



NON-PROFIT

The Good News Letter

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TAX-EXEMPT

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" MARK 16:15

November 2024

FROM US TO YOU

It's November already, the month that we Americans traditionally thank God for all His blessings and for protecting us and making the United States of America a great nation. We hope and pray that it returns to being that way, although Satan is working hard to stop it. At least historically, we have been great financially, militarily, and technologically. We have long been a melting pot of different cultures, skin colors, religions, and ethnic backgrounds. Logically, it would seem that so many different people from diverse backgrounds would not be able to come together as a nation and make for themselves a successful country. So what is the glue that has always held us together? From the earliest settlers it has been our united faith in God, our Creator, and in Jesus Christ, our Redeemer (see John 14:6). However, you may be thinking, America is a nation of many religions and there are many that are not of the Christian faith. This country started out as an untamed wilderness. The early settlers had left their native countries due to some kind of hardship and to get a fresh start.

There were no new housing communities at the beginning, no supermarkets, or fast food restaurants, no hospitals, or fire departments, and not many courthouses. Neighbors had to depend on themselves for their needs. They had to band together as a group to put out each others' fires, nurse the sick, fend off native attacks or those of wild animals. They had to somehow work together and unite for the common good. When they were settled, they would seek out others who followed their cultural traditions, to form communities. They faced many terrors in the new world. Even so, one basic faith was to be called upon when all others seemed remote. Most of the early settlers were European Christians. They depended on God. And, as new ethnic groups added to the nation, they seemed to sense the strength of faith in those who followed Christ. America had crime, animal attacks, fights, and troubles. Even so, with God's help, they formed a great nation. America became great because God is great, and they served Him and respected His laws! In 1956, Congress even adopted the motto "In God We Trust" to be printed on our paper money.

All the nation's laws were based on the Bible, the Holy Word of God (John 1:14). After a while American and European missionaries were sent out all over the world to tell natives from other nations that there is only one God (see 1 Timothy 2:5), and He is worth serving. Their ethnic idols cannot offer them what God can give them, and He is the only one who sacrificed His own Son for them (John 3:16). It was a hard life for all Americans when they first came to this country. However, America became great because God is great. It became a Christian country. Let us work together to make it stay that way! It is Satan's goal to destroy America and the Christian heritage that we have (John 10:9-10).

As we prepare this newsletter, election day has not come yet. As we pray for a good outcome, let us discuss an aspect of importance. It has been said that many fundamentalist Christians choose not to vote in American elections because of their faith. Yet Jesus told His

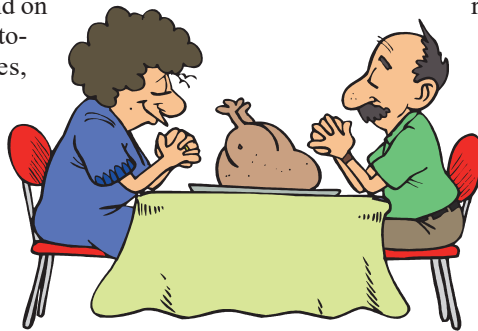
followers a parable about a man of noble birth who left his servants and went on a long trip. Before he left He gave three of his servants money to take care of things until he came back. He expected them to use it wisely. However, when he came back, he called his servants together to see what they had spent his money on. Two of the men had done well. Their master greatly rewarded them. They had doubled the money He had given them. Then the third one, "...the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.' 'His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with **the bankers**, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest'" (Matthew 25:24-27 NIV). He wasted what his master had given him and was punished.

The bankers are in Heaven (see Matthew 6:19-21). The money represents the blessings God has given us, the talents, good health, wealth, and ability. We are expected to use them to increase our Master's will as we watch over what He left in our care until He comes back. The one who buried it in the ground is burying it in earthly things. It's like a singer who chooses to become a success in this world instead of singing Christian music to give God glory. You simply can't do both! "...Don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes

an enemy of God" (James 4:4 NIV). Whatever little or lot that God gave us we must use for the good. Christ is not here on earth anymore. He can't vote for what is His will. We are to promote that which is His will, based on the Bible. If you don't vote for rulers who respect God and do His will, you are like the servant who buried it in the ground. When righteous people don't do God's will in an election, they make it easier for the unrighteous to win. This started out as a Christian nation. Let's try to restore what we have lost over the past few decades. What is "politically correct" is usually based on man-made decisions (1 Corinthians 3:19-20), not necessarily God's. Jesus said, "*These people honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me. They worship Me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men*" (Matthew 15:8-9 NIV).

