

CAMPUS MINISTRIES DEVOTION BOOK

2007-2016

¹Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer. ²From the end of the earth I call to you, when my heart is faint. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I; ³for you are my refuge, a strong tower against the enemy. ⁴Let me abide in your tent forever, find refuge under the shelter of your wings. Selah ⁵For you, O God, have heard my vows; you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name. –Psalm 61:1-5

Dear Reader,

The devotions contained in *Campus Ministries Devotion Book* were based on the annual Campus Ministries theme of the respective year and often written by various student leaders. In recent years, the theme was connected to one of the five Goshen College Core Values – Christ-centered (2010-2011), Servant Leadership (2011-2012), Passionate Learning (2012-2013), Compassionate Peacemaking (2013-2014), and Global Citizenship (2014-2015). For 2015-2016 we focus once again on Christ-centered.

May these devotions written by students and employees of Goshen College over years offer you encouragement and hope as you engage the living God. May you find comfort and security while being challenged in faithful followership of Jesus. May the Spirit awaken your own internal spirit as you drink in these words.

Blessings,
Bob Yoder
Campus Pastor

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(Passages are in New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted.)

2015-2016



"It is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be put to shame in any way, but that by my speaking with all boldness, Christ will be exalted now as always in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain."

-Philippians 1:20-21

Speaking with Boldness

By Andrew Pauls

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Paul writes from prison, placed there for what he proclaimed and the nonconformity he exhibited by emulating Christ. It is fortunate that many Christians today have the privilege of free speech (especially in a North American context) and do not face the persecution Paul did. But perhaps our freedom has allowed us to become lax in our proclamation of what is good. The Church should be a voice challenging a culture of objectification, consumerism and inequality, but this freedom and the prevalence of Christianity in mainstream culture has created a Church that conforms to the world.

The difference is boldness. Paul considers anything but speaking with the boldness of Christ's love to be shameful. He desired Christ to be exalted in all that he did,

even if it resulted in ostracization, imprisonment or death. For Christ to be exalted we must speak boldly against the unjust institutions of the world. Refusing to acknowledge and address injustices such as poverty, racism and homophobia allows them to flourish, contrary to the mission of Christ.

We are called to be "little Christs," speak boldly about injustice in the world and follow our speech with action and love. Being passive, forgetting about "the least of these," and staying in a comfortable bubble of privilege is not following the vision of Christ. I pray that we may center ourselves in Christ's mission and be lights in this world of selfishness, speaking boldly with the power of God's Love as agents of peace in this world. Amen.

²² Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet ²³ and begged him repeatedly, “My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live.” ²⁴ So he went with him. And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. ²⁵ Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. ²⁶ She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. ²⁷ She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, ²⁸ for she said, “If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well.” ²⁹ Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. ³⁰ Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, “Who touched my clothes?” -Mark 5:21-43

Treating People as Jesus Did

By Eliana Neufeld-Basinger

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Jesus cares for people's emotional well-being as well as their physical health. When Jesus feels the power leaving him as the woman touches him, he isn't satisfied with knowing that she is physically healed. He finds her, showing concern for her by learning her story and affirming her humanity by calling her daughter. Jesus also heals Jairus' daughter in a compassionate way, by holding her hand and using a term of endearment. He then makes sure she's fed – he cares about her comfort as well as her life.

The people in these stories are in very different social positions. Jairus is a respected synagogue leader, so he has society's permission to speak to Jesus. When his daughter gets sick, people are concerned, and when she dies, they mourn. However, the woman doesn't feel able to come to Jesus directly. She tries to sneak through the crowd and

touch him secretly, and falls trembling at his feet when she's caught. She's a woman, she's poor from medical bills, and she's ritually unclean. When Jesus stops and speaks to the woman even when another sick person is waiting, he makes a statement about time priorities. While society doesn't consider her important, Jesus says she's worth taking time for by giving her his attention and calling her daughter. It's an important lesson for us in our time-obsessed society: we should never be too busy to listen to someone's pain.

As Christians, our goal should be to live as Jesus lived. We could think that these stories aren't relevant to us because we can't perform miracles, but we can learn from the way Jesus treats people in the course of these miracles – caring for all people, body and soul. May God give us the grace to live this way.

Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him I will confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, I will deny before my Father which is in heaven. (King James Version)
-Matthew 10:32-33

Staying True to Your Faith

By Etienne Davis

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Being from a different religious back as the majority of this school I was shying away from what I knew and thought spiritually as to not make anyone uncomfortable. The group of friends that I had last year were amazing but I was not about to express myself spiritually with any of them. What I knew and was taught seemed too deep and uncool to me, so I did nothing that pertained to religion with them; I even stopped going to church. All of this took place in the first semester.

When the second semester rolled around I was just so unhappy with myself because I was letting my want of friends get in the way of my relationship with God. So this is what I did. I went to my room and I talked it over with myself. I said, "I grow up with God, not with these

people that I just met and they don't determine my souls place after this earth." I vowed to stop trying to be like them and start being who I am. I believe that we need to flaunt our religion the way we flaunt new clothes that we get and are so proud of. We should be spiritually confident enough to speak about God even to a stranger. As college student it's hard to stay on track spiritually because you want to have fun, you want to meet new people and try new things. But I promise if you put God first the desires of your heart will be given to you.

For those of you who are not religious or are just spiritual. Be open minded about religion and have faith. All of you...have faith. With God on your side no one can stop you or deny you.

"But more than anything else, put God's work first and do what he wants. Then the other things will be yours as well. Don't worry about tomorrow. It will take care of itself. You have enough to worry about today." (Contemporary English Version)

-Matthew 6:33-34

CHILL Out

By Gabby Castañon

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How often do you discover yourself compiling a list of all of the potential troubles of tomorrow, regardless of how outlandish they may be? As a self-proclaimed "what-ifer" I know exactly how it feels to concoct an unrealistic list of everything in my life that could take an unwanted detour. These are the moments where our hearts and minds require the roots of God's enduring love and presence; moments in which we need to sit back, focus on the present moment, and simply breathe.

Although unwanted challenges in our lives may cause us to swerve from our intended path, the act of centering ourselves in Christ empowers us to think realistically and thoughtfully about the present moment and the aspects of life that truly hold value in God's greater world. By focusing on Christ, we can focus on others. This renewed state of mind allows us to serve and walk with our brothers and

sisters of God, rather than toil about our future.

My brother often reminds me to "chill out" when I begin to bog myself down with worries of the coming days and weeks. Although sometimes unwelcome, his words serve as a loving reminder to take and deep breath and begin to live mindfully in the moment. When anxiety and stress prevail my life, I think of the word CHILL, because Christ heals, illuminates, leads, and loves.

Christ
Heals
Illuminates
Leads
Loves

Taking a moment to "Chill" enables me to consider how I can serve others today, rather than worry about myself tomorrow.

Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years.

-Mark 5:25

Being Storytellers

By Halle Steingass

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Stories: I am a storyteller. I am a compilation of stories brought forth from the life I have lived. These stories are sacred, as I will carry them with me. Stories are the medium to which we find the deepest most intimate connections with ourselves and the people around us. As humans, we are made of stories. We are born into stories, and we will leave behind stories.

In the gospels we hear the parables of Jesus: simple stories that unravel and then weave a deeper meaning. These parables still carry relevance today, as we interpret the meaning 2,000 years later. Jesus grants us these stories, providing us with the opportunity to ask questions, pondering how the text may speak to us.

In Mark we read both the story of Jairus and his dying daughter, and the story of the hemorrhaging woman. Mark is a convincing storyteller. He is able to brilliantly juxtapose two

worlds into one message: the world of Jairus a respectable synagogue leader, and a hemorrhaging woman who was deemed unclean. Both Jairus' and the hemorrhaging woman prove to Jesus their faith. In their weakness, they show strength and Jesus says: "Believe," and "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease." Mark 5:25 conveyed a story of finding strength amongst weakness, where faith became the healing power.

We all have stories where we have needed or need healing. We have many wounds and are consumed by illness, causing us to be weak. This story calls us to believe in a faith that has the supremacy to make us whole. Therefore I pray that we are capable of having a faith that is stronger than our weakness, being storytellers who share the good news of God's healing love.

Jesus used stories when he spoke to the people. In fact, he did not tell them anything without using stories. So God's promise came true, just as the prophet had said, "I will use stories to speak my message and to explain things that have been hidden since the creation of the world." (Contemporary English Version)

-Matthew 13:34-35

Discovering Stories

By Isaac Godshalk

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When Jesus wanted to teach something to his disciples, he constantly used stories of all kinds to illustrate his points. Many of these stories would be about people taking part in everyday activities; planting crops, managing money. Underneath the surface of each was a powerful meaning, a teaching relevant to the lives of the disciples.

Jesus, by telling parables, left more than just stories and their lessons. Within the parables lies a deeper message: that stories make up all of our lives, and within them are the keys to finding truth in our lives. "We are led by Christ in our search for truth."

Surely many stories in our lives could be meaningless. As the Matthew

passage states, however, Jesus used stories to uncover things about the world that were hidden (often in plain sight). There are only 46 recorded parables, leaving many truths yet hidden from our eyes. How many stories with hidden truth could one person give from their lives? How many from one country? How many in the world? What does this number leave for us to discover, both as individuals and as a human race finding its way?

To truly practice Christ-Centeredness, we must embrace the transformative and life-giving nature of each and every story. Find time to hear about others' experiences. Where have they found joy, peace, and truth, you too can find these things.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵ Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ⁸ Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹ Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you. ¹⁰ I rejoice in the Lord greatly that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned for me, but had no opportunity to show it. ¹¹ Not that I am referring to being in need; for I have learned to be content with whatever I have. ¹² I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need. ¹³ I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

-Philippians 4:4-13

Community Support

By Isaiah Friesen

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‘I can do all things through him who strengthens me.’ Philippians 4:13 could be found on tattoos, Nicaraguan mototaxi bumpers, and Tim Tebow’s eyeblack, to name a few visible places. In the modern North American context, it seems we often ascribe a fairly individualistic sentiment to it, as if to say, ‘Christ strengthens me so I can achieve whatever I want, myself--just Jesus and me.’

When the apostle Paul made this statement, he made it after a list of sacrifices he’d learned to make for the sake of doing Christ’s work. Afterward, he goes on to say that he appreciates the support the Philippian church has given him even in times when Paul had no other churches to accompany him and support him in his ministry.

To simplify this passage to just one verse cheapens it and robs it of a

chance for deeper meaning. One of the ways God gives us strength to continue on the journey is to provide us with other good people of faith to accompany us along the way. Paul achieved what he did with the support of a wide network of communities. In Philippians 4 he is acknowledging this support. Even Jesus begged his disciples to stay awake and pray with him in the hour when he was anticipating his deepest suffering. As human beings, we are not meant to go it alone, nor should we try if we expect to work for God’s Kingdom.

Today, let us remember those who have been with us in our Christian journey, and thank God for the strength we gain from those people’s presence in our lives.

*God has shown you, O people, what is good,
and what the LORD requires of you: but
to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk
humbly with your God.
(New International Version)*

-Micah 6:8

Walking with God

By Jenae Longenecker

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In this short sentence, the prophet Micah reminds us of the kingdom-building task God has set before us. At Goshen College we pride ourselves in our willingness to engage the powers that be and work for social justice. “Doing justly” is something we understand, something we can visualize. It means getting out there and protesting, giving speeches, writing petitions, showing documentaries and hosting conversations.

“Loving mercy” may be a bit harder to understand, because we like to do our research and hold each other accountable. We hold each other to high standards around here, especially when it comes to justice issues. Mercy can be a challenge for us.

responsibility is the one we as a community struggle with the most: “walking humbly with our God” is not a task that many of us can wrap our heads around easily. What does it mean to walk with God, to be Christ-centered? I’d like to challenge you to consider what exactly walking humbly with God might look like in our community. Is it learning to articulate our understandings of God more clearly? Engaging with one another in worship across boundaries? Actually engaging the Bible? Talking openly about prayer, faith and our spiritual journeys as individuals and as a community? To be a Christ-centered community, we need to support one another as people of faith, searching for a way to worship that is good, just, merciful, and humble.

I’d like to suggest that the third

There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
-Galatians 3:28

Looking with the Eyes of God

By Joelle Friesen

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While on SST in Senegal, I visited a daara, or Koranic school, on the students' one free morning. Since these young boys are often sent from impoverished families or come in off the streets to study the Koran*, it is sometimes difficult to make ends meet. To help out, our group brought breakfast of 70 baguettes and we broke bread together in the sandy courtyard. We then played for the next two hours - which for me, involved sitting on a mat with a crowd of children, demonstrating how to use crayons and fold paper airplanes and cranes. The boys spoke limited French and we only knew elementary Wolof, they studied Islam while we represented a Christian school, and our life experiences had minimal overlap.

But somehow, despite all of these

barriers, we connected and shared a timeless few hours of joy. As I sat on the sandy ground with the desert sun beating down, creating countless cranes and surrounded by children, I felt the presence of God. When you remember to look with eyes of love, as God must look upon us, perceived differences melt away. In those moments, there is neither American nor Senegalese, Christian nor Muslim, black nor white, child nor adult, rich nor poor, or any other number of barriers that we mentally construct. There is only love for one another as beloved children of God, and I learned that day that breaking down walls of difference centers us more firmly and joyously in Christ's love. Alhamdoulilah**!

*Muslim holy text

**Arabic for "All praise be to God"

Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;³⁵ for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,³⁶ I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' -Matthew 25:34-46

Helping Those Who Suffer

By Laura Miller

Junior History Major, SIPer

Following the radical, black Jesus means fighting against oppression. We cannot blithely accept and participate in violence against black and brown people in this country, or look on as transgender and queer folks are violently excluded from spaces, particularly spaces that claim to be peaceful and Christ-centered, like the Mennonite Church. We cannot continue to participate in a culture that causes violence against women and persecutes those people trying to cross the border.

Those who are fighting against violent oppression in the Black Lives Matter movement may be beaten, jailed, and mobbed by police. Transgender people who are rejected by society and forced to live on the streets may be overworked and have gone without sleep or food. Undocumented immigrants are patiently enduring troubles, hardships, and difficulties. Through their purity, knowledge, patience,

and kindness they have shown themselves to be God's servants. They have righteousness as their weapon, both to attack and to defend themselves. They are honored and disgraced; they are insulted and praised. They are treated as liars, yet they speak the truth; as unknown, yet they are known by all; as though they were dead, but, as you see, they live on. Although punished, they are not killed; although saddened they are always glad; they seem poor, but they make many people rich; they seem to have nothing, yet they really possess everything. (adopted from 2 Corinthians 6:4-10, Good News Bible)

But not only must we work to stop oppression because people are experiencing pain. Jesus also tells us in Matthew 25 that we will only be fulfilled—have heaven here on earth—when we actively work to help those who are suffering.

*"The LORD is my strength and my shield;
in him my heart trusts;
so I am helped, and my heart exults,
and with my song I give thanks to him."
-Psalm 28:7*

Giving Thanks Through Song

By Nat Dick

Sophomore Environmental Science major, Resident Assistant

It seems fitting for a passage that references 'giving thanks through song,' found in a book of poetry, to relate to Christ-centeredness here at Goshen College. Some of the moments I have felt most centered in Christ have been while experiencing music here. No matter the nature of the music, be it secular or religious, I have found solace in beautiful vocal harmonies, epic solo piano pieces, and intense orchestral arrangements.

Often, we find ourselves distracted by the busyness of our lives or the struggles that we may be going through. Even though we are reminded in this Psalm that God is our strength and shield, it can take a moment of incredible beauty to

remind us of this reality. Everyone finds God in different ways, through music, company, creation, and more. Through experiencing these elements of this world, we can embrace Christ, and rejoice in the presence of our Lord.

While God gives us these wonderful gifts of strength, courage, and comfort, it is equally important for us to realize it, and give thanks to the Lord who covers us in a blanket of love. Whether your "song of thanks" is a poem, artwork, prayer, song, or word of kindness to a neighbor in need, sing it loudly and joyfully for the God that strengthens and shields us!

¹[Jesus] was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." ²He said to them, "When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. ³Give us each day our daily bread. ⁴And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us. And do not bring us to the time of trial."

-Luke 11:1-4

Praying Like Jesus

By Bob Yoder

Campus Pastor

The Lord's Prayer, particularly the Gospel of Matthew's version, may be so familiar that we neglect the subtleties of the scene. In addition to Luke's version being shorter than Matthew's, there is another significant difference between the two...one of intimacy. In Matthew, the prayer falls smack in the middle of the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus is teaching a big crowd of people. In Luke, however, the setting is with Jesus and his disciples only. An intimate moment between a rabbi and his disciples.

In Luke, the disciples had been with Jesus as he taught, healed, and engaged the "other." Now as Jesus was praying in a certain place, his disciples wanted to know how to pray like him. As people of Jewish faith, I would have thought they would already know how to pray. And perhaps they did, but they obviously

sensed something different about Jesus and wanted to pray like he did. One could say they wanted to center themselves as Jesus centered himself.

And so Jesus taught them to acknowledge the name of God as holy. He used "Father," a metaphor of intimacy between God and us, which is different than some sort of distant, uncaring God. We are to pray for God's reign on this earth to come. For Americans who often think we are "god" through our attitudes and actions, it is no short task to yield ourselves to God's ways. Other themes include forgiveness, protection, and sustainment.

There is much that this prayer and its context can teach us as we seek to center ourselves in Christ. Try sitting with and repeating these four verses over and over for fifteen minutes, maybe even longer.

2014-2015



³³ When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. ³⁴ The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God. -Leviticus 19:33-34

Opportunities

By Taylor Ermoian

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At all moments we have great opportunity. Opportunity to flee from others. To reject. Yet we have equal opportunity to reach out. To assist, to serve, and to learn. Continually it seems that our hands are clinched shut; cold fists quivering, quick to strike and slow to touch or hold. Still, when we softly open our hands we start to welcome all things. Greeting and honoring that which has been created by God.

We have all been powerfully lifted, accepted, and cherished by the Creator. As we forget how God has accepted us we forget how to accept

others. It is in these moments that we must choose to remember how God has embraced every one of us despite our selfishness and rejection of truth and love. May we all face our palms up as we seek the acceptance that Jesus has provided. In the acknowledgement of our acceptance from Jesus we are able to extend acceptance to others. ALL others. The outcast, the poor, the sick, the hungry, the homeless, the immigrant, the unwed mother, and all others that our people choose to reject. Let us love all “others,” and be accepting of everyone, as we have always been accepted by God.

³⁴Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ³⁵for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.'³⁷Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink?'³⁸And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing?'³⁹And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?'⁴⁰And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'

-Matthew 25:31-40

Giving All You Have

By Samuel Carlson

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Kool, kool. My neighbor shakes a plate of food in front of me, insisting I eat all the sambusak she has to offer.

A hearty meal of ground beef and caramelized onions, fragrant nutmeg, allspice, salt, and pepper.

All encased in a flaky croissant-like pastry.

I was only coming to ask if she had any baking soda, but she insists I visit. Around her small kitchen table we sit. The television in the other room blares the daily news throughout her home.

One public execution in Jerusalem (6 miles north)

Thousands of homes destroyed in Hebron (12 miles south)

Two kidnappings in Bethlehem (2 miles east)

Twelve air raids over Gaza (45 miles west)

We are completely surrounded by violence and brutality. Breaking news is littered with words *abduction, hit-and-run, siege, murder*. I am overcome with emotion, and shocked that Diana isn't feeling the same.

But Diana has a beautiful, unscathed resilience. Her homeland is being taken from her. The air she breathes is cloudy with tear gas; the water she drinks has been cut off entirely.

She is not able to feed all the hungry, clothe all the naked, or care for all the sick. However, Jesus has said that if you are doing it for one, you are doing it for him.

I encourage you to be like my neighbor, Diana.

When your neighbor is at your door, give *kool, kool*.

Give *all*, give *everything*.

They have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying, 'Peace, peace,' when there is no peace.
-Jeremiah 6:14

Everything is Not Okay

By Kiernan Wright

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Have you ever gotten angry or upset because someone tried to downplay a situation that you saw was wrong? Jeremiah came up against this same type of denial, specifically about the precarious condition that Judah experienced during its last years. The religious and political establishment of Judah wanted everyone to 'keep calm and carry on,' even though the destruction of Jerusalem and exile was looming. Admitting that everything is not okay would be admitting failure, which is the last thing a government wants to do. Grieving for the end of the established order is not permitted, because denial is the only way to prolong the current order.

Looking at the world today, it is painfully clear that *everything is not*

okay. Everywhere around us, we are witnessing injustice, pain, and decay. The idealistic world of our youth is giving way to the reality of a crumbling Judah. Instead of believing in the 'keep calm and carry on' that the ruling class propagates, I believe that God is calling the Goshen College community to *not* be satisfied with the reality of this world. God is calling us instead to grieve with the suffering global community. As Jesus said in Matthew 5:4, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted." Only by acknowledging the death and hurt around us can we break through the numbness that our culture has instilled upon us. Choosing despair over numbness is the first step towards a new reality, for despair must come before hope.

