

BROKEN BREAD Page 04



Rachel – The Weeping Mother: Despair Vs Hope



DEVOTOPN Page 06



Crumbs from the master's table



Page 10



Momma Eagle Vs Momma Ostrich



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Deadly violence in Israel and Palestine

rulers left the region in 1948, and the Jewish leaders declared the formation of the state of Israel. Since many Palestinians opposed, a war ensued, and neighboring Arab countries invaded, but by the time

Continue on Page 15



Leila Abdullah selected mother of the year in Australia

Leila Abdullah and her husband Danny, originally from Lebanon and avidly practice their Christian faith, lost three out of six children in an accident caused by a drunk and drugged driver. She inspired others by forgiving the driver and has dedicated her award to all women who mourn the loss of their children. Abdullah's children, Antony, Angelina, Siena, and their cousin Veronic were on their way to buy ice cream when the call killed the children on the sidewalk. The two families involved in this tragedy forgave the man who drove the car. Abdullah believes that many people were inspired, impressed, forgiven in their families, and accepted their sorrows through her act of forgiveness.

Israelis and Palestinians have been at loggerheads for many decades now, but the latest violence witnessed followed a month of rising tensions in Jerusalem. In the past 55 years, Israel has built settlements in West Bank, where more than 600,000 Jews now live. Tensions flare up often between the Israelis and Palestinians living in East Jerusalem, West Bank, and Gaza. Gaza is now ruled by a militant group called Hamas. Even though Israel tightly controls Gaza's borders to prevent weapons

from getting to Hamas, they have been procuring weapons through the Mediterranean. The situation has deteriorated since mid-April with nightly clashes between Israeli police and Palestinians in East Jerusalem, and the threatened evictions of some Palestinian families have exacerbated the tempers.

Britain took control of the region called Palestine after they defeated the Ottoman Empire in World War I. During the 1st World War, the land was inhabited by a Jewish minority and Arab majority, and

when the tensions between the two peoples grew, the task of establishing a home for Jewish people in Palestine was given to Britain. Between the two World Wars, the number of Jews arriving in this area increased, with many fleeing Europe to find a place to stay from the Holocaust. For Jews, this region is their ancestral home for more than 3000 years. In 1947, the UN decided to split the region into separate Jewish and Arab states, which was rejected by the Arabs but accepted by the Jews. Unable to resolve the dispute, the British



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Our Advisors

C.V.MATHEW
Chief Editor
Goodnews
Weekly

T.M.MATHEW
Publisher
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CONTRIBUTING WRITERS (Current edition)

Dr. Binu Daniel, Cyril Philip, Divine Leonardo, Elizabeth Mathew, Grace Kathettu, Jacob Varghese, Dr. Joy Punnoose, Jossy Binz, TK Nandanam, Dr. Saji Abraham, Pr. Thomas Samuel.

June - The Father’s heart - 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12 (Father’s Day month)

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A Mother's Love
is Patient and Forgiving when all others are forsaking, it never fails or falters, even though the **HEART** is breaking...

FROM THE
editor

MOTHERS HOLD THE HEART



“A mother would (or should) know the ability or the lack thereof in her child”

A Jewish proverb says, “Mothers hold their children’s hands for a short while, but their hearts forever.” A mother’s love and care for her children is well-known. A mother seizes her child’s heart from birth by her gentle cherishing and nourishing and continues to captivate the mind of the growing child through her comfort in word and deed for the child amidst the struggles he/she faces in the navigation of various stages of life.

The Bible considers mothers on equal footing with the fathers by asking the children to honor both of them. In other words, it takes both the mother and the father to raise a child. Without the affection of a mother, a father’s strict discipline can have adverse effects on a child as they grow up. A father stresses rules in the house and instructs on moral absolutes giving awareness of the outcome of wrong choices. At the same time, a mother uses empathy and compassion to build a strong relationship with her child and identify and nurture the unique characteristics of each of her children.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, knew what Jesus could do, and hence she informed Jesus that the wedding celebration at Cana has run out of wine. Without the awareness of Jesus’ ability, Mary would not have dared inform Him of the need. The knowledge of what Jesus can do is also witnessed in her instruction to the servants. A mother would (or should) know the ability or the lack thereof in her child. Mary knew it is better to suggest than to command to Jesus; hence she did not reply to the answer she received for her notification of the lack. A wise mother knows when to respond and where to keep silent. Mary turned to the servants and, with motherly affection, requested them to do what Jesus asks them. The servants do not know what Jesus can, but Mary does. By requesting obedience from them, she was opening the door for experiential knowledge of Jesus. A mother has the responsibility to take the child to obedience so that they can have informational knowledge as well as an experiential realization of Christ. **Highlight: A mother would (or should) know the ability or the lack thereof in her child.**

BROKEN BREAD

THE IRREPLACEABLE MATERNAL LOVE

“The depravity of the mother’s care and love culminates in the distortion of the child’s personality”



A mother’s love is relentless and reliable, selfless and satisfying, natural and nurturing, caring and consoling. The natural bond and inimitable love shared between a mother and a child is a unique phenomenon clearly visible not only among humans but also among other species. It is a highly essential feature inevitable for the development and sustenance of the living creatures that the creator cleverly designed and built into nature. While the dominant portrayal of God in the Bible is paternal, there are numerous vivid characterizations of God as a mother. The Old Testament saints who experienced God’s care presented it using the metaphors of a mother bird (Ps 17:8; 57:1; 91:4; Deut. 32:10-11); a bear protecting her cubs (Hosea 13:8), and even as a comforting human mother (Is 42:14; 66:13; 49:15). Jesus used a similar metaphor to highlight divine

care and protection (Mt 23:37). Therefore, all mothers bear the creator’s signature in their motherly love, filled with compassion and benevolence. The sacrificial love of a mother for her child begins from the day the child is conceived. Her priorities, choice of food, sleeping pattern, and daily routine are transformed into a new rhythm around the child. Even every move the mother makes is with utmost care lest it harms the child. She bears the child not only in the womb but in her mind as well. The natural bond forged between the mother and child and the caring and nurturing relationship in the formative stage of a child determines the holistic development of every child. The depravity of the mother’s care and love culminates in the distortion of the child’s personality.

Regrettably, in the current climate of changing moral grounds, a growing number of children

around the world are deprived of motherly love and care, resulting in a generation that has been afflicted by it. The distortion of the concept of family, lack of good foundations about the meaning and purpose of human life, its sanctity and worth have hampered the natural, selfless love of mothers. The number of mothers mercilessly killing their children in the womb for their convenience is increasing day by day, justified with lame excuses - their right on their own body. The story of Jonathan Lancaster, who was abandoned by his parents at his birth just because of the ‘imperfection’ of his face due to Treacher Collins Syndrome, is one of many examples of diminishing motherly love and care of the present world. He is an inspiration for many who live with similar deformities today because another woman stepped into his life, adopted and raised him, and continued to support him even when he was rejected again by his biological parents when he attempted to contact them after becoming an adult.

