

Rochester Chinese Christian Church

# ECHO

June 2010 Volume 28 No. 1



Read Any Good Books Lately?	<i>Pastor Mitchell R. Herring</i>	1
Temptation	<i>Aileen Chow</i>	3
Dear Beauteous Death	<i>Johnny Lynn</i>	5
Sinless (Sans Fat)	<i>Andrea Dye</i>	6
Finders Keepers?	<i>Jessie Loui</i>	8
He Who Strengthens Me	<i>Helen Zhang</i>	10
God's Word and Me	<i>David Ying</i>	13
Stand Firm and Be Still	<i>A. De Votion</i>	17
More Love to Thee	<i>Alter Ego</i>	18

## Church Goals (2008-2010)

### ***Glory to God Alone***

*“Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31)...*

- \* by **growing** in our understanding of and love for the great doctrines of Scripture and the knowledge of Christ (Ps.119:97);
- \* by **honoring** the Word of God and prayer in humility, conviction of sin, and repentance, as the means of grace for the transformation of our lives (Rom.12:2);
- \* by **developing** a biblical world and life view, a heavenly-minded outlook, and personal character worthy of the gospel of Christ (Phil.1:27);
- \* by **encouraging** mutual exhortation toward each other's spiritual welfare, as well as concern for each other's all-around well-being (Heb.10:25); and
- \* by **strengthening** our conviction that the gospel of Christ is the only means of salvation, and our proclamation of it locally and worldwide (Acts 4:12).



Rochester Chinese Christian Church  
羅城華人基督教會



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<p><b>English Sunday Worship</b> 9:30 am</p> <p><b>English Sunday School</b> 11:15 am</p> <p>Call the church for other <b>fellowship, bible study</b> &amp; <b>youth group</b> meetings</p>	<p><b>中文主日學</b> 上午九時三十分</p> <p><b>中文主日崇拜</b> 上午十一時十五分</p> <p>欲知其他團契聚會 查經班，請電教會</p>
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Rochester Chinese Christian Church West  
羅城西區華人基督教會

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主日崇拜  
**Sunday Worship**  
下午 4:00 - 5:15 pm

主日學  
**Sunday School**  
下午 5:20 - 6:15 pm



## Read Any Good Books Lately?

Pastor Mitchell R. Herring

*When you come back, bring the cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments. (2 Timothy 4:13)*

Read any good books lately? In these days of computers, Facebook, iPods, and big-screen HDTVs, the answer is more likely than not to be "No." When I think of Christians today (myself included), I am reminded of the words of Simon & Garfunkel's hit song "Homeward Bound", "...and all my words come back to me, in shades of mediocrity, like emptiness in harmony, I need someone to comfort me..." I think Paul Simon was being very humble!

While technological advancement has made our lives much more convenient, it has also made us more self-indulgent. In many cases these things may come dangerously close to controlling us so that we are addicted (and don't even see it), and come into a form of idol-worship. Such a pre-occupation with convenience and entertainment also does a number on our brains, so that they become increasingly atrophied. We can become increasingly surface, superficial, mediocre, and lose the ability and even the desire to really think! Paradoxically, even as modern technology and the media bring distant corners of the world into our homes, yet we are all the more stuck in our own little world with a sort of spiritual myopia.

Yet the resources are there for us to break out of our fishbowl, broaden our perspectives, sharpen our minds, expand our world, and open new horizons. When we put the toys down (and turn them off) and read a good book, the pictures we see are not passively received, ready-made and flashed to us, but come from the active exercise of our minds through the words, sentences, paragraphs, and thought structures they convey. The author seeks to convey such mental pictures, through the agency of written language, from his mind to ours. This use of

our minds makes us active participants, and so deepens our thinking and sharpens our critical faculties.

At the same time, we come to enjoy a special kind of fellowship with the author. As I read the book "Letters of John Newton", it is almost as if he is writing and speaking to me personally. Thank you for your tender words of wisdom, "grandpa" Newton! As I read D.A. Carson's "Love in Hard Places" or "How Long, O Lord?" it is almost as if I am sitting in the classroom hearing him speak and soaking in his devotion to Christ and scholarly insight into His Word. As I read "Jesus, M.D.", I am there with missionary Dr. David Stevens trudging up the hill to Tenwick Hospital in the remote highlands of southwestern Kenya, watching him do hair-raising surgery trying to save lives with little equipment in primitive conditions, then drinking tea listening to him reflect on the analogy of the medical profession with the ministry of Christ.