²⁴A large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. ²⁵Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. ²⁶She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. ²⁷She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, ²⁸for she said, "If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well." ²⁹Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. ³⁰Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?" ³¹And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?'" ³²He looked all around to see who had done it. ³³But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. ³⁴He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."
-Mark 5:21-43

Two Important Encounters

By Kayla Gray

Sophomore Biochemistry major, Resident Assistant

In this passage, the story of a girl restored to life and a woman healed, is not only full of miracles, but also important encounters. First, Jesus arrives on the shore of the Galilee where Jairus, the synagogue leader, distraughtly falls at Jesus' feet, begging for help, as his daughter is dying. Second, as Jesus is heading toward Jairus' home, a large crowd surrounds him, but within the crowd, an unclean woman, who had been struggling with hemorrhages for twelve years, touches Jesus' cloak, which allows for her to be made clean. Jairus and the unclean woman had heard of Jesus' great healing powers, and since they both had faith in his abilities in a time of worry and struggle, the unclean woman was

made clean and Jairus' daughter was saved. The text tells us that the unclean woman was made clean because of her faith in Jesus, just as Jairus' daughter was saved because of Jairus' faith in Jesus.

This healing story is a great example of how we should encounter worry and struggle in our own lives. The word encounter can be defined as: to unexpectedly experience or be faced with something difficult. When we are faced with worry and struggle, we should look to our belief in God, who will show us the purpose to every unexpected situation. But for now, we must trust and have faith in God, and his plan for us on Earth.

⁶Therefore keep the commandments of the Lord your God, by walking in his ways and by fearing him. ⁷For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land with flowing streams, with springs and underground waters welling up in valleys and hills, ⁸a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, ⁹a land where you may eat bread without scarcity, where you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron and from whose hills you may mine copper. ¹⁰You shall eat your fill and bless the Lord your God for the good land that he has given you.

-Deuteronomy 8:6-10

Encountering God through Land

By Isaiah Friesen

Spanish and Peace, Justice Conflict Studies majors, Ministry Leader

Good land is a gift from God, and we are all tied directly to the land by the food we eat. I feel this connection especially strongly, coming from a farm where my parents and I grow a 3-acre market garden every year. That is to say, the way I encounter God's presence in the world is heavily influenced by the way I relate to the land. When we first started our garden, the ground was not well suited to growing vegetables. Seven years later, to watch plants bloom and feel the fertile soil beneath my bare feet seems like a miracle of God in itself.

The gift of good land must have also struck the Hebrew people as a miracle, as they were coming out of a time where they had lived in the desert for decades, depending directly on God's hand to give them

food. In Deuteronomy 8, they are being instructed not to forget this gift in the midst of prosperity, but to bless God and remember Who cares for them.

Though God's people today are not all subsistence farmers, we are still called to bless God for the gifts we have received. In a world where there is hardly enough land to meet the human population's needs, one of our chief responsibilities as Christians and as global citizens is to take good care of the land around us. If we can bless God by remembering where our sustenance originates—God's creation—then perhaps we can begin to move away from over-consumption and pollution, toward restoration of relationship with the land and with all of God's children.

¹O sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things. His right hand and his holy arm have gotten him victory. ²The Lord has made known his victory; he has revealed his vindication in the sight of the nations. ³He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel. All the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God. ⁴Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises. ⁵Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre, with the lyre and the sound of melody. ⁶With trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord. -Psalm 98:1-6

The Most Joyful Noise

By Hillary Harder

Senior Spanish & Music major; former Ministry Leader, Worship Assistant & MIPer

Possibly the most joyful noise I have ever heard were the songs of praise sung during a worship service I attended while on Nicaragua SST in a small, rural village. When the music began, I felt God's presence in a unique and unforgettable way. It was played on the guitaron, the guitar, and the vihuela, a common instrumentation and style of Latin American folk music. And then the voices joined in - every single person singing praise to God in Spanish at the top of their voices. This music was natural to these Nicaraguan villagers as melodies played on the lyre, trumpet, and horn would have been for the people of Israel in the days of King David: music rising

from the very essence of the people. Song is a powerful force in Nicaraguan culture. Despite its history of economic domination, oppression, and war, the songs of Nicaragua tell a story not too different from that of this psalm: the victory of the Lord in the face of human violence, steadfast love of one's people, the triumph of joy and the unquenchable spirit of justice. The songs sung in this simple, peasant worship service in La Garnacha had deep integrity for the people singing them. The music was deeply rooted in who they were and who God is for them - a God present in the fields and forests, a God of joy and melodies. May we all sing to the Lord this new song!

“Whether it is good or bad, we will obey the voice of the Lord our God to whom we are sending you, in order that it may go well with us when we obey the voice of the Lord our God.”
-Jeremiah 42:6 (The Message)

Yes, Count on Us!

By Brianne Brenneman

Sophomore Biochemistry major, Music minor, Ministry Leader

As global citizens we are called to encounter God every day. In one of my favorite books by Bob Goff he puts into words a thought I was never able to form into a concrete statement, “I used to think you had to be special for God to use you, but now I know you simply need to say, ‘yes.’” Jesus chose his disciples, but they had to choose him in return. For example, Matthew was a tax collector and Simon Peter was a fisherman. Both had much to lose by following Jesus, but by choosing every day to encounter love, peace and faith with Jesus they were able to become passionate leaders. The disciples did not choose who they told about Jesus, they told everyone. They were selfless and recognized how impactful their lives could be. They obeyed whatever their God told them and God counted on them to make a difference.

God asks us every day if he can use us, and we have the choice to say “yes” or “no.” We, like the disciples, have

much to lose. Sometimes it is hard to make time to choose to encounter God in our busy lives but in the end it will all be worth the time and energy that it takes to be passionate leaders for Christ. We must be conscious of our impact and the way we live, and thus telling does not always involve words but actions as well. A person I met that embodies these practices is Beth Guckenberger, the leader of Back2Back Ministries, who chose to give up her comfortable suburban life and said “yes” to fighting for the orphans of the world.

We have been called to be global citizens for Christ by encouraging others, by being patient and kind as well as stern in love and filled with grace. It is imprudent to throw away the privilege we are given each morning; the privilege to generously share ourselves, our stories and our love with everyone we encounter. We should shout, hand in hand, to the God that rules us all, “Yes, Count on us! We’ll do it!”

⁴ When he had finished teaching, he said to Simon, “Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.”
⁵ Simon answered, “Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.”
⁶ When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. ⁷ So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. ⁸ But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!” ⁹ Then Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.” ¹¹ When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.
-Luke 5:4-11

A Miraculous Encounter

By Bobby Switzer

Senior Biochemistry & PJCS major, Worship Assistant, former Ministry Leader & SIPer

Simon spent the day fishing with his companions and caught nothing when this man who had been teaching came and asked him to set-off and keep fishing. Simon, with a lifetime’s experience of fishing and a day’s labor already done, set aside his normal routine and way of thinking and agreed to go back out to sea. Christ, a carpenter and teacher, stepped onto the boat and went fishing. This miraculous encounter shaped the lives of the four fishermen forever: they became God’s disciples.

The encounter was made possible by the willingness of Christ to step into a fisherman’s boat and by the humility of the fishermen to trust, take chances, and lay aside their history and way of doing things.

We are called to discipleship, to follow, to engage, to be Christ-like in stepping into figurative boats

and encountering people different from ourselves. The strength and beauty of Christ’s disciples is not their perfection, for as Simon Peter said, they were “sinful,” as we all are. The beauty is their willingness to dramatically change their lives, to leave behind their livelihoods, their families, and all they’ve known to follow Christ because of this encounter. They became disciples and re-encountered Christ with every parable, every miracle, and every new disciple and continually were transformed. In the same way, we are called to discipleship, to make room for and to be shaped by encounters.

What opportunities do we have for stepping out of our normal lives and engaging with others? How can we do this with humility? What do we need to set aside to make room for genuine encounters?

²⁸One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, “Which commandment is the first of all?” ²⁹Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; ³⁰you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ ³¹The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” -Mark 12:28-31

Encountering the Other

By Becky Snider

Senior Music Education major, MIPer, former Ministry Leader & Worship Assistant

We sat around circular tables, taking turns listening and sharing. People rose and walked to the microphones positioned on either side of the fellowship hall, eager to share their opinions with the entire group. I, the young liberal woman, sat between two men who I knew to have different opinions from mine. One of them happened to be the pastor of the church that was the subject of current conversation. They had decided, as a congregation, to leave our conference. After a thorough discernment process, they had come to the conclusion that the opinions of many in this group of churches—including my own—were different enough that their membership was preventing them from carrying out effective ministry.

As I sat there next to the pastor who was in some sense an embodiment of my “other,” I realized that he was also the embodiment of my “neighbor.” Jesus says that the second most important thing we must do is love our neighbors. The number two slot...that’s pretty high up there on

the priority list. I think I understand what Jesus is saying: it’s important that you love your friends, your family, the people who disagree with you, the people who try to hurt you...

I want to rebut, “Jesus, that sounds hard! That’s a lot of people! And most of them I don’t even understand!” However, during that conversation I was surprised by how easy it was to love my neighbor. I felt his pain. It hurt me to sit there and hear people bicker about what the conference delegates should do with the congregation in question. It hurt me to sense the difficulty which others were having in simply giving the church our blessing and releasing them to do what they had decided was the best option.

Perhaps the Spirit, through this experience, gave me another piece to fit into the puzzle I am slowly constructing as I strive to follow Jesus. I learned the importance of understanding your neighbor and feeling a connection to them as a part of loving them as yourself.

“Keep on loving each other as brothers and sisters. Don’t forget to show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it! Remember those in prison, as if you were there yourself. Remember also those being mistreated, as if you felt their pain in your own bodies.”
-Hebrew 13:1-3 (New Living Translation)

Encountering God in Others

By Avery Martin

Junior Peace, Justice Conflict Studies; former Ministry Leader

This verse is a reminder that each and every person was created by God. God was intentional when making us, when putting color in our hair, height to our bodies, kindness in our hearts, or laughter in our bones. There is a piece of our Creator in each of us. By humbling ourselves and opening our hearts we can encounter God in the people we meet.

This summer I worked at Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp and was able to see God work through the campers each week. They would volunteer to set the dining hall in the morning, or hang back with each other on hikes when it was a struggle to master a thousand foot incline in one mile. They would offer to stop playing their favorite game to walk their friend to the nurse’s office, help the kitchen staff by sweeping after meals without grumbling, or help me collect the ropes and cones after recreation time.

By helping each other and honoring each other that is the best way to encounter and honor God. We weren’t put on this Earth to survive on our own. No matter how young or old someone may be they are still there will wisdom to give us or a hand to hold.

Ask questions. Acknowledge others. Treat them with respect. Honor them. When working with others have patience. Help each other with a smile because that’s what we are here to do.

Lord give us the strength and the heart to see others as you see them. Give us renewed energy and excitement to make this life a little bit easier for everyone we meet. Help us to hold each other in the highest regard, and to serve without hesitation. Everyone has something to offer us, and everyone was created in your image. Help us to see how incredible the people we encounter today are, and all the reasons you love them so much.

¹¹Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him. ¹²As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out—the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. ¹³When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, “Don’t cry.” ¹⁴Then he went up and touched the bier they were carrying him on, and the bearers stood still. He said, “Young man, I say to you, get up!” ¹⁵The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother. ¹⁶They were all filled with awe and praised God. “A great prophet has appeared among us,” they said. “God has come to help his people.” ¹⁷This news about Jesus spread throughout Judea and the surrounding country. —Luke 7:11-17

Encountering Jesus

By Ashika Thanju

Senior Nursing major, former Worship Assistant

Recently, I’ve been trying to recognize the ways I see Jesus in my daily life. Sometimes, it’s easy to identify where and when I encounter Jesus, but more often it’s not so simple. So this summer, I decided to read of Jesus’ biblical encounters with His people, and how their lives were impacted by that encounter.

In this passage, we encounter the widow crying because she had no one left on earth. Social stigma of being a widow without children would put her at social risk and embarrassment. But Jesus saw her and His heart was filled with compassion for her. The result of His compassion is not just concern or kind words, but it is involvement and action. Jesus told the woman to stop crying and raised her son from death.

When I read this passage, the most important message I got was that through this encounter with Jesus,

a widow who had lost everything, gained everything back, along with a promise from Jesus. In Greek grammar, the phrase “stop crying,” is in present imperative form. The Present Imperative is often a call to a long-term commitment and calls for the attitude or action to be one’s continual way of life (lifestyle). So when Jesus said “stop crying”, He did not just tell the widow to stop crying for that moment; he ordered her to “cry no more.” Through this encounter, Jesus not only relieved this widow from her present hardship, but He gave her an eternal promise that she will have to cry no more.

In this passage, when Jesus said “stop crying, cry no more,” I knew He was talking to me. Often, I am immersed in the midst of chaos and suffering, but I know that my encounter with Jesus will not only take away my present pain, but change my attitude and lifestyle.

For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?
-1 Corinthians 4:7 (New International Version)

Foster Understanding

By Anya Kreider

Sophomore Social Work & PJCS majors, Ministry Inquiry Program, Resident Assistant

I would like to think I have acquired some amount of cultural and religious sensitivity over my twenty years. However, this misconception was quickly debunked when I was recently dismissed from the New York Islamic Cultural Center on the grounds that I should “dress better” upon my return. I walked away embarrassed and ashamed of the ignorance my dominating Christian status had upheld. Granted, it is a label I claim hesitantly, but nonetheless bear the responsibility of defining.

Hector Avalos, author and professor of religious studies, argues that religion is inherently violent. He argues that violence is born with the development of resource scarcity and religion creates scarcity in resources such as sacred space, group privilege, salvation and exclusive revelations. I think in large this theory has become the reality within our current religious landscape, though I believe we are not destined to perpetuate it. With imagination, creativity and humility we can begin to identify

and address where we have created scarcity in our own communities.

Tom Harpur, another author and religious critic, describes the gift of faith as a desert spring, representing a scarce resource. Upon discovery the spring is protected with boulders and eventually enclosed, consequently regulating access. We have indeed successfully become so attached to “rigid, tradition-encrusted orthodoxy” that we criticize what we find uncomfortable as being false or sacrilegious. We exclude those who think differently. We remain ignorant of others’ stories and we remain comfortably within communities that are similar to us. We much prefer to see ourselves as the victims of church quandaries than identify and confront the issues within ourselves.

If we are to become global citizens in a genuine sense, or even good neighbors, we must hold even our dearest convictions with humility and grace in order to foster understanding.

2013-2014

SOWING
COMPASSION



SIDE BY SIDE

¹²For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. ¹⁴Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵If the foot would say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body....
²⁶If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.
²⁷Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.—1 Corinthians 12:12-15, 26-27

Like Those Stars

By Alicia Hofer

Senior Psychology Major; Former Ministry Leader

There are currently more than 1.7 million baptized believers in 243 national conferences of Mennonite churches in 83 different countries. We speak many different languages, sing different styles of music, and worship in many different ways. What may seem perfectly normal in one country may seem quite bizarre in another. And yet, despite our differences, we are bound together by one common truth.

Christ Jesus is at the very core of our faith; He is the foundation for everything we believe. According to Jesus, the greatest commandment is to love one another. When we place God as the foundation for our everyday interactions with the world around, we are living in love. Knowing and showing this love allows us to live in community with one another, maintaining unity despite our many differences. When

we join together in unity and share God's love, we make an impact on the lives of those around us.

At night I like to look up at the stars and revel in the brilliant expanse they create. We, as a global Mennonite Church, are very much like those stars. We are single groups, scattered across many continents, and yet, God's love is in each of us. When we share the light of His love and unite as a community of believers, we can touch the world in a unique and powerful way.

I encourage you to show that light to others. Let the love of Christ be evident in your words, thoughts, and actions. Choose to seek out the commonalities of our faith, without differences to divide us. Let us reach out to each other so that as believers we may fill this earth with the awe-inspiring light of Christ's love.

²⁶Then Abner called to Joab, “Is the sword to keep devouring forever? Do you not know that the end will be bitter? How long will it be before you order your people to turn from the pursuit of their kinsmen?”
- II Samuel 2:26

Achieving Miracles

By Ammon Allen-Doucot

Sophomore Bible/Religion Major, History Minor, Ministry Leader

This verse in 2nd Samuel comes after the death of Saul the first king of Israel. Civil War was breaking out between those who supported the old line of Saul's heir and those who supported David. In the midst of the bloodshed, Abner recognizes the brotherhood and thus stops the violence that is about to take place.

We live in a world today where divisions amongst people are constantly on the verge of breaking down good work. I personally connect this to the events happening in Egypt. During the Arab Spring, there was an incredible nonviolent revolution in Egypt, Christians and Muslims, conservative religious folks and liberal democrats working together. However in the wake of

the revolution factions have emerged and some are saying that civil war is looming. I think that the prevention for such conflict is the same today as it was back then.

Some said it was a miracle that Hosni Mubarak was ousted from power. The liberation of Egypt is an example of beauty and compassion that was achieved by working side by side, it could only be done because the Egyptian people, laid aside their differences and recognized their commonalities. Those of us who seek to sew compassion must do what the Egyptian people did in 2011 and what Abner did in 2nd Samuel: see what we share before what we don't. In this way we can achieve miracles.

¹³If you are wise and understand God's ways, prove it by living an honorable life, doing good works with the humility that comes from wisdom. ¹⁴But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your heart, don't cover up the truth with boasting and lying. ¹⁵For jealousy and selfishness are not God's kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, and demonic. ¹⁶For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind. ¹⁷But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere. ¹⁸And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness.

- James 3:13-18

Roots of Compassion

By Becky Snider

Junior Music Education Major, Worship Assistant

As I write this I am coming to the end of a summer of living and learning in Nicaragua through GC's Study-Service Term (SST) program. Like many of its neighboring Central American countries, Nicaragua has experienced quite a bit of unrest in the past few centuries. It has been interesting to consider these verses from James in the context of what I have learned.

It appears to me that at the root of years of violence and political turmoil in the 1970s and 80s is—in the words of James—jealousy and selfish ambition. The US was first motivated to get involved in Nicaragua because they didn't want another country to build a canal competitive with theirs in Panama. The Somoza family, who controlled Nicaragua's government for over forty years, was not eager to share their power and wealth with anyone who wasn't an upper-class friend. The result of these selfish,

earthly ambitions was incredible inequality that led to a revolution.

But James's description of living in the understanding of God's ways is my favorite part of what he writes here. These people love peace and are gentle, yielding, and sincere. Now, the violent overthrowing of the dictatorship by a party focused on the needs of the people of their country is not an ideal example of this lifestyle, but perhaps it planted the seeds of peace to which James refers. Since the revolution, Nicaragua's issues have continued, but many people—natives and foreigners—are passionately tending to the growth of what will hopefully someday be a harvest of righteousness.

Disclaimer: This devotional reflects some of my political biases. I encourage you, the reader, to do your own research on the history of Nicaragua and the United States' involvement there and consider how it relates to this text.

²⁴He put before them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; ²⁵but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. ²⁶So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. ²⁷And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?’ ²⁸He answered, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The slaves said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ ²⁹But he replied, ‘No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. ³⁰Let both of them grow together until the harvest...’ ³⁶Afterwards, his disciples approached him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.” ³⁷He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; ³⁸the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, ³⁹and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. – Matthew 13:24-30, 36-39

Living Like Wheat

By Bobby Switzer

Junior Molecular Biology/Biochemistry Major, PJCS Minor, Former Ministry Leader

The parable of the weeds and wheat is one in which I've found comfort while on study service term in Nicaragua. The parable assures us that as we go through our lives as wheat, we will grow next to weeds. It is inevitable. Some days all we see may be thorns and thistles, but we are also assured that God has an eye on our field. In the long term, we know that God will gather the weeds, and they shall be burnt. The wheat will then be gathered. The peace for which we have been striving will finally be harvested and put to use. Some of our wheat may be ground into flour for bread to feed the hungry. Some may be saved and used to plant new fields of wheat, to grow and reproduce exponentially.

When we are discouraged and tired while working for God's shalom, we should remember that we are part of an entire field of wheat, all growing for peace under God's compassionate eye. We should be at peace while working for peace. While in Nicaragua I was discouraged by a lot of what I saw: economic disparity, illiterate children, alcoholism, and violence. It can all feel somewhat insurmountable, but this parable tells us that all is in God's hands.

Spirit of peace, quiet our hearts, heal our anxious thoughts, free us from our fretful ways. Breathe on us your holy calm so that in the stillness of your presence we may open ourselves to trust and be transformed.