Let us make this year's Thanksgiving a special day of giving God glory for what He has already done and what bounty He has waiting for us in Heaven. "*Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*" (Matthew 6:19-21 NIV). Have a wonderful Thanksgiving everyone!

In Christ's Service we remain, *Eric and Anne Kaestner*



Learning To Pray

By Anne Kaestner

Over the years, I have sometimes been surprised at the lack of understanding people have when it comes to something as basic to the Christian faith as prayer. Some of it, I am convinced, is due to bad doctrine or family tradition. For example, nowhere in the Bible does it tell us to use rosary beads when praying. That's just a church doctrine. However, if clutching a necklace of beads makes you feel better when you pray, I don't believe it does any harm. However, no one in the Bible ever used one in prayer, not even the great prophets or disciples. So it's meaningless as far as God is concerned. Jesus gave an example of the kind of prayer God expect from us. *"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen"* (Matthew 6:9-13 KJV). I remember hearing that on nine-eleven, when our nation was attacked, at least one or more male passengers on a plane that was hijacked asked someone on the phone to guide him through that prayer before the plane crashed.

However, that prayer is just an example of the type of thing God wants to hear from us. Some churches use a prayer book in order to pray for certain needs. But the point that Jesus was making in His teaching on the subject is that God wants you to pray out of your heart, **directly** to Him. One important aspect that I want to stress is that Jesus told His disciples to pray to God the Father, **not** a saint or the Lord's mother (see Luke 11:27-28), or even to the Holy Spirit. Pray **through** the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 14:15, Galatians 5:25), but address your prayer **to God** the Father, as "Dear Heavenly Father." Of course, that assumes you are a "Born Again" child of God (John 3:3). If you haven't seriously repented of your sins, your prayers are not as likely to avail you much. *"For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are attentive to their prayer; but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil"* (1 Peter 3:12 NIV). Of course, the heartfelt, humble prayer of someone who confesses their sin **to God** and asks for **His** forgiveness will always be heard by Him! That will make you a true child of God (John 1:12-13)! That's why Jesus died for your sins, so you can be forgiven when the request is made with a promise that, with God's help, you will live a changed life, for Him.

Praying should not be a chore. For Christians, praying should be a blessing, that we have the right to speak directly to our Creator, who made us, and the whole universe we live in (Genesis 1:1, John 1:3). It's a opportunity for us, who love Him, to talk to God about our problems, fears, and hopes for the future. For the true child of God, who has repented of their sin and asked God to forgive them and guide them, it should be a stress reliever and a joy. Jesus said, *"And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him"* (Matthew 6:5-8 NIV).

When I first came to Christ in repentance, I was ten years old. I had only been in America since I was eight. My mother had occasionally

attended the church of England, which is the Episcopalian church in this country. She had sent me to Sunday school there, she said "to please your grandmother." My American grandmother was Pentecostal. She had only seen me when I was a baby, when she had gone to England for my birth. Yet her prayers for me and my salvation continued year after year. I remember going to Sunday school in England. However, I was erroneously led to assume that only **very** evil people go to Hell (1 Corinthians 6:9, Revelation 20:15, 21:8). I was going to a Christian church and I lived in a "Christian" country (in those days). So there was the presumption that I was a Christian. In Sunday school I was taught Bible stories. But no one mentioned anything about being "Born Again" (John 3:3), and not much time was spent talking about prayer. Again, I had been taught to assume that you only need to pray when the need is very great, like when a loved one is sick. Therefore, many aspects of Christianity were new me at age ten. After I came to America I was able, on Wednesday afternoons, to attend "release time" at Grandma's church, "Ridgewood Pentecostal." That led to my attending Sunday school there, where I accepted Christ as my Savior and Lord. That's when I learned more about prayer. I knew that from that time on that, no matter where I was, or what happened to me, I would never be alone again. I could talk to God, my Heavenly Father, any time at all.

