



A CUP OF FAITH

The official publication of the Women's Ministry of Faith PCA

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THE COMFORTS OF THE GOSPEL

Found in Ephesians 1

Written by Dawn Darby

In the first chapter of Ephesians we find a beautiful description of how much we are loved by our Heavenly Father. Sometimes we, especially women, feel overlooked, overanxious, over committed, overwhelmed, all kinds of other “overs”.

THE COMFORTS OF THE GOSPEL

Continued

In Ephesians 1:4 we read that God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, “chose us in Him before the foundation of the world.” Talk about not being overlooked!

God chose us before the foundation of the world! The author, Paul, continues in verse 5, “In love He predestined us for adoption.” These terms “chose” and “predestined” indicate a course of action that we had no part in planning. We were recipients of a gift that we didn’t ask for or earn.

God predestined us in love (1:4), to the praise of His glorious grace (1:6), according to the riches of his grace, (1:7), according to His purpose (1:11), to the praise of His glory (1:12, 14).

We might be a little insulted that these reasons don’t really have anything to do with us.

Didn’t God choose me because He loved me? Well, yes. We know that from verse 4 and other passages like John 3:16. But there is a lot of comfort here too...

"When God looks at you, He does not shrink back in horror and disgust. He sees a person of inestimable value and beauty..."





If God chose us in Him and there was nothing that we, the elect, could have done or will do, it means that nothing we do can change God's mind. It was made up before the foundation of the world.

What a relief!

When Paul describes God's attitude toward us in these verses, he uses language that is so exuberant and profuse. Look at verses 7-8: "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight..." The word "lavished" expresses so much. God gave us the riches of His grace in vast amounts or without limit.

As the hymn says, "How great the Father's love for us..." Since we have been adopted as sons, this means that we have an inheritance (verse 11)—our salvation.

But Paul also says we are God's inheritance (verse 18)!

The Ephesians were saved from the worship of capricious gods and goddesses so that they now belonged to the God of the universe. We may not have been rescued from this kind of background, but as Chapter 2 goes on to say, we were all dead in our trespasses and sins.

There was nothing beautiful about us when God set His sights on us for salvation and we became His inheritance.

“When God looks at you, He does not shrink back in horror and disgust. He sees a person of inestimable value and beauty. He loves you so much that He gave the costliest gift imaginable to obtain you as His own ‘glorious’ inheritance. You will be His cherished... daughter forever” (Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary, Vol 3, page 310).

Are you feeling overlooked? You are not! Are you feeling overanxious or over committed because you are trying to earn God's love? You don't have to feel this way because you belong to Him already—from the foundation of the world. Are you feeling overwhelmed? I hope that you are!

I hope you are feeling overwhelmed with how much God loves you.

*"...infused with the
reflection
Of Him whose Grace
does not end."*

PETAL

Written by Sharika Roland

Just as the petal clings to her
branch
Unaware of the beauty she
portends
Or the churchly aroma she exudes
We too are not able to feel the light
And the hope that others
recommend
We are incapable of it on our own
But are infused with the reflection
Of Him whose Grace does not end.



ELDERFLOWER CORDIAL

Written by Nancy Rowan



A couple of days ago I was out for my walk and noticed some flowers that looked like elderflowers, except that they were growing like a lilac does, in a cone shape, instead of the flat heads of the usual black elders. I smelled them. They smelled like elderflower, so I took one home and looked it up.

Turns out, our native red elderflowers can be used to make elderflower cordial in the same way as the European variety. Right now they are flowering in Western Washington, in natural settings that are on the damp side.

This morning I finished a batch of cordial that tastes very similar to the batch I made in Devon a couple of years ago.

Ingredients:

*20 - 25 heads red
elderflowers*

*1 organic unwaxed
lemon*

*2T to 2 1/2T citric
acid*

1 liter of water

5 cups sugar

Yields:

about 1 1/2 quarts



Directions:

-Wash your lemon and peel the outside with a peeler.

-Slice the lemon in 1/2 inch slices.

