

*Wonderful Words  
Of Life*



## Too Wonderful for Me

*“Then Job answered the Lord and said: ‘I know that You can do everything. And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You. You asked, ‘Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?’ Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.’” Job 42:1-3*

We have all been in the situation in which Job and his friends find themselves. Try as we may, we cannot fathom the height, the width and the breadth of God. We find ourselves struggling to comprehend the incomprehensible. We attempt to build a box and put God in it, but he simply will not fit. All our boxes, no matter how elaborate or large, are not big and sophisticated enough to contain God. God truly can do everything, and no purpose of his can be withheld.

However, we must not despair because God has chosen to re-

veal some things to us. The Hebrew writer proclaims, “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they” (Heb. 1:1-4). God has spoken to us in his word of truth. He has given to us the wonderful words of life.

In our last issue we did not have enough room to include a couple of articles by Quinton Gage and one by Timothy D Hall. I am including them in this issue along with an article I received



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Change and decay in all around I see;  
O thou who changest not, abide with me.

I need thy presence every passing hour,  
What but thy grace can foil the tempter's power?  
Who, like thyself, a guide and stay can be?  
Through cloud and sunshine,  
Lord, abide with me.

I fear no foe, with thee at hand to bless;  
Ills have no weight and fears no bitterness.  
Where is death's sting? Where grave thy victory?  
I triumph still, if thou abide with me.

Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes;  
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies;  
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;  
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

\* Henry F. Lyte

...Newton Malony  
Eugene, OR

"You are old, Father William," the young man said, And your hair has become very white;  
And yet you incessantly stand on your head—Do you think, at your age, it is right?"

"In my youth," Father William replied to his son, "I feared it might injure the brain;  
But now that I'm perfectly sure I have none, Why, I do it again and again."

"You are old," said the youth, "As I mentioned before, And have grown most uncommonly fat;  
Yet you turned a back-somersault in at the door— Pray, what is the reason of that?"

"In my youth," said the sage, as he shook his grey locks, "I kept all my limbs very supple  
By the use of this ointment—one shilling a box— Allow me to sell you a couple?"

..Alice's Adventures In Wonderland

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den by this riverside might lead. I do have some fairly clear insights about its affects on the present. I will trust this riverside (this Christian God) to accept this life I have lived even though I acknowledge that PRIDE is likely among the worst of sins. I do acknowledge that I am more than ever aware that the true purpose of this life I have lived is to join with God in trying to make this world a place of peace, justice, and love. I have not been perfect, by any means, but I have embraced this goal. I hope that the effects of my efforts – pride-filled and selfish though they have been – have made some contribution to the goals of my heavenly father.

The future? I trust God to take care of me and those I love. This is the faith of a Christian who is older than old. In fact, it could be said “I am an old man among the elderly.” Two things I have read have become dear to me during this period of time since I have become a widower and have very few hopes of a much longer life. One is a series of statements about my wife Suzanna's memory and the other is the hymn “Abide with me.” I share them now thinking they might have a broader audience.

In the rising of the sun and its going down,  
we remember her...

In the blowing of the wind and  
in the chill of winter,

we remember her...

In the warmth of the sun and the  
peace of summer,  
we remember her...

In the beginning of the year and  
when it ends,  
we remember her...

When we are weary and in the  
need of strength,  
we remember her...

When we are lost and sick of  
heart,  
we remember her...  
When we have joys we yearn to  
share,  
we remember her...

So long as we live, she too shall  
live, for she is now a part of  
of our lives...we remember her...