A year or two after that, an event happened at my parents' home one evening I will always remember. We lived in the downstairs apartment in the house that Grandma owned. We had only been there about a couple of years when an argument broke out between my parents and some neighbors. It had become increasingly hostile a few minutes later and sounded like it was about to turn into a physical altercation. The door to our apartment was wide open, and I could hear their voices yelling at each other. At only ten years old it was a frightening experience. However, I remembered a scripture I had learned in Sunday school. In those days, they always used the King James Version (KJV). It was when Jesus said, *"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly"* (Matthew 6:6 KJV).

The "New International Version" translates it as "your room." But I didn't know that it really meant prayer room. So I went into my bedroom, climbed into my tiny closet, pushing away the clothes, and began to pray to the Lord about the situation. The knowledge that I had someone bigger and more powerful than my parents, that I could always turn to, was a blessing. It may have been the first major prayer I made after coming to the Lord in repentance. Instantly I heard my mother's voice and they both came back into the house and closed the door. The fight was over. I hadn't even left the closet yet! God answered my prayer that quickly. My parents were acting relieved, as if they had won the fight. They hadn't. From what I heard later, it was almost a stalemate. However, it had nearly come to blows. My mother had slapped the neighbor's husband across the face for trying to intimidate my Dad. Both my parents had bad tempers. The neighbors did too. But, no doubt, God had intervened, and the neighbors had backed off. I was so relieved! But more than that, it had increased my faith! As I was growing up I had many painful experiences. Yet when I was upset I would always do two things. I would write about it in my diary and take it to the Lord in prayer. It was a source of ultimate comfort for me.

It's always difficult when your family, who you live with, can't



relate to the way of life that you, as a Christian, take for granted. My mother often thought my faith was too extreme. She called it “fanatical, like your grandmother’s.” For instance, when I was eleven years old, my mother went back to England for a four-month visit to see her mother and her birth family. I was taken out of sixth grade for the duration and transplanted in a British school near where we lived. My sister and brother came along too. My Dad stayed behind. He had to work. One day I misplaced something I was looking for. It wasn’t anything crucial, just something I needed at that time. Mother and Nanny (her mother) didn’t know where it was either. But they just figured I had lost it, and that was that. However, about five minutes later, I happily announced to them, “I’ve found it! I prayed about it, that God would tell me where it was.” Both of them were surprised that I had located it so quickly. But they said that it was too little a thing to pray about, and implied that I was bothering God with something that was relatively unimportant. Apparently the Lord didn’t feel that way!

It is God’s desire for us, who love Him, to have a close intimate relationship with Him. He wants to be a major part of our lives. In fact, He wants our lives to revolve around Him (Matthew 22:36-38). Christ loved us enough to leave the glories of Heaven and come into this evil world, to die a torturous, humiliating death for our salvation. He did it because He loves us so much! And God the Father, “...so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him” (John 3:16-17 NIV). The Lord wants to be an active part of our lives, even in the little things. God’s love was really not for this sinful world but the people in it.

There was a situation in the Bible where the Israelites wanted a human king, like the other nations had. Up until then, God alone had led them. Samuel prayed about it and asked the Lord to give them a king. God chose Saul. He was a strong yet humble young man in those days (1 Samuel 9:21). “When Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near, the tribe of Benjamin was chosen. Then he brought forward the tribe of Benjamin, clan by clan, and Matri’s clan was chosen. Finally Saul son of Kish was chosen. But when they looked for him, he was not to be found. So they inquired further of the LORD, ‘Has the man come here yet?’ And the LORD said, ‘Yes, he has hidden himself among the baggage’” (1 Samuel 10:20-22 NIV). That scripture has always amused me. There is no way we can hide from God! He always knows where we are and what we are doing (Psalm 94:11). However, the point I am making is that God answered their prayer. Of course, my prayer to the Lord to help me find something minor may seem unimportant when compared with finding the man who would be king! But God answered my prayer for something unimportant too. There is nothing that concerns God’s children (John 1:12-13) that the Lord does not care about (Psalm 91:14-16)!

