

EBBC Newsletter for April 2020

Psalm 25:16-18 "Turn to me and be gracious to me for I am lonely and afflicted. The troubles of my heart are enlarged; bring me out of my distresses. Look upon my affliction and my trouble and forgive all my sins."

Psalm 27:1 "The Lord

is my light and salvation; whom shall I fear? The lord is the defense of my life; whom shall I dread?"

Psalm 27:11a "Teach me Your way, O Lord....."

"His soul will abide in prosperity"

My beloved, in the book of psalm the Lord reveals to us the many pitfalls, trials, sicknesses and adversities that we will encounter in this life, as well as, many other issues related to our sinful nature. He reveals through the psalmists not only the calamities of life, but He also exposes the weaknesses and doubts of the sinful man apart from His holy guidance. He reveals our spiritual souls as "empty" or desperately in need of His peace that passes all understanding. God reveals to each of us that this feeling of emptiness will continue to manifest and dominate our hearts and minds as long as we continue to live in a state devoid of His holy spirit. He informs us in many of the psalms that these feelings of helplessness as well as doubts, depression, anxiety, etc., etc., etc., that seem to overwhelm mankind, are a direct result of living without the guidance of the Holy spirit. The world is in a constant state of decline, the world is experiencing complete and utter moral decay due to one and only one fact; the world is trying to exist apart from the laws, guidance and commandments of the Holy spirit of GOD!

In Psalm 19:7-14 God's word discloses to us the following: "The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever. The judgments of the Lord are true, they are righteous altogether. They are more desirable than gold, yes, much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them your servant is warned and in keeping them is great reward. Who can discern his errors or acquit me of hidden faults? Also keep back Your servant from presumptuous sins, let them not rule over me. Then I shall be blameless, and I shall be acquitted of great transgression. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my rock, my redeemer."

In conclusion, I pray that our congregation remain steadfast in our daily pursuit of the love and truths of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. May God grant all of us the peace that surpasses all understanding and may our lives be enriched daily by our love for God and each other. Until we meet again, may Gods' blessing be upon you and yours. Amen. *My beloved brethren, we can be absolutely assured and utterly confident that our prosperity in life is entirely dependent upon our close and personal relationship with God! Have a blessed Easter!

pdripton

FROM THE DESK OF PASTOR BOB:

My sleep was broken early this morning by the brightness of the dawn and the noise of the geese on the pond. By the time I made my way outside with Maggie (my dog), the geese were joined by a variety of ducks and even a stray seagull. While Maggie rolled around in one of the few remaining piles of snow, I watched the wildlife on the pond. They seemed oblivious regarding the worldwide pandemic, we are experiencing. They showed no signs of being surprised or unprepared. They showed up just as the ice was disappearing like they do every spring. How can that be?

I thought of how very few conversations I heard the day before that neglected to include “the virus.” I determined to avoid more incessant confusing and often conflicting news reports and social media sharing about the thing. Governments, national and local are scrambling to find ways to contain and control the spread of the virus. I leave that to them. My first goal will be to remain in a Matthew 5 mindset. Specifically remembering these words of Jesus: “*Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life?*” and a few verses later, Jesus added this: “*But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith!*” And this, “*So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself.*”

Remembering these things will prepare me to join the prophet Habakkuk, who wrote, in the midst of extraordinary difficulties: “*Though the fig tree should not blossom and there be no fruit on the vines, though the yield of the olive should fail and the fields produce no food, though the flock should be cut off from the fold and there be no cattle in the stalls, Yet I will exult in the Lord, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation. The Lord is my strength, and He has made my feet like hinds’ feet, and makes me walk on my high places.*” Read it for yourself in Habakkuk 3:17-19 and then join us.

Walk with Jesus. He has this all under control.

In His grace,

Pastor Bob

Please join us for our morning worship service at 11:00 am via Zoom - <https://zoom.us/j/5927482760>, Meeting ID: 592 748 2760 or Conference call info: Call 1-425-436-6349 Access Code is: 227144

OCC Shoebox ministry update: submitted by Melissa Coppa

Exciting news! Central Maine's shoebox numbers were up 13% from last year's numbers and the State of Maine had an 8.3% increase in boxes. Please be in prayer for the OCC ministry; for volunteers and partners across the globe, for those in leadership roles as they make decisions in these current times.

40 Days For Life Campaign ends April 5th. Have you prayed for the unborn children who are facing death? Here are some stats because of prayers: 16,742 lives saved since 2007, 106 Abortion Centers closed, 196 Abortion workers quit and 282 babies saved since February 26!