- author unknown

#### ABIDE WITH ME

Abide with me, fast falls the  
even tide  
The darkness deepens, Lord  
with me abide.  
When other helpers fail and  
comforts flee,  
Help of the helpless, O abide  
with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's  
little day,  
Earth's joys grow dim: its glories  
pass away;

in May 2018 from Newton Malony. Newton is the paternal grandfather of my son-in-law, Brian Malony. I met Newton years ago and we have corresponded quite often over the years. Newton was a professor in the Psychology Department of Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, CA until his retirement some years ago. He has written several books, one on the life of John Wesley is especially

good. Newton sends me things that he has written and asks for my opinions and I have enjoyed corresponding with him. I am including this article he sent to me last May. He contemplates on growing older. Hopefully we can find something in his musings that will be helpful to us as we try to grow older with grace and hope.

...lsg

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## Wonderful Words of Life

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P. P. Bliss wrote a song 134 years ago titled “Wonderful Words of Life” that said, “Sing them over again to me, Wonderful words of life; Let me more of their beauty see, Wonderful words of life; Words of life and beauty, Teach me faith and duty; Beautiful words, wonderful words, Wonderful words of life.”

When God made us, he gave us a communication system with a brain to operate it. Sometimes we fail in communicating what He wants us to tell, but still his

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**‘The words I speak unto  
you, they are spirit and  
they are life.’”**

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creation is excellent. I read from a bulletin of the Cedar Ridge Church in Gatesville the following:

“How very precious are the words of God. How wonderful are His warnings, and how grand are his promises. We ought to thrill at delving into the book that God has authored. May we find it sweeter than the honeycomb, and more precious than gold. May we know that Jesus said, ‘The words I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.’”

I have heard words from individuals that carry so much meaning. I remember hearing a woman say when her husband and son were baptized, “This is the happiest day of my life.” I also remember a phone call from a brother whose wife had died, “I’ve lost the light of my life.” So, words express happiness, sorrow, hope, gratitude, love or excitement. Unfortunately, there is a negative to each of those feelings, but our Great Creator and Gracious Redeemer

offers us the opportunity to find happiness and contentment even while we are sojourning here.

At one point, some of the Hebrew Christians were considering a return to the religion of their fathers. The apostle made a great effort to convince them to stay with Christ. He was superior to Moses; his covenant was better than the covenant God gave through Moses. The promises and blessings of the new covenant were better than

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They had been in the church long enough to be competent teachers, but they still did not understand the easier things of the Word of God.

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anything the Law through Moses offered. We read in Hebrews 5:12 about some problems the apostle said they were experiencing. I fear it is a problem in our congregations today. They had been in the church long enough to be competent teachers, but they still did not understand the easier things of the Word of God.

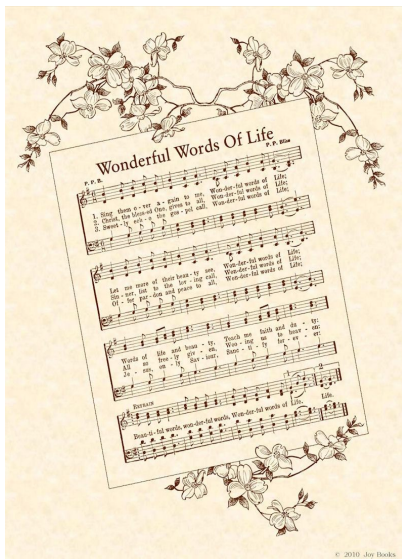
We have the words to lead others to Christ and our lives need to be focused on that activity. We were saved to teach and offer salvation to others. I can accept the fact I may not be able to teach publicly in an effective manner, but still I can lead others to Christ. If I can do that, I

will hear the words “Well done, good and faithful servant” or “Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you”.

We hear good things in this life from our fellow Christians, but how much better to hear those precious words from Jesus. May we work diligently to inherit eternal life.

...Quinton Gage (1928-2016)  
Colbert, Oklahoma

*Foundation Forum September 2008*



our delightful adventures. Jesus knew well what Peter (and all the rest of us) would experience if we lived long enough. I'm ready to lay my burden down.

I have two other thoughts about this “lay down” metaphor. The first has to do with some reflection on where I got this preoccupation with seeking praise and fame. The second has to do with what it all has to do with a river side.