A book is the ultimate travel and time machine. We are for a while transported out of our little worlds, away from the shopping malls, out of Rochester and even the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and taken back to the prison courtyard in Yangcheng in Shansi province in the mid 1930s, where missionary Gladys Aylward, unarmed, weak, a petite little woman from London, England, with great fear yet for the name of Christ takes her life in her hands and by the power of God stops a prison riot.

Reading helps us to glean insights others have had from their disciplined study of the Bible and thoughtful application to life; shows us how to think biblically; and helps us to evaluate ourselves and see our place against the broader context and flow of the historic Christian church. From this perspective we can discern ourselves more objectively and realistically, and more clearly see from where we have come, and to where we may be headed. This also stimulates thinking and self-examination, strengthens conviction, and helps us seek ways either to remain on, or to get back on track.

Read any good books lately? I hope that we will be able to say "Yes!" and to share their content and our reflections with each other. And let us stay in the greatest book of all, the Word of God, through which we are also transported---to the side of our Savior Jesus Christ.

## Temptation

Aileen Chow

During the past months, the Grapes Fellowship has been studying the book of Luke. Several weeks ago we read a very important chapter about temptation in chapter 4. What is temptation? It is a fascination, a lure or an attraction. All of us are tempted in one way or another. We all go through a battlefield of temptations. In Luke, we read how Jesus was led by the Spirit to the wilderness to be tempted by Satan. Jesus met each test in His human nature as a true man.

Jesus fasted for forty days and was hungry. So Satan told him to turn “stone into bread.” However, Jesus answered, “*It is written: Man does not live on bread alone.*” (4:4) Although Jesus was physically drained, he did not give in to the need or desire of his own body. Jesus had to trust the Father to provide for Him in the wilderness. Sometimes, we need to depend on God, rather than our own instincts.

Satan attacked him again by bringing Jesus to the highest place and showing him all the kingdoms of the world. And Satan said, “If you worship me, it will be all yours.” Jesus answered, “*It is written: Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.*” (4:8) Satan is sly and knows our weakness and desires. He wanted Jesus to accept his plan than the Father’s plan. Satan’s plan involves us to shun the Cross of salvation (deliverance from evil) in order to gain the Kingdom. Can the desires of this world save us? Can power save us? Can money, work, school, career or people save us? No. It is only through Jesus Christ who died on the cross for our sins can rescue us from the damnation of hell....and that is the Father’s plan.

Now, the ever persistent Satan is “*your enemy, the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour*” (1 Peter 5:8). He attacked Jesus again by bringing him to the highest point. He said, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here.” *Jesus answered, “It says: Do not put the Lord your God to the test.”* (4:12) Satan urged Jesus to prove himself, but Jesus would not yield himself to Satan’s plan. Jesus is the Son of God, but he is not for power or to be recognized in this way. One time Israel had forgotten the Lord in the wilderness,

and they tested the Lord, saying, *“Is the Lord among us or not?”* (Ex. 17:7) They began to doubt God and question His love. For not one minute did Jesus doubt or fail to trust God when things became difficult. When we are under pressure, we need to remember how Jesus applied this principle to himself. So much of it is our relationship with God and having confidence in God’s trustworthiness.

And so I asked you: What are your temptations? How are you dealing with them? Are you able to overcome them? I’ve been through temptations myself and whenever I passed the line, I know I need to pray to God to help me overcome my temptations, so he can give me a pure heart.

So, why does God care about us so much from falling into temptations? In the book of James, the author states that *“each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.”* (James 1:14-15) So, *“you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”* (Col 3:1-2)

I pray that we will keep this in mind. I hope we will overcome our own temptations. At the end of the study, I had asked the group to split into groups, to share with each other their own temptations and to pray for one another. I hope we are all dealing with it just fine. Remember to take the *“sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”* (Eph. 6:17) and study it each day.



## Dear Beauteous Death

In Loving Memory of Beloved Mother's Graduation (10-25-2009)

Johnny Lynn

A death for those to-day prepares  
And for others tomorrow stares  
Escape from it, no one dares

Dad and Mom have gone to the world of light  
And I alone sit lingering here;  
Their very memory is fair and bright  
Though at times it's fond and warm  
The memory can hurt, sometimes be painful,  
Yet it allows you not to forget . . . .