Reflections on Prayer from Pastor Henri:

Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray...”

Luke 11:1

Dear church family, who among us cannot identify with this request from the disciples? What veteran of prayer doesn't feel and yearn for deeper and newer realities of prayer? Prayer is like the manna Israel was sustained by in the desert. You cannot hoard and live on old manna. It will rot. We must be freshly and daily nourished by prayer (**Exodus 16:17-21**). The disciples were familiar with “prayers” and praying in the synagogue and Temple of their day.

However, as they watched and heard Jesus pray to the Father, they beheld a fellowship that was alien to them. They saw a communion between the Father and the Son which was fresh and new. In Jesus, they beheld a reality which was absent in their experience and which Jesus possessed in abundance. They turned to the Master and asked Him to show them the way. There always seems to be a greater eagerness in God to give generously than there is faith in us to turn to Him for what we need, but, in this instance, the disciples humbly turned to Jesus with empty hands of faith, and He did not disappoint them. God never mocks our needs, our weaknesses, or our frailty. He welcomes it (**Matt 11:20-21**). He loves to give Himself away to those who will humble themselves before their emptiness (**Rom 8:32; James 4:8**).

The disciples longed for the seamless intimacy Jesus enjoyed with God the Father. Do you? Do we sense our need in this moment for new and fresh depths of intimacy with God; not merely rescue? Are we solely seeking His hand or His heart also? Do you feel defeated at the thought of, “Where do I begin?”. In these days, especially, are we not perplexed and dumbfounded by the confusion that reigns in human affairs? Have we not been reminded of how fragile our human frames are? Do you want to trade the quagmire of *human wisdom* for the solid ground of *Divine Wisdom*? Then confess with me, “Lord, teach us to pray in ways we have never known prayer. Grant us a fresh intimacy with You we haven't known or perhaps neglected. Deliver us from turning prayer into a technique rather than intimacy with You through Christ. Take us by the hand and show us the way. By Your Word, enlighten us, and ignite our hearts to pray.”

Turn to God in prayer. It was the French pastor and theologian, John Calvin, who so clearly and biblically called prayer, “the chief exercise of faith”. What this shows us, is that true faith will give way to prayer. Faith breathes out prayer. Faith will grow and be strengthened by prayer; for prayer itself is making space for intimacy with God (**Psalms 91:1**). Prayer is about intimacy and relationship; not duty (**Psalms 51:15-17; Isaiah 1:13-20**). Prayer is a manifestation of faith yet faith will be strengthened by prayer.

We need to ransack the Bible for God's promises which will encourage and sustain us in the way of prayer. To that end, I would like to share with you the insights and wisdom of a Scottish pastor from a previous generation. Horatius Bonar (1808-1889) was used mightily by God to bring revival among God's people in Scotland. His pulpit ministry maintained an evangelistic fervor, and his hymn writing extended his commitment to help God's people embrace the truths that flowed from his pulpit. He also paved the way and helped support famed D.L. Moody's evangelistic ministry in his home country.

May the Lord strengthen you as you read his admonitions and encouragement.

From my heart to yours,

Pastor Henri

Pray On, and Pray Fervently

By Horatius Bonar

“Continuing instant in Prayer.” Romans 12:12

Prayer takes for granted that God is full, and we are empty; that He is infinitely full, and we unspeakably empty. I do not say *infinitely* empty, because God only is infinite. The creature is finite, alike in evil and in good: The emptiness or evil of any creature, or a whole universe of creatures, can never be infinite. Else what would become of us? Infinitude belongs to Godhead; finitude to creaturehood. And here is the first ray of hope to us. Our poverty and want must ever be a mere nothing in comparison with the fullness of Him who filleth all in all. We are sometimes alarmed at the thought of His greatness. Foolish alarm! Were He not so great, so full, so infinite, what would become of us?

Prayer takes for granted that there is a connection between this fullness and our emptiness. The fullness is not inaccessible. It is not too high for us to reach, or for it to stoop. It is not too great for us, nor too distant, so as to be incommunicable. There is a connection, and it has been established by God himself; it is a divine medium of communication: “Ask, and ye shall receive.” It is as *righteous* as it is divine.