-Combine lemons, peel, and flowers in a pyrex or large, heat-safe bowl.

-Sprinkle citric acid over the flower and lemon mixture.

-Make a thick simple syrup by warming sugar and water together in a pot over the stove, stirring until fully dissolved.

-Bring syrup to boil and boil for one minute.

-Pour the hot syrup over the the ingredients in a pyrex bowl, cover and leave to infuse overnight.

-The next day, strain the mixture through a fine mesh colander (like the plastic one I use for kefir), or muslin into a 2 qt jar.

-Pour into smaller, sterilized bottles. I use screw on or wire clasp bottles.

ELDERFLOWER CORDIAL

Continued

-If you want your bottles to be shelf stable (not explode), pasteurize the bottles by putting a tea towel in the bottom of a large pot (6 - 8 qt) stand your sealed bottles on the towel and fill the pot with cold water.

-Gradually bring the water to a simmer and simmer for 20 minutes.

-Turn off heat and let all return to room temperature before removing bottles.

-To serve, dilute 1 part cordial to 8 parts cold sparkling water.



Tips:

-Be sure to pick your elderflowers on a sunny day, in an area where the blossoms have not been polluted by vehicles. Rain washes away the pollen; this is where the flavor and scent is concentrated.

-Use the flowers on the day that you pick them.

-Warning! If you don't want your bottles to explode like mine did when I made this in 2018, they must either be refrigerated, frozen, or pasteurized.

-I pasteurized some bottles and the process does alter the flavor. If you have room for a large bottle to live at the back of the fridge, it will taste fresher.

Be still, my soul: the Lord is on your side; bear patiently the cross of grief or pain; leave to your God to order and provide; in ev'ry change He faithful will remain. Be still, my soul: your best, your heav'nly Friend through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

Be still, my soul: your God will undertake to guide the future as He has the past. Your hope, your confidence let nothing shake; all now mysterious shall be bright at last. Be still, my soul: the waves and winds still know His voice who ruled them while He dwelt below.

Be still, my soul: when dearest friends depart, and all is darkened in the vale of tears, then shall you better know His love, His heart, who comes to soothe your sorrow and your fears. Be still, my soul: your Jesus can repay from His own fullness all He takes away.

Be still, my soul: the hour is hast'ning on when we shall be forever with the Lord, when disappointment, grief, and fear are gone, sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored. Be still, my soul: when change and tears are past, all safe and blessed we shall meet at last.



HYMNS OF FAITH

Written by Sarah Gauthier

I grew up in the Deep South. My grandparents insisted I go with them to Sunday service in a little ship-lap church that had been a part of the community since the 1800's. Standing next to my grandmother I can remember opening a well-worn hymnal and hearing the trilling voices of old folks singing such tunes as "Onward Christian Soldiers" or "It is Well." In the dusty pew, I would cringe. The lack of fanfare, accompanying instruments, and my own inability to carry a tune convinced me that this ritual of singing hymns was plain ol' ugly and certainly not for me.

Years later, I've come to appreciate those seemingly boring, old hymns.

Continued

I have learned that hymns serve a vital role in both the communal worship of Christians and the daily life of the believer. Contemporary worship certainly has a place in the Christian's life, but hymns supply several unique purposes. Hymns are special.

First, we Christians have been singing hymns for centuries. When we sing the hymns of old, we are drawing our hearts back to the great testimonies of faith that have been forged by saints before us. Secondly, hymns are styled to be sung in community. There are Christians today who worship together in secret rooms under the crushing weight of totalitarian regimes. Think of the comfort they might experience as they collectively sing the words to hymns such as "It Is Well With My Soul."

Hymns also instruct us how to have practical theology. Meaning, hymns inform us about the character of God and teach us how to live in light of that knowledge.

Consider the great hymn "Be Still My Soul." Originally penned in German by Katherina Von Schlegel in the 18th century, this hymn paints the picture of a God who cares intimately for His people. The first stanza of the song states "Be still, my soul: the Lord is on your side; bear patiently the cross of grief or pain."

