

February – March 2021

Faith
&
Family

Connecting the Community to the Christ

Connect

A Ministry of Victory Baptist Church

Is There Any Hope?

By Pastor Mike Ennis

Our men's quartet sings an old gospel song called, "Jesus is Coming Soon." The first few words of that song are, "Troublesome times are here, filling men's hearts with fear, Freedom we all hold dear now is at stake." We are singing this song this Sunday morning, so the words are fresh on my mind and seem very fitting for the time in which we are living. Last year, and so far, this year, we have experienced "troublesome times".



We are faced with a world-wide pandemic which brings with it the threat of sickness and possible death. The fallout of this pandemic, quarantines, closed businesses, layoffs, have brought

and additional layer of "troublesome time" in addition to the disease itself. Put with this the social unrest of a divided nation, the rising threat of foreign enemies, a new president with the concern of how his policies will affect our freedoms and prosperity and we are indeed faced with "troublesome times." The fact is that none of this is new for other nations and times, but we Americans have had it incredibly good. We have lived free, prosperous lives built upon a Christian heritage which believes in God, the Bible, sanctity of life, and the traditional family. America is not, nor has it every been perfect, but it has been the greatest nation on the earth and that is, in large part, because of the blessings of God. But things are changing at a very rapid pace. Christians are left with an uneasy feeling at best. How should we respond to what is going on? Should we be in despair? Is there any hope? Well, the answer to that question is yes and no. There is hope, great hope, if you look for it in the right place. If you are looking for hope to our government or politicians, you will be disappointed.

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Mike Ennis – Senior Pastor

Morris Starkey - Editor

Too Good To Be True?

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”

Most of us know that if something sounds too good to be true, then it is just that - too good to be true. Recently, I heard a preacher say that the Gospel, which is commonly referred to as the Good News, is more accurately defined as “the nearly too good to be true, news.”

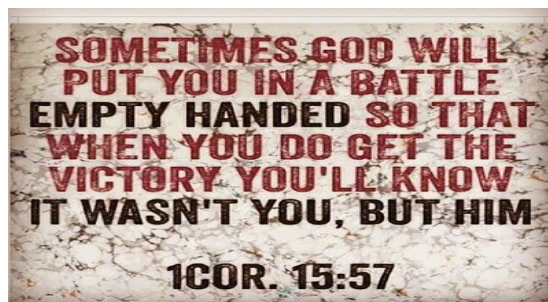
Well, the so-called, “nearly too good to be true, news” is that for love God gave His Son to save humanity from eternal condemnation (hell); and, that Salvation is free; we cannot achieve, work for, or purchase it. And, that, this situation is called grace, which is defined as the unmerited, unearned, and undeserved favor of God.

Jesus died on the cross and He rose from the grave, demonstrating God’s power over sin and death (1 Corinthians 6:14). And, because of His sacrifice, you and I are made right with God. Wow. This is news you can believe! “For by grace are [have been] saved through faith and not of yourselves, i— not by works, lest any man should boast boast”(Ephesians 2:8).

Jayne Howard



<https://vcakokomo.com/contact>



Just Walk Away

“But refuse (shut your mind against, have nothing to do with) trifling (ill-informed, unedifying, stupid) controversies over ignorant questionings, for you know that they foster strife and breed quarrels.” 2 Timothy 2:23 (AMP) God’s word notes that Satan’s goal is to steal, kill and destroy. He doesn’t always use over-the-top, easy-to-recognize theatrics to pull us out of God’s will. No. More often, he uses subtle annoyances to first steal our peace. Minor arguments and petty irritations between loved ones and brethren play on our human sensibilities, distracting us from our focus on God’s will.

Paul warned Timothy to recognize silly issues and questionings, and to refuse engagement, lest he be consumed by strife and contention. He knew Satan’s antics all too well. In warning Timothy, he was also warning the body of Christ today.

Sometimes, we need to walk away from potential conflicts if they are not righteous. By engaging in nonsensical confrontation, we run the risk of inadvertently falling into Satan’s trappings. It’s okay to walk away from controversy that threatens your peace. The source just might be Satan at work, using someone close to your heart, to steal your peace. Once your peace is gone, it’s easier for him to kill your spirit and destroy your faith. Learn when to just walk away. Time and space may be the remedy for peaceful resolution.

Ennis Smith

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A Lonely World

“A man that hath friends must show himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” (Proverbs 18:24)

A man told his friend: "I'm on Tumblr, Facebook and Flickr. I blog, I text and I Twitter, and I'm still lonely." How ironic. In this age of everything digital that you can imagine to connect to another human being, we can still end up being lonely.