(#729 Hymnal: A Worship Book)

³He himself went on ahead of them, bowing himself to the ground seven times, until he came near his brother. ⁴But Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept. ⁸Esau said, “What do you mean by all this company that I met?” Jacob answered, “To find favor with my lord.” ⁹But Esau said, “I have enough, my brother; keep what you have for yourself.” ¹⁰Jacob said, “No, please; if I find favor with you, then accept my present from my hand; for truly to see your face is like seeing the face of God—since you have received me with such favor. - Genesis 33: 3-4, 8-10

Compassion vs. Bitterness

By Kiernan Wright

Sophomore Social Work and History/Social Research Major, Ministry Leader

The story of Jacob and Esau deals with the drama of family, something that many people can easily relate to. Most of us have siblings, and although we may not have gotten our birthright stolen, there are bound to be some rough times.

After stealing Esau's birthright and blessing, Jacob runs away from his brother for fear of death. When Jacob is forced to meet up with his brother many years later, he fears for his life, and for good reason. Jacob was the wimpy kid who liked to cook and hangout with his mom, and Esau was the hairy outdoorsman, I imagine he had anger management problems. It only makes sense that Esau should want to kill his scrawny younger brother who had kept getting the best of him. Jacob had no more tricks to pull. It was finally a fair fight.

The critical point of the story comes in verse 4, when Esau's compassion for his brother overcomes his own bitterness and pride. The relationship

between Jacob and Esau in this story mirrors the relationship of Israel and Yahweh, which is fitting since Jacob's name was changed to Israel. Esau plays the unlikely part of the forgiver. He has every right to be angry, but instead chooses to let his love and compassion outweigh his bitterness. Like Esau, Yahweh repeatedly chose to show compassion towards Israel throughout the Old Testament. Time and time again, God showed Israel compassion.

Growing up with a brother a few years older than me, I know what it is like to harbor bitter feelings towards my siblings. Something that I was never good at, however, was staying mad. Like Esau and Jacob, my brother and I would eventually forget our own agendas and pride, and go back to living in (relative) peace with each other. At the end of the day, the compassion of Yahweh is a far greater alternative than the selfishness and bitterness of this world.

²²“The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light; ²³but if your eye is unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!”
- Matthew 6:22-23

Be Excruciatingly Vulnerable

By Sam Carlson

Sophomore Nursing Major, International Studies Minor, Ministry Leader

It's easy to think I have boundless courage:
thinking I'm comfortable with myself and my convictions.
I'd like to think I can voice my opinion in any situation,
being entirely transparent with personal morals and ethics.
But that's simply not the case.

I want to be heard
but sometimes courage can interfere –
courage to be vulnerable.

I believe a lot of people's struggle comes from a lack of courage.
We often close off courage because we don't feel inherently good enough
or worthy enough or smart enough.

It seems as if we're distanced from each other by fear
the fear of courage – the fear of vulnerability.

As you go about your day today,
have courage to be vulnerable.
Have courage to connect with others, despite apparent differences.
Recognize the light of others, and let light in.

You're worthy of a voice,
just as others are worthy of their voices.
Your existence entitles you to be excruciatingly vulnerable.

¹*I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all...¹⁶from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.* - Ephesians 4:1-6, 16

Learning From Others

By David Zehr

Sophomore History Major, Ministry Leader

When I think of the theme passage for this year's Campus Ministries, *Sowing Compassion, Side by Side*, it is the latter part which sticks out to me. The past couple months for me have been filled with living, dialoging, and worshiping with Christians of different cultures, languages, and faith traditions. From late night conversations with conservative Mennonites and Beachy Amish in South America to sharing open dialogue question times with peers my age hailing from a Methodist megachurch in Texas, I have found that living with and learning with Christians who in many ways may think differently than me is a rewarding experience. In some ways, such as hymn singing, I have been reminded of things which are important to me. In other ways, I have been better able to understand where some thoughts which are foreign to me are coming from, a kind of putting myself in another's

shoes. But most importantly, the time spent worshiping and learning with fellow followers of God has reminded me that even though there are many differences which distinguish us, there are far more important similarities which should unite us.

When Paul writes to the church of Ephesus in the above passage, he emphasizes how, beyond our differences which make us unique individuals or groups, our belief in God and our daily demonstration of our trust in him should be like the glue which binds us as Christians together. As we live out our days, it is important to remember to practice the fruits of the Spirit, such as patience, love, and kindness, with those who surround us. I invite those who read this today and in the days to come to put themselves in situations where learning, growth, and mutual understanding can be fostered.

¹If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, ²make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. ⁵Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, ⁷but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, ⁸he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross. ⁹Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

- Philippians 2:1-11

A Life With Humility

By Halle Steingass

Sophomore Music Major, Music and Worship Minor, Resident Assistant

In Paul's letter to the Philippians, he talks about living humbly as Christ has done. This past summer, I consumed most of my time with leading worship and music at a Mennonite summer camp. This period of time proved to be a humbling experience for me, which was exactly what my spiritual life needed. During this time I began to grasp how success-based our society is and how we are taught to project a certain image.

Paul talks about not living out of selfish ambition, but instead living out of humility, considering others better than your-self. This practice of living life with humility is a difficult concept in a competitive world, where we strive to have material belongings and copious amounts of

wealth. In this, we lose sight of the grace that God grants us. However, when we believe ourselves to be brothers and sisters of Christ and live with the conviction that we are all children of God, we are more inclined to live humbly and fully.

At summer camp, I was surrounded by campers who exemplified that what matters in this life is to love one another; they taught me to do everything out of love and not out of vanity. They also showed me that the music I offer to the world isn't about prestige or impressing, but rather about giving. When we choose to live in humility it effaces the selfish desire to be the best, and replaces it with grace, which sustains us and can help us live alongside Christ.

³⁵When it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, “This is a deserted place, and the hour is now very late; ³⁶send them away so that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy something for themselves to eat.” ³⁷But he answered them, “You give them something to eat.” They said to him, “Are we to go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread, and give it to them to eat?” ³⁸And he said to them, “How many loaves have you? Go and see.” When they had found out, they said, “Five, and two fish.” ³⁹Then he ordered them to get all the people to sit down in groups on the green grass. ⁴⁰So they sat down in groups of hundreds and of fifties. ⁴¹Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and he divided the two fish among them all. ⁴²And all ate and were filled, ⁴³and they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. ⁴⁴Those who had eaten the loaves numbered five thousand men.

- Mark 6:35-44

Choosing Compassion

By Hannah Beachey

Sophomore Elementary/Special Education Major, Ministry Leader

When hearing the story of Jesus feeding the 5000, the first thing that comes to mind is the miracle of 5 loaves and 2 fish feeding 5000-plus people. However, from a compassionate point of view, it's a secondary theme. While still important, the story is shown in a very different light if a few verses before it are included in the reading.

Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison...When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

Setting this story in the context of Jesus just finding out that John has been beheaded and then bombarded once again by people needing healing

and prayers and general leadership puts a new emphasis on this passage. While Jesus is the one who needs understanding and peacefulness, he sees that these people are in need and chooses to have compassion on them, setting aside his own troubles.

I strive to see those people in my own life, and recognize what tools I have to help others. I hope to have the courage to set aside my own worries and trust that if I help another, help will come to me.

Compassion is not focusing on what you need in the moment, no matter how serious it may be. Compassion in its purest form is seeing that someone else needs you, and not being able to refuse the urge to help them.

¹⁸Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of your possession? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in showing clemency. ¹⁹He will again have compassion upon us; he will tread our iniquities under foot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. ²⁰You will show faithfulness to Jacob and unswerving loyalty to Abraham, as you have sworn to our ancestors from the days of old.
- Micah 7:18-20

The Gift of Forgiveness

By Irene Schmid

Sophomore Nursing Major, Ministry Leader

No matter how much I try, I, like Micah, do not think I will ever truly understand the concept of forgiveness. The thought of God's mercy is such a hard idea to grasp. In our society, we are encouraged to treat people as they treat us, good for good and evil for evil. Forgiveness is not a natural occurrence for today's culture, but rather we are taught to take revenge and hold grudges. We must rise above common belief in order to receive the blessings that come with forgiveness. It is only through the help of God that we can truly be able to practice forgiveness, by both offering and accepting the gift.

Sometimes, though, I find God's forgiveness almost too overpowering. Although I am extremely thankful for his forgiveness, his forgiveness often makes it hard for me to forgive God and others because I know I will never equate to God's mercy. I must show forgiveness in order to truly appreciate my relationship with God and others. And often through forgiveness, I am able to experience the peace I was looking for by holding a grudge. Since God has shown me the depth of his mercy, how can I not forgive God and forgive others? I realize that I have no right not to forgive God and others. I must forgive or I am nothing.

⁴²and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.” - Matthew 10:42

A Cup of Sloshing Water

By Joanna Epp

Sophomore Environmental Science Major, Service Inquiry Program

As a young child, I would often see my father working on something around the house or in the yard. I was always eager to fetch him a glass of water when he stopped for a break. I'd heard this verse before and though I was not exactly sure what everything in the Bible meant, I knew that if giving people water when they were thirsty would get me into heaven, I would do that.

As I've grown up, I have come to understand this verse beyond its literal meaning and recognize the themes of compassion. God calls us to be compassionate to each other and look for ways to help others, and

not just so we can “get into heaven.” Whatever we do, He wants us to look for the big ways and the small ways to nurture and minister to others.

As I go through life, looking for ways to show compassion, I sometimes remember that earnest little girl running through the yard, water sloshing out of the cup in her hand as she carried it to her father. Though my reasons might have been somewhat skewed, I believe my heart was in the right place as I tried to put God's Word into action. I invite you to join me in earnestly seeking both large and small opportunities to sow compassion today.

⁷Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹Indeed we call blessed those who showed endurance. You have heard of the endurance of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

- James 5:7-11

Understanding Pain

By Leah Amstutz

Sophomore Molecular Biology/Biochemistry Major, Ministry Leader

Suffering and pain are an inescapable part of our world. Every person has his or her own unique experience with or connection to hardship, including but not limited to extreme illness, poverty, rejection or abandonment, sexual, and/or emotional abuse, and death. The Bible was not written for people who “have it all together,” but rather for real people who experience real hardship. Throughout the Bible there are stories of pain, perseverance, and faith in God, such as Job in the Old Testament and, of course, Jesus’s crucifixion and resurrection. Our God is a god who understands our pain.

God created us to live in community, to live in relationship with God, with our neighbors, with the environment, etc. Thus, it is important that we reach out to one another, especially in hard times. Alone, our pain can

overwhelm us. However, together with God and with our brothers and sisters in Christ, side by side, we can find patience and strength, and persevere against the torrents of injustice and pain.

Whatever hardship it is that you are currently wrestling with or witnessing in the lives of others, I encourage you to bring it before God. Some situations are difficult to comprehend, and some emotions are impossible to articulate. However, when you come before God in prayer, you do not need fancy or elaborate words; God is always listening, and God always understands. There is a peace that comes from releasing your frustrations and pain to the One who will never leave you. Healing and peace take time to grow, so be patient and do not try to walk or carry your burden alone.

I have been crucified with Christ;²⁰ and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

- Galatians 2:19b-20

Why Live a Cross-Centered Life?

By Natalie Hubby

Sophomore History Major, Art Minor, Ministry Leader

Everyone's life is centered on something. Think about what the center of your life is. There can be one big focus of your life, or many interests. Make a mental list of your priorities, and then take note of things that define you as a person. Even if your defining characteristics and your focuses in life are good things, if it isn't God, then it isn't the right thing to be focused on.

My life in high school was defined by my volleyball career, but while I was passionate about my sport; it was not always there for me. Volleyball let me down my senior year of high school when I injured my ankle and was unable to play for the rest of the season. I felt like I had lost a part of

me, but after listening to a sermon the following Sunday about being focused on God, I realized that even though I knew I would heal from the injury, volleyball would not always be there for me.

God will always be there for me, and that joy will no longer be based on the emotions of our current circumstances that I happen to face. When I was injured I was upset about not being able to participate in one of my strong passions, but if my focus would have been more on Christ then I would have recognized that maybe God was trying to use me in a different way, or just showing me that there is much more to life than just a sport.

¹⁵So she said, “See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.” ¹⁶But Ruth said, “Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; Where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. ¹⁷Where you die, I will die— there will I be buried. May the Lord do thus and so to me, and more as well, if even death parts me from you!” ¹⁸When Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more to her.

- Ruth 1:15-18

Compassion Away from Home

By Quinn Brenneke

Senior Public Relations and Interdisciplinary Major, Ministry Inquiry Program

The first day of living on a college campus is exciting. Everything is new: dorm rooms, food, and people from around the world. Opportunities for new experiences are bursting at the seams and it's hard to believe that this awesome place is will be home for the next four years.

Similar feelings reemerge during the first day of being in another country – people look different, the food is new and of course, everyone is speaking another language. However, after all of the newness normalizes, these different places can feel lonely.

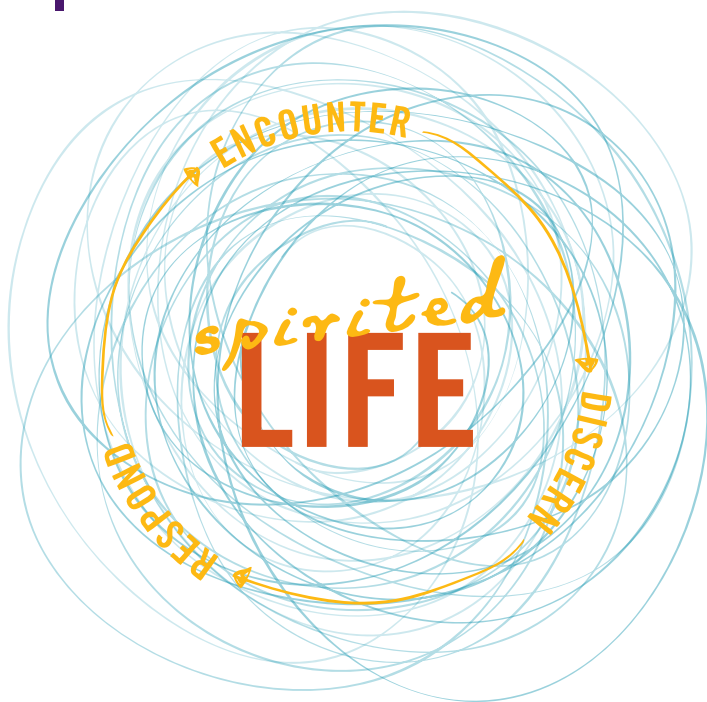
Naomi might have felt that same mixture of excitement and loneliness when she first arrived in Moab with her husband. When their only two sons died, it's not surprising that she decided to go back her home in

Judah. What is surprising, though, is that Ruth, one of her Moabite daughters-in-law, decided to leave her home to go with her.

Giving up the comforts of familiar life to accept the struggles of a new life requires a lot of compassion. It means feeling merciful to someone to the point of giving up personal comforts to help them. At times, giving up comforts feels lonely.

Ruth probably felt lonely living in a place that was far from her home, but God blessed her for the compassion she showed Naomi. Her line of descendants ended up bringing Jesus into the world, who is the perfect example of compassion and who shows us that being compassionate makes the world look a little more like the kingdom of God.

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³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.” - Revelation 21:3 (ESV)

A New Reality In Our Midst

By Quinn Brenneke

Junior Business and Public Relations Major, Global Economics Minor

A lack of sleep or perhaps some old leftovers might be all it takes to instigate a dream that seems vivid enough to be reality. John the Revealer’s daydream, however, was probably not the product of cold pizza for breakfast. In the beginning of his book, he says that he was “in the Spirit” (1:10) when he saw the signs and wonders that are recorded in the final book of the Biblical cannon. Living a spirited life, John prophesied to seven ancient churches God’s plan for a new order of creation. He saw “a new heaven and a new earth” (21:1) that bore the beauty of a “bride adorned for her husband,” a dwelling place for God to be with His people. Likewise, Jesus Christ also announced a new reality. In the words of Isaiah, Jesus proclaimed a world free from captivity and

oppression, good news for the poor and the blind and promised to send his Spirit to live among humanity.

This new reality, the Kingdom of God, is in our midst. Just as John was “in the Spirit,” we can also participate in a similar spirited life, living in the Kingdom. When we let our worries and frustrations control our hearts, we force God out of His dwelling place. Creating space for God to dwell in our lives, away from the distractions of our world, might be one way to begin living “in the Spirit.”

God, open my eyes to see Your Kingdom, and create in me a heart that is open to Your Spirit. Help me let go of the things that force You out of Your dwelling place with me.

¹Answer me when I call, O God of my right! You gave me room when I was in distress. Be gracious to me, and hear my prayer. ²How long, you people, shall my honor suffer shame? How long will you love vain words, and seek after lies?

— Psalm 4:1-2

Letting Go...

By Liz Core

Senior Communication and PJCS Major

I believe God often confuses us with blessings and answers to prayers. We pray for safety, yet are soon brought into a dangerous situation. We pray for food, but called to give all we have for others. We pray for rest, yet called to walk a mile with our enemy. However, when we call, the door will always be opened for us.

This summer during my Ministry Inquiry position, I joined a group of individuals from my church who walked in this knowledge. Literally. The group—consisting of an experienced pilgrim, his wife, and their baby boy, as well as a wandering artist, a musician, and three college students—decided to walk around the entire county with only the sandals on their feet (and some diapers and food for the baby) in order to rely on God's provision.

On a long, tiring day we were low on food and weary from exposure to the sun. We saw a church. Over the course of the pilgrimage, churches had been our refuge in times of hunger and weariness. Yet as we approached the door and encountered the preacher, we were told that there was no food available there for us to eat. By this time, the

baby and his mama were growing needy with thirst and hunger. As the preacher left the parking lot, they entered the church. In the freezer they found a bag of broccoli and a tub of ice cream. "Ice cream!" Mama called out to the weary travelers. As we prepared to dig into the tub of ice cream, mama stopped us with her hesitant, "Hm. Maybe we shouldn't." We were to experience God's provision and this food was not given to us. So we left. As we continued, we were approached by a truck driven by a kind old farmer who invited us over for dinner. A three course meal which ended up involving both broccoli and ice cream. As we let go, God came through.

God, guide my way. I don't know whether to go to the right or the left. But I will trust in you. You make me complete. I am a sinner, I am in darkness. I am a liar. I am a hypocrite. Sometimes I hate myself and other times I seem to love myself way too much. But, Today I proclaim that Nothing is impossible for You. Today, I will search my heart and be silent, Today, I will lie down and sleep in peace, for You alone make me dwell in safety.

¹⁶I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, God may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, ¹⁷and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. ¹⁸I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

- Ephesians 3:16-19

Life's Divine Poetry

By Nina Fox

Sophomore English and Spanish Education Major, Ministry Leader

In spite of brief, transient whisperings of a rather “pedestrian” appreciation for poetry, I did not really begin to enjoy poetry—to live poetry—until I entered my second semester at Goshen College. Of course, children and adolescents are generally somewhat disdainful of this, admittedly, bewildering art, and I was always a part of this blind—albeit, justified—majority. However, the combination of my own emerging adulthood as well as the acknowledgment that poetry often expresses my own heart’s stirrings with a rather uncanny exactitude finally convinced me of the rare beauty of this timeless, illimitable art. And in the months since that discovery last January, I have begun to read and memorize poetry as a part of my daily devotional. Of course, I do not do so out of a sense of obligation, (who, after all, ever feels obligated to read poetry?), but rather, I do so out of the sheer joy of learning, recognizing, and delighting in the gift of this divine expression of life’s ups, life’s downs, and life’s

inevitable gray matter. Indeed, at this moment in my spiritual journey, the reading and memorization of poetry has become an essential element of prayer. After all, God has provided outlets for the passionate pursuit of learning in a million different forms and ways, and for me, the prayerful reading and memorization of poetry has become just one way to recognize the “breadth and length and height and depth of God’s love, and to know this love, which surpasses all knowledge and understanding” (Ephesians 3:18-19). For me, then, the discovery of poetry is pure gift! It is one more way to know God’s love. And ultimately, it is what I... we... as Jesus-followers, are called to do: pursue passionately—humbly—the unfailing love of our Lord in the many different ways that bring us, and Him, unmatched joy.

Oh Lord, thank you for the opportunity to express, in countless different ways, my love for You, and to discover, in a million ways more, your unending love for me. Amen!

¹¹“He said, “Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.” Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; ¹²and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. ¹³When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

– 1 Kings 19:11-13

Encountering And Discerning God's Word In Prayer

By Stephen Graber

Sophomore Biology Major, Ministry Leader

With the busy schedules that so many of us have today, it is often difficult to find time to come to God in prayer. As a college student busy with homework, relationships, music, sports and many other activities, I often find myself cramming my “God time” into the five minutes that I can stay awake when I lay down to go to bed. And in this time my prayers usually consist of simple lists of things that I am thankful for and concerns that I have before dozing off to sleep.