"...hymns inform us about the character of God and teach us how to live in light of that knowledge."



These lyrics are theologically profound; the author affirms the truth that we Christians will face hardship in our life. “Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain” encourages the Christian to think rightly about suffering; we are encouraged not to conceal ourselves from pain. Neither are we to pretend that pain does not impact us- our bodies, our hearts, our souls.

Rather, we are to endure suffering and pain by having an eternal perspective. This eternal perspective is only made possible through Christ. Jesus Christ's death on the cross secured reconciliation between us and God the Father.

As we bear patiently the hurts in our life, we remember that the Lord has promised His people painless safety in eternal communion with Him.

With that being said, pain was a mainstay of life even before the current Coronavirus pandemic came to pass. But oh, how much more does this viral scourge cause us to feel the sting of this reality.

Reflecting back to the hymn “Be Still My Soul,” the author sends us a gold nugget of hope for such a time as this: “Be still, my soul: when dearest friends depart, and all is darkened in the vale of tears, then shall you better know His love, His heart, who comes to soothe your sorrow and your fears.”

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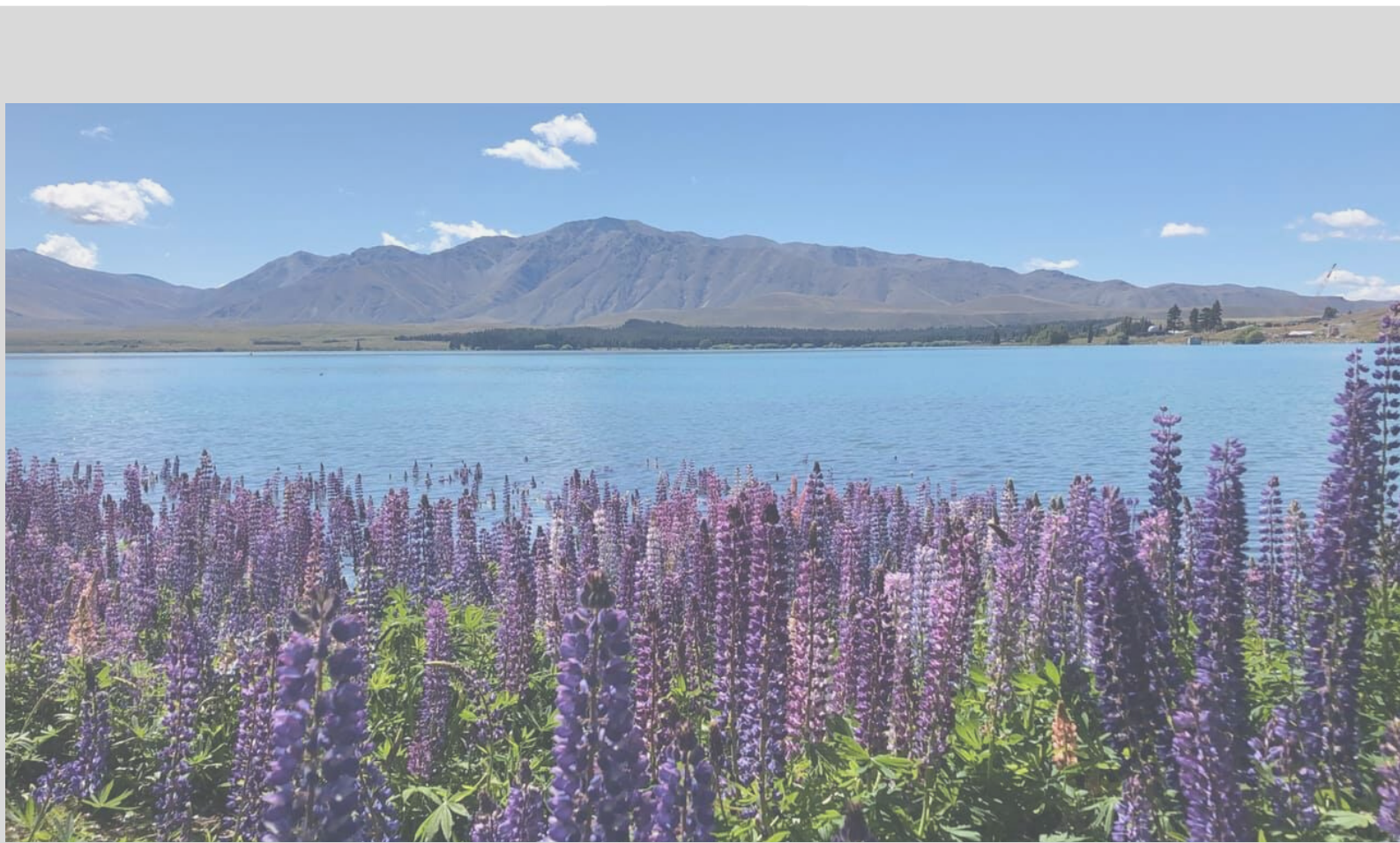
We all live in a vale of tears.