We humans are a peculiar lot. There are times we want to be left alone, but, in reality, we can never abandon our God-given desire to connect with another person on some level. It's called the "connect and communicate" function that is part of our need to survive. This isn't a bad thing. From the cradle to the grave, we long to connect with another in some form or fashion.

Today's technology can aid us in our quest to connect and communicate. But that is all it can do. It can never replace hearing someone speak, feeling their warm touch or seeing how much they care. Our desire to connect with another goes deeper than mere friendships and casual acquaintances. Adam's sin left a hole in our soul. Without our connection to something greater, we can wander around in life aimlessly for years and not have the satisfying relationships we desire. The only remedy for this is to reconnect to the Great Connector and keep our connection to Him current. And nothing digital we have will ever do that for us.

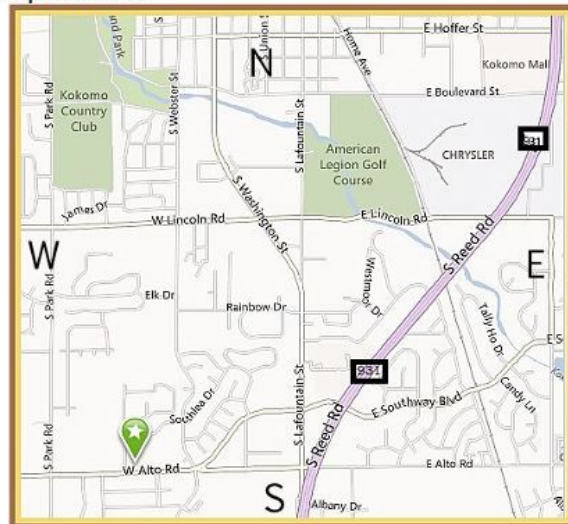
Bob Valleau



Don't Blame God

Ephesians 2:1-2 (NIV) As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of the world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

Map to Church



610 West Alto Road, Kokomo.

People don't believe you are near when things are so bleak and dark. It's hard for them to understand that if you are in control and always with us, why do you allow the pain and suffering? They are wondering why you are letting these disasters, wars, tragedies, and all the evil happen. They feel deserted especially when it happens to them.

People don't understand that it is not your choice. God, you don't initiate these traumatic situations. It is about the free will that you gave each and every one of us at the beginning of time. You gave free will to Adam and Eve and when you commanded them not to eat the fruit on the Tree of Life, they chose to sin. Satan tempted Eve and this is when sin began. The choice is ours. You, God, gave us standards to live by—statutes, laws, and commandments; it is our choice to follow them or not.

Satan is the ruler of the air; he is responsible for all evil and sin in this world. Always remember, Jesus defeated Satan when He died and rose again. Choose God--don't blame Him.

Susan Allen

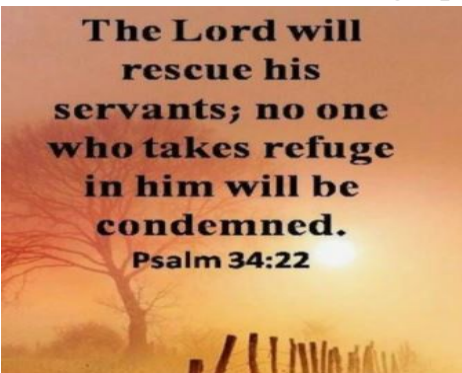
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(Any Hope? From Page 1)

If you are looking to doctors, or other men, you will be disappointed. If you are looking for hope in your bank account or education or any other thing in this life you will be disappointed. In fact, there is only one place that you can find hope. That hope is found in Jesus Christ and the gospel



message. The hope that we have is vested in eternity. This world is ugly and will continue to be so until God takes care of the sin problem completely. For a Christian it involves hope past this life. In fact if your hope is here Paul describes you as miserable or to be pitied. 1 Corinthians 15:19 (AV) ¹⁹ If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. Our hope is not in a world that we will not have problems or troubles. Jesus John 16:33 (AV) ³³ These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. Our hope is in the fact that Christ has overcome the world. He has triumphed over the power of sin and darkness. He has conquered death. This world is fallen and will not get better until the fruition of

salvation. It involves three things. First it involves a resurrection of our bodies from the grave. 1 Corinthians 15:19–20 (AV) ¹⁹ If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. ²⁰ But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become the firstfruits of them that slept. Secondly it involves a reunion. 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17 (AV) ¹⁶ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: ¹⁷ Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be **caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.**