However, there are occasions when our prayers are about something that is important, even life-threatening. When I was much younger, I once had a temporary assignment working at an insurance company. My boss was a black man from Haiti. He told me he was a Christian. He looked strong and healthy and was in his late thirties or early forties. My first day there, he was deeply troubled about his wife who had been in a severe accident and was in a coma in the hospital. The doctors had told him that she was in a vegetative state due to all the brain damage. He was beside himself with grief! She was a young woman with an infant baby at home. He didn’t know what to do or how he would manage. I felt so bad for him that, during my evening

prayer that night, I spent about an hour praying for his wife. I begged God to heal her. Then, the next day, as I walked into the large office building, I heard his voice. It was so loud! I wasn’t even in their suite yet, just the lobby by the entrance way. He was saying, “Praise God! Oh, thank you doctor! Thank God. Praise God. Thank you for calling!”

When I got to his cubicle he told me what the doctor said. The hospital staff had checked on his wife at 11:00 PM the previous night. Nothing had changed. They hadn’t done anything different. He said that the doctor told him that they couldn’t take any credit for it because they didn’t understand it themselves. But when they checked on her at about 7:00 am the next day, she was totally healed, and they were releasing her from the hospital! God doesn’t always answer my prayers so quickly. However, I’m glad that He healed that woman, who needed it so desperately! “Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective” (James 5:16 NIV). When the Bible uses the word “man” God is referring to women as well (see Genesis 5:1-2).

That being said, it is important for you to understand that even though you, who love Him, pray humbly to God about something that is important to you, you may not always get a quick answer. Sometimes it takes weeks, months, years, or even decades. And often the answer comes in a totally different way from what you expected or asked for. For instance, you might pray for your spouse to get “saved” but it may seem like they’re getting worse every day. It

doesn’t mean that God is not answering your prayer. Chances are God is working on their heart, but the devil is putting up a fight to keep them from the Lord. God won’t **make** anyone love Him. He made us with free will. He did not want any robots or androids. Even the angels were given free will. And look what happened (Revelation 12:7-9)! Lucifer became jealous of God (Isaiah 14:12-15) and led one third of God’s heavenly angels in a rebellion against the Lord (Revelation 12:3-4). Adam and Eve were given free will too when God made mankind. Consequently, Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, loved us enough to leave Heaven to come into this world and die in our place. My mother-in-

law, Gerry Kaestner died in 1998. She finally repented of her sin and accepted Christ as her Savior just five days before she died! We had been praying for her salvation since we were married 18 years earlier. So don’t give up praying (Luke 18:1-8).

The devil is the one who enslaves people spiritually, such as to an addiction like alcoholism, drugs, gambling, cigarettes, or some other form of idolatry (see John 8:34). The apostle Paul said to the Christian church, “Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator” (Colossians 3:5-10 NIV). Only through Christ can the chains come off (John 8:36)! Keep praying for them. Don’t give up!

My parents met in World War 2, when my Dad was stationed in England. My mother was married to him in New York after the war. But she missed her birth family and, therefore, wouldn’t stay in this country, but returned to England. My grandmother in America kept praying for me and my salvation, year after year. Before I was born my dad, her son, moved to England to

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live with my mother. He got a job and stayed there for nine years. That's where my siblings and I were born. Then, one day, my Dad got a letter in the mail from his brother, Eddie. He said that Grandma had lung cancer and not much time left to live. So be careful what you pray for! Sometimes God has to take drastic action to make it happen!

My Dad left England right away to return to New York and be with her. However, my mother refused to leave England. She felt that when Grandma died her husband would return to her. Grandma, sick as she was, kept praying for her grandchildren, especially me, whom she had seen as a baby. My parents were separated for two more years, but my mother would not acquiesce. My grandma stayed alive, but was dying slowly and painfully. She just wanted to see her grandchildren before she died. Neither of her remaining two sons got married. So my siblings and I were the only grandchildren she had. Nanny had many. It wasn't until after two years of separation that my mother finally capitulated. What happened was that she received a letter from my Dad threatening divorce. He said he had seen a lawyer who told him that he thought he could get custody of his children. My mother brought my siblings and me to America in 1961, and I accepted Christ two years later!