True believers have a great responsibility to be role models in the church as well as in society to reclaim the losing virtue of motherly love that is highly

essential for the world. The early church practiced the gift of motherhood to building God’s Kingdom. Paul greets Rufus’ mother in Romans 16:13 and testifies that Rufus’ mother has been a mother to Paul as well. History witnessed several mothers who raised great men of God that changed the course of history. Susana Wesley is known as the ‘mother of Methodism’ because she was instrumental in raising John and Charles Wesley amid utmost hardships. Let the divine signature of maternal love embedded in godly mothers be unleashed into the world unreservedly to make a difference in a violent world.



PR. THOMAS SAMUEL
Luton, UK

Rev. Thomas Samuel is Minister at Word of Hope Christian Fellowship Luton (affiliated to AOG, U.K.), and Chaplain at NHS Bedfordshire Hospitals U.K.; online Discipleship Coach with Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. He is married to Praisya and they have three children.



Rachel – The Weeping Mother: Despair Vs Hope



“God solemnized the family to demonstrate and appreciate relationships and love, where a mother’s love is unparalleled and unequalled”

“A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted because they are no more” Jeremiah 31:15; Matthew 2:16-18.

Rachel, one of the matriarchs of the Israelites, died while giving birth to her second son, Benjamin, on the way to Bethlehem from Bethel. She was buried in the vicinity of Ramah, a place later allocated to the tribe of Benjamin. Centuries later, at Ramah, the residents of Judah (which included the tribe of Benjamin) were gathered before being taken into exile by the Babylonian army. Prophet Jeremiah allegorically portrays the somberness of this event by depicting Rachel as the weeping mother who is desperate beyond consolation at the plight of her children. When King Herod massacred male children in the quest to kill baby Jesus, the same imagery of Rachel weeping for her innocent children is cited by Apostle Matthew to describe the desperate and pathetic condition of the Israelites under the foreign regime.

A mother’s love is the epitome of affection and compassion on

earth. God solemnized the family to demonstrate and appreciate relationships and love, where mother’s love is unparalleled and unequalled. The picture of Rachel’s weeping represents the tenderness of a mother and the hopeless despair of her children, which would require divine intervention to bring forth consolation and restoration. Though the situation seemed bleak and gloomy, prophet Jeremiah does not stop with the description of Rachel’s weeping; he further goes on to comfort her with the promise that her children will return and will be restored. Likewise, Apostle Matthew writes that the situation was not as depressing as was imagined because salvation and hope through Jesus are at hand.

Today, amidst the pandemic and the resultant anxiety, sickness, loss, weeping, and wailing, our only resort is God who alone can reinstate us to normalcy. We have hope that our Lord promised to be with us always till the very

end of the age (Matthew 28:20). Though our feeble minds cannot comprehend all that is happening around us, we can rely on God’s sovereignty and trust that He is in control.

Our God is compassionate and merciful (Exodus 34:6). As a mother comforts her child, He comforts us in trouble (Isaiah 66:13). He promised that we would be filled with His peace amid trials and sorrows, and He urges us that we must be courageous because he has overcome the world (John 16:33). We are to bring our cases and petitions before the almighty God and wait on Him (Psalm 130:5). In the meantime, as we keep waiting for His deliverance, we should comfort and help one another (2 Corinthians 1:3,4).

Rachel was consoled and comforted in her weeping and despair with the new hope of restoration of her children. There is no other allegory so heart-warming that portrays the picture of a situation that swings from utter

despair to joyful cries than that of a desperate mother getting back her lost children.

Just like every dark cloud has a silver lining, amidst despair, our hope is anchored in God’s promise that *“those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint”* (Isaiah 40:31.)



JOSSY BINZ
Al Khobar, Saudi Arabia

Jossy Binz is a student of M.A Theology at IPC Theological Seminary. She has done her Master’s degree from Alagappa University (M.A. English Literature). As a Teacher, she has worked at St. Brittos Academy, Chennai. She is presently at Al Khobar, KSA with husband Binz Varghese and two kids.



Adversities are Opportunities to Trust God

I heard of a person who years ago spent most of his time planting trees. But he seldom watered the young trees because he thought that too much watering spoiled them. Later he found the trees have grown strong, durable, tall, and tough. Adversity and deprivation seem to have benefited them in ways that being sheltered and pampered could not.

Mathew Henry, the famous Bible scholar, was once confronted by thieves and robbed. In his diary, he wrote: “let me be thankful first because I was never robbed before; second, because they took my purse and not my life; third, because although they took my all, it was not much; and fourth, because it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed”. For Mathew Henry, doing God’s will was far more important than what had happened to him. None of us knows what our future holds for us. Sometimes God’s will involves walking through “the valley of the shadow of death”. At times we may have to choose the path of hardship because we need to do what is right, rather than what is easy. In all of our life’s difficulties, we need to remember that obeying God’s will is far more important than what may happen to us.

Once an Italian violinist Nicolo Paganini (1782-1840) was playing a difficult piece of music before a large audience. Suddenly one string on his violin snapped, yet he continued to play beautifully. Then two more strings broke and he completed the composition playing with only one string. When the round of applause eventually stopped, the violinist smiled at the audience and shouted, “Paganini

... and one string!” Placing his instrument under his chin, he played again with that one string. With that same concept in mind, Charles Swindoll, an evangelical Christian pastor, writes, “The longer I live, the more convinced I become that life is 10% what happens to us and 90% how we respond to it.” Have you allowed life’s adversities to discourage and immobilize you? With God’s help, make the most of the “one-string” you have been left with.

One measure of our spiritual maturity is the way we respond when things go wrong. If we give in to despair, doubt God’s existence, or strike out at some innocent person, we have some growing up to do. How about you? How did you respond the last time something went wrong? Did you fall apart? If so, you need to ask God for patience and a positive perspective to handle life’s setbacks in a mature Christian way. When things go wrong, ask God for strength and wisdom.

Job’s calamities were enormous. His oxen and donkeys were stolen. A fire consumed his sheep. Raiders took his camels. But that was just the beginning. A great wind destroyed the house where his sons and daughters were feasting and they all perished. His loss seemed unbearable! But notice Job’s response. He humbled himself and worshiped God. How can anyone worship while caught up in the fierce winds of adversity? The answer is clear: By anchoring our faith in the love and wisdom of God, we can say through our tears, “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”

“Sooner or later God will bring self-sufficient people to the place where they have no resource **but Him-no strength, no answers, nothing but Him. Without God’s help, they are in trouble.**”

A wise Bible teacher once said. “Sooner or later God will bring self-sufficient people to the place where they have no resource but Him-no strength, no answers, nothing but Him. Without God’s help, they are in trouble.” He then told of a despairing man who confessed to his pastor, “my life is really in a bad shape.” “How bad?” the pastor inquired. Burying his head in his hands, he moaned, “I’ll tell you how bad - all I’ve got left is God.” The pastor’s face lit up. “I’m happy to assure you that a person with nothing left but God has more than enough for great victory!” Are you in a position where all self-sufficiency is gone? As you turn your eyes on the Lord and put your hope in Him, you have God’s reassuring promise that you need nothing more.

All of us have struggles. They may be related to age, finances, relationships, or several other difficulties. But if we truly set our heart to trust God, and if we stay thankful even in the midst of our troubles, we will be more likely to acknowledge that we “don’t have anything to complain about.” I have observed that those who speak most often about God’s goodness are usually those with the most trials. They focus on the Lord’s mercy and grace rather than on their troubles, and in doing so, they taste His

goodness. God knows us personally and intimately. He monitors our thoughts and feelings all the time. As King David declared, we could be sure that when we cry out to Him, He hears us. He hears the shouts and the groans of our hearts. He knows when we are “broken” or “out of tune”. And when we call on Him, He knows exactly what we need.

