ZION FAITH HOMES NEWSLETTER

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2820 Eshcol Avenue, Zion, Illinois 60099

"Grace to you and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in Love: …To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved" Ephesians *1: 2, 4, 6*

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ MAY GOD BLESS THIS NEW YEAR _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

We've again been blessed to celebrate the advent of our Christ and the wonder of His reign on earth, as a man – as God. How happy we are in Christ Jesus our Lord. The account of His birth amazes us! Grace! Always! Few recognized Him. Was it few who cared? Some opposed Him, blocking truth and love, really. There were some though, watchers, seekers, love hungry souls, angelic hosts who heard and saw and celebrated. Hearts were touched. New Life was born – Salvation had come. Joseph and Mary were faithful and obedient. Lowly shepherds responded to the angelic expression. Wise men saw the star. They were watchers, who had sought and found The Truth. Their journey was long. The star wasn't always visible. The earthly king was a liar. God led them. The child was holy. The star was bright. The true Light was lowly. The Love was Life. All was glory. Worship Him!

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Re: Nov. 14 Meeting

It was with joy that we celebrated the Faith Home ministry, now about 112 years old. We give thanks to God for His great faithfulness and lovingkindness. We thank all who were with us in heart, here or elsewhere. How blessed we were to worship together.

We marvel that the Lord has kept the Faith Home ministry all these years. We thank God for the early founders, vessels for the Lord. Their focus was Jesus Himself. We thank God for the many people who've come through the years, and for the missionaries who were called and went out into the world and for the pastors, teachers and laymen: all lovers of Jesus, steadfast and faithful. Oh, but not perfect. Nor are we perfect now. God is working. He is with us. We believe. We follow on. It is not in vain. We labor, both inwardly and outwardly. **Oh, but it is Jesus!**

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<u>WHAT DO WE SEE</u> -R. Simon

We are living in a day when we must see JESUS and see things the way He does. Our very lives in Him depend on it. There is so much we read in the Scriptures that we cannot wrap our minds around. That is because the Scripture is written for our hearts and our spirits. The Word is not meant for our outward man, but our inward man. God is more concerned with our inner lives than our outer ones.

When we read the Bible do we only connect with it in our intellect or do we connect with it in our hearts? Is there something in us that bows to His Word, that bows our hearts and makes us say, "Yes, Lord?" That is what God is wanting in us, to make a difference in our hearts and a change in our lives; a change that is not only on the outside. Let us read the following passage and let God speak to our hearts.

II Corinthians 4:12-18 "*So then death works in us, but life in you. We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak: knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and*

eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal"

For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. All the grace, all that Jesus has done is for the glory of God. God the Father wants to glorify Jesus in us. He wants to get us to agree with His purposes and to get our eyes on Him, not ourselves or the world, or flesh, etc. He wants people to see Jesus in us.

We faint not, but that is not the way we feel at times. We want to faint don't we? But we faint not because of the grace of God, not because we have it in ourselves to do it. Our inward man is "being renewed day by day." How? As we are before Him during the day, as we read that Word of God, as we get excited about God's promises, as we let it become part of us, as we let it confront us. The Word of God confronts us and shows us ourselves and as we yield to Him the Lord changes us.

While we look not at the things which are seen, but that is what we like to do…look at what we can see. Mr. Andrews wrote: "As long as we want or demand to be quickened by anything else – books, friends, nature, self-importance, etc. we cannot really taste or understand what it means to be quickened by God and His Word. Gradually the Lord must remove or deprive us of things we depend upon for quickening. The transition is slow.

Can we experience the Lord without sitting in our favorite chair reading from our favorite Bible? Does it have to be a beautiful sunny day? If it is raining in floods and we have to turn all the lights on to see anything, can we still experience the Lord for Himself, just Himself? We may be in a damp dark cell someday, all by ourselves with no warm or comforting atmosphere. We may be in an atmosphere of great darkness of horrible evil. Can we experience God then? Yes, yes we can because… "*we look not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen."* We are looking at the things that are eternal. That is the way we should be living our lives---so important to keep our eyes on Jesus. All the things most wonderful in our lives are the things NOT SEEN. *"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."* I Peter 1:8 How do you love someone you have not seen…it is GOD, it is by HIS HOLY SPIRIT that we know JESUS lives in our hearts and we see Him within.

We can live our lives without all the outer trappings, like a bad hair day. And we all have them. How much we can fuss about how we look! But does it really make a difference what our hair looks like compared to what we look like on the inside? It is more important to think of how we look on the inside isn't it? It is more important if we go out with the love of Jesus for all people in our hearts. God wants the invisible love of Jesus to redound in us to the glory of God! It is important we live one moment at a time looking at Jesus---seeing the unseen which is ETERNAL. Look for treasures in heaven, "*where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt,"* eternal in the heavens. Let JESUS be the beauty that the world sees in us, something incorruptible. Let us keep our eyes on Him whom having not seen we LOVE!

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SHOW US YOUR GLORY

Our desire is to be transformed and filled with God's power and glory. Let's look at Acts 2 & 3.