But this is not what prayer is and this is not a way to encounter God's presence. Prayer is a conversation with God that must be more than going through the motions: it requires just as much listening as it does talking, and this requires coming to God in silence with an open heart and quiet mind to hear God's word. Consider Elijah in 1 Kings 19: he does not encounter God in the

wind, earthquake, or fire; instead, he encounters God through a whisper in the silence. Elijah brings his concerns to God with the faith and trust that God will help him discern how to act in his current situation. We too must have this trust and mindset when we come to prayer with God. But this will require a different type of prayer. This requires a type of prayer in which we set aside time from our busy schedules to clear our minds of the everyday thoughts that clutter it, abandon our own insights, share our concerns and joys with God, and inquire God's will in our lives through silent listening. So next time you come to God in prayer, pray in this way: “Ever-present God, you have heard my joys and concerns. Enlighten me with your word and make straight my paths before me. I trust you, and I desire to live my life according to your will.” You may be surprised at what you will hear.

Making Space For God To Work

By Emily Grimes

Junior Music Education Major

This past summer I went to Peru for Goshen College's SST program. Before I went, I was uncertain and scared of how I would survive being separated from my loved ones for so long. I was also anxious about the unknowns and how they would affect me. Looking back, going on SST this summer was probably the best thing I could have possibly done for myself. During my time in Peru I slowly learned how to loosen my grip on my need to control my life, and slowly trust more and more in God. Even though SST was extremely difficult at times, I had an overwhelming sense of peace through it all. God was breathing new life into me in slow but steady ways. It wasn't until after I got home that I realized how much I had changed for the better.

I like to think of the Holy Spirit as God's breath that moves around

and through us. God is the only one who can bring life to the dust of our inmost being. However, allowing God to fill us isn't easy; we have to first make space in our lives for God to work. For me, that meant going on SST, pushing myself out of my comfort zone, and learning to give God access to parts of me that I'd rather control myself. Although it wasn't easy, doing so has left me feeling refreshed and revived in a million different ways. Do you ever feel like something in you has dried up? Perhaps it's patience, hope, joy, or a dwindled awareness of God's presence. Ask God to breathe new life into an area of your life that may be lacking.

O breathe on me, O breath of God, fill me with life anew, that I may love the things you love, and do what you would do. (STJ 46)

⁶We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ⁷ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; ⁸the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness. ⁹Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; ¹⁰love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹²Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. ¹³Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. ¹⁴Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. - Romans 12: 6-16

Encounter, Discern, Respond

By Hillary Harder

Sophomore Music and Spanish Major, Ministry Leader

When trying to determine what a “spirited life” looks like, this passage immediately jumped out at me. Paul’s letter seems almost like a how-to essay, instructing us on the steps to living a good life in the Holy Spirit. In fact, this passage has always been a comfort to me in my faith journey. Everyone has a gift, Paul says. Everyone has a niche, their own secure spot in the body of Christ.

However, I cannot deny a nagging feeling of discomfort when I read this passage. Paul’s faith-and-life laundry list makes living a spirited life seem so simple, when that is far from true. What if someone feels inadequate for the niche in which they are placed? Worse yet, what if someone feels they don’t have a niche, or any gifts to offer the body of Christ?

As young people struggling to find our way in the world, I think we

experience this doubt and worry a lot. We are encouraged to choose something we’re good at, to study and work hard at it, and to spend the rest of our lives doing it. But oftentimes, feelings of inadequacy and the panic of having to choose threaten to overwhelm us.

This is where the Holy Spirit comes in. A few verses before this passage begins, Paul tells us to offer our whole selves as a living sacrifice, which is our “spiritual worship”. He encourages us not to “conform to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our minds, so that we may discern what is the will of God”. To me, this says: Learn. Explore. Know that your life, whatever path it may take, is a living offering to God. Through discerning what we learn, with the help of others a long the way, we can come to know God’s will for us.

*⁵Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit."
- John 3:5*

Breathe

By Sara Klassen
Junior PJCS Major

If Spirit is read as breath as the Greek, *Numa*, allows, we are born of breath and water. Makes sense, the two elements we absolutely cannot live without. For the sake of space I will focus on breath.

Take a moment to feel your breath, the rise and fall of your belly, the expansion of your ribs. Feel the energy of oxygen refreshing cells, rushing into arms, legs, fingers, toes.

Aware of each breath we become aware of how, in each moment, the life in us is born again. Born as in renewed—filled with new life—but born also as in carried. With each breath we are carried by the Spirit, carried by the moment, in the arms of our mother Wisdom, Sophia.

Life is made new in the Spirit. Just like an infant, each moment is a world met by our awareness for the first time. We are drawn by this mindfulness to listen to the sounds oft' unheard traveling to our ears

but unnoticed, tuned out. With the wisdom brought by our breath we hear anew the depth and richness of a forgotten soundscape.

Awareness, spiritedness draws us back to our bodies, these good vessels, lungs and chest and veins housing the Spirit. Spirit, *Numa*, welcomes us home to our body, to the earth, to feel our toes on warm cement or squishing in spring mud, sloshing through January snow or crackling in Autumn's offerings. So, through our breath, the Spirit, we enter the Kingdom of God, the earth made new by our new presence in it: our new sight, new listening, new being.

Born of the Spirit, we are invited to be carried and to carry this Life and breath with gusto, blown by the gusts of the Spirit to encounter these seconds, to listen to and hear the sounds of calling in them, to respond with full-lunged commitment, saying "Yes!" to this moment, "Yes!" to Life, "Yes!" to the Spirit breathing in us.

¹The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ²He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. ³He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord God, you know." ⁴Then he said to me, "Prophesy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. ⁵Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord."

- Ezekiel 37:1-6

Can These Bones Live?

By Micah Miller-Eshelman

Senior Physics Major and Informatics Minor

I like Ezekiel's response. I've found it all too easy to confuse faith with self-confidence: to waver between 'being rational' (duh, these bones can't live) and emulating the bold faith statements of spiritual ancestors whom I admire but seldom understand (yes, of course God will make these bones live!). Truly, we don't know. We are mortal, our minds limited as much as our years. But we are confident, not that we know, but that God knows. And this is enough.

This past year I led an amateur intellectual group on campus called 'Thinking on Thursdays.' I'd send an email out Wednesday night and spend Thursday evening baking cookies and recruiting guys for the late-night meeting. And 10 o'clock would roll around, I'd race back to the dorm room, arms full of food and dishes, a couple minutes late,

greeting by the thunderous silence of a half empty room. A couple guys, looking around, uncertainty painted in lines above their brows. Will people come? 'I don't know, but let's get started.'

We persevered. Sometimes five or ten, sometimes over twenty constituted the best discussion group I have ever been part of. Beforehand I would pray, 'Lord, please bring people tonight, bless our time together. May your spirit be here with us.' We begin by asking, but end with joyful submission, the acknowledgment that only God knows, and that she alone is trustworthy.

"Lord, as I face the many uncertainties of the coming weeks, satisfy my needs and cravings in ways that only you know best. Give me the confidence in your judgment and joy in the daily patience of life."

Gracious Spirit, dwell with me: I myself would gracious be, and, with words that help and heal, would thy life in mine reveal, and, with actions bold and meek, would for Christ my Savior speak. Truthful Spirit, dwell with me: I myself would truthful be, and, with wisdom kind and clear, let thy life in mine appear, and, with actions lovingly speak my Lord's sincerity. Silent Spirit, dwell with me: I myself would silent be, quiet as the growing blade, which through earth its way has made, silently, like morning light, putting mists and chills to flight. Mighty Spirit, dwell with me: I myself would mighty be, mighty so as to prevail where unaided I must fail, ever, by a mighty hope, pressing on and bearing up. Holy Spirit, dwell with me: I myself would holy be, break from sin and choose the good, cherish what my Savior would, and whatever I can be, give to him who gave me thee.

- Hymnal: A Worship Book #507, text by Thomas T. Lynch

Dwell In Me

By Becky Snider

Sophomore Music Education Major, Ministry Leader and Worship Assistant

Before I sang this hymn in church several months ago, I wasn't at all familiar with it. And I'll be honest, I don't really remember anything else about the service that Sunday, but something about the words to this hymn really struck me, so I went back to my dorm room and read them again. The thought that I would be gracious, truthful, silent, mighty, and holy if the Spirit was dwelling in me because the Spirit is gracious, truthful, silent, mighty, and holy made sense. It's like how Harry Potter can speak Parseltongue because He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named can and Harry is one of his horcruxes. Voldemort is in Harry, therefore characteristics of Voldemort are in Harry; the Spirit is in me, therefore characteristics of the

Spirit are in me. I guess that's what it means in Galatians 5 when it says "But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (verses 22-23). And as Paul says in Ephesians 3:16-17, "I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong." Let the Gracious, Truthful, Silent, Mighty, Holy Spirit empower you to be gracious, truthful, silent, mighty, holy, and rooted in God's love.

¹Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. ²He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; ³a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. ⁴He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his teaching. ⁵Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it: ⁶I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations ⁷to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. ⁸I am the Lord, that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to idols. ⁹See, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them.

- Isaiah 42:1-9

Bringing Forth Justice

By Bobby Switzer

Sophomore Biochemistry/Chemistry Major, PJCS Minor, Ministry Leader

This passage explores the concept of individuals working for God's justice. The passage says that God has called you in righteousness, has taken you by the hand and kept you, and declares new things. Part of hearing what God is saying is opening your life to God. At times, life can be so busy that we shield ourselves from new endeavors, but by doing this we close ourselves to God's calling. If we open ourselves up to hear God's calling by being open during the most monotonous times, we can feel God's push and pull in our lives. After realizing that God has an initiative, we can begin to discern what that initiative may be. This passage illustrates that the one who responds to God's call will work for justice, but the possibilities when

God is leading are limitless. The last part of the passage speaks of seeing the former things and learning the new things. God is always creating, and according to this passage God will guide you and inform you to what God's new creation. It may still be a mystery to you, but God will eventually illuminate you with discernment. You will then have the chance to respond. Everyone has the chance to experience God's call, but what makes individuals extraordinary is how they respond to that call. You may not think that you have the capability to achieve what you feel God is calling you to do, but like the passage says, even those who cannot quench a dimly burning wick God will use to bring forth justice.

⁸We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. ¹⁰We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed. ¹¹For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body. ¹²So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you... ¹³All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God. ¹⁶Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. - 2 Corinthians 4:8-18 (NIV)

Don't Let Your Setbacks Set You Back

By Ashika Thanju

Sophomore Nursing Major, Worship Assistant

Every morning I woke up worrying about what to eat, then what to wear, then how to pass the ever so brutal chemistry class, and then, again, how to wake up the next day early enough to be on time for my 8 am class. My whole life, I had spent worrying so that every little thing went right. There were times when I felt sick to my stomach because everyone around me looked happy with their lives while I struggled to keep things straight, but then one morning upon reading this passage, I got a wakeup call. The part that caught my attention the most was the last sentence: "For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." Yes, it shook me from the ground and slapped me right in the face, while God said to me, "Ashika, trust me." It's true; I had been in panic mode ever since the day I was born. All God was asking me to do was to trust Him. From that

day onwards, I tried surrendering to God, and living a life filled with good spirit and enthusiasm. Even in times when I was deep in trouble and there seemed to be no way out, I thought of God's promise for me. He would never leave me nor forsake me. How did I forget that my God is omniscient? Nothing is hidden from Him, not even my future because to Him, time is meaningless. So why worry? Everything I think or do is His plan. So my pain today is temporary, as He said in Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." But my trust is what I have to give in return.

Lord, you are the sole keeper of my future. I am grateful because your blessings for me are eternal. Give me strength to trust you in everything I do.

When he passes me, I cannot see him; when he goes by, I cannot perceive him.
- Job 9:11(NIV)

Ruach

By Natasha Weisenbeck

Junior Public Relations and Bible/Religion/Philosophy Major, Worship Assistant

The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit. - John 3:8 (NIV)

Ruach is the Hebrew word for breath, wind, and spirit-- each an essence which holds great mystery, power, and passing. They are not constant substances, but rather, things which one cannot perceive, but animate what is around them-- they give life, for a time.

Proclamation of God's power surrounds Job's words. His own non-perception of God is part of God's power, the ability to work beyond human sight. Even though Job cannot make out the Lord's movement, he still attests to His action.

When Moses asks whom he shall say has sent him, God replies, "I AM THAT I AM," or I will be what I will be—Ehyeh (Exodus 3:14) Not very concrete, is it?

The deity from Avatar, Eywa, retains similar faithfulness and unpredictability. As Jake ends his prayer for help in their battle, Neytiri tells, him, "Our mother does not take sides. She only protects the Balance of Life."

Likewise, God's presence in our life is not determined by victories, but by the relationship that we have with Him-- both in times of presence, and times when he seems absent, as if on call elsewhere, leaving us with our own courage and his heart.

Like an overseas letter correspondence-- you may send letter after letter, only to receive a brief postcard weeks later, reading, "I love you. Hold on."

Clinging to the memory, or just a hope, of his presence, we trust that he is working in our emptiness and our fullness.

How does one perceive the wind?

2011-2012

Serving Christ



⁵You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. ⁶Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. ⁷Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. ⁸Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, ⁹and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. — Deuteronomy 6: 5-9

Talking About God All the Time

By Beth Yoder

Senior Interdisciplinary Studies Major, Ministry Inquiry Program

If ever I were to get a tattoo, I'd like "Deut. 6: 5-9" scripted on my wrist. Then, every time I glance at my wrist, I'd be reminded to love God with my complete being- my heart, soul, mind, and strength. (Plus, I think it'd make a great conversation-starter.) I'd also be reminded to share this commandment with those around me. This scriptural passage doesn't say to share this greatest commandment with others every once in awhile; rather all the time! In the morning, afternoon, and evening; at the Rott or the Fraker or Java Junction or the Electric Brew; as we're waiting for a train or walking around at First Fridays; we should always be talking about loving God.

But what does loving God mean? To me, it means serving Him and living our lives so that others may see that we love Him. These three things are bound together indistinguishably. By living lives of servanthood toward others, we also serve Christ, for He says in Matthew 25:40, "When you serve the least of these, you are serving me". When others see us serving from our hearts, they know there's something more at work. Serving others is countercultural. Loving God completely and continuously above others and self is countercultural. But serving Christ, by living for Him rather than offering sacrifices or pleas, is the greatest testimony we have to offer.

¹²For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has—not according to what one does not have. ¹³I do not mean that there should be relief for others and pressure on you, but it is a question of a fair balance between ¹⁴your present abundance and their need, so that their abundance may be for your need, in order that there may be a fair balance. ¹⁵As it is written, ‘The one who had much did not have too much, and the one who had little did not have too little.’
— 2 Corinthians 8:12-15

Let Go and Let God

By Quinn Brenneke

Sophomore Business And Interdisciplinary Studies Major, Resident Assistant

Jesus loved to talk about money. He is recorded telling a rich man that he can enter the Kingdom of God only after he sells all of his possessions and gives the money to the poor (Mk. 10:21). In his sermon on the mount, he proclaims that “you cannot serve both God and money” (Mt. 6:24) and yet another time, he preaches that a person is “a fool to store up earthly wealth but not have a rich relationship with God” (Lk. 12:21). The people Jesus met needed serious financial counseling – not necessarily because they were poor, but because they had control issues. As long as they could have power over their wealth, they were willing to let God have the rest of their lives. They probably had loans to repay, bills to manage, and a family to feed; of course they wanted control over their finances.

Part of Paul’s letter to the church in Corinth asks for funding for his ministry. Just like churches today fund missionaries’ expenses, Paul needed support to travel through Europe and the Middle East to

spread the gospel of Jesus. He did not ask for everything the Corinthians had, just enough that they could both be supported. Reminding them of what is written in Exodus 16:18, “those who gathered only a little had enough,” he encourages them to have faith that God will provide for their needs when they give Him control of their money.

In Jesus’ preaching, he tells us not to “worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today’s trouble is enough for today” (Mt. 6:34). Jesus knew that it is hard for us to let go of what we can control, so he spends a lot of time calling us to trust that he will provide for tomorrow’s needs. What are you struggling to give to God? Is it your money? Time? Heartaches? Are you so worried about planning for tomorrow that you forget that God is in control and has tomorrow already planned for you? Take time today to ask God for faith. Give him whatever he is asking of you – give him control of your whole life, no exceptions.

²¹*And when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left, your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it." – Isaiah 30:21*

Nicki Minaj Goes Spiritual

By Marissa Weldy

Sophomore Nursing Major, Ministry Leader

It's not very often that a famous rap artist's lyrics can apply to my spiritual life. But in Nicki Minaj's single, "Moment 4 Life", this phrase has stuck with me: "Everybody dies but not everybody lives." Now in the song, this is referring to her fame and fulfillment of her dreams. But to me this statement goes much deeper.

Everyday we can choose to live our lives to the fullest or to let the days slide by unnoticed. Now I know that we all can get a little busy sometimes, there's nothing wrong with that. But what happens when you pass up those chances to make a difference in this world, to truly live your life to the fullest? What happens when you hear God's voice calling you to a task and you silently ignore him or

brush him aside? Isaiah 30:21 says, "Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, 'This is the way; walk in it.'" No matter what choices you make, God is there, calling you back to his plan, calling you to live the life he has set out for you.

So go ahead, make that leap of faith, go on that service trip, take that summer counseling job, smile and say hi to the person sitting next to you in class. You don't have to take on the whole world in one giant step, and maybe it's a cliché, but even the small things can make a difference. Take advantage of the life and talents that you've been blessed with and see where God takes you.

¹⁴What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? ¹⁵If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, ¹⁶and one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,” and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? ¹⁷So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. ¹⁸But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith.

— James 2:14-18

Actions Speak Loud

By Leanna Teodosio

Sophomore Sociology and Bible/Religion Major, Resident Assistant

Actions speak louder than words. Our words carry tremendous weight, but words backed by actions even more so. In James 2:14-18 the connection is not only made between our words and actions, but is taken one step further to include our faith. This passage has been convicting to me as I read and meditate on it. Faith is not about simply saying the right things, such as the passage suggests; do not say, “keep warm and well fed,” then do nothing about their needs when it is in your power to do so.

One specific way I have been convicted about putting my words into actions is in praying for others. Each week I pray for my church family’s prayer requests listed on a sheet in the weekly bulletin, which

includes a list of shut-ins. One day as I was praying for each of those names it struck me that their immediate needs were company, conversation, compassion, the knowledge that they are thought of, cared about, and that they aren’t just a name on a list that people like myself aimlessly pray for. So I started visiting them.

This passage tells us that faith without actions cannot even be called faith. My exhortation for all is to show your faith by what you do. Look for ways you are able to serve others and meet their needs. Let’s let our actions speak for themselves as together we follow in the example of the actions of Jesus Christ who was constantly serving others.

¹¹“For I know the plans I have for you.” Declares the Lord,
“Plans to prosper and not to harm you. Plans to give you
hope and a future.”
- Jeremiah 29:11

Life's Sharks

By Rachel Jantzi

Sophomore History Major, Ministry Leader

This passage has always held a place in my heart not so I continue living my life which I have planned for myself, but to keep on the plan which God bestowed upon me as my body was being formed inside the womb. We as humans are created to be curious, especially for our futures. Where will I be in twenty years? Who will I be married to? This verse does not just instruct us to be patient but also to hold faith in God. The Lord DECLARES not suggests that He knows your future which will prosper (if you simply have faith).

At a very critical time in my first year when I was questioning God's plan for me, this verse appeared in front of me during a crying-out-to-

God-scene in the movie Soul Surfer. Bethany Hamilton cried out to God, “How could losing my arm possibly honor you? How could this be in your plan?” She realized that she prospered not because God revealed His plan to her, but because she continually sought out God in every situation she was given. Her faith became stronger even after losing her arm to a shark.

What are the sharks in your life? Our human nature creates fear for not having control over our own lives and even when we are in a deep ocean surrounded by nothing but sharks, God reminds us by this verse all over again that He is always present and He carries the ultimate plan for us.

*⁴¹He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. ⁴²A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins. ⁴³Then he called his disciples and said to them, 'Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. ⁴⁴For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.'*³*While he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head. ⁴But some were there who said to one another in anger, 'Why was the ointment wasted in this way? ⁵For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor.' And they scolded her. ⁶But Jesus said, 'Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me. ⁷For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me.*

— Mark 12:41-44, 14:3-7

Open Hands

By Micah Miller-Eshleman

Sophomore Physics Major, Ministry Leader

Outrageous. Two women make two stupid economic decisions. And yet we don't shake our heads. We stop and stare. "but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on." The broke Middle Eastern widow throws away her last two pennies, her last scraps to live on and, no doubt, the final remnant of her tattered sense of security. But she has not tossed them into the river, angry, desperate, suicidal. No, she has given them away—a gift to the God of the broke and the lonely. She is helpless before the God of the humble. Indeed, she has nothing to lose; her treasure resides elsewhere.