Jesus said that our life’s journey would be rough going if we choose to follow Him. So we should not be surprised if our path becomes difficult. If you are

Continue on Page 14



JACOB VARGHESE
Dehradun, India

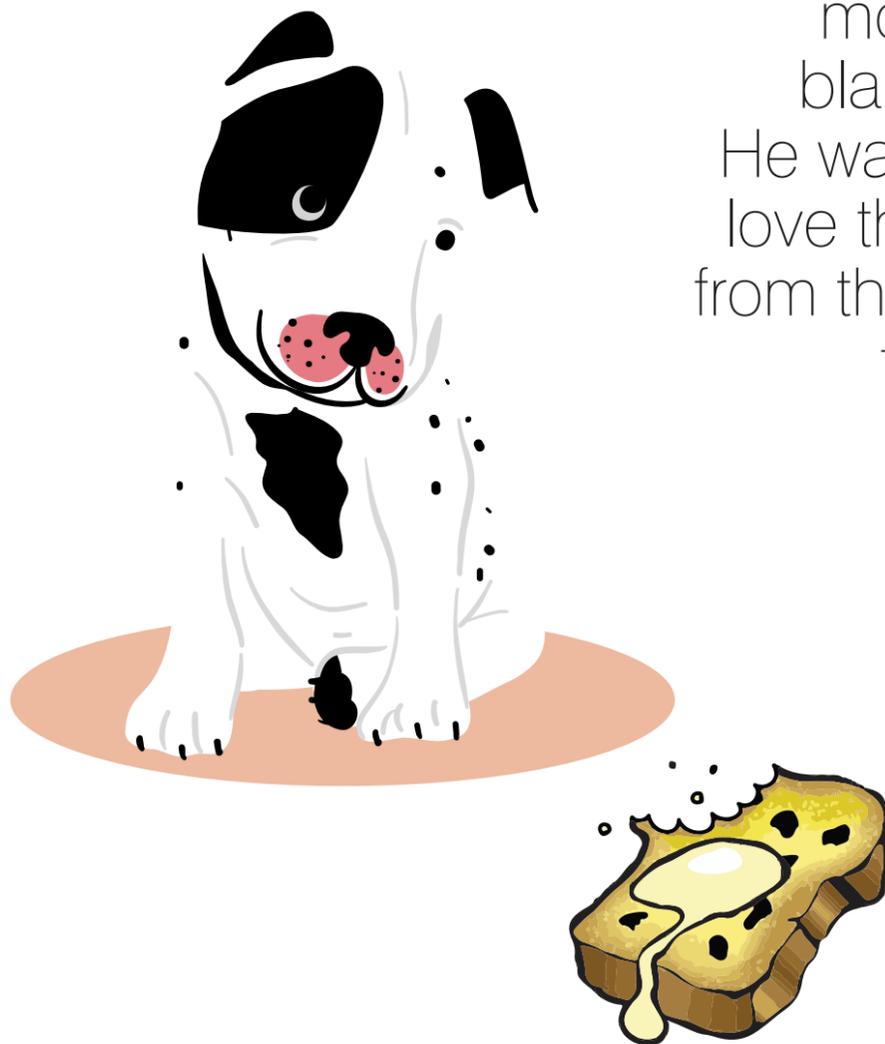
Jacob Varghese is a writer and serving the Lord at NTC, Dehradun, India. He is one of the associate editors of Igniter Newsletter.

Crumbs from the master's table

The love of a biological mother is deep and unconditional. Mothers always feel happy and blessed when they see their children growing up and reaching a point of success in life. As children, there are many incidents in our life where we felt the unquestioning, caring, complete and wholehearted love of our mother. The ultimate and ideal love in this world is said to be the love of a mother. But at the same time, we should not forget the love of our everlasting Father and God in heaven. As David, the king of Israel, once said, "Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me."

Nonetheless, we hear again and again the stories of the failing love of a mother. Mothers kill their children and even forsake them for some material gains. Also, some mothers love their sons much more than their daughters, and some mothers love and care for their daughters more than their sons. Further, there are still mothers who love their children who do not care for their parents. There are mothers who sacrifice everything for their children, and they often starve to feed their children; some mothers wake up early in the morning to prepare food for their children expecting nothing in return. Indeed, God wants mothers to be blameless, and He wants them to love their children from the bottom of their hearts.

There is a Canaanite woman who begged Jesus for her daughter's release from demon possession in the Bible. I feel sad when I read the story, which happened when Jesus was on His way to Tyre and Sidon. Admittedly, I don't remember how many times I read this story in the Bible. It may be recalled that the Canaanite people were outcasts in Israel then, and this woman knew that Jesus, the Lord was a healer. She was an unlucky mother of a girl child who was tormented by a demon. So, she decided to approach Jesus to heal her daughter, and she knew that this was her last attempt to save her daughter. The moment she met Jesus on the road, she cried out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon possession." But quite surprisingly, Jesus did not answer her at all. Then the disciples came and urged Him to send her away. At that time, Jesus said to her, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Hearing



"God wants mothers to be blameless and He wants them to love their children from the bottom of their hearts"

this, she again begged, "Lord, help me!" Then Jesus replied, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs." She knew her social status in Israel at that time, and so she felt no humiliation at all, for she had a burning issue raging in her heart- somehow, her daughter should be healed. However, she had an answer to Jesus, saying, "Yes, Lord, but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus replied, "Woman, great is your faith. Let it be done for you as you wish." Thus, her daughter was healed at Jesus' command right then. The mother's true love is manifested here in this story, and a birth mother sacrifices everything for her children.



DR. BINU DANIEL
Dusseldorf, Germany

Dr. Binu Daniel is a management consultant, teacher, author, and educationist. He has written numerous articles in well-established English dailies on Economics and Management issues. He lives in Germany with his wife Reena and two daughters, Sharon and Naomi.

MOTHER'S example

“May we raise our children to have faith even when everything around them is falling apart”

From the moment we become a parent, we know our lives will never be the same. We know that there is another human being that is dependent on us. A mother in particular knows that the gift of a child comes with far more than just dependency or a lifestyle change. She is aware of the magnitude of this responsibility for it is from her womb that the future is birthed. She begins setting the example consciously or unconsciously, intentionally or unintentionally right from conception. Hers is the first sound the child will hear, he or she will know what a prayer is from her lips. She knows that her success and reputation will be gauged by how well she has raised her children. And so, she does this task of child-rearing with a bold face and a strong heart regardless of her situation.

One such example from the Bible is the widow at Zarephath. God instructs Elijah, the prophet, to visit Zarephath, a town outside of Israel. He tells Elijah that there a widow will feed him. And so, when the prophet enters this town that has been plagued by famine and drought, he meets a woman gathering sticks. Without any introduction, Elijah knows that this is the very same woman that God spoke to him about

and so without hesitation, he asks her to bring him a little water in a vessel and a morsel of bread. Notice that Elijah does not ask for a whole lot, just a little bit. But the woman tells Elijah that all she has is a little flour and some oil so that she and her son can have one last meal and die. Her words carry a depth of embarrassment, pain, suffering, and shame at not being able to provide for her child and the unknown guest before her. Yet when Elijah commands her to use the last of her ingredients to make a meal for him and promises her that “The jar of flour shall not be spent, and the jug of oil shall not be empty, until the day that the LORD sends rain upon the earth” (1 Kings 17:14), she listens and does not say anything more.

