



March 2025

LEPC Rummage Sale - April 4 and 5, 2025

Volunteers are needed to help bring rummage sale items up from the basement on March 27th, at a time yet to be determined. The local Boy Scouts have been asked to help, too.

Volunteers are needed to unpack boxes and put things on tables during the days March 28, 29, 31, and April 1, 2. Usually someone is at the church from 9-4 those days. Volunteers are needed the actual days of the sale, from 9-5, Friday 4/4 and 9-11 on Saturday 4/5. Don't go away yet, at 11, we will box up the leftover items to donate elsewhere. Any hours you can offer are appreciated. See Carol Griffen to sign up.

Twenty-five percent of the proceeds are given to missions and the rest of the money goes in the operating fund. Many people in our community are blessed by this opportunity.

Carol Griffen (cbgriffen@yahoo.com)



Fatu Thoronka

Last month I received a letter from our sponsored student Fatu Thoronka.

She is 19 years old and in her second semester of Junior Secondary School 2. She shared that she was very happy to spend Christmas break with her brothers and sister. Her favorite thing about Christmas is dancing. She wants to learn how to respect people and would like us to pray for her education.

EduNations encouraged us to write a letter to our sponsored student. My letter to Fatu, which included a bookmark, said we are praying for her and her education. We wish her the best for her learning and many blessings. An EduNations team traveling to Sierra Leone this month will deliver the letter.

Cathy Mlyniec,
EduNations Liaison



LEPC Fun Fellowship Family Friends and Food!

Whatever you call it, it is a special time to get together with others for a relaxing social time of fun and entertainment!

In January, Cathy organized an afternoon of playing different games that people brought from home, not to mention the delicious snacks everyone brought. Leo and Sharon are in the process of planning a BINGO game day (no money involved) with mystery prizes for the winners. Date to be determined.

If you think this is fun, how about organizing another date? We could use volunteers to pick a month and day and set up some entertainment. Some ideas could include: another game time, movie time, ice cream social, miniature golf, Burgers and Bocce, bonfire and snacks, or another interesting event.

This is a great opportunity to invite your friends and neighbors!



Food Pantry Volunteers Needed

Carol Griffen is seeking volunteers to help with the Leicester - Cuylerville Food Pantry. She is looking for a couple of people willing to go to the grocery store for fresh items such as milk and eggs, when the need arises, and bring them back to LEPC. Carol would then see that these items are distributed.



Pastor David Missel

585-658-1197 Residence
djmguided1947@gmail.com
585-382-3311 Church

It is our desire to assist anyone who is seeking help, if possible, whether it be spiritual or otherwise. Please contact Pastor David or any Session Elder if you would like us to be of help.

When Pastor David is unavailable:

Pastor David is presently scheduling Fridays as his day off so matters of less urgency could be left on the church office answering device, or call one of the Ruling Elders:

- George Briggs 585-382-3038
- Patty Gregg 585-245-1311
- Carol Griffen 585-382-3681
- Shirley Matthews 585-382-3171
- Cathy Mlyniec 585-322-6669
- Leo Richardson 585-382-3153
(Clerk of Session)

Other Contacts

LEPC website:

www.seekinggodtogether.com

LEPC Email Address:

grichardson001@rochester.rr.com

LEPC Food Pantry:

(by appointment only)
585-245-3448

Sunshine Person:

Cathy Mlyniec
cmlyniec@gmail.com

Because our life on earth is a loving gift from God, I want to share the following devotional written by Dr. David Jeremiah who writes as follows:

A famous psychiatrist once said, “Love, true love, is the medicine for our sick old world. If people can learn to give and receive love, they will usually recover from their physical and mental illnesses.”

Before Christ, the concept of love was a love for the best. If something was deemed worthy of love, it was loved. Christ dying on the cross changed all that, for He offered a love for which we are completely unworthy. Christ revealed God’s love. He lavished that holy love on people with no thought about whether they were worthy or not. Now when a Christian wants to know what real love is he looks to the cross. Having experienced God’s love while yet a sinner, and having been transformed by that great love, the Christian recognizes the people around him as the objects of God’s love. They are love starved, in need of the transforming power that only Christ’s love can bring.

Jesus set an example by giving Himself totally in love, with no thought of receiving anything in return. We, as Christians, are called by God to reflect that love to our spouses, our family and our world. And the more we reflect it, the more we give it away to others, the more we experience it in our own lives.

