protect him/her forever from the wicked.

Psalm 12:7



3 HEART

Lord, create a clean heart in _____, and renew a steadfast spirit in him/her.

Psalm 51:10



4 WISDOM

Lord, let _____ heed life-giving corrections and be at home among the wise.

Proverbs 15:31



5 WORDS

Lord, let _____ offer gentle answers to turn away wrath rather than a harsh word that stirs up anger.

Proverbs 15:1



6 FRIENDSHIP

Lord, keep _____ from unreliable friends that bring about ruin, but instead bring about friends who stick closer than a brother or sister.

Proverbs 18:24



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