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Where did all this pride concern come from? I surely wasn't born with it and I had able but average parents.

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Where did all this pride concern come from? I surely wasn't born with it and I had able but average parents. Mother was a public-school teacher and father was a builder. I was an only child and always felt loved. The only disruption I felt growing up was the sudden death of my father when I was six years old.

Mother filled in his absence with love. I remember, as if it were yesterday, her taking me into the room where he had died and stating with her arm around my shoulders “Daddy has gone to be with God, and we must so live that we will join him some day. And God will send his guardian angel to take care of us.” I felt

secure in her care. I remember waking up in the middle of the night a short time later and seeing a form in the room. Then I remember mother's guardian angel promise and went back to sleep. I became her life's work. I have sometimes said, humorously but truthfully, “my mother's only disappointment in life was that I was not the Messiah.”

Now, here may be a key to where my desire for fame came from – her love and desire. I must admit, I learned her lesson well. In her dreams for me I was to be well known and famous.

But this admission of her wishes for me has a dimension that may provide some insight to what lies down by the river side. The “riverside” always involved the Christian faith. She had me in church the Sunday after my father's death and all the Sundays thereafter. I spoke my conviction when I later inscribed on my picture, I gave her for her birthday “To my mother who made me a minister.” I did indeed hear the call to ministry and have never doubted that is where God intended for me to live my life. The riverside is the arms of God as He has been revealed to me in Jesus Christ.

Now, I have not meant this essay to be a sermon, so I will simply say “I have no special insight or knowledge about where this laying down my bur-

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## Growing Older: My Thoughts

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As of the nightfall of the 17th day of this month, May, I will have lived 87 years on this planet. When I thought of what I might say if asked to share some thoughts about growing older, the old spiritual “Down by the Riverside” came to mind. “I’m going to lay down my burden down by the riverside” makes some sense to me. I’m pretty clear about the burden I’ve been carrying around for some years and I am ready to “lay it down.” The burden is PRIDE and its first cousin “THE SEARCH FOR PRAISE.” I am ready to lay it down and, as the spiritual suggests, “study war no more.” As strange as it may seem, it has been a war. I have been like a General Patton who searched out every opportunity to assert myself and seek some fame.

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The burden is PRIDE and its first cousin “THE SEARCH FOR PRAISE.”

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The second verse of the spiritual makes this war-like burden even more apparent. It states, I’m going to lay down my sword and shield down by the riverside. I have been aggressive (cf. my sword) and defensive (cf. my shield) on every opportunity where I might be approved and

remembered. I am going to lay down my Pride and “study War no more. I will no longer be calculating how to be noticed in every situation. I will study war no more.

Of course, you might well note that at 87 there are many things a person can no longer do anyway. I have been struck by those true verses at the last of John’s gospel. Reassuring Peter, Jesus notes the difference between youth and old age. Jesus says: Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not want to go. That is very true for me. While I still can walk, to drive, to eat, to send emails, to sleep well, to read, to think, to write down a few ideas and to read the morning newspaper, increasingly others make decisions about where I will go. And when!

I used to back-pack and climb mountains. My late wife of 64 + years climbed Mt. Whitney with me. Before her death, she was unable to walk around the block but was still able to remember our hikes together. She became confused about the day of the week and many other things but could still remember many of

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## Just Drifting

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In 1937, V. O. Fossett wrote a song and named it “Drifting Along”. It is a pretty song with good words and although it is in a lot of our books, we haven’t used it much. The message says we are drifting along with a smile and a song, never once thinking that we might be wrong.

Sixty years ago next July, Brother Leland Knight came to Colbert for a meeting, and I made the decision to be baptized into Christ. I made no plans beyond that day, but three years later the decision was made to do church work. There was no way to know what the future held in this life, but there have been no regrets on either of those decisions.

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I would like to say I never just drifted along, but I am not sure I can make that statement in all truthfulness.