Her son must have been surprised to see his mother use the last of their food supply on a stranger. She certainly does not say anything to her son during this time nor does assuage her son’s worry. A part of her probably did not dare to tell her son that yet again they must starve. But here’s what his mother taught him through her unquestioning act of faith:

1. To obey and listen.
2. To serve others even when your portions are depleted.

3. To have faith that if God said He would do something, He would bring it to pass.

She does not say much to her son, but oh the lessons she imparted just from her actions. May we be like this mother, who despite her tragic personal circumstances, knew that the best possible example she could set for her child was to show him the importance of placing God first and foremost ... May we raise our children to have faith even when everything around them is falling apart ... May we teach them that what they perceive to be impossible, is possible in our Lord’s eyes.



DIVINE LEONARDO
New York, USA

Divine Leonardo is an educator with the New York City Department of Education. She holds a B.A. in Communicative English, a B.A. in English, an M.S. Ed. in Adolescent Education/English and an M.S. Ed. in Educational Leadership. She resides in New York with her husband, Eapen Leonardo, and her two children.

**CONTACT US**

India : +91 96336 50506
+91 94473 72726
USA : +1 (214) 929 7614
Kuwait : +965 9600 5235
Canada : +1 (647) 764 9518
UK: +44 7466 846919
Australia: +61 490 043 301

DEVOTIONAL



A PERFECT SKETCH OF GOD'S LOVE

One of the most matchless and powerful emotions in this world would be a mother's love for her children. The maternal bond between a woman and child begins to develop during her pregnancy. It pulls her through the pain of labor and leads up to an incomparable excitement when she sees her child's face for the very first time. It undergoes various challenges as years go by, but what makes it exceptional still is the fact that despite all the circumstances, it is unconditional and sacrificial. And that is the sole reason why it is portrayed as the sharpest image of God's love for us in the Scripture.

A mother's love is soothing. We see that God uses the maternal symbol in the Bible when he talks about comfort. Isaiah 66:13 says, "As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you." The comforting experience of her love influences the growth of a baby very much. It nurtures the child and helps the baby to develop in a way it could not, on its own. A simple instance would be this - A mother's smile initially may not trigger reactions from the child's side but after a few days or weeks, the child smiles back in response which means that her love has revived in the heart of her child. The comfort that a mother bestows on her child is unique in its ways.

A mother's love is protective. She would sacrifice even her security to protect her child. That makes it different from the usual flimsy affections. She will be always vigilant, waking up even when she hears a feeble noise during sleep to guard her child against danger. It doesn't change even when the child grows up into a teenager and later into an adult. This points to a greater reality of our God's protection for his children. In the same way,

a mother protects her child, so does God rescue us from the danger of sin and its effects. That is why the Psalmist says in Psalms 18:2 that, "The LORD is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold."

A mother's love is unconditional. It is not governed by feelings and emotions but is rather an attitude. It is a long-term connection that lasts forever no matter what the response of her child would be. Sometimes a mother's decision in some matters may make her children angry but the underlying reason for her strong stand at times is because she has their betterment in her mind. Children may not like rigid decisions at times but from a mother's perspective, they need to be taken as those are acts of unconditional love that always work for the best interest of her kids. In the same way, the storms of this life trouble a child of God in this world and even makes us ask God the question of, "Why?" in midst of uncertain situations. The answer lies in Romans 8:28, "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." His unconditional love works for our eternal good where he is sanctifying us through each circumstance by which we would finally be conformed to Christ Jesus.

Finally, a mother's love is sacrificial. She bends herself for her children's sake. She hides her dreams and puts the desires of her children above everything else. She doesn't even consider it as a sacrifice but rather thinks of it as something that just defines who she is and what she stands for. The

sacrificial nature of a mother's love points to the love God showed us by sacrificing his son to save us from sin. As John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." Christ died for us so that we would not be condemned but have everlasting life. It is the selfless love of Christ that reconciled us back to God when we were alienated from his presence due to our sin. Let us also remember that an earthly mother might not be perfect always and may let us down. Isaiah 49:15 says, "Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you." Ideally, a mother cannot forget her child but even if that happens, we serve a God who will never forget us nor forsake us. We love our mothers for all that they have done and for the ways they have comforted us, protected us, and loved us unconditionally and sacrificially. Above all, we are thankful for they provide a perfect sketch of God's love for us.

"Ideally, a mother cannot forget her child but even if that happens, we serve a God who will never forget us nor forsake us"



CYRIL PHILIP
Tulsa, USA

Cyril Philip is an IT professional, and writes gospel content for online Christian publications. He lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma with his wife Reeba and two sons. He serves God in the worship department at Bethel India Christian Assembly, Tulsa.



MY MOM'S WORDS: 'DON'T TRUST ME!'



Yes, you read it right! My mom would say something so different from what I hear others say. She would always say, don't love me, love God. She would say, don't trust me, trust God. As kids, we all call our mom first when we're hurt or scared. Our mom didn't even allow us to wail like that and would ask us to say 'sthothram' (in Malayalam) instead. As a child, I wondered why she would say that. I'd puzzle over whether she loved me when she says that. I would always think that she just loved her Lord.

Despite all these words, she was my go-to person for silly little stuff to big issues. Watching her God-fearing life, I've always felt that God would pay more attention to her prayers more than mine. So, I've always wanted my mother to bear all of my burdens and pray for me. But as time went by, I realized what she meant

when God took her from this world.

During the first few months, after losing our mom, I wished my mom was around to listen to my problem. But then I'd realize that she was the one I lost and I couldn't tell her that. I've always wanted her to pray for me when I faced problems after her passing away. Those were the days I recalled her words, "Don't love me, love God; don't trust me, trust God." She loved us to the extent that she taught us to depend on God even though she wasn't around to physically love us anymore.

The fundamental realization of a Christian mother's love for her children is when she teaches them to trust and love God more than they love her or anyone else. Isaiah 66: 13 says, "As a mother comforts her child so will I comfort you;" Indeed, even

your mother, who loves you the most and whom you love the most, will leave this earth one day. Their love lasts for as long as they're alive. Yet, even when the heavens and the earth pass away, God, who comforts and loves you unconditionally more than a mother, won't ever come up short.

The fundamental realization of a Christian mother's love for her children is when she teaches them to trust and love God more than they love her or anyone else.



GRACE KATHETTU
Hyderabad, India

Grace Kathettu is an Agricultural Entomologist, currently residing in Thrissur. She holds B.Sc., (Agriculture) and M.Sc., (Agricultural Entomology) from Annamalai University and Pondicherry University respectively. She is married to Adv. Clinton Kalleri Reston.



Momma Eagle Vs Momma Ostrich

God Almighty uses His creation to teach us many lessons about ourselves and how to live!