What is your vale of tears? Perhaps you are quarantined alone. Maybe you have recently watched loved ones die. Maybe you are reading this in the wee hours of the morning, dreading the moment when your little ones wake up demanding your attention. Sister, remember how sweet communion with the Lord can taste when we see His face and His promises amidst our pain. He soothes us when we are sad and afraid.

I really don't know how to carry a tune. Even still, the importance of singing hymns is not lost on me. Hymns don't forfeit their communal, historical, or theological significance because I can't sing. My lack of musical ability simply allows for a greater opportunity of reflection and to ponder the areas of my life where I need soothing. Sister, what hymns are you reflecting on during this time?

Where do you need Christ to soothe you?





LOVE POEMS

Written by Sharika Roland

Love poems are delicious
Words that slip down your
throat and fill
Your tummy with yummy
And they radiate out
Into love strings
That tie around your mind
Until you can barely
Stand up.

LAVENDAR

Written by Sharika Roland

Lavender
Sweet cool purple
Whispering repose
And renewal
Wafting in the sun
Like magic wands
Enchanting all who
Need a beautiful place to
go.

FRIENDSHIP CIRCLES

Written by Dawn Darby



Have you heard about the Friendship Circles that the Women's Ministry of Faith has established for the women in the church?

These are small groups of women who meet on a regular basis for fellowship and fun. The purpose of these Friendship Circles is to help women of different ages and stages of life get to know each other better, enter into one another's lives, encourage one another, and pray for one another.

The aim is to meet once a month. Before COVID-19, these meetings were held in homes, coffee shops, restaurants, on hiking trails, etc. Now, they are all meeting by Zoom. Even though this is not ideal, what about life is these days? Are you interested in connecting with other women from Faith?

Please contact Dawn Darby at darbydawnm@gmail.com to get set up in a group.

UPCOMING EVENTS (LORD WILLING)

Written by Janie Irwin

-Field Trip – Saturday, June 20th, 9am – 3pm Flower World Nursery in Maltby, WA. Recommendation from Shari Roland: “All are welcome! Join us for a delightful trip to Flower World in Maltby. Walk through the biggest nursery in Washington! They have everything you could possibly want, and buy! The prices are very reasonable. You can picnic in the beautiful park, which has a pond and fountain. You can visit Maltby Produce Market right across the street to get all sorts of wonderful things to bring home. They even have animals, so you will not get bored. There is a winery (JM Cellars at the Vault at Maltby) a block away and so if you are so inclined, wine is available for tasting! Please join us for a wonderful day together again!”

-Women's Ministry Kick-Off Dinner & Meeting –
Thursday, September 17th

-Women's Retreat – Thursday–Saturday, October 22–
24th Falls Creek Retreat Center, Raymond, WA

-WMF Meeting – Thursday, November 19th

-Christmas Brunch – Saturday, December 5th

PRAYERS FOR THE PANDEMIC

A Prayer For God to be Glorified

Prayers taken from YouVersion emails 3/23/20 - 4/13/20.

It's Your Name that is honored from generation to
generation.