"She has done what she could." This could almost be the same woman. I see the money, roughly thirty

paychecks. What could I have done with all that? Still, Christ doesn't seem to care—about the money. He knows the giver's blessing, the joy she felt as she smote the jar and spilt its fragrance upon his head, the lasting satisfaction from doing "what she could." Christ also models for those of us on the receiving end, all too quick to write a check in reciprocity, to thwart the giver's act of love.

How to respond? I find it helpful to look around my room, naming all possessions I'd have a hard time giving away or lending to a friend—a simple activity which grows harder in proportion to honesty. For a clenched fist cannot grasp anyone's hand, nor wash their feet; but open hands are free—to give and to receive.

³¹“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. ³²All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. ³⁴Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ³⁵for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ ⁴⁰And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’ ⁴¹Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; ⁴²for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ ⁴⁶And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

- Matthew 25:31-36, 40-43, 46

Christ is Hungry, Thirsty, Naked

By Beth Yoder

Senior Interdisciplinary Studies Major, Ministry Inquiry Program

This summer I have watched people sell cocaine, seen prostitutes on street corners and heard deadly gunfire in my immediate neighborhood. I have spent the summer working for DOOR in Chicago, an urban ministry that takes wealthy kids and leads them in service experiences in the West and South sides of Chicago. I usually do urban gardening and Headstart daycare. Through these programs I have spent the summer working against racism, violence and despair here in Chicago.

However, I rarely get to see the fruits of my labors. The weeds in the gardens come back with a vengeance. The kids at the daycare go home to broken households every afternoon. Realistically, I have no idea if I made

a “long lasting” impact on anyone.

That’s the thing about service. When we do service we receive so much more than we give. I met an 85-year-old woman who transformed a crack house in her community into an award winning urban garden. I’ve had little children whom I’d only met once come running up to me, grab my hand, and play with me with more love than I can possibly express.

We will never be able to feed all the hungry, give water to all who thirst, clothe all the naked, or even visit all the prisoners. Only God can do that. But Jesus said, whenever you serve just one, you are doing it for me. And when we commit to serving one, we receive so much in return.

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

— Matthew 5:13-16

Tesoros Escondidos

By Ben Sutter

Junior History and Communication Major, Ministry Inquiry Program

I write this from Mexico City, where I’m helping a church with bible school. The theme for our week is ‘Tesoros Escondidos’ or ‘hidden treasures’. The hidden treasures we’ve found include the mustard seed that grows into a huge tree, the yeast that expands rapidly to make bread and the pearl that a man is willing to sell all his possessions to buy.

Our first night here, Gabriel, a member of the church, called us to be “sal y luz” (salt and light) for the world. As we began our time here, the usage of this passage felt incredibly meaningful. Here was a call to the congregation to get out and spread the gift of Jesus’ life and ministry. Were we doing that by traveling here to help with bible school? Maybe.

But there was a larger call in the message, too. Salt and light spread, they’re contagious. As I’ve been present here, I’ve wrestled with what this passage means for my life. When someone thanked Gabriel for his message, he said “No, thank Jesus.” He redirected the praise to the One who truly deserved it. Often we take all the credit for ourselves. I’ve found that it’s only when God is my purpose—when I allow God to control my life and my actions—that the message of Jesus spreads in ways I never thought possible. What credit does God deserve for working in my life? How are the salt and light of Jesus’ kingdom present in my life?

²⁵“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? ²⁸And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. ³⁰But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you — you of little faith? ³¹Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ ³²For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

— Matthew 6:25-32

Relying on God for Everything

By Marcelle Al-Zoughbi

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My friends (7 Goshen College students, my three brothers, a woman from Seattle and a student from Canada) and I went to a Palestinian Bedouin village in the Negev (Naqab) Desert in Israel. This village had been demolished 28 times in one year! When we arrived at the village, it had just been demolished by the Israeli government 2 days earlier. The Bedouins were living in tents.

My friends and I went to sit in one of the tents to hear and ask about what had happened. The Bedouins told us about their hard life. They told us how it is hard to find water and if they find it, they have to pay more than the other citizens. They told us how they trust in God alone because

the Israeli government terrorizes them and they can't call the police for protection because the police are the ones demolishing their homes.

My heart hurt for these Bedouins. Even though they didn't have much food, money or water, the Bedouins were very hospitable and were so giving. It astonished me how these people who may not have food or water the next day were sharing with us. They relied on God for everything! They trusted God to take care of them. It reminded me that I need to be sharing and loving towards all people and that I should trust in God to take care of me. It reminded me to be generous and trust that God will provide for me.

¹The plans of the mind belong to mortals, but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord. ²All one's ways may be pure in one's own eyes, but the Lord weighs the spirit. ³Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established. ⁴The Lord has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble. ⁵All those who are arrogant are an abomination to the Lord; be assured, they will not go unpunished. ⁶By loyalty and faithfulness iniquity is atoned for, and by the fear of the Lord one avoids evil. ⁷When the ways of people please the Lord, he causes even their enemies to be at peace with them. ⁸Better is a little with righteousness than large income with injustice. ⁹The human mind plans the way, but the Lord directs the steps.

— Proverbs 16:1-9

Obedience is Service

By Natasha Weisenbeck

Sophomore Public Relations and Bible/Religion Major, Ministry Leader

Service requires teamwork with the one who holds the plans. Teamwork requires trust. We disobey God when we do not trust his ways. Because we know this, we deceive ourselves, but God knows WHEN we act IN pride, saying we were simply shining- when we fearfully avoid in place of the meekness we claim. We know it too.

While some are called to leave behind their families and their jobs to fully work with Christ, many of us have a much meager calling. We are only asked to commit to the Lord the work of our hands.

God calls us to act according to the standard he has set in all our ways and he will lead us-- that's it. Even if you have a greater calling on your

life and you pursue with your own greatness or your own plan in mind, you will fall.

Do not be foolish, believing you can control your steps. You can only control your actions. Even if we have fallen, or have never really been the most obedient, we can always aim to please God, faithfulness replacing past folly.

When the spirit is quiet, giving little or no prompting, do not fret. Act according to what you know is right. You do not need to seek out a "holy" position to serve God; service goes beyond Missions and the Church, but it always comes back to obedience.

⁵Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. ⁶In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.
— Proverbs 3:5-6

Relying on God

By Becca Augsburger

Sophomore Molecular Biology/Biochemistry Major, Ministry Leader

In June of 2009, my uncle discovered early traces of cancer in his lungs. When a full-body scan revealed rapid growth in the brain, spine, and abdomen, doctors began discussing possible treatment plans for stunting further growth and exterminating the cancer already present in his body. When I heard of the extensive diagnosis, I struggled to understand why my uncle, who had taken care of his body, could end up with cancer everywhere. However, what has impacted me since then is my uncle's response to his diagnosis and treatments. Since his diagnosis, he has written, meditated, prayed, and blessed those around him with his humility and optimism. His commitment to serving and following Christ has not waived, but it has been redefined. While he may struggle to understand the

reasons behind his challenge, he keeps looking to God for strength.

This summer, as I was thinking about the Campus Ministries theme for the 2011-2012 year at Goshen, which is "Serving Christ," my uncle's story came to mind as well as Proverbs 3:5-6. These two verses talk about serving Christ by putting our faith and trust in him and accepting that we do not always have the answers to difficult questions. In my uncle's journey, he has trusted that no matter the outcome of his battle with cancer, God is using this curve in his life to reveal His grace and strength. This verse and my uncle's example serve as constant reminders for me that by humbling myself and leaning on God's understanding instead of my own, I can serve him in all circumstances.

¹⁰Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. ¹¹Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me. ¹²Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.
- Psalm 51:10-12

Pillow Fight

By Grace Parker

Junior English and Bible/Religion Major, Ministry Inquiry Program

I am limited.

I cannot predict the future, stop the rain, or understand every person. All I can do is take care of myself and the little bubble of life around me. Selfmaintenance. That's what this psalm tells me to prioritize. God requires us to take care of ourselves. Fortunately, God helps us get in sync with our inner being so that we may sustain a "willing spirit" to serve.

One thing that blocks my willingness to serve is when I dwell on the negative. When I do this, I refuse to let God cleanse me. My mind tends to get hooked on one instance in the past or one specific theological quandary or one thing that I could have done differently. As I obsess about these things that I cannot change, I lose sight of the present.

My family has a unique solution to this internal dilemma: a pillow fight. When one of us starts saying "I'm a

total failure" or "Why did I say that," one of us usually responds with "You just need a good beating." So we grab pillows and begin the therapeutic pillow-fighting session. Of course, when it's me, I yell and run away because I don't want to deal with it. I like wallowing. Soon enough, though, I must grab a pillow and join the play. My attention is torn away from my thoughts and forced to deal with the present.

In a way, this restores me to "the joy of your salvation." It makes me embrace the present and resist the negative spirit of dwelling, regret, and guilt. God uses these pillow fights to put a new and right spirit within me once again. If you are feeling separate from God, I pray that you find some way—whether through walking, writing, or pillow fighting—to recognize God in every moment.

2010-2011



¹Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.
- Psalms 51:1

God's Forgiving Love

By Jennifer Speight

Senior English Major, Ministry Leader

I love King David. He is so utterly human. There's something refreshing about seeing King David in this place, broken, ashamed, and fallen. To see Israel's greatest King, the one God called a man after his own heart, mess up so tremendously should encourage anyone in their journey. See, we know where David's journey ended, we know that he sought the Lord, and we know that God was faithful to David and that David was forgiven. But we also see him fallen. David is at a place where he feels like he has completely blown it. He writes in verse 3, "For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me."

Have you ever been there? Ever cheated on an assignment that a professor later commended? Done something you said you'd never do? I've been there. David's been there. But the great thing about this Psalm is knowing that the heaviness, the conviction, the guilt even, are not longstanding. God's mercy and love is. We have to get to the place where we know we are so wrong that we literally agree with God's judgment of us, and then comes mercy.

Junior year of college was the worst year I've ever had in my life. I took so many paths I said I'd never take. I did things that I said I'd never do. But past errors don't define us. David, after this incident with Bathsheeba and Uriah allowed himself to be transformed by God, by Christ. He writes, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." This is what God wants to do with us. David says that "The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise." Is that what we're offering to God?

We fumble. We fall, and sometimes, instead of getting right back up we lay in the path and proclaim that it's over. We feel like we've failed completely. But God has not failed us, and his mercy abounds. "Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit." When you feel like you've blown it, take comfort. Take hope. Resolve to do something different, and come to God and allow yourself to be transformed. He's not finished with you yet.

¹Praise the Lord! Praise, O servants of the Lord; praise the name of the Lord. ²Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time on and forevermore. ³From the rising of the sun to its setting the name of the Lord is to be praised. ⁴The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens. ⁵Who is like the Lord our God, who is seated on high, ⁶who looks far down on the heavens and the earth? ⁷He raises the poor from the dust, and lifts the needy from the ash heap, ⁸to make them sit with princes, with the princes of his people. ⁹He gives the barren woman a home, making her the joyous mother of children. Praise the Lord!
- Psalms 113:1-9

God the Helper of the Needy

By Reuben Sancken
Senior Bible/Religion Major

This summer I volunteered in the food pantry at Church Community Services (CCS). My favorite part of the job was helping those that came to the pantry by carrying their food out to their vehicles. It was during this time that many would share parts of their story. They told me a little about their backgrounds and how they were struggling to get by. I felt honored, because most of us do not have a chance to hear them. For the majority of the time, the poor are treated as invisible in our world. During the times the poor are visible, they are often treated as an inconvenience that should be avoided.

Today's scripture is filled with words of praise and wonder at God's ability to lift the poor out of their dire

situation. When the world is blind to their suffering, God sees them and chooses to help. God sent Jesus, who came and lifted up the outcasts and invisible people of the world through his teachings and actions. CCS, motivated by Jesus' example, uses its services to feed the hungry and provide resources to bring people out of poverty. These acts of compassion and mercy have the potential to transform individuals by giving the gift of hope. One man, who used to regularly receive help from CCS, eventually, was able to start his own business. He was so grateful for the help he received that he gave all this earnings for one work day to CCS. The hope of Christ is not limited to a specific group of people. It is a gift given to everyone.

¹I lift up my eyes to the hills—from where will my help come? ²My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. ³He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber. ⁴He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. ⁵The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade at your right hand. ⁶The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. ⁷The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. ⁸The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and for evermore.

- Psalm 121:1-8

Assurance of God's Protection

By Jenna Zehr

Junior Elementary Education/Special Education Major

College has had many ups and downs for me, but I always have been reminded to turn to God because that is where my help comes from. During the fall of my sophomore year, I was an RA. On top of my classes, I had to attend to the duties of an RA, which was challenging. Two girls ended up leaving my floor, and the college, as a result of self-destruction and mental illnesses. This really hit me hard. On top of that, I found out during that time one of my sisters was dealing with self-destruction, something I barely had known about since that time. During this time, there were many questions going through my head of why this was all happening. My walls seemed to be crumbling down. Evil had struck, but during this time my friends and family were able to lift me up and remind me to turn to the Lord, because He will keep us from all evil.

This Psalm is one that really applied to my life. The first two verses are

also a song that I always would listen to during this time of my life. “I lift my eyes up, unto the heavens. Where does my help come from? My help comes from you, maker of heaven, creator of the earth.” I knew that God would help me through this time. I knew that God would help my sister and the two girls who had to leave my floor. Looking back, I can see the journey I went through and how I really am a stronger person today.

God has such wonderful plans for us, and we need to remember that. Smile when you can, and laugh often, because life is something we should cherish. Through all the stress that college brings, remember to turn to God during the rough times. He will never leave you, and he loves you so much. As the Psalmist writes, “My help come from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.” So remember that today. And thank him for helping you in good times and in bad.

⁴Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD. ⁵You hem me in—behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me. ⁶Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. ⁷Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? ⁸If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. ⁹If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, ¹⁰even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. ¹¹If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,” ¹²even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you. ¹³For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. ¹⁴I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. ¹⁵My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, ¹⁶your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

- Psalms 139:4-16

The Inescapable God

By Maggie Gilman

Senior Interdisciplinary Major

If I have learned one important thing in life, it is that God knows and loves me completely. There are days I still do not believe this, that I cannot fathom it, but I am ever moving closer to the place where I can truly experience God’s perfect love. This perfect love does not care for me despite my faults and mistakes, but is a love that takes me wholly with all the darkness that is of my past and self along with my goodness, brightness and joy. No matter where I turn, there is never a time when I am without God. I can push the Divine away, can be so blinded by despair that I cannot feel Her, but She is always with me. The Sacred will reach out to me and hold my heart in those times when I am so deep in darkness that I cannot see Her face. And when I question my own worthiness, I only

have to remember that God created me simply as I am and with the knowledge of the destructive choices I have and will make at times. I only have to remember that perfect, all knowing love of God that has been with me from the moment I came into being. Where ever I go, what ever I do, that love will follow me; to the ends of the earth and back, my God will not forsake me.

So I will set my heart to You, and allow you to lead me in your wisdom, grace, perfect love, and forgiveness. I will strive to love others and myself completely in the unconditional, surrounding way that You do. Thank You for being with me through all that life has brought, and for loving me so deeply. My truest life is in You.

¹⁸I tell myself, "I am finished! I can't count on the LORD to do anything for me." ¹⁹Just thinking of my troubles and my lonely wandering makes me miserable. ²⁰That's all I ever think about, and I am depressed. ²¹Then I remember something that fills me with hope. ²²The LORD's kindness never fails! If he had not been merciful, we would have been destroyed. ²³The LORD can always be trusted to show mercy each morning. ²⁴Deep in my heart I say, "The LORD is all I need; I can depend on him!"
— Lamentations 3:18-24

God's Merciful Love Endures

By Ben Sutter

Sophomore History and Communication Major, Ministry Leader

College is change. Change can be hard, because we try so desperately to cling to what we know. Sometimes we can't find the new day until we've found the courage to let go of the old one. What God has in store for each one of us is far beyond what we could ever comprehend. We don't have a clue where we're going or where we'll come out, but God does. And "Deep in my heart I say, 'The Lord is all I need; I can depend on him'"

But sometimes that's hard to do. It's hard to depend on God. It's hard for me to give up control and let my views and experiences be transformed into what they can be through Christ. I love so much what I've had, it pains me to give it up, even in the face of

the promise for something better. And even, sometimes more so then, God can feel absent.

The writer of Lamentations, at first despairs at the absence of God in his life. He feels abandoned and completely disregarded by God. Depression has overcome him and it's all that he thinks about. But then, the writer says, "I remember something that fills me with hope. The Lord's kindness never fails!"

If we let ourselves fall into desolation and depression, we too must remember to be transformed by Christ. The Lord is our way out of despair. If we are transformed by Christ, we too can say, "The Lord is all I need; I can depend on him!"

*⁴⁴But I say unto you, Love your enemies,
bless them that curse you, do good to them
that hate you, and pray for them which
despitefully use you, and persecute you;
– Matthew 5:44 (King James Version)*

Loving Our Enemies

By Karina Rohrer-Meck

Sophomore Nursing Major, Ministry Leader

Always Love.

We all have that one individual that for some reason can crawl under our skin and inevitably we gossip about. For me I found this individual this past summer while at work. I found myself struggling to get along with them and consequently found the temptation to talk about them. In those times that I felt the urge to talk about them, I turned to God in prayer and He showed me how to pray for them and show them love instead.

Sometimes it seems and feels like an impossible task. But when we turn to scripture and God's teachings, we see how to react. In Matthew 5:44-45 we read: "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

This past summer, it was this very verse that served as a great reminder

that what we are to do in all circumstances is to love. We have to be careful to still love the people who show evil but not to love the actual evil. The Bible in various places says to hate evil, but never to hate the person who sins. Instead of hating them, which is the easy thing to do, love them and pray for them.

Again, we find this challenge emphasized in Luke 6:27 where it states: "But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you."

So God gives us this challenge: to love our "enemies," which includes the people we have daily struggles with, and to pray for them.

Who is the individual or individuals that crawls right under your skin and supply with the necessary items to gossip? And how can you share God's amazing love with them?

²¹They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. ²²They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. ²³Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, ²⁴and he cried out, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.” ²⁵But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” ²⁶And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. ²⁷They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, “What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.” ²⁸At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

- Mark 1:21-28

The Healing Power of Jesus

By Bob Yoder

Campus Pastor

In reading this passage, what jumps out at you? Is it that Mark seems to “pick a fight” with certain religious leaders of that town by proclaiming Jesus as one who has authority, as opposed to them? Or, is it that Jesus strikes up a contemptuous conversation with “an unclean spirit”? This is the first miracle performed by Jesus in Mark. In fact, other than a personal trip into the desert and calling out his disciples, this one of Jesus’s first public ministry endeavors. Can you imagine if in your first public speech you encounter a disruptive, heckling voice? (Hopefully this won’t be your experience in Oral Comm!)

Jesus not only transformed the life of this man, but also the situation itself. Jesus, the new authoritative voice in town, unshackled the chains of the prison that the man was living in by

commanding the unclean spirit to come out. You can almost hear the murmuring whispers and tension in the amazed crowd. Finally, someone who actually does something real for someone!

Like the crowd, what would it take to amaze you today? Like the man, what fills you in a way that disrupts how you want to live life? Do you ache for a new authority in your life who could free you? In this passage, I am amazed the unclean spirit even showed up at the synagogue. Didn’t he know that this could spell trouble for him? I’m sure this encounter with Jesus surprised him since he too had to “change locations.” How do you wish to be surprised?

Lord Jesus, move in me that I might be transformed.

¹I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. ²He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. ³You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide in me as I abide in you... ⁵As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. ¹⁰If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete." - John 15:1-4, 9-11

Jesus the True Vine

By Tamara Shantz

Assistant Campus Pastor and Apartment Manager

This summer I spent three lovely weeks visiting family in western Canada. This meant mountains, lots of mountains. One day we visited Waterton National Park and came upon a small, but powerful, waterfall. At the base of the falls, there was a series of historical signs that included a photo of the falls one hundred years earlier. The rock base of the falls was completely altered – in a dramatic reminder of the power of water - you could see that the channel where the water now flowed was astonishingly different from its earlier form.

When I consider what it means to be transformed by Christ, this imagery of rock being gradually carved, smoothed, shaped, and changed by the continual flow of water comes to mind. John 15 uses different

imagery from the natural world to get across a similar point. For me, transformation is a process; a process that occurs when we abide in the love of Christ and open our lives to the work of the Spirit. Change can happen quickly and miraculously, but in my life, change is often of a more subtle nature.

As I seek to know God more fully, to follow after Jesus more closely, the Spirit of Christ shapes and molds me with the constancy of a gardener's pruning shears in the orchard; it pushes and propels me like the dynamic force of rushing waters. As we enter into another school year, it is my prayer that we might allow ourselves to be shaped by the transformative power of Christ's love.