May we, as the family of God at LEPC, wholeheartedly show forth God’s love to those we meet so they too may know God’s love for them.

Transformed by God’s love,
Pastor David

Per Member Asking: 2025 PMA

Per Member Asking: 2025 PMA is the figure that reflects the per member administrative costs for the upcoming year for the POA (Presbytery of the Alleghenies) and the EPC General Assembly, including the Office of the Stated Clerk, Church Planting and Revitalization, Student and College Ministries, Women’s Ministries, and World Outreach Ministries.

Although this is not mandatory, in the past we have encouraged our members to make this special commitment. You may use the “Other” section of the offering envelope to designate this giving. If you are a member who doesn’t use offering envelopes, please use any envelope and/or memo your check and envelope: “Per Member Asking” You may mail it to church if you think you won’t be attending for a period of time.

The 2025 Per Member Asking for POA is \$15.00.

The General Assembly of EPC is now asking for 1% of last year’s income for LEPC. This makes it more difficult to determine per member, but it will be roughly \$30.00.

The total commitment per member will then be \$45.00.

Thank you.

Monthly Celebrations

March Birthdays

29 Carol Griffen

March Anniversaries:

6 Gene and Patty Gregg

Prayer Shawl and Lap Robe Ministry

If you know of someone who has serious health problems and would find some encouragement, warmth and comfort from receiving a handmade shawl or lap robe, please contact Carole Missel.

Liturgists Signup for March

For those who want to read scripture during Sunday worship, please remember to sign the "Volunteer" list on the Bulletin Board in Fellowship Hall. Thank you!

May God Bless!



A visitor at the Missel birdfeeder!
Photo by Carole Missel

LEPC Session Highlights of 2/13/2025

Sharing Life, Spiritual Focus and Prayers for the Church and others we meet:

Session prayed for the needs of church members and friends, laments for the dwindling size of LEPC, thankful for God's guidance, and asked for the health of our nation and leaders.

Worship: LEPC will celebrate Communion on Easter Sunday this year, and an Easter Sunrise Service is scheduled for 6:30 a.m., outdoors by the Cross, weather permitting, followed by light refreshments.

Witness: The Phone Tree and Prayer Chain are being updated. The Food Pantry assisted 4 in January and 2 in February.

Missions: Financial support is being sent to Samaritan's Purse and also to Camp Cherith.

Christian Ed: The Berean Class will start a new video series, "In Pursuit of PAUL the Apostle, beginning on February 23rd.

Property: Piano was tuned. Ol Smokey Construction contracted to lay drainage pipes across the sledding hill this spring.

Old Business: 2025 Division Chairs appointed.

New Business: No changes to Membership Rolls.

Miscellaneous: A "Game Time" is being planned for the near future.

The next Session Meeting is scheduled for March 20, 2025.

Continued Prayers for:

Pray for peace in Jerusalem.

May all who love this city prosper.

O Jerusalem, may there be peace within your walls and prosperity in your palaces.

For the sake of my family and friends,

I will say, "May you have peace."

For the sake of the house

of the Lord our God,

I will seek what is best for you,

O Jerusalem.

Psalm 122:6-9 niv

How Can We Pray for Israel?

Pray for the SOLDIERS Pray for the soldiers who are on the front lines right now. There are many believers in the army. Please cover them all in prayer.

Pray for their GOVERNMENT - Israeli Parliament Pray for wisdom as they lead the military and police in handling both domestic conflict and the war on their southern and northern front.

Pray for the PEOPLE OF ISRAEL War is very traumatic for the elderly and children involved in this conflict. Besides physical injuries, there are many in shock and deep trauma.

Pray for the HOSTAGES - ones that have been released and ones still being held.

Pray for the PEOPLE IN GAZA There are a good number of secret believers in Gaza, and many who have seen evangelistic videos online in Arabic. Pray for God to care for all His sheep there, protecting them from all evil, danger, and harm.