God at last freed Mother from the world of thrall  
Into the true liberty during her cocooning on bed  
For three years and more;  
Ever since she came through the iron gate of life  
Most of her life wandered solitary there!  
With eight mouths to feed  
She was hung with weights and woe  
And pining all her life there!  
She worked diligently hard,  
Entrusted the Lord to raise up her kids of eight;  
Her faith glows and glitters in my cloudy breast  
Until I find my salvation in our Lord Christ Jesus!

Time's winged chariot her hurrying  
The way, which from this dead and dark abode,  
Leads up to God.  
The crown her Bridegroom does for none provide  
But for His Bride alone!

## Sinless (Sans Fat)

Andrea Dye

I was pondering ice cream choices at Coldstone when I came across flavors labeled Sinless Sans Fat. I briefly paused and thought oh, healthy! I also thought about the word 'sin' and how it was used in the connotation. If the word 'sinless' was indeed reduced to a marketing ploy, I certainly did take notice. The particular ice cream flavor would clearly not exonerate me of my sins. Would selecting another flavor cause me to be sinful? Also, to what extent is sin bad? I didn't think much deeper into it, as I hurried to select a flavor and proceeded to dig into my delicious treat - probably a sinful flavor. With sin being such a complex and multifaceted problem, I couldn't help but wonder-what would Jesus do? It is easy to shrug sin off as bad things bad people do. The Bible teaches us that there is a much more profound meaning to sin as anything that falls short of the glory of God and is ultimately what separates us from God. I had a conversation about this recently, which really struck me.

Since I graduated from college in 2008, God has blessed me with a stable job in the DC metro area. I have been able to attend a church near the University of Maryland: The Chinese Bible Church of College Park. It has been a real blessing to be able to serve with the brothers and sisters I have gotten to know through Christ. They have a young adult and college group, very similar to the college group at RCCC, so the move to Maryland was very smooth. Although God has provided me with such stability and comfort, He has also challenged me in testing moments. About half a year ago, I had a conversation with a non-Christian friend, who said that Christian views are irrelevant to today's society. He said the views are old-fashioned, and that believers are more judgmental of others. I've had several discussions with this friend before, but this one particularly stood out. We discussed some more on why this may or may not be the case, and I mentioned sin. He said, "Sin is not a religious topic." That was a critical point of the conversation and, as I realized, a real misunderstanding on the concept of sin. Prior to the conversation, sin seemed like a basic concept; but it was then I realized the complexity of it.

A major theme in the Bible is sin. Our walk with God and the existence of sin is very much relevant to today's society. In Galatians 3:22, Paul says, *"But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised being given through faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe"*. It is what separates us from God. Satan shamelessly throws temptations into all of our lives in order to distract us from God and to stray us away from our walks with Him. The only way we are saved is through God's grace and faith in Christ. *"And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin."* (1 John 3:5) Since the second coming of Christ is still yet to take place, we need Christ more than ever, hence the relevance is necessary in today's society. Christian faith is not an embellished and jazzed up marketed product like the most popular trend, but rather a long journey we take joy in. There are a countless number of distractions which can easily thwart our walk with God. In my experiences, it's too easy to get distracted from God in my every day life, whether it is work, forgetting to thank God, technological distractions, and many more.

The notion that believers are more judgmental is another misunderstanding of sin. Since sin is an abomination, it is something that we should hate. In Proverbs 8:13, it states *"The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate."* In Romans 12:9, a stronger term than hate is used - sin is to be abhorred. *"Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good."* Although we are told to hate sin, we are still told to love one another. In John 15:12, we are told *"This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you."* Given the nature of sin and how we are instructed to love another, it is not the individual we hate, but rather the sin itself. It is something believers strive for every day.

The concept of sin is so much more profound than merely as something bad, which is an understatement. We are only saved from our sins by faith in Christ and God's grace. To me, that's a really comforting thought. Praise the lord for His mercy!

## Finders Keepers?

Jessie Loui

Walking along a strip mall, my eyes widened as I spotted a \$20 bill outside a boutique on the sidewalk. Gleefully I picked it up. I was on my way to the grocery store. No other pedestrians were around to witness me pocketing the bill, but of course you don't need to be a boy/girl scout to know I should return the money to its owner. Dutifully I waltzed into the boutique, waved the bill to an employee and declared, "A customer lost a \$20 bill outside the entrance", secretly and highly pleased with myself for being so noble. The young saleslady flashed a huge grin, "I'll take that!" and grabbed the money. I exited the store, not fully satisfied with the outcome. I regretted my gesture, fearing the saleslady would keep the money, all the while deriding my naiveté. I thought I could have offered the money to church instead.