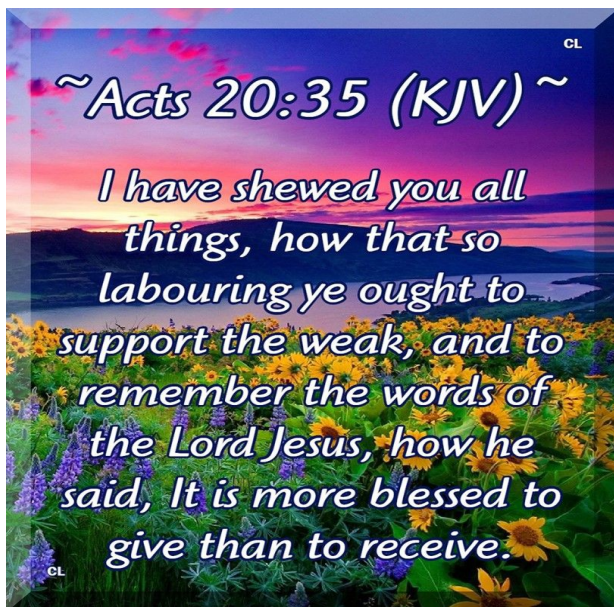
Lastly it involves a restoration of all things. Revelation 21:1–4 (AV) ¹ And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. ² And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God. ⁴ And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

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(Any Hope? From Page 4)

This is our true hope. It is in eternity. In the meantime, we are guided to our destination by the sustaining presence of Christ. He will not always deliver us from our trouble, but He will go with us through it. He will take us to our true home in heaven. The last verse of the song “Jesus is coming soon” says, “Troubles will soon be o’er; happy forevermore, when we meet on that shore, free from all care. Rising up in the sky, telling this world goodbye; Homeward we then will fly, glory to share.” This is our true hope.



LETTING GO

“Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.” ~Isaiah 43:18-29 (ESV)

Do you have “what ifs” or “if only’s”, or anything else that is in the past that is hard to let

go of? We need to be intentional about working on leaving it in the past. We all have had trying events, bumpy roads, regrets and stress. It can be emotionally difficult to let go of these things. Ask God to help you carry burdens of the heart, past troubles and heartaches. We experience regret in life, and experiences in life that may not always be pleasant, and sometimes difficult BUT we learn and grow from those things. Romans 8:28 tells us, “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose”. (ESV)

When driving a vehicle we look forward in order to see where we are going. We do not look in the rear view mirror to see where we are going, just as life cannot advance forward if we are stuck looking back. Easier said than done, but prayer and practice letting go is key. Pray and pray often. Seek God’s help, strength and peace. Look to His many gifts at your disposal. Stay focused on the rainbow, instead of the storm!

Gwen Mirman



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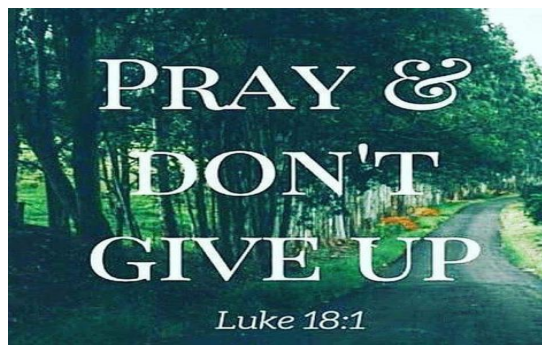
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A Very Human Hero

Judges 6:14–15 —“The Lord turned to him and said, “Go in the strength you have and deliver Israel from the power of Midian. Am I not sending you?” He said to Him, “Please, Lord, how can I deliver Israel? Look, my family is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father’s house.”

Everybody loves a hero. It is evident in literature and film, regardless of culture. Heroes are appealing because they are often ordinary people empowered to become extraordinary. Gideon was such a man. When the Angel of the Lord tasked Gideon to deliver the Israelites, his reaction was essentially, “Who, me?” In his own strength he felt woefully inadequate for the job. Even the appearance of God did not quell his insecurities. But as the story unfolds, through the power of God he becomes the mighty warrior the Lord calls him in Judges 6:12.

When you feel inadequate in the face of an insurmountable task, remember the Lord’s faithfulness to Gideon. His presence and power also enable us to be extraordinary. A. B. Simpson wrote, “God is preparing His heroes. And when the opportunity comes, He can fit them into their places in a moment. And the world will wonder where they came from.” Gideon’s story reminds us that God helps us all to be very human heroes.
Shirley Ralston



“God Only Knows” by Richard Belford

John 14:1-4“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going.”