OneforIsrael.org

Berean Class Starts New Series

The Berean Class is starting a new video series, "In Pursuit of Paul the Apostle, beginning on February 23rd. The class meets Sundays in Fellowship Hall at 9:40 a.m. *All are welcome!*

Voice of the Martyr's:
icommittoprayer.com

January 2, 2025 | Vietnam

**Former Prisoner for Christ
Receives Medical Care**

Thang has been a follower of Christ for more than 35 years. His extended family rejected him when they learned of his conversion, and he spent almost 10 years in prison suffering forced labor, poor rations and regular beatings for his ongoing testimony about Christ. Thang is regularly harassed, and he has been blacklisted by the government. As a result, he has no access to social services, including healthcare, and his family is closely monitored. This past year, Thang received medical care with the help of the body of Christ for a severe stomach ulcer. He is now able to continue visiting the many Hmong churches he oversees and serves.

January 9, 2025 | Bhutan

**Authorities Raid Christian
Youth Conference**

A Christian youth conference scheduled in Bhutan was disrupted when authorities raided the location and demanded that organizers show permits, which did not exist because Christian events are not allowed by the Buddhist government. Authorities then summoned the organizers for interrogation. The raid caused organizers of other youth events to change their plans as they wait to see the consequences. Pray for Christians in Bhutan who are reaching and discipling young people to have wisdom and courage as they plan and lead their ministries so that many will come to know and follow Jesus Christ in Bhutan.

January 16, 2025 | Benin

Evangelist Dies in Traffic Accident

Pastor Mathieu Tchando, along with 13 others, was leaving a Christian conference in Nigeria on November 1, 2024 when a large truck hit their minibus. The group was outside of Lagos when the truck hit three vehicles. One person was killed at the accident site, and three others were seriously injured. Pastor Tchando suffered a brain injury that left him comatose; another minister was hospitalized with broken ribs, and doctors were concerned about internal bleeding; and the third was in stable condition. Sadly, Pastor Tchando succumbed to his injuries. Pastor Tchando and his wife cared for two persecuted children and he worked as an evangelist and in Bible translation in Benin. Please pray for his wife to experience God's comfort as she grieves the loss of her husband.

January 23, 2025 | Bangladesh

Family Loses Everything in Attack on Home

When protests forced the resignation of the prime minister in August 2024, Islamist groups took advantage of the lack of police presence across the country to attack the Christian minority. Attackers have looted and destroyed churches and targeted Christians' homes. Monoara, 75; her daughter, Salma, and her granddaughter, 14, were among those who were attacked. On Aug. 5, they escaped from their home and watched from the nearby jungle as their belongings were carried away or destroyed by an extremist mob. "I thought that was my last day," Monoara recalled. "I was so sad, but after a while I started to say, 'Thank you, Jesus.' I am very grateful to the Lord because he saved me and preserved my family. Despite losing all our belongings, we have life, and as he took away, he can give again as he did with Job." These sisters in Christ continue to host prayer meetings as they recover from the attack.