A similar incident cropped up shortly after that. My daughters and Anna take weekly gymnastics class together. One day, after the girls found a handful of coins in the gym, Anna (at the prompting of my daughters I was sure) approached me and asked if she could use the money to buy a snack from the vending machine in the gym. Looking at the girls' eager faces, I dreaded disappointing them and thus gave them permission to spend the money as desired. I reasoned that the girls would be "giving the money back to the gym" if they made a purchase at the gym's vending machine. Having not lost my common sense or conscience completely, I urged Anna to check with her mother Teri first. Teri instructed the girls to return the money to the gym manager. They complied (albeit grudgingly) and learned to do the right thing (myself included).

On one of the rare occasions where my whole family visited the mall, my daughters discovered some singles on the floor. Again, no other shoppers were around to lay claim on the cash. Alex thought we should pass the money to mall security.

The last incident occurred when I found a pocketbook in the grocery store restroom. It was no ordinary pocketbook, but a brand name one, with the YSL initials all over it. Without any

hesitation, and void of any curiosity to inspect the contents, I surrendered the item to a Customer Service clerk.

All these events happened within the past six months, if not for the fear of our holy and righteous God, no doubt I would have “thanked my lucky star” and merrily spent the cash away. I was raised in a family where thriftiness is the “must-have” virtue. My parents tirelessly advised and taught us to make prudent financial decisions, even before the economic downturn that started in 2008. Consequently, I am spared from the burden of the sandwich generation even though my parents retired almost two decades ago. If there ever was a Miss Frugality Pageant, my oldest sister and I would emerge as the winners. However, I cannot be dubbed “The Coupon Lady” who organizes her coupons alphabetically in mini accordion folder because I don’t even purchase the Sunday paper! Most people adversely affected by the market meltdown attempt to be frugal. My family is no exception. Nonetheless, I should not be consumed by worry, nor crave excessive material wealth. Hebrews 13:5 says *“Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’”* Also, in Luke 12:15b *“Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”* Can we sincerely pray the words of Agur in Proverbs 30:8-9? *“Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, ‘Who is the LORD?’ Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.”*



## He Who Strengthens Me

Helen Zhang

Young girl of seventeen, fantastic grades, president of four clubs, musically inclined, and generally invincible. I am *in my prime*. Or so I thought. I have always been a bit obsessive when it comes to my future. It is probably a product of my parents' constant reminders to keep my eyes fixated on what's important, such as grades, reputation, and God, and my own self-motivation that has gotten me through thus far. For as long as I remember, I've always known exactly what I need to do. From the beginnings of my academic career in sixth grade, I gradually spelled out the formula for success and laid down the map of my future. I stuck quite stringently to this plan and built up my credentials and reputation at school as one of the most ambitious students. I strove to outdo everyone else in grades, number of clubs, number of Advanced Placement classes, sports, and officer positions, and generally speaking, I succeeded. Though I almost always gave glory to God, a part of me always took credit for my successes. Junior year of high school was the breeding grounds for my ego. I attained multiple officer positions, increased in ranking on the Varsity tennis team, and took seven AP college credit classes, a feat, I was later told, had previously never been undertaken by anyone in the history of my school. I felt ready to face the world head-on.

According to the plan I had laid out so long ago, I needed to get a job, preferably an internship, the summer of my junior year, both to create a cash flow beyond constantly asking my parents to fund my leisure spending, and also to experience what it would be like to be a scientific researcher, a career I am highly interested in and also something that would surely impress the colleges I will soon be applying to. I came across a paid internship for high school students at Rochester Institute of Technology that involved scientific lab research at their Center for Imaging Science. I did some research on the program and learned that they would hire eight interns for a seven-week internship that runs a 40 hour work week and pays considerably more than the minimum wage, which is what most people my age tend to earn. I was immediately attracted to this offer and assembled my transcript, résumé, the application, a lab report, and an essay. I carefully checked and rechecked every

sentence, punctuation mark, and all the requirements, and tenderly placed it into a large envelope, sealed it, and sent it on its way through the mail. I had every intention of landing an interview. When I got the email a few months later that I was indeed offered an interview, I was not entirely surprised.

The interview went better than I could have possibly expected. Both interviewers asked the exact questions that I had already practiced in anticipation. I walked out of the interview smug and radiant, sure that I had landed the position.