Peter and John had experienced the spiritual awakening of Pentecost. Jesus' followers had gathered in the Upper Room to pray. The Holy Spirit came and filled everyone in the place. As a crowd gathered outside, Peter, emboldened by the Spirit, preached God's Word. He told the truth of Jesus, whom they'd crucified, who God raised from the dead! Peter said to them, "*Repent, (change your views, and purpose to accept the will of God in your inner selves instead of rejecting it) and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of and release from your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*." Three thousand people came to Christ as their Savior and were baptized.

These new believers in Christ "*continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship,*

and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." They ate, took communion, and prayed together. There was Godly fear and reverence. Signs and wonders were done by the apostles. All was shared. Needs were met. They continued "*daily with one accord in the temple.* They were glad, simple and generous in heart. God was praised and gave favor.

Now Peter and John were walking to the Temple one day when a lame man begged them for money. They had no money so they offered him what they had. They gave Jesus,- "*In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!"* Peter took his hand and lifted him up. Strength came. He *"leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God."* The 'no longer lame' man held Peter and John. He wanted this One who they had. May we hold on to Jesus, believing, trusting, relying on, and loving Him. Peter boldly shared the Word of God and the truth of Jesus Christ. It is no surprise that all the people came running in. The people were needy and hungry for love. There was hope and expectation. They came together as one, humbled by the majestic power of God's presence. Peter and John shared Jesus with them.

What do we share? Attitudes, complaints, gossip, criticism, pride? Who would come? Do we make things right, forgive and ask forgiveness, encourage, bless, unite? Welcome, care? Jesus alone is to be glorified, not you or me. God's glory is found in a single source: his servant Jesus.

There is hope. Do we want Christ's glory in our lives and churches? It's going to come by emptying ourselves out that He may fill us. "*He must increase but I must decrease"* John 3:30. Moses, in anguish, cried out "*I beseech thee, show me thy glory"* EX. 33:18 This beseeching implies a pleading, a begging, a groaning in the soul, an expression of a need that simply had to be filled. God answered, but it was in part and not in fulness. There was a veil. Only in Christ can the Fulness be seen or received. The Law was done away. It served a purpose but was "in part."

"When one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit." 2 Corinthians 3:16-18

What an amazing God we serve. In Christ, God's glory lives in us at all times, and it isn't fading…it's growing! It is truth to all who follow Jesus, from the weakest to the strongest, from the youngest to the oldest. God's promise is yes and amen to every believer. As Paul declares, His manifest glory brings freedom – from bondage to sin, from despair and defeat, from lukewarmness and apathy. There is no veil anymore for us who live in Christ. We are being transformed by his glory into his own image. That's the kind of glory that causes people to rush to God with unashamed hunger.

It is time for us to put aside everything that veils God's glory in our lives. Is there anything in your heart that may hinder God's glory from drawing others to you? -unforgiveness, slander, bitterness, in your heart? Are you burdened by habitual patterns of sin?

It does not have to continue. The veil of fear that Satan has placed over you will not work anymore. His lie that you're too weak won't hold power over you. God says his glory rests on weak, earthen vessels. It shines through people who are brokenhearted, whose lives are in turmoil. When our Lord manifests his glory, He transforms defeat into victory, fleshly weakness into heavenly strength.

Believe his word to you: "You don't have to lead a defeated life. You don't have to live without a testimony. I will manifest in ways that will astound you. Lost people are going to be drawn to Me through your life. And when they do, they'll say, 'Truly, the Lord is in this place."'

Some thought and content from: .
World Challenge Pulpit Series -Gary Wilkerson

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"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loves is born of God and knows God." 1 John 4: 7

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Genesis 32:31 *And as he passed over Penuel the sun rose upon him.*

More than fifty years ago a man who had met his Lord in the sunrise stood by the long breakfast table in the China Inland Mission House, Shanghai, and said these words: *This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."* Ps .118:24 I was one who sat at that table, and those words fell into my heart like seeds of light. Many a time since then, especially when it was dull weather in my soul, these words have enlightened me and help has come. How much I should have missed, if it had not been that the sun rose upon that man before he came to breakfast that morning.

May the Lord give it to us so to meet Him before we meet others. I was reading the other day of one who was always "in low gear" in the morning. Halting or not, "low gear" is not for us. "The voice of joy and health is in the dwelling of him who stands in the sunrise with his God, and wherever he goes, he will sow seeds of light. -Amy Carmichael

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FAITH HOME NEWS

Another year has gone by. It hasn't seemed a normal time. Are we shaking? Will it end? God Himself is our answer. Jesus is our Way. The Holy Spirit is right here each day. We are safe. We live, pray, and stay.

Our hunger for Jesus is increasing. Our love, care and ministry one to another is increasing. We have as it were few, not many instruments to bring forth sound, but few. All have become vital. We thank God for each one, uniquely placed here for these times. By God's grace we hold faith and serve Him. We're simply marching on. The Lord is with us as He is with you. The Body of Christ is growing and bonding. We're so thankful for one another. The Holy Spirit is present. His Presence brings us cheer.

We have enjoyed several church gatherings and the fellowship is always a blessing. It is also fun to work together to make the events happen. The local nursing home, where for several years we had church with the people, has finally been able to let us back in to share.

We truly thank God for all of you dear friends who are following Jesus. We believers pray for one another. Our hope is rising. Our King has come, His Kingdom is coming. Let God arise! BLESS YOU.