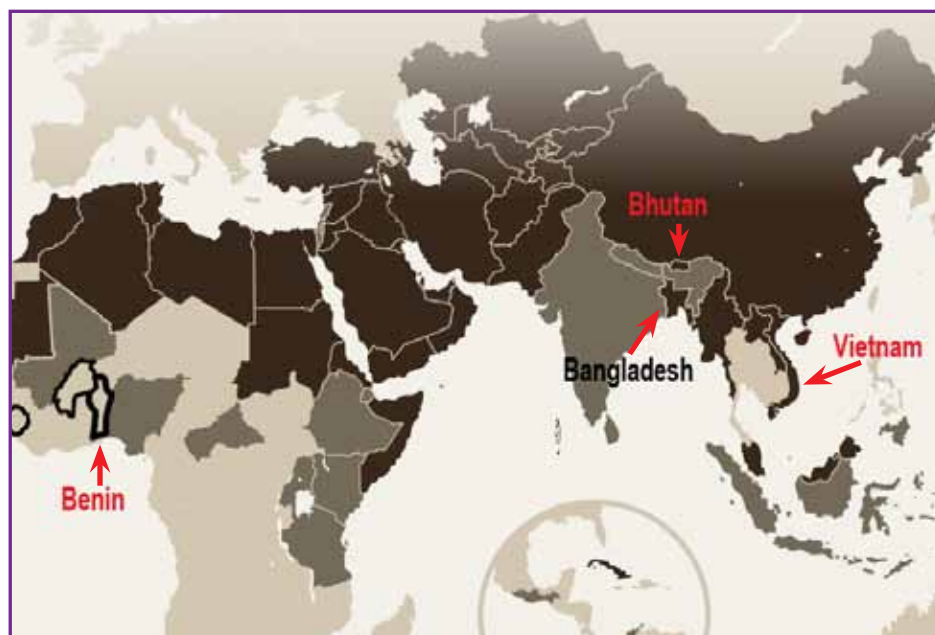




Photo by Carole Missel

**Teach Me,
Help Me,
Thrill Me**
**A Guide
to the Longest Psalm**

Article by Brian Tabb, President,
Bethlehem College and Seminary

The Grand Canyon is spectacular and vast: 277 miles long, up to 18 miles wide, and over a mile deep. Covering about 1,900 square miles, the Canyon is roughly the size of the state of Delaware. While millions visit this national park each year, the vast majority see the Canyon only from the rim and never venture onto the trails to explore its wonders.

Think of Psalm 119, the longest chapter in the Bible, as “the Grand Psalm.” At 176 verses, this single psalm is longer than Ephesians and 28 other books of the Bible! It includes many familiar lines, such as, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (verse 105). But studying the whole psalm is a bit like setting off on a hike to the bottom of the Grand Canyon.

After a few hours on the trail in the blistering desert sun, weary hikers might conclude that they’ve seen enough of the limestone, sandstone, and shale rock formations and head for the air-conditioned gift shop. You might have similar thoughts about Psalm 119, as the verses seem to run together as they speak again and

again about the Scriptures as God’s law, testimonies, precepts, statutes, commandments, rules, word, and promise.

To get our bearings, note that Psalm 119 is an intricate acrostic poem with 22 stanzas corresponding to the letters of the Hebrew alphabet: aleph, beth, and so forth. Just as the mighty Colorado River runs through the Grand Canyon with its sheer rock walls, so the poetic form of the Grand Psalm provides the walls through which a river of passion and praise flows. The inspired poet was so captivated by the loveliness of God’s word, so confident in its truthfulness, that he penned the Bible’s longest, most intricate poem celebrating the Book God gave us for our good.

Let’s explore three themes or “trails” in and through this Grand Psalm — devotion, dependence, and delight — to renew and deepen our love for the Book of God.

Devotion

The first trail through the Grand Psalm is devotion. Devotion is like checking the map, choosing your route, and setting off with eager expectation. We must orient our minds, hearts, and lives to God and his word. The psalm opens with a double blessing that captures this emphasis on heartfelt devotion:

*Blessed are those whose way is blameless,
who walk in the law of the Lord!*

*Blessed are those who keep his testimonies,
who seek him with their whole heart,
who also do no wrong, but walk in his
ways! (verses 1–3)*

“Blessed” means truly happy and favored by God (as in Psalm 1:1). Our society defines the good life by accumulation of possessions, by personal achievements and autonomy. But the good life is actually found in seeking the true God, keeping his ways, and being happy in him.

And then, after only three verses

of speaking about God, the worshiper speaks directly to God. We typically think of Psalm 119 as a lofty poem about God’s word. But it is also the most sustained “I-to-you” prayer in the Bible. The Grand Psalm reflects personal, passionate, and honest communion with the living God — in other words, devotion to the living God.

**“Devotion pleads, ‘Teach me!’
Dependence cries, ‘Help me!’
Delight says, ‘Thrill me!’”**

Time and again, this psalm ponders precious truths about God’s character and ways. “You are good and do good” (verse 68). In verses 4–8, the poet rehearses reality (“You told me to carefully keep your word”), makes a request (“I want to keep it”), then expresses his resolve (“I intend to keep it!”). These and other verses of the Grand Psalm summon us to a life of deep devotion, a life marked by confidence in God’s word and wholehearted commitment to God’s ways.

This first trail through the Grand Psalm orients us to what is true, right, and good and motivates us to trust God and seek him. The word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (verse 105), so the worshiper prays, “Teach me, O Lord” (verse 33). We need light from God’s word because we often face darkness — which leads to our second theme.

Dependence

Returning to the hiking analogy, dependence is when you are hours into your hike and you’re weary and hurting and wondering if you’re going the right way. This second trail through the Grand Psalm entails trusting God through trials. We move from the prayer of devotion, “Teach me,” to the desperate plea, “Help me!”