At the time, I had not even entertained the thought of being denied. So when the rejection letter popped up in my inbox a week later, I was stunned beyond belief. I refused to believe the words on the screen that condemned my perfect summer. I was in complete and utter denial and tried to convince myself that it was a mistake; the email was surely wrongly addressed and was meant for someone else. The next step in my rejection was one of grief and distress. I spent the rest of the day locked up in my room sobbing and mulling over every step in my application. What had I done wrong? How was it possible that there were eight people more suitable than I for this job? What exactly was my fatal mistake that viciously tore this opportunity from my grasp? My mother did much to console me; she led me in prayer until my anguish subsided, and then counseled me gently. I remember the exact words she said:

“Pray to God; He has a plan. If He has this internship in His plans for you, you will get an offer. If you get another offer, you know for sure that it is completely and entirely by God’s grace”

It was comforting, but I still did not have a job. I was still a reject. I could not even beg for a second chance. The next week passed by slowly and painfully. All my friends and a couple of my teachers knew that I had applied for the position, and my ego was again and again wounded as they asked whether or not I was offered the position. It was during that week that I discovered the extent of my arrogance and my utter confidence in my own abilities. It was also during that week that I fully understood how weak I am and how little I can do by myself. I was still angry at God for ruining my summer plans, angry at RIT for rejecting me, and extremely angry and frustrated at myself for not being quite

good enough to make the cut. I couldn't understand why God did not see that this internship was where I was supposed to be this summer.

Despite my lack of faith, God answered my angry prayers. I was re-offered a position in their optical imaging department a week after my rejection. This time, I did not embrace the news as joyously as I thought I would. After the initial excitement, I was ashamed. In my time of discouragement, God picked me up and showed me His true power. When I was angry with Him and afraid that my future was ruined, He was there. Jesus once said to his disciples, *"You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" (Matthew 8:26)*. I realized that I was afraid because I am powerless and weak. I tried to control my life, plan out my own successes, and dictate the best course of action for myself. I was ignorant of God's perfect, unfailing will: *"for I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jeremiah 29:11)*. This ordeal brings to mind a certain verse: *"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me" (2 Corinthians 12:9)*. Indeed, my weaknesses are but amplified in light of God's strength. This experience has taught me not to rely on myself to further my aims, but that *"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13)*. Praise the Lord.



## God's Word...and Me

David Ying

I was born into a Christian family. Both my parents were born in Buddhist families in China and became believers through Christian schools. Although I went to church every week with them as I grew up, my mind was everywhere but on the church. Nevertheless, one verse from God's Word, John 3:16, stuck in my mind during those years.

During my early growing up years, many of my friends wanted me to join them in our church sponsored summer retreats. But I never went until the summer following my junior year in high school when I ran out of excuses or other activities...or when God intervened. It was a beautiful sunrise one day at the very scenic Sun Moon Lake in the mountains of central Taiwan and I was alone in a rowboat as I had awakened before dawn that day and couldn't fall back to sleep. There surrounded by the grandeur of mountains, trees, lake, rising sun and absolute quietness, I was overwhelmed with the presence of God all around me and heard God speak to me with the words of the only verse I knew: *"For God so loved you that He gave His only begotten son, that if you believe in Him, you should not perish but have eternal life."* That morning, the personalized Word of God led me to know Him and to believe in Him as the Lord of the universe and of my life without any doubts. Having been baptized on Easter Sunday of my senior year in high school, I thought my salvation was complete and further study of God's Word was desirable but not necessary. I didn't realize then that my walk with Him and His Word was just beginning and there was much, much more to know.

After high school graduation, even though I was guaranteed admission to Taiwan University's physics department, my parents decided that I was to continue my education in the US. Through a chain of events that summer that can only be described as miracles from God (too many coincidences as to be humanly and mathematically probable), I came to Wheaton College in Illinois with a rather rudimentary knowledge of written English and essentially no spoken English. But I came with God's Word that my mother gave me: *"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful,*

*who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also provide a way to escape that ye may be able to bear it.*" I Cor. 10:13 (KJV) These Words of God have become my greatest source of strength, encouragement and comfort, especially in those early years of adjustment and learning. But I needed to know more, far more. Wheaton College provided the nurturing environment for a young Christian like me to grow in faith in God and His Word.