Moses as a shepherd had watched the little wonders of Momma eagle, its purposeful motherhood carried out with tender loving care. It opens one's eyes to the mystery behind the embodiment of strength and uniqueness that these birds possess. The mother eagle trains the eaglets by thrusting them out of their nest. It drops her fledglings so they can learn to fly. When they flounder, she catches and bears them on her wings! Thus, the mother eagle teaches and patiently waits to see the desired outcome. They are known to have extremely sharp and keen eyesight, and they can spot prey from a great distance. It nurtures her babies according to their needs, as long as they are in the nest. And she does take time to renew her strength from time to time.

The inspiring ways of the eagle's motherhood reflect a few of the qualities that a godly virtuous mother is expected to have for the ideal growth and development of her children.

- To teach and instruct her children in the way to go (Proverbs 29:17).
- To know her children intimately and must be able to see keenly into their lives (Proverbs 31:27).
- To rely on God to renew strength during her exhaustion and weariness (Isaiah 40:31).
- To desire to see her children fulfilling their God-ordained destiny (Hebrews 11:23).
- To never give up on her children and to lift them when they fail.

- To patiently wait to see the expected maturity and competence in her children.

On the other hand, God created the ostrich with a purpose that was to teach us how not to act in motherhood. In Job 39:13-18, God directs Job to wonder at such unnatural heartlessness of this bird. It is pictured as a bird devoid of understanding for leaving its eggs in the sand and accidentally crushing them. The Momma ostrich takes no pain to take care of her young rather she forsakes her nest upon the most trifling time and never returns to it again.

It's a sad truth that our world has an increasing number of mothers like the ostrich than mother eagles, who seek their worth and personal fulfillment in things that take them away from their best selves of motherhood. And there are quite a few tragic resemblances that prove the statement to be true.

1. To negotiate abortion or heartlessly terminate a pregnancy.
2. To sprint from home and scoff at the family intimate bonds.
3. To be deprived of natural affection between mother and child.
4. To be neglectful of duties and responsibilities towards her children.
5. To break her children's heart by dishonoring marriage vows.
6. To stay unrepentant of her ungodly ways.

God has created us with much more wisdom and understanding than all of His other creations. Take time to search your own heart and learn if your ways toward your children could be improved. We should not underestimate the value of motherhood and the power of a mother's love in a child's life. It is more than giving birth to a child. It is a responsibility that calls for sacrificial motherly love, commitment, and dedication. Don't give up, it is highly rewarding!

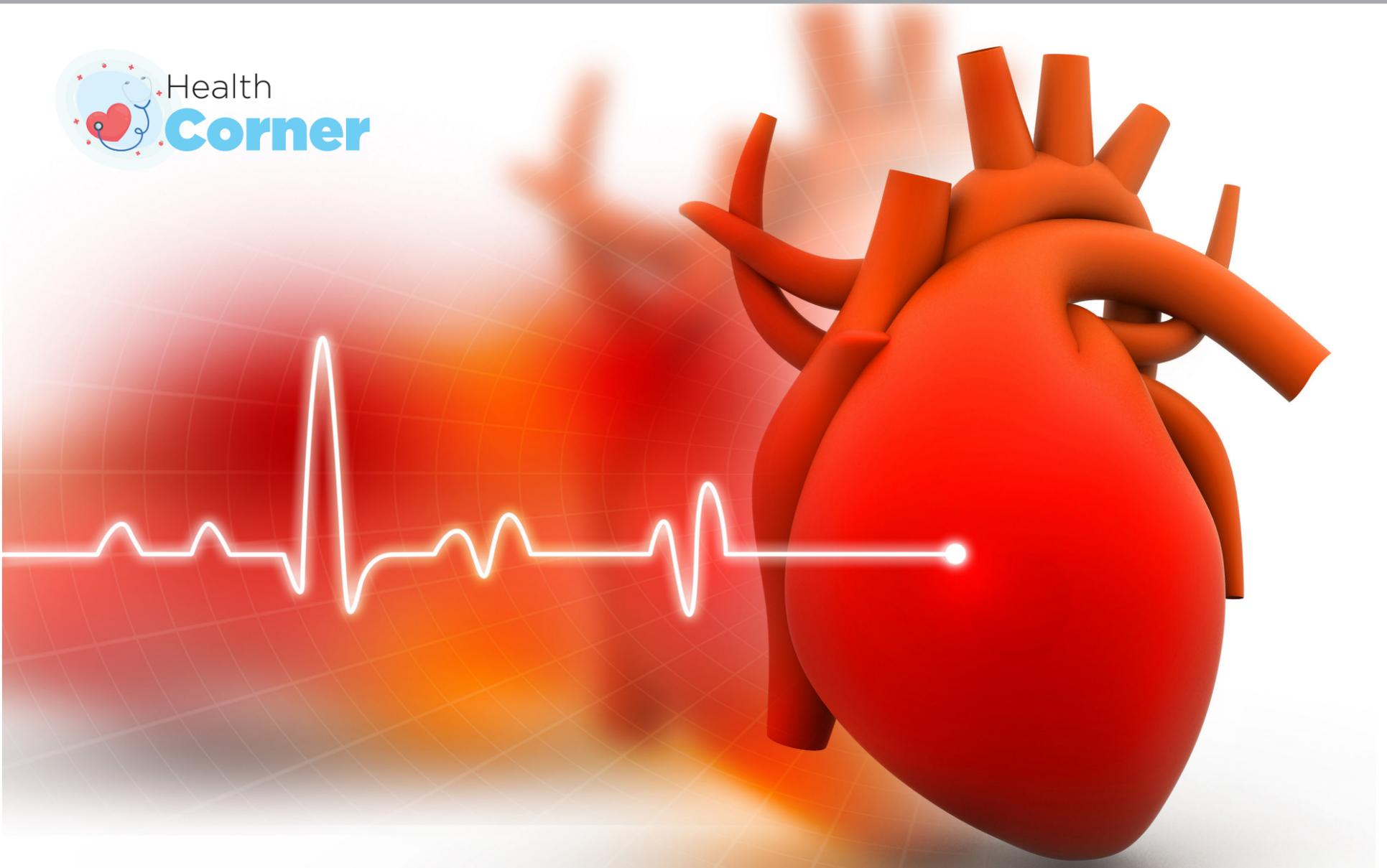


ELIZABETH MATHEW
Muscat, Oman

Elizabeth Mathew is a born-again, Spirit-filled Christian. As a former Vice Principal, she had a close association with educators, parents, and children. She has been involved in Sunday School ministry as well as in leading secular schools in UAE for over two decades. Elizabeth currently resides in Muscat, Oman, with her husband, Mr. Abraham Mathew, and children.

**CONTACT US**

India : +91 96336 50506
+91 94473 72726
USA : +1 (214) 929 7614
Kuwait : +965 9600 5235
Canada :+1 (647) 764 9518
UK: +44 7466 846919
Australia: +61 490 043 301



Heart health

Jesus said, “Come to me, all you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest”

The Heart pumps (Systole) and relaxes (Diastole) with each beat (cardiac cycle), triggered by an electrical stimulus. When the pumping function of the heart is dysfunctional, most commonly from a heart attack, it is referred to as systolic heart failure or Heart Failure with reduced Ejection Fraction (HFrEF). There are various proven and effective treatments for this condition. But for the Diastolic Heart failure (pumping function is preserved, but there is an abnormality in relaxation, filling, and/or distensibility - Heart Failure with preserved Ejection Fraction - HFpEF), we do not have many validated medical options. Relaxation of the heart is an energy-consuming process and it is very timely, following each systole. The normal diastolic function allows the pump to be filled with the least resistance, by quick untwisting, recoiling, and raising the compliance. The relaxation time dominates each cardiac cycle, by two-thirds. And when the heart races it is the diastole that is shortened, to accommodate the rise in the frequency of beats. Diastolic heart failure constitutes half of all heart failure population and is even higher in the older, though similar in both men and women.