The psalmist identifies himself as “a sojourner on the earth” (verse

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19), and he regularly expresses his neediness, confusion, and trouble. This believer is severely afflicted. He weeps, lies awake at night, cries for help, and longs for salvation. Think of King David on the run from his father-in-law Saul or his son Absalom. Think of David's greater Son, Jesus, a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. He was mocked, betrayed, abandoned, accused, tortured, and killed.

The psalmist hits rock bottom in verses 81–87. This embattled believer feels like “wineskin in the smoke” — spent, burned out, shriveled up, cast aside. Think of Job sitting in the ashes, scraping his sores, or Jeremiah at the bottom of a muddy cistern. The poet cries out, “How long? Help!” He can't see a way out. He is almost done — yet he clings to God's promise. That's how light pushes through the darkness, turning desperation into confident joy: “Forever, O Lord, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens” (verse 89).

Even after this hopeful turn to confidence, the trail of dependence in affliction winds through the Grand Psalm until its surprising conclusion: “I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek your servant, for I do not forget your commandments” (verse 176). Elsewhere, the believer insists that he does not stray from God's precepts (verse 110). Yet here, as he addresses the holy God, he is mindful of his own sin. “Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it!” This is the prayer of one who is poor in spirit and who has tasted the grace of God. The psalmist seeks God with his whole heart (verses 2, 10), but he also needs the divine Shepherd to seek him.

Delight

Our last trail through the Grand Psalm is delight. Ten times, the poet expresses his gladness in God's word, as in verse 14: “In the way of your

testimonies I delight as much as in all riches.” The emphasis on delight recalls the happy man of Psalm 1, whose “delight is in the law of the Lord” (Psalm 1:2). Our psalmist sings because of the supreme value of God's word, which is more precious than gold or silver (verses 72, 127). Indeed, the Scriptures are a savory feast for the soul: “How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” (verse 103).

Remember that these euphoric expressions spring from the pen of the same poet who has endured days of distress, sleepless nights, and countless afflictions. He thought his life was over. He felt used up and worn out. God met him in the darkness, sustained him in the valley, and brought him to a place of abundance. So, he rests and revels in God's faithful word. He treasures his God in and through trials, expressing the biblical reality that believers are often “sorrowful, yet always rejoicing” (2 Corinthians 6:10).

Devotion says, “Teach me!” Dependence cries, “Help me!” Delight says, “Thrill me!” This third trail through Psalm 119 reveals the aim of our devotion to God and dependence on his promises. Why does a hiker set off with eager expectation and keep going even when he's tired, hot, and hurting all over? Because he knows that the trail leads to a spectacular waterfall where he can gaze upon glory and plunge into refreshing pools. As Augustine famously prayed, “You have made us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You” (Confessions, 1.1.1).

The Grand Psalm holds out for us a fresh vision of the God who has graciously given us his excellent word, the God who sustains and satisfies his weary saints. So take and read the Book of God with devotion, dependence, and delight.

Brian Tabb (@BJTabb) is president and professor of biblical studies at Bethlehem College and Seminary.

Submitted by Carole Missel

Redemption in the Face of Tribulation

Inspiration comes from:

Battle Prayers

by Michael Klassen &
Thomas Freiling

*For I know that my Redeemer lives,
And He shall stand at last on the earth;
And after my skin is destroyed, this I know,
That in my flesh I shall see God,
Whom I shall see for myself,
And my eyes shall behold, and not another.
How my heart yearns within me!*

— Job 19:25-27 NKJV

Despite the storms that rage against me, Lord God, I will not become embittered against You. Would that I respond to hardship like Job who refused to doubt Your goodness in the face of relentless tragedy and loss.

For I know that my Redeemer lives. You are my Redeemer. You transform the crude sketches in my life into priceless works of art. In Your time, You make all things beautiful (Ecclesiastes 3:11), including my life. Perform Your redemptive work — but give me Your strength to hold on until the end.

My heart's desire is to be more like You.

As gold is refined in the fire, purge me of the dross that tarnishes your character in me (Romans 5:-4). I look forward to the day when I will be able to see the changes You have made in my life.

You see the big picture — the forest — while I can see only the trees.

Although I may not fully understand the reason why I'm in this

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situation, one thing I do know: You are good, and Your mercy endures forever (Psalm 106:1).

Therefore, I will not give up. I will not allow the hardships I face to dictate to me my emotions and responses. Lord, I rest myself in Your care. I trust You. You are in control, and You know what You're doing.