It was at Wheaton that my professors 'made' us memorize God's Word, such as Ps. 27 and 34. It was there that I began using the Navigators' topical memory system (which later also served as the "spark" that ignited my life long relationship with Betty, my wife). *"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy Word....Thy Word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against thee."* Ps. 119:9, 11 (KJV)

As I considered my future beyond Wheaton, another series of miraculous events pointed toward a single medical school. With fear and trepidation, and the uncertainty of a young but growing faith, I tested my faith like Gideon and applied only to that one medical school, University of Pennsylvania. God's Word which I had memorized (as assigned by my college professor) again was the source of courage and assurance. *"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?...Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident."* Ps. 27:1, 3 (ESV)

The subsequent years of busy studying, marriage, five children, residencies, army service and professional practice came and went like a blur. But in the midst of those very busy years, the Lord continued to test my faith in Him that I may know and trust Him more through His Word. There were three medical thorns (malignancies) in my flesh during the time of raising our family in 1984, 1987 and 1998. The last one was stomach cancer that usually carries a mortality rate of more than 90%. Before and during my seven hour surgery to remove about 80% of my stomach, the Word of God amazingly sustained us, and not only us but Betty was able even to comfort those from our church who came to the hospital to comfort her during my long surgery. God said to us: *"The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about*

*anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known to God. And the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”* (Phil. 4:5b-7). It was our source of comfort and peace for all of these circumstances. Indeed we were excited and thankful to experience His amazing peace just as He had promised. After surgery the cancer was found to be T1b, a very early diagnosis that meant a survival rate of more than 94% instead!

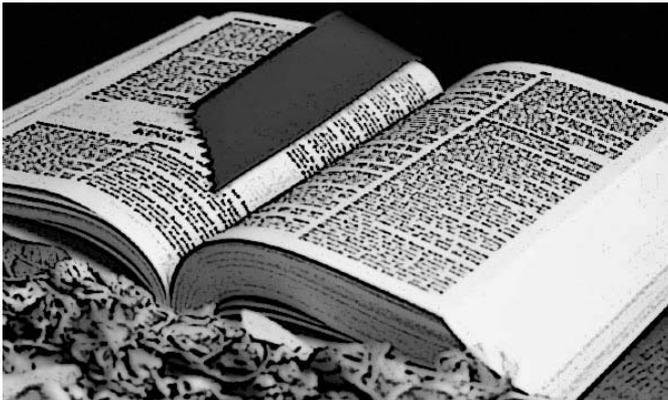
The Lord has continued to remind me of the importance of growing in the knowledge of His Word through many other means. Many sermons, readings and conferences like the Basic Life Principle Institute have convinced me of the absolute necessity of knowing God’s Word as the basis for more fully understanding and enjoying a life of faith. And yet despite all of these experiences and reminders of God’s love and faithfulness over the years, it continues to be a constant struggle to spend time consistently in God’s Word. Satan through my sinful “flesh” is still hard at work to detract me from studying more diligently the Truth for my life. I thank God for the Men’s Bible Study every Friday night here at the church which continues to encourage and challenge me, and others, to more consistently pursue the Word of Truth. I thank God for brothers who meet with me regularly for prayer and mutual challenge and encouragement. Indeed a cord of three strands is not easily broken. (Eccl. 4:12)

Some of the Truths I have learned:

- that loving God with all of my strength, mind and heart is my first priority in life, and to truly love God means to be completely obedient to Him (John 14:15, 21, 23, 31, etc.). How can I truly obey without knowing what God has said or commanded in His Word? How can I say that I love God without total obedience to Him?
- that the manna, the bread from heaven, was eaten by Israelites in the wilderness on a daily basis for their sustenance and strength. So is the Word of God, the bread of life, to be consumed daily and regularly in order that I can more fully know and enjoy the power, wisdom and will of God in my life.

- that God has revealed Himself and His love for me through His Word, both the written and the living Word (the Lord Jesus). The more I know Him through the study of His Word, the more wisdom, confidence and courage I have in facing the challenges of my daily life on earth. I can indeed become more and more 'fearless' and at peace in my earthly life!
- that God's Word fills my mind with the knowledge of God, but prayer satisfies my heart's longing for Him as my Abba Father. Both are necessary for growing into spiritual maturity.
- that the Holy Spirit, who lives only in God's own children, reveals to me the Truth in His Word. Without the Holy Spirit, *"the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing..."* (1 Cor. 1:18, ESV)

I am still learning, a small finite mind in search of an infinite God through His revealed Word!



