

THE PENTECOST

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May is here, and in its issue we will be discussing spiritual hunger, enlightenment, and the image of God. God bless you!

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EXTOL THE LOVE OF CHRIST

Extol the love of Christ, ye saints,
And sing His wondrous worth,
Whose love, like God, eternal is
In heaven and on earth.
From God He brought His blessing rare;
To God He did ascend;
And constant in His heav'nly love
He loved unto the end.

Extol the love which sought to show
The Father's boundless grace:
The Son, from Father's bosom come, -
Beheld the Father's face: -
In servile garments clothed upon,
With humble service meet,
The Master loved as none could love
And washed His servants' feet.

The Lord and Master humbly served
To glorify the meek;
His heav'nly glory shared with those
Who would His favor seek.
Lord, teach Thy saints in Thee to know
The fullness of Thy love,
The fellowship Thy service taught,
Thy glory, bright, above.

Let poor, vain man example take
And from his pride repent;
For Christ far greater is than man,
Or servant that is sent.
Example, worthy, Christ has giv'n,
And happy shall they be
Who wash each other's feet, and love
As deep and true as He.

Samuel F. Coffman (b. 1872)

Christian Hymnal, Moundridge: Gospel Publishers, 1976.

MY SOUL THIRSTS FOR YOU

O God, You *are* my God;
Early will I seek You;
My soul thirsts for You;
My flesh longs for You
In a dry and thirsty land
Where there is no water.
So I have looked for You in the
sanctuary,
To see Your power and Your glory.
Because Your lovingkindness *is* better
than life,
My lips shall praise You. Thus I will
bless You while I live;
I will lift up my hands in Your name.

Psalm 63:1-4

Again, we read about the heart of David, the King of Israel, expressing his hunger for God. At the time of the writing of this Psalm, it is believed that he was a king in exile, running from his son, Absalom. The worst of circumstances seem to have brought out the best in David. His heart and focus were on God. His thirst is not overcome by fear, despondency or stoic indifference. Instead, he cries out to God with great yearning. He seeks God early. The faith of David is there to challenge us. David seeks God early in life, and early in the day. He is crying from a dry and thirsty land where there is no water. This is an excellent picture of the Judean wilderness and wasteland that He was hiding in. It is also an excellent picture of his soul, which is dry from lack of God and yearns for an outpouring of the Spirit of God. There is nothing on earth to cheer him so he looks up to God. He says that he has looked for God

in the sanctuary. He is remembering his days in the sanctuary in Jerusalem. It was there that he saw past all of the ceremony of religion and found God. Now, he is exiled from that place but he still has faith to find God at the place where he presently is. God's glory is not confined to a building. It can be found on land or at sea. It can be found in a palace or a cave. It can be found in Jerusalem or in the Judean wilderness. It is God's glory and presence that David needs so much at this time. David praises God and lifts up his hands.

David's heart was bent towards God. Just like a plant that leans in the direction of the sun, David's soul gravitated toward God. David knew that "The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth." (Psalm 145:18). So, he called, expecting an answer from the Almighty. We can have that Sabbath of soul where we inwardly worship God and fellowship with God. There is no need to let your hands hang down when God and His love are there.

Let us pray:

God, You are our God. Lord Jesus, sit at the helm of our souls and steer and rule. Please rebuke the wind and storm. Let your goodness and mercy follow us as we follow You through this life. Your praise shall continually be in our mouths and help us not to forget all of Your benefits. Lord, we thirst for the spring of water opened to us by Your gospel. Water the barren soil of our hearts. Let us have spiritual hearts which are growing in grace and blossoming in holy desire and faith. Lord, we want to see both Yourself and ourselves in Your holy Word. Brighten our lives with Your light. Let us be full of Your light with no part dark. Be our teacher, prophet, shepherd and king and let us, with Mary, choose the better part of sitting at Your feet and learning from You. May, in our times together, You be

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ENLIGHTENMENT PART 3

The Gospels record an incident from the childhood of Jesus Christ where Jesus' parents took Him to Jerusalem for the Passover feast. Once the event was over, they started heading back and only Jesus lingered behind. What was he doing? His parents, after searching for Him, found Him in the temple conversing with the temple teachers. Jesus was only twelve years old and the teachers, and others, who were listening to Him "...were astonished at His understanding and answers." (Luke 2:47). What was it that made Jesus' words so astonishing? It was His enlightenment.

Jesus, even from His childhood, had a relationship with God, His Father. In that relationship was divine communication and the transference of wisdom. This wisdom was one quality that would characterize His life. He repeatedly gave God, His Father, the credit for His teaching. He said:

...When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. (John 8:28).

Jesus was teaching His Heavenly Father's wisdom.

After receiving enlightenment from His Father, Jesus shared this truth with others, bringing them to enlightenment also. Jesus is faithful to lead and shepherd and teach His followers in any age. A Christian begins to know the voice of Jesus. Jesus referred to His followers as His sheep and said:

I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd. (John 10:14-16).