I lift my arms in surrender to the One who reigns above the heavens and the earth.

Magnifying the Lord

*I will bless the LORD at all times;
His praise shall continually be in my mouth.*

*My soul shall make its boast in the LORD;
The humble shall hear of it and be glad.*

*Oh, magnify the LORD with me,
And let us exalt His name together.*

*I sought the LORD, and He heard me,
And delivered me from all my fears. —*

Psalm 34:1-4 NKJV

This day, O God, I choose to bless Your name. I bless You because You are great, and Your greatness does not depend upon my circumstances. The problems of this world are mere child's play in comparison to Your ability to overcome. So, I choose to focus on the Problem Solver rather than any problem. I will boast in You, O God, because nothing is impossible for You (Matthew 19:26). Only You can make the impossible possible.

I proclaim Your name, O Lord. I ascribe greatness to You, my God, for You are the Rock. Your work is perfect and all Your ways are just (Deuteronomy 32:3-4). For this reason, I place my trust in You with confidence. You are greater than my problems; greater than my sins; greater than my sickness; greater than those who oppose me; greater than the powers of darkness; greater than my own shortcomings; greater

than the failings of Your people; greater than the powers of human government; greater than my limited conceptions of how big You really are. My God You are greater!

My power to overcome any situation comes only from You, because greater is He who is in me than he who is in the world (1 John 4:4). My heart's desire is that Your great name will be made known throughout the earth, beginning in my life.

I lift my arms in surrender to the One who reigns above the heavens and the earth.

There is no power on earth greater than Yours. No love stronger. No wisdom deeper. You alone stand above the earth, but You have willingly chosen to also stand beside me.

The fact that You are great, yet You choose to reveal Yourself to me through Your Son, Jesus, through Your Word, and through Your Holy Spirit, drives me to my knees in gratitude. You didn't have to reveal Yourself to me, but You did. Now may Your greatness be revealed in my life so that others may see Your glory as well (Ezekiel 38:23).

Meditating on His Omnipotence and Omnipresence

And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the LORD God Omnipotent reigns!"

— Revelation 19:6 NKJV

Hallelujah! For the Lord God almighty reigns! The heavens and the earth are no match for Your awesome power and might. As You spoke through Your prophet Jeremiah, *Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?*

— Jeremiah 32:27 NKJV

There is no mountain or battle

too great that Your might cannot cast it into the deepest sea. Nothing is too hard for You.

Despite Your great power, I have nothing to fear. I revere Your great name, but I need not be afraid of You because Your love is as great as Your power.

Through Your Son, Jesus, Emmanuel, You are "God with us" (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23). Clothing Yourself in human flesh, You prove Your love and willingness to meet me at the point of my need. Jesus, You are God's power and presence revealed. Only through You can I truly be freed from my bondage to sin.

God, where can I go to outrun Your love (Romans 8:35)? You have positioned Yourself right beside me, carrying me, encouraging me, believing in me. At the end of my rope, when I feel all alone, Your Word promises that You are with me (Hebrews 13:5) and that no one can snatch me from Your hand (John 10:28-29).

And because I cannot escape Your love, I also know I can go to You in prayer. You alone have the ability to answer my requests according to Your power and might.

Because You are all powerful, all present, all wise, and all loving, I can entrust the control of my life to You without fear of being unloved and uncared for. You have raised up Your people for the express purpose that You would show Your power in us, and that Your name would be declared in all the earth (Exodus 9:16). And so here I am Lord, willingly giving to You the praise and honor befitting only You.

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Submitted by Carole Missel

Feast on the Word, Fast from the World

Article by Seth Porch
Guest Contributor

The inability to taste is a terrible experience. I remember it distinctly as a symptom of the Covid virus. Gone were the rich, aromatic notes in that morning cup of coffee; all that was left was the sensation of heat and the effect of caffeine. Gone were the sharp, distinct flavors of the egg-and-bacon breakfast sandwich, though the stomach was satisfied. Food and drink remained necessary, but consuming them was so, well, joyless.

How often do we pick up our Bibles with the same sort of drudgery? We know we need God's words to live, but as we chew, we find no flavor. What once warmed and satisfied our hearts now seems more like the bread in the Gibeonite's sacks, "dry and crumbly" (Joshua 9:12).