Our hearts get stiffer as we age, but associated comorbidities identified include Hypertension,

coronary heart disease, irregular heart rhythm (Atrial Fibrillation), Diabetes, Obesity, Kidney disease, sleep disorders like sleep apnea, lung disease like COPD, and anemia. There are other causes also but are rare (amyloidosis, hemochromatosis, etc). The relaxation time and process are very essential components of the heart's function and performance.

David, the Psalmist, says 'Be still in the presence of the Lord and wait patiently for him to act' (Psalms 37:7), recognizing how important it is for us to relax in the Lord's presence for him to work, (Diastole - relax and be filled). Jesus said, *“Come to me, all you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest”*. There is no better promise than this. It calls for us to come to him for relaxation and priming. In whatever cycle of life you are in today, 'Is Diastole predominating?' Are you resting in God's presence and being filled, with rest and hope he alone can give? Pay attention! 'Diastole' is a vital portion of not each heartbeat but also your spirit.



DR. SAJI ABRAHAM
New York, USA

Dr. Saji Abraham, MD FACC, is a Consultant Cardiologist & Assistant Professor in Cardiology at New York University. He is married to Renee and blessed with three children - Hannah, Victoria, and Luke.



CONTACT US
India : +91 96336 50506
+91 94473 72726
USA : +1 (214) 929 7614
Kuwait : +965 9600 5235
Canada : +1 (647) 764 9518
UK: +44 7466 846919
Australia: +61 490 043 301

Lag B'Omer festival stampede at Mount Meron



The stampede began when large numbers of people thronged a narrow tunnel-like passage during the event to celebrate Lag BaOmer at Mount Meron

A deadly disaster was reported to have struck Israel on April 30, 2021 killing as many as 45 people. It was the most unfortunate yet avoidable mishap heard in the history of Israel. It was virtually a stampede at a religious festival attended by tens of thousands of ultra-orthodox Jews in northern Israel. What worries Jerusalem authorities was the fact that it could have been averted if a little more care had been bestowed by the police and the organizers of the festival. In the first place, Israel is a small country with not much concentration of people, besides being a country that is a trailblazer in many respects. The stampede occurred during the celebrations of Lag B' Omer at Mount Meron, the first mass religious gathering to be held legally since Israel lifted nearly all restrictions related to the coronavirus pandemic. It was true that people were leading a restricted life following the Covid-19 pandemic for almost

one year. Fortunately, the country has seen cases plummeting since launching one of the world's most successful vaccination campaigns late last year.

What is the Lag B'Omer festival? It is an annual Jewish festival being observed during the Hebrew month of Iyar. Lag B'Omer is the only day during the 49 days when a celebration is permitted. Usually, it is common for Jews to schedule weddings on this day every year and for young boys too it is an auspicious day when they are brought here for their first haircut. Tens of thousands of ultra-orthodox Jewish pilgrims unfailingly make their way to the base of Mount Meron every year to pay their respects to Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, a second-century sage and mystic, who is believed to have died on this day. The tomb of the Rabbi is a highly revered holy site in Israel. Many Jews believe that Rabbi Shimon told his disciples about certain secrets of Jewish mysticism, and thus,

how Lag B'Omer became a day of celebration, and Jews took it for granted that they practiced it ever since then.

Backed by the successful hundred percent vaccination rate and buoyed by the fact of inoculation, people moved with gay abandon and indulged in an uncontrolled mode of activities though the coronavirus was still raging across the world. Different accounts of the incidents provide different versions. Some say that a structure had collapsed sending tens of thousands of devotees running for cover. The police's version was that the stampede was caused by a few people slipping on the stairs setting off a human avalanche. Anyway, people were asphyxiated and trampled on in narrow passageways and this incident took the world by storm as it happened in Israel where this kind of incident was unexpected to occur.

To be frank, the psychology of

the masses is identical everywhere. It is universal irrespective of Jews or non-Jews. Prior to this year's Lag B' Omer festival, ultra-orthodox Jews had been eagerly waiting for an opportunity to celebrate especially when the government lifted nearly all restrictions related to the Covid-19 pandemic. So, people thronged the place in great numbers and the police present were few in numbers to cope with the milling crowd. Unfortunately, the avoidable mishap occurred disgracing the country though it is otherwise well-known for its people's discipline.



TK NANDANAN
Freelance writer

TK Nandan, a freelance writer, is presently employed with an Indian Government Organization. Married to Jayasree, who is a nurse by profession, he lives in Kochi with their children. He is a regular contributor of articles to several English dailies in India.



A MOTHER'S LOVE

Deep is the love of a mother! Flowing from the heart of Jesus, it is one of the most powerful tools God uses to spread His kingdom. When Jesus works His love through a mother's heart, she instills in each child, from conception to adulthood, the same agape love all believers are commanded to share. It is that deep. It is that important.

A mother's love gives comfort, security, and encouragement to her children. Yet, she knows her precious gift from God is not to be pampered, but nurtured in the love of Jesus—even before birth. Her love doesn't give everything a child demands but instead everything it needs for true life, abundant and free.

Every mother treats her God-ordained role with utmost respect and responsibility. While most mothers know their love and emotional availability are vital to their children's well-being, many do not understand the profound and long-lasting impact they have in developing young children's minds, teaching them the first lessons of love and shaping their consciences.

A mother serves as an important model for her children. The loving mother continually prays, guides, provides,

comforts, and sacrifices, whether recognized or not — for this is the character of Jesus.