Just as miracles are, God sent,
tragedies occur for reasons
known only to God.

Whether it is the gift of birth
or the loss of a life,
one cannot exist without the other.

The gift of life is just that.
The power of reason is the knowledge
there’s no guarantee.

So, enjoy what you’re given,
mourn what you’ve lost
finding comfort in, God only knows.



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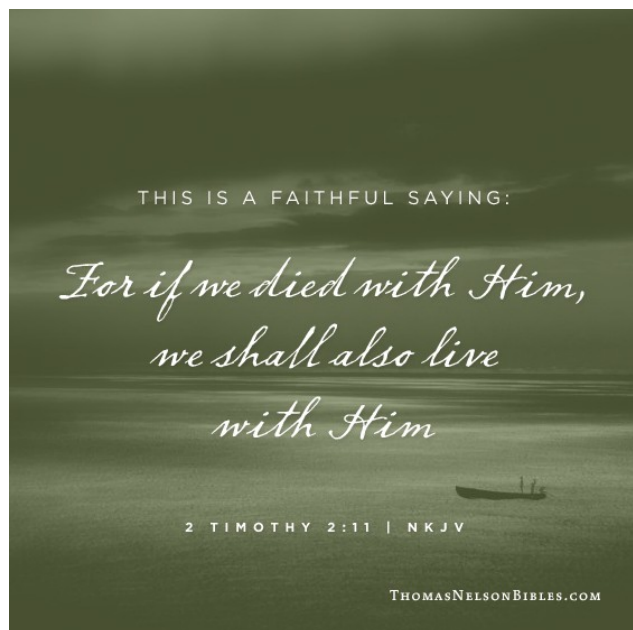
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From Fragile Earthly Life To Life Eternal

"For God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16 (NKJV)

Greeting the dawn in my barn, one of my trusted outside cats approached with a "prize". This hard working fellow does a great job of keeping rodents out of the barn, and always shows me his catch to receive praise. As he got closer I could tell that the object was a flapping bird, actually a very young turkey.

When he dropped the bird at my feet, he was surprised when I shooed him away. While still alive, it was clear that he would die, so I just cuddled him in his death throes. Across the fence I spied the hen which, realizing her chick was dead, returned to the care for the living. And when my loyal barn cat returned later, I gently held him, letting him know that he was still appreciated.



This little event, common on any farm, exemplifies the fragility of life as well as the

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wonders that God has provided. It also shows simply the importance of living each day like it's our last. Only God knows when we will be called and being prepared for Him is imperative. Just think of the benefits. By living as He wants and believing in Him we can look forward to Eternal Life. And it's all because Jesus gave His very life for us. Oh, what a gift.

James Dick



Cast your cares on the
Lord and he will sustain
you; he will never let the
righteous be shaken.

Psalm 55:22

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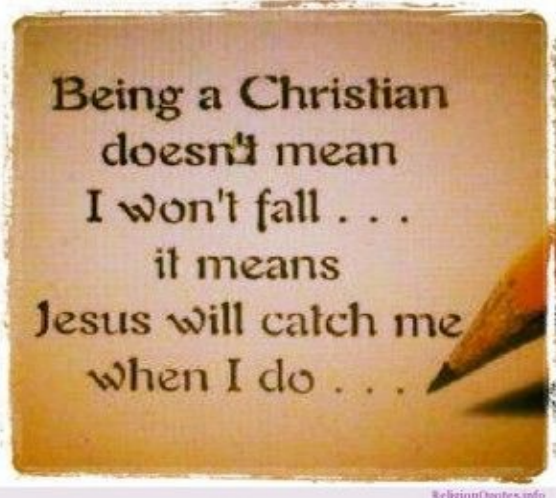
A.W. Tozer
1897-1963

Aiden Wilson Tozer was born April 21, 1897 on a small farm in Western Pennsylvania, the third of six children. And although he would inspire millions with his preaching and writing, he was given very little education during his childhood.



A. W. Tozer was 66 when he died of a heart attack on May 12, 1963. Buried in a small cemetery in Akron, his tombstone simply and appropriately reads, "A Man of God." He left behind many books that continue to give Christians encouragement and guidance. His writings are as fresh today as when he was alive. His honest and colloquial humor has been known to sweep up congregations in gales of laughter. And his wisdom has left them silent and stunned. For almost 50 years Tozer walked with God, and even though he is

gone, he continues to minister to those who are eager to experience God.



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