³Now as [Paul] was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” ⁵He asked, “Who are you, Lord?”
- Acts 9:1-31

Paul's Blinding Transformation

By Brook Hostetter

Sophomore Music Major and Ministry Leader

Three characters catch my attention: Saul, Ananias, and Jesus who are all pertinent, prevalent, and needed. At the beginning of the story, Saul was persecuting the Christians and “breathing murderous threats against the Lord’s disciples.” I think we could conclude that Saul was dangerous, intimidating, and an over-all “bad” man.

This is the type of person that most people would be afraid to approach, much less begin a conversation about Jesus with. But this is exactly what Jesus asks Ananias to do. He must have been terrified! And he was because he protested this idea at first. But Ananias knew God and believed God, and did as he was told.

What he didn’t fully realize was that Saul had already had an encounter with the Lord. Saul met the Lord on his journey and experienced the power of God. Ananias had a small part; to bring the message to Saul and take away his blindness. Because Ananias believed, Saul believed and became a new leader in Christ.

Which person are you right now? Saul, in need of transformation, or Ananias, the vessel from God to Saul? Both roles are important, and I believe that we will all be in both positions at some point in our lives.

Jesus still transforms his people every day. Maybe you’re on the wrong road and need to have an open mind to what God is telling you. Or maybe you’ve been spending a lot of time in the word and are feeling a calling to BELIEVE, let go of your fears, and talk about the love of God to those who are following the wrong path.

Earlier this summer, a man from Nepal spoke at my church about his time as a Brahmin in Nepa; “the top of the totem pole.” This man had power in Nepal and used it to murder Christians. God got through to this man and today he is using his power to spread the word of the Lord.

Have you been transformed by Christ? Are you willing to be a messenger and share what you have with others so that they may be transformed as well?

¹What then are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? ²By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? ³Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life... – Romans 6:1-4

Dying to Christ

By Stephanie Wyse

Senior Elementary Ed./Special Ed. Major and Ministry Leader

“The Realization of your Salvation brings an Expectation of Transformation” –Joe Wood, pastor

The Bible clearly states that we are saved by God’s grace through faith in Christ. However, the Good News does not end with salvation. After salvation is accepted, transformation is expected. In Romans 6: 1-23 Paul explains to the people that they cannot simply accept the grace that has been given and keep on sinning. In fact, if they have accepted God’s grace, he says, “we died to sin, how can we live in it any longer?” He goes on to say that as Christ died and was raised from the dead, we too die to our old selves and are given “new life.” Our new life in the Spirit brings

FREEDOM from sin’s mastery over us. In Romans 8, we read that through Christ we have life in the Spirit and “are not controlled by the sinful nature but by the Spirit (v. 9).”

Accepting God’s grace does not mean we can do whatever we want; it means we receive his Holy Spirit and have NEW LIFE! It is exciting to know that God wants to transform us! If you claim salvation in Christ, ask yourself these questions: How has the realization of your own salvation transformed your life? Are there parts of your life that need transformation? As Paul Tillich puts it, “He loves you just the way you are today, but too much to let you stay that way.”

So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering... fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out.
— Romans 12:1-2 (The Message)

Placing Our Ordinary Before God

By Nikita Zook

Sophomore Social Work Major

Life moves by slowly if you stop and think about it too often. I think I was three weeks into my summer internship when I realized that. For 10 weeks, I served as an intern at Grace Community Church in Bryan, Ohio, through the Ministry Inquiry Program at Goshen College. Now, don't get me wrong, it was a great experience. And I definitely learned a lot. But there were days when I woke up in the morning not wanting to get out of bed. We all have those days.

However, in Romans 12: 1-2 (The Message) it says, "So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering...fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out."

It's often difficult for me to feel any sort of joy or purpose or excitement when I'm rolling out of bed. But I

think God calls us to exactly that: excitement at the possibilities a new day always holds. We are to take everything we have, our "everyday, ordinary life" and give that to God. That is the beginning of our transformation – giving up our "everyday life." And that's a process. Each day this summer, I tried to put my heart, my life and my desires in the hand of God. I tried to rely on his strength and trust that he had a plan for me. And looking back, I'm realizing how much that changed me. I don't feel like the same person. I feel transformed. I am trusting God in ways I never have before. And that didn't happen overnight. It took weeks of frustration, loneliness and moments when everything seemed pointless –lying in my bed, wishing I could go back to sleep. I had to continually, constantly give my "everyday life" to God in order to find that change and transformation was possible.

¹So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, ³for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory...

- Colossians 3:1-4

New Life in Christ

By Jessica Camacho

Junior Nursing Major

The day I was saved brought an entirely new meaning to transformation for me. Looking back now at my teenage years I can see that I have been renewed, saved, forgiven, and transformed. In the beginning I didn't realize what a gift it really is to be transformed. Growing in Christ and learning compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, and love takes our own willingness to be transformed by God.

Verse 3:3 says, "For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God." When I "died" I put to death what belongs to my earthly nature, but not literally. I can say that I've learned that letting go of anger, filthy language, impurity, lust, greed, etc., is something that must be done continually. The day I accepted Christ didn't mean that all of these things were literally "put to death" all at once. That day meant that I'd begun the most

precious and treasured relationship of my life: a relationship with our Father. Now when temptations such as anger, greed, lust, impurity, etc., appear in my life I have a way out: Jesus Christ. I have learned to ask God to transform my heart and mind continually as I grow in Him. I have learned to seek God in prayer, fasting, and reading the Bible as a personal way of pursuing a deeper relationship with Christ.

Being transformed in Christ has a variety of deep meanings. For me, it means letting go of our old ways and being willing to live our lives fully for God. It means seeking Him continually, praying without ceasing, and being willing to offer our lives to God to serve Him as He leads.

Am I as willing today to let God transform my heart and mind as I have been in the past?

2009-2010



¹²Jacob dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. ¹³And the Lord stood beside him and said, "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; ¹⁴and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring. ¹⁵Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." ¹⁶Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place—and I did not know it!" ¹⁷And he was afraid, and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

- Genesis 28:12-17

Jacob's Dream of Peaceful Assurance

By Tamara Shantz
Campus Pastor

My first peacemaking task this year is with this text. I tend to read the stories of the patriarchs through my own lens. I hear echoes of privilege and oppression. I think of where these texts have been used to claim a chosen status that has hurt other communities. Do I really have to 'make peace' with this text?

With the help of commentaries, I try to shed my cynical scales and hear the story from a different perspective; that of a desperate, fleeing Jacob. Jacob is something of a fiend. He lies, schemes, manipulates and is now running from his brother's wrath. Even after an awe-inspiring experience of the Divine, his response to God is still conditional: "OK God, IF you fulfill your promises, I'll keep you on as my chosen God."

But even with Jacob's less than inspiring vow, something significant has occurred with this midnight visitation. Jacob's journey was transformed. His journey began as a desperate escape plan to save his life and now, his journey has become the pilgrimage of one who bears God's promises of accompaniment, protection, and homecoming. Jacob experiences conversion, a conversion of how he looks at his life. Jacob has received a new context for life, a new purpose. He has awoken and seen that "Truly, God is in this place and I never knew it!"

How might your journey be changed by hearing God's promises anew? What new purpose to your journey might emerge if you seek to look for God in unexpected places?

¹Answer me when I call, O God of my right! You gave me room when I was in distress. Be gracious to me, and hear my prayer. ²How long, you people, shall my honor suffer shame? How long will you love vain words, and seek after lies? Selah ³But know that the Lord has set apart the faithful for himself; the Lord hears when I call to him. ⁴When you are disturbed, do not sin; ponder it on your beds, and be silent. Selah ⁵Offer right sacrifices, and put your trust in the Lord. ⁶There are many who say, "O that we might see some good! Let the light of your face shine on us, O Lord!" ⁷You have put gladness in my heart more than when their grain and wine abound. ⁸I will both lie down and sleep in peace; for you alone, O Lord, make me lie down in safety.

- Psalm 4:1-8

Bold Plea for Deliverance and Peace

By Becky Horst

Associate Registrar and Convocation Coordinator

Sleeping can be difficult in college. Noise, caffeine, anxiety and homesickness may cause you to avoid your bed until very late or to simply toss and turn when you do lie down.

Christians who follow the rule of St. Benedict read Psalm 4 as their last prayer each night. This psalm offers three possible ways for you to “make peace with God” at bedtime.

1. Do what the psalmist does in verse 1: call on God for help when you are distressed. Remember how God has helped you in the past. Be confident and persistent in your plea. God is righteous, and God wants the world to be righteous, so be bold in pleading your case.

2. Follow the advice that the psalmist gives to others in verse 4: “When you are disturbed, do not

sin; ponder it on your beds and be silent.” In other words, reflect on the events and people in your life without the distractions of cell phone, iPod or laptop. Be still. Listen. Allow God space and time to speak to you.

3. State your trust in God, as the psalmist does in verse 8. Verbalizing your trust will strengthen it. Create a version of this verse that you can repeat over and over in your mind if you have trouble falling asleep. Here is my own bedtime mantra version of verse 8:

“I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O LORD, are my safety.”

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¹Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. ²Ascribe to the Lord the glory of his name; worship the Lord in holy splendor. ³The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the Lord, over mighty waters. ⁴The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. ⁵The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars; the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon. ⁶He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, and Sirion like a young wild ox. ⁷The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire. ⁸The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness; the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh. ⁹The voice of the Lord causes the oaks to whirl, and strips the forest bare; and in his temple all say, "Glory!" ¹⁰The Lord sits enthroned over the flood; the Lord sits enthroned as king forever. ¹¹May the Lord give strength to his people! May the Lord bless his people with peace!

- Psalm 29:1-11

God's Peaceful Voice In A Great Storm

By Crystal Zook
Goshen College junior

When we think about God's presence and voice, we like to think of how we find God in the quiet. We think of Psalm 46:10 which says "Be still and know that I am God," or of God appearing to Elijah in 1 Kings 19. In that instance, God does not appear in the great forces, but in the silence. This is how we think of God's voice. But we forget one important fact; God is all powerful and majestic. God can be found in the calm, but God can also be found in the storms of destruction.

This is what the psalmist writes of in Psalm 29. The psalmist writes about God's powerful yet peaceful voice. God's voice can be found thundering over the water, or in the breaking of the cedars. God's voice can be flashes of fire or the forests being stripped

bare. We don't like to think about God's voice being in destructive forces, but God's voice is there.

Yet, the psalmist writes that after seeing these great forces at work, all in God's temple say 'Glory!' This was hard for me to understand until I continued reading: The Lord sits enthroned over the flood ... The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace. So yes, God's voice can be found in the mighty waters, but God's voice is also over the flood. God gives us the strength to carry on; the peace to know that we can come through the storm to the other side and that all will not be destroyed. And so we need to make peace with God's voice being everywhere, even in a great storm.

¹⁶Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the fruitful field. ¹⁷The effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever. ¹⁸My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places. ¹⁹The forest will disappear completely, and the city will be utterly laid low. ²⁰Happy will you be who sow beside every stream, who let the ox and the donkey range freely.

- Isaiah 32:16-20

The Peace Of God's Reign

By Ben Baumgartner

Goshen College sophomore

The reassuring imagery of these five verses at the end of Isaiah 32, with references to “secure dwellings” and “quiet resting places” for God’s people, are a stark contrast to the verses that precede them, which call on the “women who are at ease” to put on sackcloth and beat their breasts for the barren land and forsaken city. However, in the mind of Isaiah, it is not the Assyrians who are to blame for this impending misfortune, but the unjust ruling class of Israel who has oppressed their people. Thus, Isaiah looks expectantly to God’s spirit to intervene so that “justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the fruitful field.”

The Israelites were not alone in their desire for justice and the peace that comes from it; this is a need that is just as present today. Last May term I took Liberation Theology, where we examined the struggles of various peoples to achieve both peace and justice. One of the most powerful stories we learned about was that of Oscar Romero, an archbishop of San Salvador, El Salvador, who led the Catholic Church in speaking out against the government’s persecution

of the people, in place because of fear of a revolution. What I admired most about Romero was his commitment to both justice and peace. Although he was chosen as archbishop because initially he emphasized peace above justice, a stance that obviously benefited those in power, the stories of suffering that he witnessed, including the assassination of one of his friends, eventually caused him to change his mind and speak out. This stance of calling for justice and an end to the killings would eventually lead to his own assassination in 1980.

In this passage from Isaiah 32 we see a yearning for the peace of God that is a result of justice and righteousness. As compassionate peacemakers who seek to “Heal the world peace by peace,” it would be wise of us to look to the examples of Oscar Romero and many others like him who have realized that peace cannot be separated from justice. Martin Luther King Jr., famously said that, “Without peace there can be no justice,” reminding us today that we must continue to speak out on behalf of both.

¹When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ²Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: ³“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. ⁵“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. ⁶“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. ⁷“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. ⁸“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. ⁹“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. ¹⁰“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹“Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven; in the same way they persecuted the prophets before you.
- Matthew 5:1-12

Blessed are the peacemakers

By Anita Stalter

Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Academic Dean

Eleanor Roosevelt, a former First Lady of the United States remembered as a champion for social reform and a key voice in advocating for the establishment of the United Nations, said, “It isn’t enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. And it isn’t enough to believe in it. One must work at it.”

My dad was a peacemaker. He believed in peace, and one significant way that he worked at it was by consistently encouraging understanding among individuals and congregations in conflict. One of his goals as a pastor throughout the five decades of his service in ministry, he once wrote, was to “foster unity.” While serving as conference minister of Illinois, a regional leadership role within the Mennonite denomination, he sought to honor all voices in a church

expanding its racial, economic, geographical, and organizational scope.

In a range of different settings, my dad listened carefully to people who were struggling with situations that resulted in hurtful relationships within families, congregations, and regional groups. I heard the language he used to talk about reconciliation and healing. I watched as he spent a lot of time and energy in bringing people together to sort out a complex problem. I saw how he actively tracked down rumors that were dividing families and communities.

I learned so much from him: peacemaking involves action, perseverance, and a heart that deeply cares about how we as humans live together in a conflicted world.

³⁵That evening, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." ³⁶And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. ³⁷A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. ³⁸But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" ³⁹He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. ⁴⁰He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" ⁴¹And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" - Mark 4:35-41

"Peace! Be Still!"

By Bob Yoder
Campus Pastor

We all face unexpected storms in life. We don't look for them. We don't anticipate them, but they suddenly swell to swamp us when we least expect it. In those moments what is our initial response? Shock? Denial? Do we shout: "What did I do to deserve this?" "Why is this happening?" "Jesus, why are you asleep?!? WAKE UP!!!"

In this passage Jesus and his friends are leaving one shoreline of ministry to go to "the other side" where a different kind of ministry awaits them. But in the meantime, Jesus was tired, exhausted, and fast asleep. Then, a sudden and great windstorm arose and the disciples accused Jesus of not caring. They must have had some sense that Jesus could make things okay, even though some of

these disciples were the "professional boaters" since they were the fishers, not Jesus.

If I were an experienced boater, I'm not sure that I'd look to a land based professional carpenter for help in this situation. I'd rather rely on my own understanding and expertise. However, these disciples must have sensed something different about Jesus. They were, after all, with him in the healings, the exorcisms, and the powerful teachings that drew crowds. And so if I experienced an unexpected storm to the degree that I'd felt swamped and in over my head, perhaps I too would call out to Jesus, "Wake up! Do you not care?!"

Jesus, be our peace in the midst of life's unexpected storms that we face.

³⁷As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, ³⁸saying, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!" ³⁹Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, order your disciples to stop." ⁴⁰He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out." ⁴¹As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, ⁴²saying, "If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. ⁴³Indeed, the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up ramparts around you and surround you, and hem you in on every side. ⁴⁴They will crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another; because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God." - Luke 19:37-44

Jesus Laments the Lack of Peaceful Things

By Jonna Buller
Goshen College senior

At the end of Luke 19, Jesus laments the lack of peace in the world, especially in Jerusalem. The Pharisees approached Jesus as he descended from the Mount of Olives and told him to quiet the crowd and his disciples. Jesus said the city and the crowd had not recognized God's coming and the path of peace was hidden from their eyes. He foretold of the harm and unrest the people would experience because they didn't make peace.

Later Jesus enters the temple in Jerusalem and finds that peace, even within the temple, has been disrupted. Jesus, who came to bring the peace, threw the vendors out of the temple. The interpretations of Jesus' emotions in this story vary

in different translations, but in this context I believe we see the anger comes from the compromising of God's peace, even the House of God.

We in our own lives must seek to find peace. It is always God's will for us to take the path of peace, and yet we are still blinded by our lives and can't see the peaceful way. However, we are called daily and in many scriptures such as this to seek out peace and lead lives that honor and praise God. Now, let me end with this question – What is the House of God? Is it our bodies? Only our church buildings? Where does God's House begin and end? Continued by, how then, are our actions changed when we are challenged to always act peacefully in the House of God?

³⁶While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.'³⁷They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. ³⁸He said to them, 'Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?' ³⁹Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.'⁴⁰And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. ⁴¹While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, 'Have you anything here to eat?' ⁴²They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³and he took it and ate in their presence. - Luke 24:36-43

"Peace be with you"

By Susie Lambright

Resident Director of Kratz and Miller Residence Halls

Jesus is peace. Jesus is calm. Jesus is.

In this passage Jesus appears to the disciples and extends peace to them. They are not in a state of calm or contentment, instead they are in shock and don't really believe that it is Jesus. Even after Jesus shows the disciples his hands and feet, their shock is such that they can't fully accept that it is him. He doesn't waste his time telling them stories of their time together to prove his identity, nor does he beg them to acknowledge that it is indeed him. Instead, he asks for a piece of fish to eat while they let the truth of who he is sink in.

I love that about Jesus! I see him doing the same thing in my life. He has presented himself to me through his word and the gentleness of the spirit. While others may have tried to "prove" him to me or scare me into believing in him, that has not been his way. Jesus has let the truth of who he is settle into my heart, let me believe and accept the truth at my own pace. I am grateful to serve a Lord who does not force his way into my heart, but instead comes into my life in a way that respects the time it takes me to process and fully accept who he is. After all, he's in no hurry.

¹³Let us therefore no longer pass judgment on one another, but resolve instead never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of another. ¹⁴I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean. ¹⁵If your brother or sister is being injured by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. Do not let what you eat cause the ruin of one for whom Christ died. ¹⁶So do not let your good be spoken of as evil. ¹⁷For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸The one who thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and has human approval. ¹⁹Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.

- Romans 14:13-19

Pursue Peace and Mutual Upbuilding

By Emily Yoder

Goshen College sophomore

These verses talk specifically about the food and drink that could tear down others, and while we don't necessarily have those specific conflicts in our culture, we do have other things that we feed ourselves with that are fine to us, but may tear down others. Some people can handle swearing and think it's perfectly fine, but others may not be able to take it and would prefer not to hear it at all. We all have our own music tastes and watch a variety of movies, and each of us has a different tolerance level to go along with that. Our common goal is to lift each other up and support one another, acting in love and goodness. If I'm doing something that I believe is fine for me, but is causing another

believer to be distressed, I should double check my actions and find how I can instead act in love.

The Kingdom of God isn't all about what we should and shouldn't "eat and drink," but is about our positive actions. We are called to live a life of goodness, peace, and joy, so we should be constantly searching to find ways to build each other up and encourage one another. It is always so much easier to quickly criticize others before ourselves, which only tears us down. If we are working to focus our own actions in a peaceful way, then not only will we be helping ourselves, but we will also be building up each other (and the church) in harmony.

¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. ¹¹Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹²For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. ¹⁴Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. ¹⁵As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. ¹⁶With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹⁸Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. — Ephesians 6:10-18

Proclaim Peace with the Armor of God

By Jim Histan

Vice-President for Finance

I struggle with the contradictory images in this passage. So many instruments of war and violence are described as tools to use to promote the Good News of peace!

Put on armor: to defend against the devil, fight against inhuman spiritual forces

Belt around waist: compared to truth

Armor: compared to God's justice

Shoes: compared to desire to tell the Good News about peace

Shield: compared to faith, and stops flaming arrows of evil

Helmet: compared to God's saving grace

Sword: compared to God's message from the Spirit

How do I reconcile my personal desire to make peace with God with all these images and tools of violence

and destruction? Am I naïve about the effort or even the 'battle' to make peace? That battle is not one to be used against my neighbor to 'convince' him or her to believe as I do, or to share the exact same values as I do. Rather it is a battle to understand, to accept, to walk beside and live in harmony with others, while clearly following my own interpretation of God's will for my life.

God, forgive me when I try so hard to convince others of the rightness of my own position on the difficult dilemmas of life. Clothe me with the desire to share the Good News by faith, grace and Spirit leading, as much as by the quest for truth and justice. I pray that I may use these tools peacefully in my relationships with others.