## Stand Firm and Be Still

A. De Votion

*“Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today... The Lord will fight for you; you need only be still” (Exodus 14: 13-14)*

The Israelites had just left Egypt. Once again Pharaoh changed his mind and went after them. The Israelites were no match against Pharaoh's army and there was no exit. When an animal faces a threatening situation, it has two options---to flee or to fight. The animal may be threatened, but it must not be so afraid that it is paralyzed. When it is paralyzed with fear, it can neither flee nor fight and is doomed. This is also true of human beings. Psychologists tell us when we face tough challenges or stressful situations, we either want to get away or fight it with all the resources we can muster. A certain level of fear or anxiety is natural and perhaps necessary to stir us into action, but never paralyzing fears.

Fear is the origin of many of our problems. Many outspoken people deep down may be very shy and introverted and those who find every opportunity to exert their authority may be insecure and timid inside. People who are cold toward others may be desperately in need of love and care. Fear causes us to do many unnatural things, things that can hurt us and others. In a life threatening situation, fear can even cost our lives.

Now that we understand why Moses had to deal with the fear of his people first, we expect that the next step will fall in either one of the two options---to flee or to fight. Moses told the Israelites to do neither. What Moses said next was in total defiance of logic. He told the Israelites to stand firm and be still. It's like being told to stay put when there is a grizzly charging at you. Moses didn't just say "stand firm", he also said "you will see God's deliverance." Stand firm on the promise of God, be still, and expect to see God's mighty deliverance in His own way.

We all know the ending. The Israelites neither fled nor fought. God prepared for them a spectacular miracle. God fought the enemies for them. Can we learn something from this passage and apply it to our lives today?

## More Love to Thee

Alter Ego

I can't love Thee, Lord,  
 Nor say to love Thee more.  
 Once having Thee, I beside have nought  
 The pleasures I have sought.

Also into question I call,  
 The divine love excels all,  
 Can implant into this soil  
 Where floats the dingy oil?

Truly a love rings thr' this grain  
 We can smell and feel its reign,  
 That impels us to love aright  
 Instead to conquer by the fight.

The moment we, as a babe, come into existence,  
 We taste parental love without reluctance.  
 Its sweetness far more than express,  
 Not that in purpose to repress.

But these, it does not say  
 His divine love in full play,  
 Spreads itself in human race,  
 Inscribes itself on each face.

Nay, it is not, methinks, the love divine,  
 But a natural human love more refined  
 Possessed when we are born by instinct  
 Until to the minute of death does it extinct.

Thus I see and hear not Thy divine cupid,  
 How can I love Thee by Thy bid!  
 Neither further to say love Thee more,  
 When Thou art standing by my door.

“My son, you are wrong in interpreting.  
 Lo! Human love needs human meriting.  
 See the case between two lovers the human love,  
 It is sweet, stimulating but a selfish love.

Now, in a family, the son or the father,  
 Perhaps the daughter or the mother.  
 Entwine one another by a bond pointing  
 Also human love needs human meriting.

Nobody is able or can love his kinsmen,  
 Without merits or purposes for his gain."  
 To my indignant question with loving smile He in reply  
 Rings out my revolt which blows into the sky.

All of a sudden a thought grasps hold of me  
 That boils with indignation, asked what it be,  
 "Lord, a good Samaritan we ought to follow.  
 A lesson you taught in the Bible I borrow.

But of'en times we come to despondency and despair  
 When we are brought to market place where our hearts bare  
 The love for the plundered Jews on the road we share  
 In return is to fill our hearts with gall and tear."

"Yes, my son. This is the tendency of human affair.  
 Hove you forgotten my people did I care  
 When they roamed aimlessly in the broiling desert?  
 But when came to the promised land did me desert."

Still I can't love Thee, Lord,  
 Nor say to love Thee more.  
 Lord Byron taught me a lesson deep  
 When through his poem I peep.

"And now I'm in the world alone  
 Upon the wide, wide sea –  
 But why should I for others mourn  
 When none will sigh for me?"

"My son, on the cross I suffer and die  
 For thee, mockery I bear, everlasting life I buy.  
 Lovest thou me? My son, lovest thou me?  
 More than these, my son, lovest thou me?"

"O Lord! Within me ebbs my strength;  
 I can't love Thee nor love Thee more.  
 Pray strengthen me and fill with Thy breath  
 That I may love Thee and love Thee more."