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I would like to say I never just drifted along, but I am not sure I can make that statement in all truthfulness. There were times when I had to fight currents in order to get where I felt I needed to be. I can remember preachers saying years ago “brethren, we are drifting”, meaning we were not staying with the teachings of

the scripture that meant so much to us in everything.

Paul told the Ephesian Elders he kept back nothing that was profitable to them, but that he had declared the whole counsel of God. Peter states “we have been given everything that pertains to life and godliness”. Paul tells Timothy that inspired scriptures are profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness so the man of God can be complete. It is somewhat presumptuous of us to think we can improve on God’s plan. But that is exactly what we think and what we are saying when we change God’s plan and substitute one of our own.

...Quinton Gage (1928-2016)

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### Drifting Along

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Soul you are drifting along on the tide,  
Out on life’s ocean so boundless and wide;  
Drifting away in the morning so bright,  
Where will you be when you anchor at night?

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## A Blessing or a Curse?

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A masked man approaches me with what appears to be a very sharp knife. Is this a good thing or a bad? It depends, doesn't it? If I'm in the hospital with a badly infected appendix, then it's a blessing that a skilled surgeon is about to remove it. But if I'm walking down a dark street late at night, I don't want to see a sharp knife headed my way.

Money is another example of "it depends". Some might immediately disagree, quoting the Bible as saying, "money is the root of all evil". Before you say "Amen", though, may I remind you that the Bible doesn't say that. Paul wrote that "the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil" (1 Timothy 6:10). One can possess money without loving it.

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**Paul wrote that "the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil"**

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Nancy Gibbs wrote an interesting editorial in the February 22, 2010 issue of "Time" magazine. In "Doing Good Badly" she writes about misguided efforts to help others in times of disaster. She pointed to clothing that had been sent to the victims of the tsunami in 2004. Articles included a Santa suit, high heeled shoes and evening gowns. How helpful were those kinds of

things for people picking up the pieces of their lives?!

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**It can turn into anything - a water bottle, a prefab house, a tetanus shot, a biscuit.**

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Gibbs then made this point: "Money is fleet and nimble. The very thing that makes it unsatisfying to give makes it powerful to deploy. It can turn into anything - a water bottle, a prefab house, a tetanus shot, a biscuit. It lets relief agencies buy locally whenever possible, supporting local markets for products that are culturally and environmentally right" (p. 134). Instead of sending that T-shirt from your trip to the Grand Canyon, send money; that will buy things the victims really need.

Even Jesus pointed to the fact that money can be a blessing. In Luke 16:9 He said this: "And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home." Another translation of that verse makes the point clearer: "I tell you, use your worldly resources to benefit others and make friends. In this way, your generosity stores

up a reward for you in heaven" (New Living Translation).

No, Jesus isn't talking about buying friendship. Those who attempt to use their money in that way sooner or later find out how futile such pursuits can be. The prodigal son of Luke 15 had friends while he had money. When the money ran out, he searched in vain for those pals.

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**Using our resources to help others, however, usually wins true friends.**

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Using our resources to help others, however, usually wins true friends. When others see that we care enough about their needs to open our wallets, they learn to trust us. Occasions of suffering can lead to deep relationships when love and compassion respond.

For what shall we use our money? Only for ourselves? In that scenario money becomes a curse (just read 1 Timothy 6:10 again for confirmation of that). We can turn it into a blessing, though, by following the words of Jesus: "... but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:20,21).

As someone once said, "Money can be either a harsh master or a valuable servant." It's our choice.

...Timothy D Hall  
*LightGrams* – Feb. 25, 2010

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Money has never made man happy, nor will it, there is nothing in its nature to produce happiness. The more of it one has the more one wants.

He that is of the opinion money will do everything may well be suspected of doing everything for money.

...Benjamin Franklin

They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil.

...Paul the Apostle

A fool and his money are soon elected.

...Will Rogers

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