Jesus' followers are enlightened by His voice and come to discern it. When we read the Bible and it is

illuminated before us, we see in print what we know from Christ's voice, and we know that they are the same source. Jesus instructed us to walk in His teaching. He said:

...A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light... (John 12:35-36).

Here, we have Jesus giving two commands to us, that is, if you want to consider these as separate things; we are to walk in the light, and to believe in the light. The result of this walking/believing is that God's light becomes such a part of us that we become sons of light.

Enlightened sons of light, who are walking and believing in God's light, begin to understand mysteries. A mystery is something unexplained, unknown or something kept secret. In the first century Roman world there were many mystery religions which were small cults into which people were inducted and initiated after swearing themselves to secrecy. They lured people with the intrigue of understanding their acclaimed mysteries.

The Apostle Paul also spoke of mysteries, but he handled them differently. He said:

...we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. (1 Corinthians 2:6-8).

The apostles had been given quite a revelation when the Gospel was made known to them. Who ever would have imagined the Gospel without God revealing it to them? Jesus Christ would save His people by dying a sacrificial death for them, and then rising from the dead.

He was creating a church of all who would receive His rule over their lives, regardless of their race or background. God's kingdom was a spiritual kingdom and now His spiritual revelation was coming out in a greater way than ever before. Unlike the mystery religions of Paul's day, the apostles were not trying to peddle this information in little bits and pieces, holding back as much of it as possible and speaking only as much as was necessary to lure people into mystery cults. They were not trying to preserve God's truth in mystery form but, rather, were doing everything they could to get their message out.

Nevertheless, it was still a mystery, in that, people didn't understand it. It required heart knowledge, over head knowledge, to grasp it. Their message was soundly based in the Old Testament books, but it was not until this time, as a result of enlightenment, that a real understanding of those books was coming out. It was a progressive revelation. The gospel was rooted in the Old Testament but the explaining of it, by enlightenment, was for this time. The message that the apostles were bringing was profoundly new to the people's thinking. It was deeply spiritual. You could call it a mystery, still the apostles were doing everything they could to get the word out.

It is God's great pleasure to reveal His light and mystery to all who will receive it. Jesus said:

No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts it under a bed, but sets it on a lampstand, that those who enter may see the light. For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light.

(Luke 8:16-17).

Friend, are you walking and believing in Jesus' light? Are you a son or daughter of light? In the Bible, Jesus has shared with us His Heavenly Father's words. Jesus said about His words; "... The words that I speak to you are spirit, and *they* are life." (John 6:63). What was once a mystery is now revealed. Is it open to your understanding because you have believed it with your heart?

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worshiped and we be filled up with spiritual treasure in our hearts which will bring forth fruit, with patience. Lord, create in us a clean heart and incline it wholly towards You. Lord, we empty from our hearts any love for the things of this world and You fill it with a new level of love for You. Lord, let us run after You. We are delighted by Your love, refreshed by Your Spirit, strengthened by the awareness of Your presence and made glad by Your embrace. Lord, let Your word be sweeter to us than the honey and the honeycomb. Lord, let our hearts be quieted by Your peace and governed by Your truth. Hide not Your face from us. Let us know You closely. Jesus, we want to be sincere and without offense until the day of Your return, being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which come by You. We want to be rooted and grounded in love, comprehending Your love and being filled with You. Lord, we want to forget all the things behind us that would simply distract us and we want to press foreword towards those things which lie ahead in You. You have drawn us with cords of love and we now yield to all Your pulling. Pull us in. Pull us close. May Your love diffuse through every part of our spirit, soul and body and also shine out to others. You have put your love in us and the pearl of it we will always keep and guard. Lord, You possess our reins. Steer us through this world. Steer us strait up to You. How precious are Your thoughts to us, how great is the sum of them. Let us know them and by knowing them, come to know You and ourselves better. Thank You for Your faithfulness, Lord. When we lay down, You are there, and when we awake, You are still with us. You are a fountain of purity. Let us drink again. Let us drink anew of You.

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THE IMAGE OF GOD IN THE SOUL OF MAN

The holy Bible opens with the famous creation account. God created the heavens and the earth. He created light. He created earth's firmament and life on the globe. The last thing in the creation account that He made was man. How did God make man? We read:

Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (Genesis 1:26-27).

What does the Bible mean when it says that man was created in the image of God? What is the image of God? I believe that the image of God is primarily God's attributes, which are many. Some of His divine attributes, for example, would be His holiness (Exodus 15:11; Revelation 4:8), His justice (Romans 2:11; Genesis 18:19), His love (John 3:16; 1 John 4:16), His mercy (2 Corinthians 1:3; Psalm 25:6) and His truthfulness (Psalm 25:6; Psalm 31:5). When God created man, he put these same attributes or qualities into him. He made man like a mirror to reflect Himself. Man was like a portrait of God, holy and beautiful. There has always been, and will continue to be, a great distinction between man and God. Man is not God, but the first man was in many ways an image or imprint of God.

