



## The object of His affection...

As we begin this new year, and I take a moment to reflect on the last, there seems to be an excess of cares and distractions that strive for our attention, ranging from our health, our families, our jobs, the current political climate, the news, social media, and even our church. Many of these we should be concerned about. However, a problem arises when these things consume all of the time and attention we have in a given day, and we lose our focus on who ultimately matters: God. This seems cliché, I know, but like so many in today's culture would love to do, God could very well force us to "love and serve" Him and give Him the time He's worth. However, He does not force any of us to make time for Him even though He's powerful enough to do so. So why? Why doesn't He force us to serve Him? Well, the Lord is not a fan of lip-service and false sacrifice (Isaiah 1), and forcing us to worship Him whether we wanted to or not, would be just that. The fact is our Lord does not need us, and He does not need us to serve Him. This may seem a bit bleak to say, but it's true. He doesn't need anything from man (Acts 17:24-25). John the Baptist tells us "God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (St. Luke 3:8). God could have made another creation to serve Him if that's what He needed. So, no, God does not need us. He never has. But the amazing thing is, He wants us! He wants us to willingly serve Him. So much so that we are the object of His affection! It was made evident when He sent His only begotten Son as a sacrifice to redeem us from our captive, miserable, and sinful state!

After we beg for forgiveness and forsake all of ourselves and our desires and fully consecrate our lives to Him, He does the unfathomable. He destroys the wicked, sinful creature with the stony heart that we once were with the brightness of His coming, and He creates us anew by placing within us a new heart of flesh. He completes us with the mind of Christ and grants us the keeping of the Holy Ghost. The only wise God, who created the very world in which we live, even calls us His sons and daughters. He allows us to choose every day whether or not we will give Him back the time He has given us. For, without His everlasting love, mercy, grace, and salvation, we could not have the very lives that allow our attentions to be so diverted. But isn't our God so much better than a God who would force us to serve Him? Yes, He is. "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it" (Psalm 10:22). So as we go through this upcoming year, and you are faced with countless cares, trials, or distractions, I pray you remember you are loved, not only by me, your family, and the church but by the Almighty God. And despite all that's going on around us, He is more than worthy of our little time here on Earth. I pray we all spend just a little more time this year focused on what's truly important. He is worthy to be praised. Amen.

- Bro. Paul Clelland

*"Behold, God is my salvation;  
I will trust, and not be afraid:  
for the Lord Jehovah is my  
strength and my song; he also  
is become my salvation.  
Therefore with joy shall ye  
draw water out of the wells of  
salvation."*

ISAIAH 12:2-3

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*"Great is Thy faithfulness,  
O God my Father,  
There is no shadow of turning  
with Thee;  
Thou changest not, Thy  
compassions, they fail not.  
As Thou hast been Thou  
forever wilt be.  
Great is Thy faithfulness!  
Great is Thy faithfulness!  
Morning by morning new  
mercies I see.  
All I have needed Thy hand  
hath provided.  
Great is Thy faithfulness,  
Lord, unto me!"\**

## A very present help in time of trouble...

"If we lose you, we'll bring you back!" the nurse told me, as she busied herself with my IV, all the while trying desperately to maintain a safe distance from me, the Covid patient. "What if I don't come back?" I asked her, and never looking at me, she said, "You will!" I began to shake as my mind swirled with what this meant, and I thought of my family, sick at home, unaware of what I was facing here alone. The doctor had just informed me, after hours of unsuccessfully trying to get my heart rate below 160, that they needed to "reset" my heart. She explained that they would have all CPR measures ready in the event that after the necessary pause, my heart didn't start again. The room was crowded, and the main nurse was giving orders, "You stand behind her with the bag," and "Heart rate going up, let's go," as she positioned people around me prepared to do CPR.

The fear was all I could see or feel. I had trouble forming a prayer, but I cried out to God, and as I looked up at the fluorescent light, something incredible happened. A tangible calmness settled over me, and I stopped shaking. The fear ran away, and I was flooded with a wonderful knowing that I had nothing to fear...heart stopped still or heart beating. The procedure brought crushing, intense pain, but I felt almost removed from that as I heard them say, "Stay with us, stay with us...you're doing great, keep breathing!" I did stay with them, enveloped in a stillness that defies logic, and all was well, but do you know where I really was? I was being covered by His feathers, and I was trusting under His wings, and He had given His angels charge over me just like He promised...and I was totally safe. Psalm 46:1 "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