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ⁸Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

- Philippians 4:4-9

The God of Peace Will be With You

By Laura Krabill

Goshen College sophomore

Often I find myself easily consumed by my busy life. I allow myself to become carried away with the all too familiar college-student-mindset. (You may feel you are unaware of this thought process, so I'll share with you one of many possible scenarios). For me, this mindset is triggered most often by an upcoming exam. Usually, my first thoughts express minor feelings of uneasiness. I start by pondering the importance of the upcoming test, and this quickly leads to my realizations that if I don't do well, my grade will undoubtedly suffer. Naturally, this could lower my GPA. Of course, if I don't have a high enough GPA, I won't be accepted into dental school, which then leads to my most certain state of unemployment. By this point I have likely lost precious hours of sleep,

and I have successfully allowed my mind to become a worried wreck.

As I think about this Scripture, a familiar tune by Bobby McFerrin, begins to play in my head. "Don't worry be happy, In every life we have some trouble, When you worry you make it double...Don't worry, it will soon past, Whatever it is, Don't worry, be happy."

This song quickly reminds me of God's deep desire for us to give Him all of our worries. Through prayer we can release our burdens and find renewal from God's peace. By turning to God during my stressful, busy days, I am refreshed. I am able to refocus my thoughts, because I know God has a plan for my life...so in the end why worry.

¹³Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom. ¹⁴But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth. ¹⁵Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. ¹⁶For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. ¹⁷But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. ¹⁸And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.

- James 3:13-18

Righteousness is Sown in Peace

By Bryce Bow

Campus Ministries Intern and Goshen College senior

Christ talked a lot about humility, and how we should strive for it. “The upside down kingdom,” as many call it, “where the first will be last, and the last will be first.” Being humble doesn’t mean you think less of yourself; it means you think of yourself less often. Being humble is hard, though, especially the obedient, surrendering type of humility that God calls us to. Why? The parasite of Pride.

Pride would be the opposite of humility and is certainly more common in our culture. This passage from the Book of James describes what Pride looks like in great detail saying those who go on boasting, having bitter envy, and living with selfish ambition actually create an evil “disorder” around them. C.S. Lewis makes a similar observation in his classic work *Mere Christianity* when he writes, “What Satan put into the heads of our remote ancestors was the idea that they could ‘be like gods,’ could set up on their own as if they had created themselves—be

their own masters—invent some sort of happiness for themselves outside of God, apart from God.” He continues, “And out of that hopeless attempt has come nearly all that we call human history—money, poverty, ambition, war, prostitution, social classes, empires, slavery—the long terrible story of man trying to find something other than God which will make him happy.” Out of Pride comes disorder. It is the reason Satan fell from Heaven and continues to be responsible for much of the chaos we see in our world.

So let us instead take hold of this realization, apply it to our lives, and refuse to let the parasite of Pride eat away at our lives. Let us sow in peace and humility as God intended us to, and take great joy in being able to partner with our Lord in gathering the harvest of righteousness that it will produce. When you finally come to the humble realization that “It’s not about me,” your life will never be the same. Stand firm.

2008-2009

Sensing God's Hope



Claiming God's Hope

¹¹But Naomi said, “Turn back, my daughters, why will you go with me? Do I still have sons in my womb that they may become your husbands?” ¹²Turn back, my daughters, go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. Even if I thought there was hope for me, even if I should have a husband tonight and bear sons, ¹³would you then wait until they were grown? Would you then refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, it has been far more bitter for me than for you, because the hand of the Lord has turned against me.” ¹⁴Then they wept aloud again. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. ¹⁵So she said, “See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.” ¹⁶But Ruth said, “Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; Where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. ¹⁷Where you die, I will die— there will I be buried. May the Lord do thus and so to me, and more as well, if even death parts me from you!”

- Ruth 1:11-17

The Hope of Companionship

By Rachel Friesen

Goshen College sophomore

Throughout my life, I have always felt a personal connection to the story of Ruth, traveling to a foreign land and making a new start among strangers. Having moved a few times and traveled quite a bit with my own family, I am familiar with the feeling of being unfamiliar. Being stared at, questioned, lost, judged, excluded from things of which I'd like to be a part, included in things of which I'd rather not be a part... it comes with the territory, literally. These experiences of loneliness and insecurity can be tremendous opportunities for learning and growth, but more importantly in my life, they have allowed me to experience God's personal attention and provision.

In all of my moves and travels, I can't think of one single time that I was left completely alone. Just like God led

Ruth to be a companion for Naomi, God provided companionship for me, sometimes when I least expected it. Occasionally it was in momentous ways, such as my first day at a new school in first grade—a little girl appeared at my side during our restroom break and said, “Will you be my best friend?” (I said yes, of course, and the rest was history.) Or other times, in much more subtle ways—while flying alone last summer, a sympathetic smile from a stranger regarding the unwanted attentions of the passenger next to me. In both of these situations and many others, God took care of my needs before I even knew what to ask. How wonderful it is that we have such an attentive God, who both cares for us when we are strangers and allows us to be companions for the strangers we come across in our lives.

¹Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause against an ungodly people; from those who are deceitful and unjust deliver me! ²For you are the God in whom I take refuge; why have you cast me off? Why must I walk about mournfully because of the oppression of the enemy? ³O send out your light and your truth; let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling. ⁴Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy; and I will praise you with the harp, O God, my God. ⁵Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God.

- Psalm 43:1-5

God of Refuge

By Crystal Zook

Goshen College sophomore

Psalms 42 and 43 are two of my favorite psalms. I turn to them at the times I feel God is so far away and has forgotten about me. With the psalmist I say “Why have you forgotten me? (Psalm 42:9). We ask him to send us his light and his truth in the midst of our pain, in the midst of feeling lost and alone so that we know he is there. We want to praise him, but we don’t always know how.

It helps me to know that the writers of these psalms felt far from God at times. I know others have gone through hard times and have come through. God has not forgotten me just as he had not forgotten them. These psalms resonate with my pain but remind me that there is much more to life. There is always hope even if we can’t seem to find it.

I find this assurance in verse 5 which is repeated three times in 16 verses. “Why are you cast down, O my soul

and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God: for I shall again praise him, my help and my God.” Because of this verse, I have written in my Bible that God is someone we can always hope in even when we think he has forgotten us.

One of my favorite songs is “Praise You In This Storm” by Casting Crowns, which reminds us that God will never leave us; we can turn to him to seek refuge in any storm. Even if the storm around us does not stop, we will not be on our own. “And I’ll praise you in this storm and I will lift my hands, for You are who You are no matter where I am, and every tear I’ve cried You hold in your hand, You never left my side and though my heart is torn, I will praise You in this storm.”

Can we do the same? Can we continue to place our hope in God even in the midst of a storm?

¹Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord. ²Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications! ³If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? ⁴But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered. ⁵I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; ⁶my soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning. ⁷O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is great power to redeem. ⁸It is he who will redeem Israel from all its iniquities.

- Psalm 130:1-8

Crying Out, Waiting

By Emily Graber

Goshen College sophomore

When we were kids, one of the best parts of Christmas was the week or so before, when a few presents were put under the tree. I would always get excited, wonder what I was going to get, and hope that the rest of the family liked my gifts to them. Opening the presents was fun, of course, but the wondering, the questioning, the waiting made the ‘season of giving’ more ‘magical’ than the event of opening presents itself.

Sometimes life is like the week before Christmas. We all have ups and downs in life. When we go through trials and struggles, we wonder why these things happen. When we don’t see any end in sight, when we are in the dark night of the soul, when life is being its meanest, we cry out to God.

We cry variations of Psalm 130. Sometimes we can only moan the

first two verses. We recognize that we cannot do this ‘life thing’ alone. We realize again, in our brokenness, that we need God to put us back together, to make sense and meaning in a seemingly senseless and meaningless situation.

Eventually, maybe one day, we begin to depend on God. And so we wait for it all to end, we begin to have hope. We wonder, “What will I ‘unwrap’ at the end of this trial? What gift will I receive? Hope, faith, a deeper understanding of love, a better way to connect with others?” The gift at the end of a trial is not always obvious, and maybe we won’t see it for a while. But there is a hope. When we cry out to God, when we wait on God, God will be there, by our side, walking beside us, helping us with each painful, struggling step we take.

¹Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul! ²I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God all my life long. ³Do not put your trust in princes, in mortals, in whom there is no help. ⁴When their breath departs, they return to the earth; on that very day their plans perish. ⁵Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God, ⁶who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; who keeps faith forever; ⁷who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free; ⁸the Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous. ⁹The Lord watches over the strangers; he upholds the orphan and the widow, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin. ¹⁰The Lord will reign forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the Lord! - Psalm 146:1-10

Praise For a Creative, Just God

By Tamara Shantz

Assistant Campus Pastor

Hope can seem trite. Cute. Naïve even. In the past, I have often wanted to scoff at those who would raise the notion of hope in the context of what I considered to be terrifying realities. Hope seemed like a form of denial (still can sometimes). But I now believe that hope, true hope, does not deny tragedy and suffering. True hope, that roots itself in God, takes a deep breath as she looks around, wipes a tear from her eye and says this too belongs to God.

In Psalm 146, there is a wonderful intermingling of words like praise, hope, and trust. We are challenged to not put our trust in human rulers. Rather, we are instructed to practice hope by trusting in the liberating God of all Creation. We praise God because She has made the sea, the heavens, and the earth. We hope in God, because our Lord executes justice. It is interesting to see how strongly the psalmist emphasizes the

activity of the Lord. Over and over we are reminded that the Lord releases the prisoners. The Lord watches over the stranger.

I believe that God has a vision, a hope, for this world. And this divine hope calls us to search for that tenuous balance between blindly trusting in God in a way that leads to denial and irresponsibility (you know, the “God will take care of it...I don’t need to feed the hungry” sort of way), and trusting so heavily in humanity that we drown in our despair over our inability to solve all of our world’s problems.

Even amid wars, climate change, and a series of broken political and economic systems, this is still our Father’s world, and our God has promised to be with us always. It is in this truth that my hope lies. Praise the Lord!

²⁹These are the words of the letter that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the remaining elders among the exiles, and to the priests, the prophets, and all the people, whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon....¹⁰For thus says the Lord: Only when Babylon's seventy years are completed will I visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. ¹¹For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. ¹²Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. ¹³When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, ¹⁴I will let you find me, says the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

- Jeremiah 29:10-14

God of Intimacy and Future

By Ross Peterson-Veach
Curriculum Director

When I was a teenager I took an extended trip to Taiwan and Hong Kong, traveling alone. I learned many lessons during that time on coping with doubt and hopelessness by reaching for God's presence. Even though it was exciting to be abroad, spending most of my days alone sometimes felt more like exile than adventure. In those afternoons wandering through the streets of Taipei, my goal was to see as much as I could of that unfamiliar place. But I had no frame of reference for my experiences – no community to share them with – and my life was at once hectic and purposeless. After a few weeks, though surrounded by literally millions of people, I began to experience a deep loneliness. Back in my room at night I uncovered my miniature Bible and read. In

those quiet moments of solitude, I reached out for God's presence, and felt hope and love there. There are no better words of assurance than those God gave Jeremiah for the exiles in Babylon: "I will hear you...you will find me...I will bring you back."

Today, if we don't pay attention, it's easy to exile ourselves from God in non-geographical ways. As I search for security and solace in acquiring things, or in pursuing a life I assume I deserve, how can I see the fortunes God will restore for me? But when I seek God with all my heart, I find the hope I lost as an exile. Just as God assured those in exile in Babylon, I am assured today that God has hopeful plans for my future.

God, as I seek you with all my heart, grant me a future with hope.

¹⁹The thought of my affliction and my homelessness is wormwood and gall!
²⁰My soul continually thinks of it and is bowed down within me. ²¹But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: ²²The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; ²³they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. ²⁴"The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him." ²⁵The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him. ²⁶It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord. ²⁷It is good for one to bear the yoke in youth, ²⁸to sit alone in silence when the Lord has imposed it, ²⁹to put one's mouth to the dust (there may yet be hope), ³⁰to give one's cheek to the smiter, and be filled with insults.
- Lamentations 3:19-30

A Glimpse of Hope in the Midst of Destructive Chaos

By Reuben Sancken
Goshen College sophomore

There are times when everything seems to be going right and other times when everything seems to be going wrong. During those times we can feel so lost and helpless. I feel so saddened when I see people who have messed up priorities and who give up on themselves. I feel helpless when wars continue because of hate and lack of life's basic necessities. I think about the thoughtless way we are treating the environment. Add our own personal struggles and it is hard to have hope sometimes. When the world and ourselves are broken, how can we have hope?

Lamentations is filled with violent imagery of the destruction of Jerusalem. Yet, through all of this destruction, the writer shares

encouraging words of hope. The Lord loves us and is faithful and merciful. The Lord will not leave us to suffer. Jesus helps us through our challenges and saves us time and time again from our brokenness. Many times it takes awhile to heal, but hope and patience are rewarding. I think about the times I've said that a circumstance in life will never get better. When I look back at where I was and where I am today, I realize that a situation can turn out better than even what we anticipated. We can have more hope when we let go and trust in God's love that everything will be okay. This can be hard at times, but we are reassured by God's promise of love and mercy that will never fail.

¹⁵While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, ¹⁶but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷And he said to them, “What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?” They stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?” ¹⁹He asked them, “What things?” They replied, “The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. ²¹But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. ²²Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, ²³and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. ²⁴Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.” ²⁵Then he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! ²⁶Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?” ²⁷Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. - Luke 24:15-27

A “Hidden” Jesus Eventually Revealed

By Ana Yoder

Goshen College sophomore

How often does Jesus reveal himself in our lives, only for us to completely miss it? In this passage, we meet two of Jesus’ followers who have lost hope. Their minds are preoccupied, perhaps trying to reason through the events surrounding Jesus’ crucifixion.

What strikes me in the face of this lost hope is not Jesus’ power to open his followers’ eyes. But rather, I am drawn to ponder how much I resemble those travelers walking towards Emmaus, before their eyes are opened. Perhaps they are too involved in discussion, or too spent

from the emotional disappointment, but somehow they are totally blind to Jesus’ identity.

In the same way, I think, we are often blind today. I wonder how often we miss an opportunity to experience God’s hope because we are somehow blind to Jesus’ presence. I wonder how we can best invite Jesus to reveal himself to us, like he did to his followers that day? As we journey along that road, may we learn to claim that hope grounded in a God who does continue to actively reveal himself to us.

¹⁰When the governor motioned to him to speak, Paul replied: “I cheerfully make my defense, knowing that for many years you have been a judge over this nation. ¹¹As you can find out, it is not more than twelve days since I went up to worship in Jerusalem. ¹²They did not find me disputing with anyone in the temple or stirring up a crowd either in the synagogues or throughout the city. ¹³Neither can they prove to you the charge that they now bring against me. ¹⁴But this I admit to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our ancestors, believing everything laid down according to the law or written in the prophets. ¹⁵I have a hope in God—a hope that they themselves also accept—that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous. ¹⁶Therefore I do my best always to have a clear conscience toward God and all people.

- Acts 24:10-16

The Hope of Apostle Paul While on Trial

By Lane Miller
Goshen College senior

Paul would have made a good lawyer. He carefully complimented the judge and then skillfully countered each accusation made against him earlier in the passage. He also does well under pressure. He spoke off-the-cuff. And if he's such a great guy, why's he in court in the first place? He goes into more detail two chapters later. “It is for this hope, your Excellency, that I am accused by the Jews! Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead?” (Acts 26:7b-8) It's hope that got Paul in trouble. In the defense above, Paul claims that he and his accusers share a hope in the resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous, which they do. But Paul's belief goes further than that. He believes in the resurrection of Jesus the Christ specifically.

I watched the news yesterday and felt rather depressed. The environment, wars, genocide, poverty, and even the economy, worry me. I could use some hope for the future. That is the hope that Paul carried for the church. The kingdom Jesus envisioned conflicted with the dominant consciousness of Paul's time- with that of Paul's accusers. Jesus' resurrection was a validation of that vision and a call away from the status quo. It promises a future, a hope that can sustain us in the desperation of our situation. It cries against that powers that be, and the powers over Paul took him to court for just that reason. The irony is that it was that hope which they denounced that drove Paul to share Christ's vision even going all the way to Rome.

¹⁸I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. ¹⁹For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; ²⁰for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²²We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; ²³and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. ²⁶Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. ²⁷And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

- Romans 8:18-27

An Invisible, Saving Hope

By Julie Armstrong
Assistant Professor of ASL

Yesterday I went to visit a friend of mine who is dying from cancer. On the way to her house, I went over in my head of all the possibilities of what I wanted to say – to tell them how sorry I am – to tell them that I’m hurting for them. I had difficulties trying to find the words to express my sorrow and also hope – hope for life eternal.

My sister and I went to take her cat, Barney. Barney is the least of the family’s worries – but this was a tangible thing that we could do to help the family and our friend. It made us feel better. Hospice and her family are now doing their best to make her comfortable and cared for. My heart ached for them. I wanted to say words of comfort, peace, and

encouragement. I didn’t know what to say and I didn’t know how to pray.

There are times in our lives when we are suffering or we see people suffer and we don’t know how to pray. I am sure there are people in your circle of friends who are dealing with sickness, divorce, death and uncertainty. I feel confident, however that when these times come, the Spirit can intercede on our behalf. The scripture says that the Spirit searches and knows our heart and mind even when we have no words to communicate our feelings (Romans 8:26-27).

I’m thankful that yesterday when I didn’t know what to say and that all I could do was take Barney – and let the Spirit intercede and do the rest.

¹If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ²And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. ⁴Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant ⁵or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. ⁷It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. ⁹For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; ¹⁰but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. ¹¹When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. ¹²For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. ¹³And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

- I Corinthians 13:1-13

Faith, Hope, Love

By Becky Horst

Grant Director/Coordinator

I Corinthians 13 is often referred to as “the love chapter.” You’ve probably heard it read aloud at a wedding. But this passage could also be called “the hope chapter” because it leans toward a positive future, energized by two enormous hopes: that true and lasting love between humans really is possible, and that someday we will see God face to face and know God as fully as God knows us.

It is often said that love is a commitment, not just a feeling. When we make a marriage vow to love someone “for richer, for poorer, in sickness and health... as long as we both live,” we cannot rely on emotions alone to keep such a weighty vow. Time will shift emotions.

To keep a marriage vow, we must constantly act out our commitment to love, even if we don’t always feel it. I have found, in my own 32 years of marriage, that God honors prayers for the emotion of love to return.

Hope is similar to love. It is an emotion, yes, but it is also a way of life based on deep trust in God. Trust, hope and love are not just emotions. They are actions that we can do each day.

Dear God,

Come peel off my mask of cynicism, and help me to sense and claim your hopeful future. Today, may I trust you steadily, love extravagantly, and hope unswervingly.

¹³When God made a promise to Abraham, because he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, ¹⁴saying, “I will surely bless you and multiply you.” ¹⁵And thus Abraham, having patiently endured, obtained the promise. ¹⁶Human beings, of course, swear by someone greater than themselves, and an oath given as confirmation puts an end to all dispute. ¹⁷In the same way, when God desired to show even more clearly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it by an oath, ¹⁸so that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible that God would prove false, we who have taken refuge might be strongly encouraged to seize the hope set before us. ¹⁹We have this hope, a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters the inner shrine behind the curtain, ²⁰where Jesus, a forerunner on our behalf, has entered, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

- Hebrews 6:13-20

Certainty of God's Promise

By Bob Yoder

Campus Pastor/Assistant Professor of Youth Ministry

Patience. What a struggle this is for me at times. Yet this passage screams out the virtue of patient endurance. Why would Abraham bother to yield to such a virtue? Perhaps it had something to do with God...God's blessing, God's promise, God's hope. God promised to bless Abraham, yet Abraham also did his part. Though the specific situations this passage refers to are not identified, he “patiently endured.” In similar fashion, we humans who have taken refuge in God are “to seize the hope” before us. This seems somewhat paradoxical...the call to patient endurance while also seizing the hope. Patience. Seizing. One word feels passive and the other active.

Sensing God's Hope, Claiming God's Hope. Though the first part of the theme is not passive, it certainly demands our patient endurance.

Sensing requires our attentive ears in case the sound of God's hope whistles, or when the taste of God's hope tingles the taste buds, or as the smell pleasantly opens the nostrils. All the while we are to patiently sense. Yet once we've patiently sensed, we are to claim the prize of the hope that is a steadfast anchor of our soul. That hope is the blessing and promise of God. Will we seize it? Claiming God's hope requires our confident activity. Do we have the guts to claim that which God offers?

Claiming God's blessing is not only for personal sake, but also for that of others. Just like Abraham, God's blessing is to flow through us to the world around us, thus multiplying the blessing. Will we bother to do our part? Will we yield to the virtue of patient endurance while seizing the hope of God?