The operative word in the previous sentence is *seems*. Lack of taste for the word reveals far more about us than it does the word of God. "Those for whom prophetic doctrine is tasteless," warned John Calvin, "ought to be thought of as lacking taste buds" (Institutes of the Christian Religion, 1.8.2). Lacking a taste for the hearty bread of God, we seek to satisfy ourselves with the empty calories offered by a deceitful world. And when once a taste for worldly fare is acquired, joy in the triune God grows strangely dim.

The struggle to be satisfied in God is part and parcel of daily life for believers. "By nature," writes John Piper, "we get more pleasure from God's gifts than from himself" (When I Don't Desire God, 9). As those who have been corrupted by father Adam's sin we are, all of us, prone to "forsake the one true God for prodigious trifles" (Institutes, 1.5.11). So how do we fight for joy in God? In his mercy, he has given

us ample means, and the first and foremost of these is his own word to us in Holy Scripture.

Fountain of All Joy

Why does God's word play such a crucial role in our fight for joy? Before we answer, we actually have to start by asking a different question: Where does joy come from? Ultimately, joy comes not from reading a book, nor from meditation, nor from prayer, nor from this article. It has a very specific source.

The psalmist writes, "Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. . . . God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever" (Psalm 73:25–26). And elsewhere, "In your presence there is fullness of joy" (Psalm 16:11). There is one, and only one, source of joy: the eternal and perfect God, who dwells forever in the felicity of triune love. From his fullness alone can we be satisfied because he made us (oh, glorious truth!) to be satisfied in him. "Whom have I in heaven but you?"

It is worth pausing here to ask ourselves, Do I believe this? Do I really believe that in himself God is replete and that he created all things out of the superabundance of his own inner life? Do I trust the testimony of the beloved apostle when he writes, "God is love" (1 John 4:8)? If we do not believe that the only source of true joy is God himself, then the gospel, while it may taste sweet from time to time, will be just one among a host of delicacies spread before us. We may rejoice in God, but only as the provider of other joys.

The daily struggle for joy in God is a fight of faith. We strive against the deceits of the world, the flesh, and the enemy of our souls to cling to God as the one who has life and joy in himself and freely offers them to us in the Son. And one of the

crucial ways we fight is by opening his word.

'Seek My Face'

We are daily presented with fresh opportunities to pursue God as our greatest treasure. In his mercy and kindness, he commands us, "Seek my face" (Psalm 27:8). And he has not withheld from us the means to do so.

"Food is for eating. Good food is for feasting. And God wants us to feast on his word."

Holy Scripture is the revealed word of God. It is the principal means he has given to us to seek him and to hear his voice. Piper writes, "The fundamental reason that the word of God is essential to joy in God is that God reveals himself mainly by his word" (When I Don't Desire God, 95). We do not seek our God in mindless meditation, emptying ourselves of thoughts and ideas. Christians do meditate as a means to seek God, but we do so by filling our minds and thoughts with his word, carefully following the shafts of revealed light up to the Source.

And what — or better, who — do we see as our eyes are filled with heavenly light? We see him who is "the radiance of the glory of God," our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:3). God the Father calls us to seek him by his Spirit in his Son. Jesus made this plain when he said, "No one comes to Father except through me. . . . Whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:6, 9).

When we open the word of God, we behold by faith the Word of God. In beholding the Word of God, we gaze upon the glory of God. In gazing upon the glory of God, we are filled (as Anselm writes) with "the blessedness for which [we were] made" (Proslogion 1) — fellowship with the Father through the Son in the Spirit.

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‘Your Face, Lord, Do I Seek’

God made us to rejoice in him. And he has given us his word as the principal means to that joy. But how do we actually wield Scripture in our fight for joy? The psalmist responds to the Lord’s command “Seek my face” with “Your face, Lord, do I seek” (Psalm 27:8). How do we follow him in his pursuit? I’ll draw your attention to two aspects of faithful seeking that bring us back to where this article started: tasty food.

Seek by Fasting

God calls us to delight in him by fasting from this world.

Many are the delicacies offered to us by the world. The confectioners are hard at work, ever seeking to delight our senses and satiate our bellies. They want to fill us with goodies that, though tasty in the eating, will turn to ash in the stomach and leave us feeling bloated and sick. The pleasures of the world — anything and everything that promises to yield lasting happiness apart from God — amount to nothing but vanity.