One day I went upstairs to visit my grandma. She was beaming with more joy than I had ever seen in her. She told me that God had spoken to her and told her that some day He was going to give me a worldwide ministry. I had forgotten all about it for decades. However, we began this ministry in December 1988, when our first newsletter went out. Then, one day a year or two later, I remembered Grandma's prophecy. We basically started with just a prison ministry. But, with the invention of the Internet, we don't just hear from Americans. We get email from people all over this world asking questions, wanting prayer, buying our ebooks, or rarely, offering a donation! Amazingly, as sick as she was with lung cancer, Grandma lived for four more years until God took her home! So don't get discouraged or stop praying for those you care about! It sometimes takes drastic measures before hearts are changed for the Lord.

There is something else, that is important, that I want to stress about prayer. Sometimes it needs an extra boost from fasting along with prayer. Jesus fasted for forty days and forty nights before He began His ministry (Matthew 4:2). God gave Him strength, despite all the temptations Satan added (see Matthew 4:3-11). The Lord had a healthy, strong body, but it was still an ordeal. Daniel fasted too (Daniel 9:3 and Daniel 10:3). So, when the need is crucial, it sometimes helps to fast. However, when you fast, do **not** do it to try to persuade God to do **your** will. Do it in order to find out what God's will is for the situation. Balaam made the mistake of trying to get God to do **his** will. Balaam was influenced by the goodies of this world. He knew that he could profit from pleasing King Balak. The King wanted Balaam to persuade God to curse Israel. So Balaam sacrificed many animals to the Lord, in effect, trying to bribe God to curse Israel.

However, God had already told Balaam that He was going to **bless** Israel, not curse her. Despite this, Balaam kept trying, thinking to himself that if he offered the Lord enough sacrifices, God would change His mind. Nevertheless, it didn't work. And King Balak kept promising Balaam much wealth if he could get the Lord to curse Israel. But the Lord had made up His mind that He was going to

bless Israel. So Balaam just wasted his time because He wouldn't listen to God. He wanted God to listen to Him (Numbers 22:1 thru 24:25). God was angry at Balaam because Balaam was supposed to be a servant of God. But he cared more about pleasing King Balak. And, in the end, Balaam was killed and died in a state of unrighteousness (Numbers 31:8). It's like Jesus said, *"What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?"* (Matthew 16:26 NIV. Also, see Jude 1:11 and Revelation 2:14).

Now this is important. It's not a one way street with the Lord. When we are sincere Christians, God loves us more than any human ever would. But the Almighty God is not a Santa Claus! He doesn't exist to serve you. You exist to serve Him! So just praying for things all the time isn't enough. God expects to be an important part of your life. *"A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother"* (Proverbs 18:24 NIV). Your Savior is that friend, Jesus Christ. And God the Father loved you and me enough to send *"...His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life"* (John 3:16 NIV). So He wants to be assured that you love Him. Praise Him, for He is worthy. Thank Him for all the things He has done in your life. *"Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ"* (Ephesians 5:18-21 NIV).

Make God a regular part of your life. Let Him be a big part of your world. I have a habit, after my husband, Eric, and I pray at night, to play Christian music in the bedroom while I am getting ready for bed. Sometimes, especially on the songs where I can really feel God's Spirit, I sing along and praise Him to the music. Believe me, praying to God with all your heart is very important for the right relationship with Him. If you have the gift of tongues (Mark 16:17, Acts 2:1-4, and 1

Corinthians 12:1-4), pray with them as well. Paul told us the purpose for which God gave us tongues. Sometimes we want to talk to the Lord through prayer, but we are so emotional that we can't quite find the words to speak what is on our mind. *"In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will. And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose"* (Romans 8:26-28 NIV).

"There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues" (1 Corinthians 12:5-10 NIV).

Prayers of praise are very so important to the Lord too. Let the Almighty know that you worship and honor Him! I sincerely hope this has been a blessing for you.