Prayer takes for granted that we are entitled to use this channel, this medium; and that, in using it, there will be a sure inflow of the fullness into us. “Everyone that asketh receiveth.” It is *men*, not angels, who are invited to use this medium. It is to *sinners* that the gate is thrown open; for them is the access provided. Free, yet righteous access for unrighteous men. God’s love has made it *free*; the blood of His Son hath made it righteous.

It takes for granted God’s willingness to receive every applicant. His willingness is like His fullness, *infinite*. “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out,” applies to prayer; but still more does **John 4:10** “If thou knewest the gift of God, thou wouldest have asked, and He would have given.” He makes no exceptions, He does not bid the sinner qualify himself, or ascertain his election, or get up some preliminary preparation, or make sure of the quantity or quality of his faith; He throws open wide His gate and His throne to any applicant, the unworthiest of the human race. His willingness to receive each coming one is infinite. Prayer is not meant to *create* or *produce* willingness; to move the heart of an unwilling God. It assumes this willingness, and acts upon it. It is not “tentative”; it does not go in order to make an *experiment* on God’s willingness. To “experiment” upon it is in reality to *deny* it; and to act upon such an experimenting principle is to deal with an unknown God.

Prayer takes for granted *expectation* on our part. This is in a measure implied in the willingness of God; but it needs special notice; for it is that to which Paul referred when he wrote, “without faith it is impossible to please Him, for He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” *Length* will not do; nor *repetition*; nor *regularity*; no, not even *earnestness*; nay, earnestness is often the mere expression of unbelief, and the indication of a secret feeling on our part that God is not wholly willing, but requires our earnestness to make Him so.

If, then, we examine our prayers, and strip them of all that is not prayer, how little remains? Take away the vain words, the mere meditative parts; the mere expression of solemn feeling; the mere sentimentalism; the mere utterance of petitions, because urged by conscience and a sense of duty; the requests not accompanied with expectation, and how little remains in the best of our prayers! What multitudes of prayers are ascending on this day. How much of these will God recognize as prayer? What a small residuum would remain if divested of all prayerless accessories. I cannot compare it to the amount of grain when the chaff is winnowed away, nor of gold when the dross is purged off; but to the tiny gem or little crystal which you pick out of some great rock, after breaking it in pieces, and sifting its endless fragments.

Let us mark such things as the following in reference to this kind of prayer:

1. The irksomeness of non-expecting prayer. Sometimes there may be such an amount of natural feeling as may make what is called “devotion” pleasant. But in the long run it becomes irksome, if not accompanied with expectation, sure expectation. It is expectation only that can produce and keep up truly devotional feeling; expectation founded on God’s infinite willingness to give, and on His promises to the applicant.

2. The uselessness of non-expecting prayer. It bears no fruit; it brings no answer; it draws down no blessing. It is expectation that honors God, and that God will honor. The answer always runs in this form, “According to thy faith be it unto thee.” It is non-expectation that, more than anything else, ruins and nullifies prayer.

3. The sinfulness of non-expecting prayer. The utterance of petitions is nothing to God; it does not recommend the petitioner. Many seem to think so; and to suppose there is some secret virtue or influence, if not merit, in all prayer, however unbelieving. It is not so; nay, there is guilt, deep guilt, in every unbelieving petition; for thus God is dishonored, His willingness is denied, His Son is set aside, His Spirit is grieved, and He is addressed both as an hard master and an unknown God. Oh the guilt involved in the religion of religious men; men whose prayers are as regular as the rising or setting sun!



April Birthdays

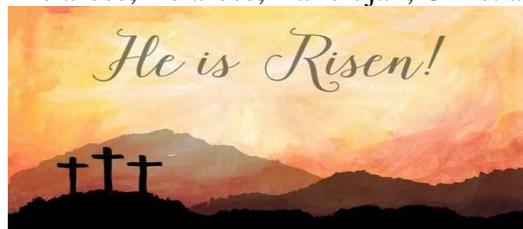
Joshua Ripton 4/3
Roger Southwick 4/3
Asher Pelletier 4/4
Nichole Langley 4/5
Tim Baird 4/6
Duane Harvey 4/10
Joshua Viekman 4/14
Sue Hoffman 4/14
Keith Whitaker 4/20
Heather Armstrong 4/21
Sandy Justus 4/26
Vickie Washburn 4/26
Brenda Ripton 4/28
Heath Foster 4/28
Dora Petry 4/30

April Anniversaries

Charlie and Sherry Grant 4/18

Easter is Sunday, April 12th

He arose, He arose, Hallelujah, Christ arose!!



For

I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures..... 1 Corinthians 15:4&5