However, tragedy was around the corner. The Bible records that man chose to disobey God, and sin entered the world. Eve had been deceived by a serpent into disobeying God and Adam followed her lead. Man was now a fallen creature, and the first effect of having

sinned was that the image of God in him was shattered. Just as shattered glass is still glass, man continued to have some of these qualities in a limited sense, but he was not like he was before. His understanding was now darkened. His heart was now twisted. The image of God in him was severely distorted.

There is nothing more horrifying than the shattering of the image of God in man. Not only was it shattered and distorted, but now man was taking on a new image, that of the serpent who deceived Eve. I believe that this is why John the Baptist referred to many of the hypocritical religious leaders of his day as being a *brood of vipers*. That was the image that they now wore.

However, in God's grace and mercy, provision was made and, at the high price of the substitutionary death and resurrection of Christ, redemption was made for man. Now, whoever will repent from self-rule and receive God's gift of salvation will have something else given to them too, God's image. The Christian is a new man and the Bible says; "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." (Ephesians 4:23,24, King James Version).

Becoming a Christian is to be born again, into a spiritual life. One result of this is having the fruit of the Spirit. The Bible says; "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law." (Galatians 5:22-23). These fruits sprout up in the life of a Christian and they are also a part of the image of God. New birth changes a man. He becomes a child of grace, a new creature who begins to reflect God again. The Bible says it this way:

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the

same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Corinthians 3:18).

The Psalmist also tells us that:

*As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness;
I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness.
(Psalm 17:15).*

When the image of God is awakened in a man or woman, they are refreshed and renewed. They have experienced how gracious the Lord is. Now, they grow in the spiritual attributes. Johann Arndt has said:

In true knowledge of Christ, his person, his vocation, his blessing, his heavenly eternal goods, consists eternal life (Jn17:3). All this is ignited by the Holy Spirit in our hearts as a new light that becomes ever brighter and clearer as a polished brass of mirror, or as a small child grows and matures daily in body. A man is newborn in his conversion if the righteousness of Christ is given to him through faith. Then the image of God will be daily renewed. He is not yet, however, a perfect man (Eph 4:13) but a child who must yet be trained by the Holy Spirit and become conformed from day to day with Christ Jesus. The whole of the Christian life upon earth is nothing other and can be nothing other than a raising up of the image of God in a faithful man. Thereby, he continually lives in the new birth and the old birth is daily extinguished and mortified in him (Rom. 6:4). This must begin in this life but will be perfected in the next. If he has not so begun before the final judgment day and before his death, it can nevermore be established in him.¹

You see, a man or woman's soul is like clay; it bears the image of whatever is imprinted on it. Again,

it is like a mirror. If you are journeying towards heaven, you will reflect heaven. If you are journeying towards hell, you will reflect hell.

Friend, do you bear the image of God? Do you have the fruit of God's Spirit? Is God's image all shattered in you? The good news is that Jesus has died for your sins and mine, and has risen from the dead to bring His salvation to us. We must come to Him in repentance and faith, make a full surrender, and allow His new image to be birthed in us.

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¹ Johann Arndt, *True Christianity* (New York: Paulist Press, Reprint 1979), 184.

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Canada's eastern Arctic is divided into two primary domains, Nunavut and Nunavik. These areas together encompass 2.7 million square kilometers. Its natural geography is beautiful, and it is the home to tens of thousands of Canadians.

The history of many arctic communities is painful and full of sorrow. Many of these communities have come to be known for their alcoholism, abuse, suicide and lack of law and order. In fact, in the summer of 1991, the CBC television crew did a program entitled, *Deadly Summer*, in which the northern city/town of Puvirnitua was reported on for its eight teenage suicides of that year.

Against a painful social climate such as this, Christians in the northern town of Pond Inlet began praying for revival. Their prayers were answered and, in Feb 1996, Evangelist Billy Arnaquq and Pastor Moses Kyak began holding special meetings. A revival broke out and people began committing their lives to Jesus Christ. One act of repentance that the people did was the discarding of sinful property such as drugs, heavy metal CDs and pornography. Such a pile of this material was gathered that the local RCMP offered support in burning it all. According to them, the value of the materials gathered was between \$80,000-\$100,000.

Other northern towns would be visited by revival as well. Apupaluk, in Northern Quebec, had another story of despairing social chaos, for which Christians began praying. A school teacher, named Maggie Akpanatak, tells of the terrible incidents of suicide in her community. She tells also how they began to pray that the curse over their community would be broken by God's power. The turnaround came, and she testifies of the healing that God has brought to the community. A new openness to God sprung up in the community and, with this openness, she begins her class with prayer. She asks her students; "Do you have a Savior in your heart?" She says that all of them can say yes.

Other communities have been touched, and the influence that Christian faith is having on the region is substantial. In fact, in the Nunavut legislature a tusk mace is carried in, containing the words of the Lord's Prayer; Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. This mace is a symbol of the Nunavut legislature's authority. Some mayors even have opened their council chambers for prayer meetings.

With positive changes, such as these, Canada's Arctic is taking on a new character. The light of Christ has shone upon her, and those revived by God are sharing His love with others.

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