You alone are worthy of all glory and praise.
And You are not shocked by the state of the world right
now.

Your ways are not our ways, and You are not at a loss
about what to do.

Nothing is impossible for You.
So today, we pray that You will be glorified through this
pandemic.

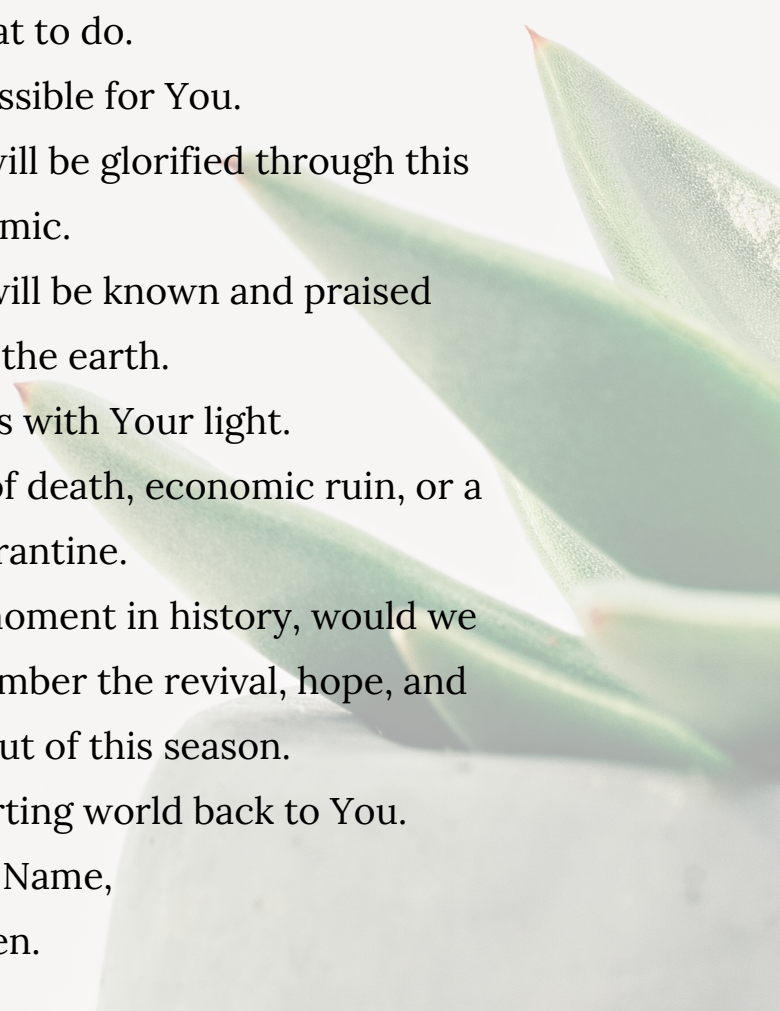
We pray that Your Name will be known and praised
throughout the earth.

Pierce the darkness with Your light.
Shine brighter than the fear of death, economic ruin, or a
long quarantine.

When we look back on this moment in history, would we
be filled with joy as we remember the revival, hope, and
peace that came out of this season.

Continue to draw this hurting world back to You.

In Jesus' Name,
Amen.

A close-up photograph of an aloe vera plant, showing its thick, green, pointed leaves. The plant is positioned on the right side of the page, with its leaves extending towards the center. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light green.

Welcome to being a parent of a teenager. Prepare for a large amount of eye rolling, emotional outbursts, and thoughts of running away. And that's just the parents.



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WHY DOES COOKING TAKE
LIKE 5 HOURS AND EATING
TAKE LIKE 20 SECONDS AND
WASHING DISHES TAKE LIKE
7 DAYS AND 7 NIGHTS?

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WANT TO BE FEATURED IN THE NEXT ISSUE?

Written by Sarah Gauthier

We are accepting submissions for the Women of Faith newsletter, June edition! Do you have a piece of writing that you would like to be considered for publication? Send your article, update, recipe, or poem to Gauthierfamily2016@gmail.com by May 15, 2020!