If we are to have taste buds for what is true, we must fast from such delicacies and train ourselves to enjoy wholesome food. Fasting, in this sense, doesn’t mean we forsake all earthly goods, only that we learn to enjoy them properly as gifts received from the Father of lights.

So, how do we fast? By taking seriously how Jesus refutes the devil’s tasty temptation: “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God’” (Matthew 4:4). We need to carefully consider what makes up our steady diet and ask if we’ve developed tastes for that which leaves us empty. We can test whether or not we’ve acquired a taste for the ephemeral by asking a few diagnostic questions.

What grabs your attention when you first wake up? Are you more eager to read emails or check what people said about your most recent post than you are to kneel in prayer with God’s word open before you?

What rhythms punctuate your days and weeks? Is your everyday life marked more by the demands of a busy schedule or by a repeated turning to hear the Lord?

What most informs the way you think and speak of the events of your life and the wider world? Do you primarily refract them through the lens of the latest political changes or most recent trends? Or do you consider them in light of the One who orders all things according to his good and sovereign will?

The list could go on and on. The fight for right fasting is won not in a single day nor, unfortunately, in the present life. We must, like a sommelier, carefully train our taste buds to “test everything; hold fast what is good [and] abstain from every form of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:21–22).

Seek by Feasting

God also calls us to delight in him by feasting on his word.

God frequently refers to his word in terms of food. Man lives not by bread alone (Deuteronomy 8:5). “Your words were found, and I ate them, and [they] became to me a joy and the delight of my heart” (Jeremiah 15:16). Peter likens the word to “pure spiritual milk” (1 Peter 2:2), the author of Hebrews compares “the word of righteousness” to “solid food” (Hebrews 5:12–14), and David writes, “The law of the Lord is . . . sweeter . . . than honey and drippings of the honeycomb” (Psalm 19:10). Food is for eating. Good food is for feasting. And God wants us to feast on his word.

How do we feast? We feast by attentively reading his word.

Attentiveness requires putting away distractions, soaking without hurrying, and attending carefully to what God says.

We feast by meditating on and memorizing his word, learning to speak and think with the grain of Scripture and hold fast the myriad promises made.

We feast by praying his word, speaking back to God in our own varied situations his very words, aiming to conform our will to his.

We feast by sharing what he shows us of himself in his word with others, inviting them to try a bite of what we have enjoyed.

We feast by hearing his word taught, humbly submitting ourselves to those whom he has appointed to lay the table for us.

We feast by singing his word, joining with the saints and angels as we address one another “in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all [our] heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 5:19–20).

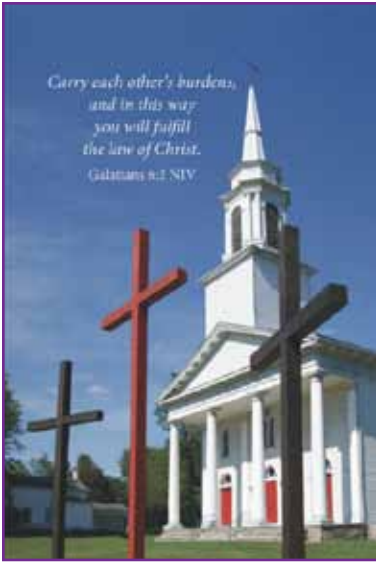
Come, Eat

In one of his final appearances to the disciples before he ascended to heaven, Jesus cooked a meal and invited them to come and eat (John 21:12). He has done the same for us, but instead of a few fish on the beach, he has spread an unimaginable feast, putting before us the finest delicacies of his glory and calling us to banquet at his table.

So, come daily to eat and drink your fill. Feast on the food of his word, and find that he alone truly satisfies.

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Submitted by Carole Missel



EPCConnection

EPCConnection is the news and information service of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, a denomination of Presbyterian, Reformed, Evangelical, and Missional congregations. To the glory of God, the EPC family aspires to be a global movement of congregations engaged together in God's mission through transformation, multiplication, and effective biblical leadership, embodying Jesus' love to our neighbors near and far.



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is published monthly by the Leicester Evangelical Presbyterian Church, for the purpose of proclaiming that Jesus is Lord and that He is moving among his people here. Our intent is to keep the readers informed of church and local events, and provide information to stimulate and edify its readers.

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