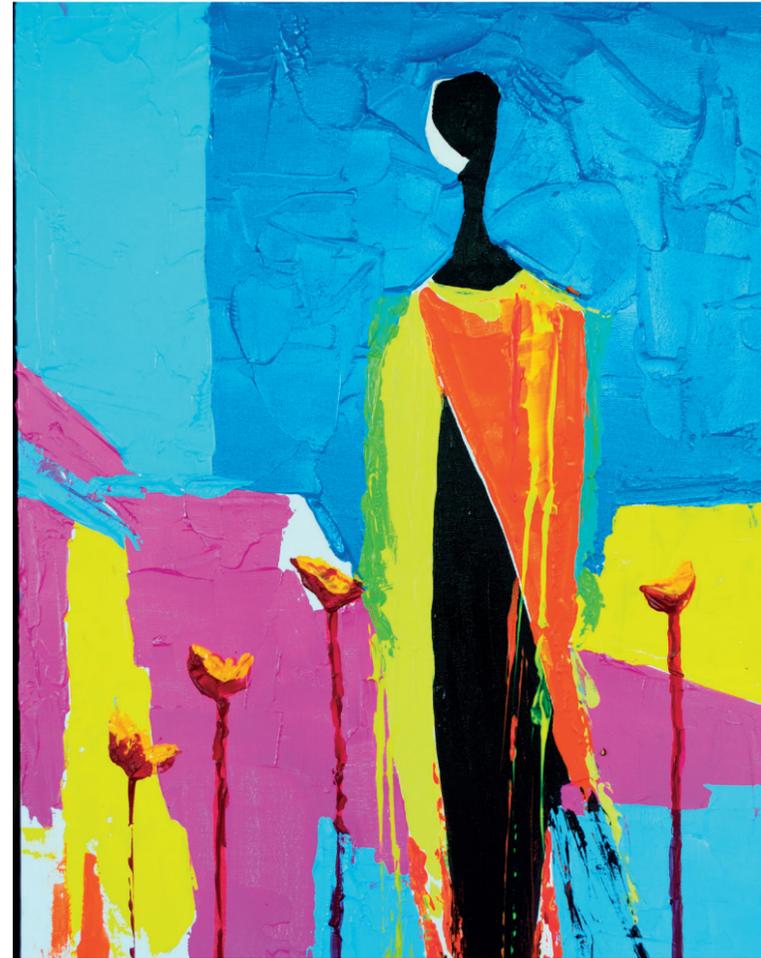
Selfless mother-love shapes not only individuals but cultures as well. Through the fruit of the Spirit of her indwelling Savior, she awakens in each child the desire to discover God's love and purpose for him/her. In the Scripture, Timothy's godly mother and grandmother so greatly influenced him that he followed in their footsteps of faith and changed his world (2 Timothy 1:5).

A mother's deep, unconditional love shows Jesus to her children in word and deed throughout their lives. Let us lavish all these precious women with the gratitude and love they richly deserve for their selfless servant's hearts. **Highlight:** A mother's deep, unconditional love shows Jesus to her children in word and deed throughout their lives.



DR. JOY PUNNOOSE
London, Canada

Pastor Joy Punnoose is the founding senior pastor of Philadelphia Fellowship Church, a multi-language church in London Ontario, Canada. In addition, he serves as the International President of Native Missionary Movement. He is a pastor, a teacher, and an author, and has earned a Ph.D. in Missiology.



“Selfless mother-love shapes not only individuals but cultures as well”

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Continued from Page 05

Adversities are Opportunities to Trust God

facing difficulties, Praise God! Under His wise control, everything that happens to us whether pleasurable or painful is designed to develop Christ-like character. That is why we can glory in tribulation. The Lord permits trials and temptations to enter the lives of His children. The challenge may come as an opportunity to gratify the lusts of the flesh, or as a series of disheartening circumstances. Whatever form it takes, we must not yield. Rather, we must stand for what is right and trust God to supply the grace we need. Tell God all about your troubles. You don't have to defend yourself. Ask Him to be your shield and to protect your heart with His overshadowing love and care. God does not always remove the difficulty, but He is present to help us.

Perhaps you may be a caregiver, a pastor, a teacher, a nurse, or a counselor. Maybe you are a mother with small children or a spouse of an invalid. You have your struggles, disappointments, heartaches and no one seems to care about you. But there is someone who cares. God does. He knows your sorrow as no one else does, and He understands the depths of your misery. You can give your cares to Him and find in His presence His love, consolation, and the strength you need to move from your grief to the grief of others. You can care for others because God cares for you.

Once I was going through an extremely difficult time at my work. It was a crisis of major proportions that had ominous implications for me. I could not resolve it. Finally, I thought to

myself, I have tried everything I know to get through the situation and nothing has worked. It is time for me to start praying. I can remember a similar situation of a man who was fighting a serious sickness. As people observed the gradual effect on his body and lifestyle, one person said, "Well they have tried everything else. I guess it's time to begin praying." In both of these instances, prayer was seen as the last effort to resolve the problem. Instead of prayer being the last resort, it should be one of the first things we do. What if despite your fervent prayer, God doesn't deliver you from terrible circumstances? God's word tells us that believers often suffer. Pain far from being an obstacle to our spiritual growth can be the pathway to it. If we allow pain to train us, it can lead us closer to God and into His word. When people face trials, they often turn to prayer as a last resort.

Life is hard for everybody, but it is much harder for some than for others, putting our trust in Christ as our savior does little to change that. Nothing in the Bible promises us a free pass merely because we are Christ's followers. Some of our wounds may not heal and some of our deficiencies may not be corrected during our lifetime. They may even get worse. Yet all of our deformities and weaknesses are only temporary.

An excellent test of character is the way a person reacts under the pressure of a difficult situation. Under normal conditions, most people behave in a socially acceptable manner. They give the impression that everything is under control. When they are caught off guard or are unexpectedly upset, however, they reveal their true disposition. What is deep down inside of us will spill out when we are tested. Our reactions to pressure can reveal what we are. Trials are an inescapable part of our life. But God's word assures us that they will turn to joy when we lean on God.

A young Christian man asked an elderly believer to pray that he would have more patience. The older man got down on his knees and began, "Lord, send this young man tribulation in the morning; send this young man tribulation in the afternoon; send this young man..." At that point, the young Christian blurted out, "No, no, I didn't ask you to pray for tribulation. I wanted you to pray for patience." "Ah," responded the wise Christian, "it's through tribulation that we learn patience." Yes, adversities are opportunities to trust God and a pathway to Spiritual Growth.

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Contact Us

95 Broadway, Suite #2, Town Center Building, Hicksville, NY-11801, USA

QSeven Solutions Pvt. Ltd. Kochi 682032, Kerala, India

+1 (360) 973 7360
+91 8086528007



www.samc360.com



CONTACT US
 India : +91 96336 50506
 +91 94473 72726
 USA : +1 (214) 929 7614
 Kuwait : +965 9600 5235
 Canada :+1 (647) 764 9518
 UK: +44 7466 846919
 Australia: +61 490 043 301

Continued from Page 01

Deadly violence in Israel and Palestine

the war got over, Israel controlled most of the territory. Jerusalem was divided between Israel and Jordan in the West and East, respectively. In the war of 1967, Israel occupied East Jerusalem as well. Israel claims the whole of Jerusalem as its capital, whereas Palestinians claim East Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian state. The U.S. is one of a few countries to recognize Israel's claim to the whole city.

From the Biblical perspective, Israel is the land given by God to Abraham and his descendants as part of the covenant He made with Abram. The term used in Genesis 15:18 is "I have given this

land," which indicates an action in the past. Hence, some Rabbinic commentators believe that God had set aside the land of Israel for His chosen people at the time of Creation itself. Even though Israelites went into slavery in Egypt years after Joseph's death, God raised Moses to bring them back to the land of promise. Moses led them through the wilderness, and Joshua made them cross Jordan and fought the nations that occupied their land. God settled them in the land through David and Solomon. God's Word stands testimony to whom this land belongs since time immemorial!

IPCT

IPC TABERNACLE CHURCH SEEKING A YOUTH PASTOR

The Indian Pentecostal Church Tabernacle, Dallas, Texas is seeking a youth pastor to lead the youth, young adults and English-speaking members of the congregation. The youth pastor must be able to lead worship services to inspire and encourage the congregation to help them lead a more abundant and fruitful Christian life with Biblically sound, culturally relevant teaching. The candidate must: have a Bachelor's degree in theology or in divinity from the US; be between 27 and 40 years old; be married; be a citizen or permanent resident of the United States. Malayalee ancestry and pastoral experience preferred.