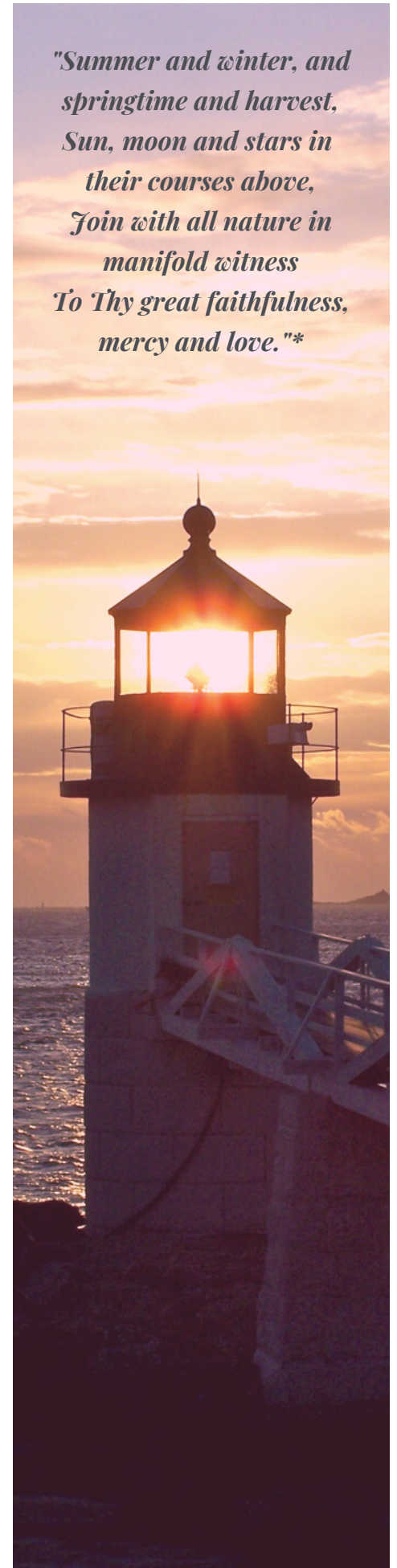
How many stories do you have of God's faithfulness in your life? There is not enough paper to contain them all! In how many raging storms has Jesus held out His hand and calmed you along the way, and how many hungry lions has He fed while you slept right beside them, night after night, during a long trial? How many pools of Bethesda has He carried you into, broken, and healed your grief or sorrow? How many times have you emerged from your own fiery furnace, and not a hair on your head was singed? How many Red Seas have you faced, thinking there was no way through or around, and just in time, the water parted, and you walked across on dry ground?

We have this amazing deliverance because we are standing on the promises that can NOT fail! God's promises are not just sweet assurances, but also provisions for our daily walk. They provide us with faith, hope, and strength for every situation we face. Exodus 14:14 promises, "The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." Hebrews 13:5 says "...for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Best of all, He has promised a glorious Heaven to those of us who serve Him. Jesus said in John 10:28, "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

I don't know what lies ahead, brothers and sisters, but I do know this... when you look for me, I'll be there in Heaven with you. But until that day, I'll be right here, standing on the promises of God.

- Sis Deanne Collier

*"Summer and winter, and  
springtime and harvest,  
Sun, moon and stars in  
their courses above,  
Join with all nature in  
manifold witness  
To Thy great faithfulness,  
mercy and love."\**



## The hand of God in all my life I see...

God has shown up in immeasurable ways in my life. The veracity of the statement, "the hand of God in all my life I see" rings clear when I step back and look at exactly how He has carried me throughout my entire life. Our society teaches us to seek immediate fulfillment of our desires. Psalm 46:10 reminds us to "Be still and know that I am God." He is our faithful provider, and He will satisfy our needs in His own time. When we still ourselves, we allow our hearts to hear His words, feel His presence, and rest in the contentment He bestows--knowing He will provide a path that our mortal minds cannot possibly comprehend. He feeds the sparrow and waters the grass with dew; He will surely provide for us, His children. Just think how He dispensed precisely the right amount of nourishment for the children of Israel as they blindly wandered in the Wilderness those forty years, even knowing they would begin to grumble and complain after deliverance. He unwaveringly cares for us, granting us exactly what we require, I dare say, before we ourselves know of what we stand in need. God is faithful in providing; Philippians 4:19, "But my God shall supply all your need according to



his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Isaiah 41:10, "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." Are there times when you might get a little weak or a little weary? If you made it through 2020, I can almost imagine that you could have a time or two. However, God is faithful to strengthen us, encourage us, and uplift us. I have been a recipient of copious God winks. You know, when a song or verse comes to your mind exactly when you stand in need, when God shows you His light and love through the words or actions of another, when you see His handiwork painted across the sky, when that wave of peace rolls throughout your body, or one of the other countless ways that God shows you He is ever present. I love those moments that come right on time, just like our God. I know then that when it is hard, still to press on because God is right there. He is the God of comfort. I love the imagery that comes to me with Psalm 91:4, "He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be

thy shield and buckler." What more comforting place can you find yourself than safely snuggled to God's side covered by His sheltering wings. A memory forever etched in my mind is of seeing my grandfather under His wings. My grandmother had passed and she was taken away from the house. I watched as my Poppy, with tears streaming down his face, slowly walked over to turn on the CD player where Our Folks were singing "When the Savior Reached Down for Me," and he sat down in his chair singing along with both of his hands raised high. In his grief Poppy was safely covered by God's feathers. God is faithful to comfort us, praise the Lord! Finally, God is faithful until the end of this life, even into eternity. Jeremiah 29:11 so beautifully tells us of His promise, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." What more do we need to know? He is our God, our Father, our Everything. The verse to a song we learn as children assures me, "Jesus loves me--He will stay, Close beside me all the way; He's prepared a home for me, And someday His face I'll see." Rest in His promises, friends. In all things God is steadfast, "so I will trust Him for tomorrow because He was faithful yesterday."

- Sis Katie Call

**"Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth, Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide; strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow, blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!"\***

\* quotes from "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" by Thomas Obediah Chisholm (1866-1960)

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WINTER 2021

# TIDINGS

**CHRIST'S SANCTIFIED  
HOLY CHURCH**

"And hope maketh not ashamed;  
because the love of God is shed  
abroad in our hearts by the Holy  
Ghost which is given unto us."

Romans 5:5