¹⁹Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), ²¹and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²²let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. ²³Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. ²⁴And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, ²⁵not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.
- Hebrews 10:19-25

A Persevering Hope

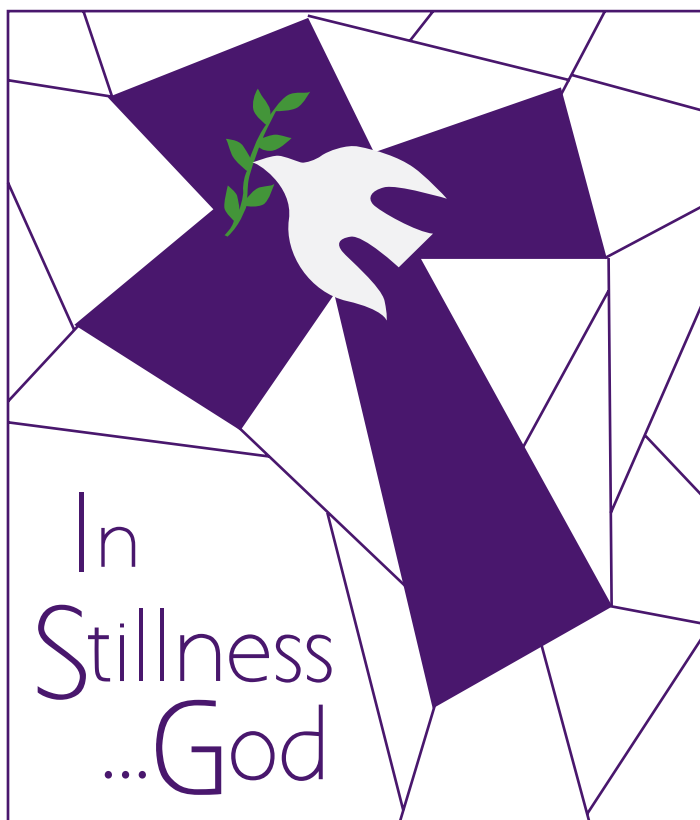
By Meghan Hoover
Goshen College senior

When I first read this passage, the last three verses stood out to me the most. It seems to really be speaking to the spirit of what we have on campus. ‘Let us not give up meeting together, but let us encourage one another.’ Encouragement, open relationships, helpfulness are huge parts of what I see everyday in our community.

This year I have more fully felt God’s hope in the world by interacting with friends and those in the community who rally for justice, enjoy peacemaking, and love one another as simply as they can. We need to keep these passions together, tied up in a creative and inventive hope in Jesus’ teachings.

The Message version of the bible says to be “inventive” when we encourage one another toward love and good deeds. We are such a creative body of people – let’s show what we have to the world in all the ways we can. Continue to encourage one another toward God, toward love, toward the hope that we can find in living as Jesus would live. As a community we can already feel these things; now we must recognize them, hold on to them, and encourage others by our hope in them and in the God who is revealed through the compassion of Jesus.

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¹God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. ²Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; ³though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult. Selah ⁴There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. ⁵God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved; God will help it when the morning dawns. ⁶The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts. ⁷The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah ⁸Come, behold the works of the Lord; see what desolations he has brought on the earth. ⁹He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire. ¹⁰“Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth.” ¹¹The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah
- Psalm 46:1-11

Restless

By Jim Brenneman
President of Goshen College

“Be still and know that I am God.” (Ps. 46:10). Whenever I hear the words, “Stillness” or “Be still” associated with God, I get fidgety. Maybe it’s because behind those words, I hear my mother’s voice whispering “Sit still!” and this usually happened while we were in church. I get fidgety also because stillness is an objective impossibility (try stopping the earth’s rotation!). When the Psalmist invites us to ‘be still,’ there must be a little wiggle room there. He speaks of stillness as a kind of movement toward God – a circling back from distraction and chaos to that priceless treasure beneath us in every moment, any time, in any place. Stillness is that journey to the alpha and omega point described by Annie

Dillard as that place that is “lower than metals and minerals. . . lower than salts and earths . . . [beneath] the waxy deepness of planets.” That place of stillness “in touch with the Absolute, at base,” Dillard calls “Holy the Firm.” The Psalmist calls us to that holy place beneath and beyond the stillness of death itself, to that holiest of all foundations, to a vital stillness, a living stillness, a pulsing ecstasy, a place of rebirth and resurrection, a fiery core of new life and oddly enough, a place of repose and rest for our frantic souls. St. Augustine speaks of such stillness when he cries out, “My soul is restless until it finds its rest in thee, O God.” Who doesn’t want that?

⁸He got up, and ate and drank; then he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God. ⁹At that place he came to a cave, and spent the night there. Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" ¹⁰He answered, "I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away." ¹¹He said, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by." Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; ¹²and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. ¹³When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

- I Kings 19:8-13

Wind, Earthquake, and Fire, but God is in a Whisper

By Jim Hiland

Vice-President for Finance

Many popular movies today are filled with chase scenes, gun-battles, inter-galactic wars, physical feats that defy gravity and sometimes even the imagination. Commercials on TV move at light speed – 15 seconds to capture the viewers' interest, to leave an indelible image in the mind of the consumer watching the screen. Jokes, laughter, moving images; we laugh and nod and retell the subtleties of the marketing messages over and over to our friends. Sports teams practice incessantly, year-round, athletes pump iron, always training, before dawn and well into the night.

Where has the world of silence and stillness gone, the listening for a

whisper, for a 'quiet' sound? When the Lord appeared to Elijah, it was only after Elijah traveled forty lonely days and nights to Mount Horeb. Only after a night spent in a cave, alone with his thoughts. After a mighty wind passed by, after an earthquake shook the entire mountain and after fire raged on the mountaintop. The Lord was not in any of those things.... but instead came to Elijah in a gentle whisper.

Am I listening? Will I sense God? Is my stillness great enough? God, quiet my heart, and still my mind, so that I may experience your presence. Whisper to me, that I may hear and that I may experience YOU.

¹Hannah prayed and said, "My heart exults in the Lord; my strength is exalted in my God. My mouth derides my enemies, because I rejoice in my victory. ²"There is no Holy One like the Lord, no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God. ³Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth; for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. ⁴The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble gird on strength. ⁵Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry are fat with spoil. The barren has borne seven, but she who has many children is forlorn. ⁶The Lord kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up. ⁷The Lord makes poor and makes rich; he brings low, he also exalts. ⁸He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor. For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and on them he has set the world. ⁹"He will guard the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness; for not by might does one prevail. ¹⁰The Lord! His adversaries shall be shattered; the Most High will thunder in heaven. The Lord will judge the ends of the earth; he will give strength to his king, and exalt the power of his anointed."

- I Samuel 2:1-10

1 Samuel 2:1-10

By Hope Langeland

Goshen College senior

I believe that Hannah's prayer was said through tears. Hannah has given up her precious child, and though she says her heart rejoices in the Lord, her heart must also be aching. And yet, it is just in this joint of joy and pain that Hannah is able to speak so confidently of a God who is present in all parts of life. Hannah initially petitioned God from a position of weakness. She was a barren woman and her husband's other wife had the upper hand. God gave her a son, and therefore gave her strength in her household and community, but Hannah is now willingly putting herself in a place of weakness again. She feels such security in God's goodness that she is able to place her most precious possession in God's hands. I can't pretend to understand

this kind of complete faith. Hannah has experienced true joy and desolating pain and expresses them as intimately interwoven. She is able to embrace and rejoice in a God who brings both death and life. The prayer she prays describes a perspective of such deep peace as is untouched by the highs and lows of humanity.

To be honest, I marvel at this wise woman's prayer. I doubt, question, and am still seeking a faith that could allow me to give myself so fully into the hands of an unseen God. I find my own solace in Hannah's words that "The Lord is a God who knows." There is peace in being understood, even when I do not understand. May you find stillness and rest through both joy and pain, because God is a God who knows.

¹All the people gathered together into the square before the Water Gate. They told the scribe Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had given to Israel. ²Accordingly, the priest Ezra brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding. This was on the first day of the seventh month. ³He read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law. ⁴The scribe Ezra stood on a wooden platform that had been made for the purpose and opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. ⁵Then Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered, "Amen, Amen," lifting up their hands. Then they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground. ⁶Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, the Levites, helped the people to understand the law, while the people remained in their places. ⁷So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

- Nehemiah 8:1-8

"Be Quiet, For This Day is Holy."

By Tamara Shantz

Assistant Campus Pastor

In this passage of Nehemiah, we are told that "this day is holy to the Lord your God" and that the appropriate response to this holiness is to be still, to rejoice and celebrate, not to mourn or weep. My first impulse was to expand the notion of 'this day' to include every day. To consider how this passage is encouraging us to embrace the sacredness of Creation, of the everyday gift of life. But Nehemiah and Ezra are not exhorting their people to a practice of daily gratitude (at least not in this passage). Rather, they are calling the people to set this one day aside from all others. This one day is to be dedicated to God and to rejoicing.

Through this passage, I am reminded that in addition to finding space and time for stillness in my daily routine, God is also calling us to set aside special days as holy and sacred. The Israelites were called to this holy day in the context of the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the renewal of their covenant with Yahweh. What would it look like for us to set aside certain days as sacred, as a time for renewal, as a time dedicated to God? How do we already do this as a college community? Do we have space in our lives to listen attentively to God and rejoice in response to the wonder of Creation outside of our daily routines?

¹*Do not fret because of the wicked; do not be envious of wrongdoers, ²for they will soon fade like the grass, and wither like the green herb. ³Trust in the Lord, and do good; so you will live in the land, and enjoy security. ⁴Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. ⁵Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act. ⁶He will make your vindication shine like the light, and the justice of your cause like the noonday. ⁷Be still before the Lord, and wait patiently for him; do not fret over those who prosper in their way, over those who carry out evil devices. ⁸Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath. Do not fret—it leads only to evil. ²⁷Depart from evil, and do good; so you shall abide forever. ²⁸For the Lord loves justice; he will not forsake his faithful ones. The righteous shall be kept safe forever, but the children of the wicked shall be cut off. ²⁹The righteous shall inherit the land, and live in it forever. ³⁰The mouths of the righteous utter wisdom, and their tongues speak justice.* - Psalm 37:1-8, 27-30

Psalm 37:1-8. 27-30

By Kevin Gary

Assistant Professor of Education

Psalm 37 brings to mind 14th century mystic Julianna of Norwich's prayer, "All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well."

The psalmist calls me be still, to let go of undue anxiety, and trust that all shall be well, to believe in Paul's proclamation that everything, all worries, all frustrations, all loss, shall be redeemed and "swallowed up in victory." These are words I need to hear as I get caught up, sometimes consumed, by the immediacy of today's problems, anxious for instant resolution. The psalmist also reminds me of the significance of good deeds in the eyes of the Lord, to direct my attention towards acting justly, albeit

in small ways, rather than feeling overwhelmed by the injustice by others I see. Yet the psalmist also illuminates the thirst for justice as our restless desire for God who will quench this desire and right the scales. However, the quest for justice must be grounded in the peace of God. When I forget to ground the pursuit of justice in God I lose my way, become fatigued, feel my results are insignificant, and am easily give into cynicism. The psalmist reminds me to first "trust in the Lord" and then "do good." Psalm 37 nuances the expression "If you want peace, work for justice" to mean "If you want peace, trust in God's peace and work for justice."

¹O Lord, my heart is not lifted up, my eyes are not raised too high; I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me. ²But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother; my soul is like the weaned child that is with me. ³O Israel, hope in the Lord from this time on and forevermore.

– Psalm 131: 1-3

Psalm 131

By Bill Born

Vice President of Student Life

When I think of “stillness”, I’m quick to think of the escape from hectic day to day routine of family and work. Like the Southwest Airline marketing tag line of “Want to get away?”, “stillness” often for me is defined as an escape from experiences that seem overwhelming.

Psalm 131 defines “stillness” in a different light, a deeper more personal light. “My heart is not proud, Oh Lord, my eyes are not haughty”. Rather than the external pressing in; the internal, personal pride, is the defining factor of true “stillness”. The “Great matters” and “things too wonderful” that we value as defining our self worth by way of responsibility or items of personal identity stand in the way of true “stillness”.

Psalm 131 is an invitation to “stillness” through humble trust in God, humble trust apart from the day to day roles, responsibilities and defining characteristics we value as our identity. Rather than “getting away” from all that seems to matter, “stillness” begins by “letting go” of those items we so often take so seriously, those items we claim with pride.

What is it that sets us apart from others? What is it that defines who we are? What is it that defines personal passion and purpose? Is personal pride involved? It is when we can name those items and “let them go” that we are able to “still and quiet” our souls before God.

Let go and in stillness....God.

²²Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. ²³And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. ²⁵And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. ²⁶But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. ²⁷But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid." ²⁸Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." ²⁹He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. ³⁰But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" ³¹Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" ³²When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

- Matthew 14:22-33

In Busyness...Stillness. In Stillness...God.

By Phil Schmidt
Goshen College junior

Wow, Jesus was one busy guy! There is a lot going on in Matthew 14: Jesus retreats off by himself after finding out about John the Baptist's beheading, the people find him and he heals the sick among them, Jesus feeds all of the people gathered around with only five loaves and two fish, he climbs a mountain, walks on water, calms a storm, and then heals more people on the other side of the lake!

As students, we know what it's like to feel like there's not enough time for individual reflection. So, what can we learn from the actions of Jesus in this passage in regards to stillness? In verse 23, Jesus went up on the mountain alone and prayed. Jesus took time out of his busy schedule

for a break! This is a theme that one can find throughout the gospels. Jesus takes time to go and pray and be renewed in the presence of God. He knew that in order to have the power to do all of his future miracles, he would need God's strength.

The lesson I want to take from this passage is to find times to go off by myself and pray. I don't want to plow through my busy schedule without the consistent refreshing drink that comes from quietness and prayer. I hope all who read this can also take it to heart. Find time to go off by yourself and pray. Rejuvenate. God will give us the strength and peace to make it through and thrive in the midst of our wonderfully busy schedules!

¹²Now during those days he went out to the mountain to pray; and he spent the night in prayer to God. ¹³And when day came, he called his disciples and chose twelve of them, whom he also named apostles: ¹⁴Simon, whom he named Peter, and his brother Andrew, and James, and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, ¹⁵and Matthew, and Thomas, and James son of Alphaeus, and Simon, who was called the Zealot, ¹⁶and Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor. - Luke 6:12-16

Jesus Chooses the Twelve Apostles

By Mary Olson

Administrative Assistant for Campus Ministries, Multicultural Affairs Office, CAC

Have you ever been certain that God gave you a specific direction, and you obeyed only to end up with an outcome that felt like complete failure? Surely it was the voice of God, wasn't it? Maybe it was just bad pizza? Why didn't God come through? I did my part! Did God change His mind? Was I hallucinating? Am I delusional? Did I just make the whole thing up? Am I so sinful and unholy that I can't even interpret God's voice? Jesus spent time alone with God. A huge decision was to be made: out of all these disciples, which will I choose to keep as my apostles? Which will I trust with the most important information? Which will I keep close at my side to be my friends and to experience life together?

Among others, Jesus chose Judas Iscariot, "who became a traitor."

After spending all night in prayer to God, Jesus knew what to do. Obedience would end up looking like failure. Jesus knew that it wasn't going to end pretty and that Judas Iscariot would betray all trust. Could it be, in times when I feel like God isn't coming through, that there's a purpose different than the one I imagine?

Could it be that God calls me to what looks like failure for a purpose larger than me?

Can I be still enough to hear God and to trust that He is directing a plan that's larger than I'm able to understand? Can I choose to obey, knowing that it doesn't secure my success? He is God, after all... be still.

¹He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.”
²He said to them, “When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. ³Give us each day our daily bread. ⁴And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us. And do not bring us to the time of trial.” ⁵And he said to them, “Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; ⁶for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him.’ ⁷And he answers from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.’ ⁸I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs. ⁹“So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. ¹⁰For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. ¹¹Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? ¹²Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion? ¹³If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

- Luke 11:1-13

Teach Us to Pray

By Becky Horst

Grants Director/Coordinator

Jesus' disciples were diligent Jews who had been taught how to pray from childhood. However, they recognize that Jesus is taking them to a new level of relationship with God. They ask Jesus to teach them a better way to pray. He responds by giving them a model prayer and instructions on persistence, which many of us memorized as children. Each phrase is packed with potential meaning and merits meditation.

Hallowed be your name. God is our beloved parent, worthy of reverence.

Your kingdom come. We have hope for the future. God's kingdom will come as

a healing balm in our wounded world.

Give us each day our daily bread. God provides for us in the here and now.

And forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who have sinned against us. God absorbs our sins and transforms our interaction with others and with money.

Lead us not into temptation. God can also transform our sin-prone attitudes and desires.

After this model prayer, Jesus's parable and instructions urge us to pursue a relationship with God. God tells us to ask, seek, and persist because we are God's beloved children.

³⁵On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." ³⁶And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. ³⁷A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. ³⁸But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" ³⁹He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. ⁴⁰He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" ⁴¹And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

- Mark 4:35-41

Mark 4:35-41

By Jeff Hochstetler
Goshen College senior

Many of us shudder at the thought of leaving things to chance. Let's face it; we're a society that loves control. We have news programs forecast our weather, actuaries that calculate our risks, and insurance coverage to protect against financial loss. As humans, we like to have certainty. I believe planning is a wise and preparation is a good thing. In our quest for stability, however, we must realize that we can predict and prepare, but we cannot control. Too often we try to create stillness ourselves.

In doing so we are often thrown off course by the unexpected. In Mark, we see Jesus and his disciples caught up in a sudden storm at sea. The disciples, experienced fishermen, attempt to weather the storm themselves, but it's clear the boat is starting to sink. The distraught disciples then wake a sleeping Jesus

who rebukes the wind and says to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" The wind then ceases and there is a dead calm. By acknowledging their own helplessness, the disciples turned to the God who was in the boat with them.

Often turmoil in our life is perpetuated by our love of control. When it becomes apparent that we don't control a situation, we either give up, or cut our losses and try harder. Rather than giving up or trying harder, I suggest we let go of our love of control and trust God. After rebuking the wind and calming the sea, Jesus rebukes his disciples. "Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?" We should take Jesus' challenge to the disciples a message for us as well. In doing so, may we be willing to let God calm the storms in our life. In stillness...God.

¹When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ²And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. ⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. ⁵Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. ⁶And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. ⁷Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?" ⁸And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? ³⁷Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?" ³⁸Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him." ⁴⁰And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." ⁴¹So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. ⁴²They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. - Acts 2:1-8, 37-42

Acts 2:1-8, 37-42

By Bob Yoder
Campus Pastor

"...there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind..." The Holy Spirit makes a grand entrance onto "the stage" at Pentecost. Unlike the "sound of sheer silence" that Elijah experienced in I Kings 19, these Believers had a noisy encounter with the Divine that gave them some interesting abilities. In fact, Peter preaches from the Old Testament prophet Joel that God's Spirit would cause sons and daughters to prophesy, young men to see visions, and old men to dream dreams.

I can't help but wonder what interesting abilities God grants us today. Though being filled with the

Spirit is no doubt a grace from God, it also seems that these early Believers postured themselves especially to receive such an unexpected blessing. Their posture included breaking bread together, being devoted to the apostles' teaching, and engaging in prayer. In our very busy lives these days, how are we posturing ourselves?

After experiencing this Divine noisy encounter, they ask: "what should we do?" What should we do today, in the middle of all of our important happenings, to acknowledge the need for God's workings in our lives? Have we stilled ourselves to receive such "noisy rushes"?

²³After they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴When they heard it, they raised their voices together to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and everything in them, ²⁵it is you who said by the Holy Spirit through our ancestor David, your servant: 'Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples imagine vain things?' ²⁶The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers have gathered together against the Lord and against his Messiah.' ²⁷For in this city, in fact, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, ²⁸to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. ²⁹And now, Lord, look at their threats, and grant to your servants to speak your word with all boldness, ³⁰while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus." ³¹When they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness. - Acts 4:23-31

Acts 4:23-31

By Bob Yoder

Campus Pastor

Timidity. Insecure. Cowering. These are words that do NOT describe this Acts 4 passage! What we see here is a prayer that speaks to the "BIG-ness" of God, to the creative energy of the Holy Spirit, and to the bold foundation of which our faith is built. Peter and John were released from prison and reported all that happened to their friends, thus developing this prayer. Compared to the Old Testament, such articulated prayers are not as common in the New Testament, and so I savor those that do exist. The text acknowledges God as Creator of all and that God's Spirit is the Holy One through which mighty signs and wonders are performed. Following this prayer, the place where they gathered was

shaken! They were filled with the Holy Spirit! They spoke the word of God with boldness!

Boldness. Confident. Empowering. These are words that resonate with me as I read this passage and yearn for a faith that can be described in such terms. What holds me back? What causes me to be silent about my faith? What causes me to forget the "BIG-ness" of God's creative power? In the still and reflective moments with God, may I be reminded of the foundation of our faith. May I remember to open myself up to the "shaking work" of the Holy Spirit. May I live confidently knowing that God has a vested interest in my life and surroundings.