Please email resume to
 IPCT.YouthPastorSearch@gmail.com

For more information please contact Secretary, Benny Thomas - 214-674-8376

FROM THE HISTORY

ELIAS BOUDINOT, BIBLE SOCIETY FOUNDER

Do you know all of the presidents of the United States? Does Elias Boudinot ring a bell? He was chosen President of the United States "in Congress assembled" on November 4, 1782. It was in his capacity as president that he signed the peace treaty with England that brought an end to the Revolutionary War. But his importance to Christian history lies in another direction. Elias Boudinot was born on May 2, 1740, in Philadelphia. One of his ancestors was a French Protestant who had fled from France when King Louis XIV took protection away from these Huguenots.

Boudinot studied law and became a respected lawyer in New Jersey and made a fortune, much of which he gave away to charity. Because he was an energetic Patriot, his neighbors elected him as their delegate to the Continental

Congress. After the Revolutionary war, they elected him as their representative to the new Federal Congress. He served three terms.

But Boudinot's real interests were not political as much as religious. An Episcopalian, he served on the board of directors of the College of New Jersey (Princeton). This school had been founded to train clergymen. Boudinot helped establish and pay for its Department of Natural Sciences, but he was even more concerned that the resurrection of Christ is taught.

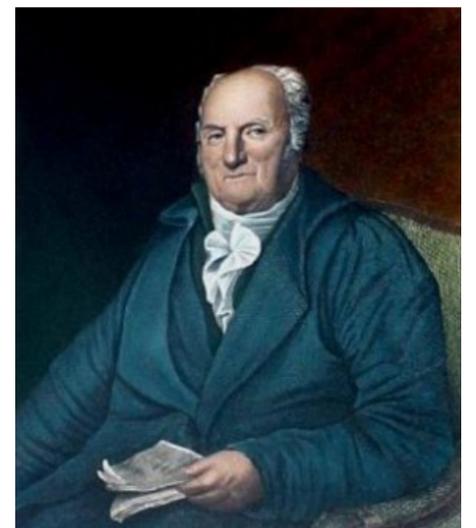
Widely read in Bible literature and a lifelong student of the scriptures, Boudinot wrote a reply to Thomas Paine's *The Age of Reason*. His response was called *The Age of Revelation*. He also wrote about the life of William Tennent, the man who started a "log college" to train preachers.

Boudinot thought the American Indians were the ten lost tribes of Israel (DNA studies have since proven him wrong). He wrote a book about that, too, titled *A Star in the West*. His concern for the Indians (he is not to be confused with the Elias Boudinot who sold out the Cherokee Nation) led him to find ways to educate them.

Given his interests, it is hardly surprising that Boudinot was all for Bible societies, whose purpose was to get the Bible into the hands of as many people as possible. In 1816, he pushed others to join him in forming the American Bible Society. He served as its first president and gave it \$10,000 in a day when an annual salary of \$400 was considered good money. We've pretty much forgotten Boudinot's service as president. But his work with the Bible Society will never

die. The American Bible Society is still with us to this day and sponsors the work of Bible translation and distribution around the world.

Source: www.christianity.com



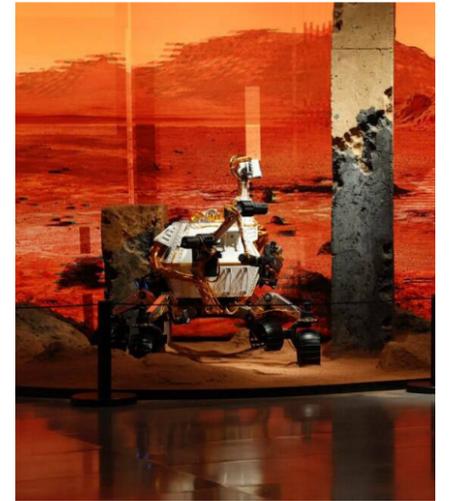


COVID ravages in India

India has witnessed a massive surge of COVID cases in the past four weeks. With an enormous population of more than 1.3 billion people living with a lack of universal access to clean water, significantly fewer hospital beds per person on the national average, and very high population density, all have posed a significant challenge to the fight by India against the pandemic. The daily death toll has topped 4000 with the 2nd wave of the pandemic, leaving people without hospital beds, oxygen, and vaccines. As bad as the reported numbers are, the actuals are 2 to 5 times higher. States of Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Kerala are witnessing higher numbers.

Covaxin, India's indigenous COVID-19 vaccine, was developed by Bharat Biotech in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). The Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine is produced in India by the Serum Institute of India and sold as Covishield. Both Covishield and Covaxin are reported to be less effective against B.1.617 strain since they produce only 50% antibodies. However, this drop doesn't diminish the fact that these vaccines are a required tool against the virus. Sputnik V vaccine from Russia has been rolled out in India on Saturday after receiving clearance for its use from the Drugs Controller General of India. Dr. Reddy's Laboratories are the marketing partner for this Russian vaccine.

World News



China lands a rover on Mars

According to Chinese state media, a rover was successfully landed on Mars, thereby becoming the second country in history to do so. The rover named Zhurong landed Saturday morning in Utopia Planitia on Mars. The solar-powered rover on six wheels weighs over 500 pounds and carries six scientific instruments, which will be later deployed from the lander to search for life on Mars' surface. The Tianwen-1 Mars orbiter will relay signals to the rover during its mission, and it was launched by a Long March 5 rocket from the Wenchang space launch center in Hainan on July 23, 2020. Tianwen-1 is expected to gather important information about the Martian soil, geological structure, environment, and atmosphere and search for signs of water.



What happens if you do not accept WhatsApp's new policy?

As WhatsApp's privacy policy update deadline ends, users around the world are anxious about it. Though the company has made it clear that the users' chats are safe, and their calls remain end-to-end encrypted, their contacts are not shared with Facebook and neither WhatsApp nor Facebook can read the messages, the unnecessary need to collect excessive data in the name of showing relevant ads has raised suspicion among its users.

WhatsApp has confirmed that they won't stop users from accessing the instant messaging platform completely on the previously mentioned deadline of 15 May. The company announced that no one will lose functionality of the application due to the privacy policy update. However, the services on the application may be limited.

You will be repetitively reminded to accept the new policy whenever you will open the app, and if you still choose to not accept it, then eventually, WhatsApp will become more or less useless to you.

Those who accept the new policy won't notice any difference in their experience. But, if you keep WhatsApp installed on your phone, and still refuse to accept the policy, then WhatsApp won't immediately delete your account because of that. It will probably delete your account due to "inactivity" if you don't connect for 120 days.

Colonial Pipeline hacked



A ransomware group called DarkSide was responsible for the dayslong shutdown of the Colonial Pipeline. Founded in 1962, Colonial Pipeline is privately-held and one of the largest pipeline operators in the U.S. and provides about 45% of fuel on the East Coast, including gasoline, diesel, jet fuel, and military supplies. The pipeline shutdown resulted in panic-buying in several states and raised concerns about fuel shortage due to delivery interruptions. Colonial Pipeline informed on Wednesday evening that although it had restored its operations, a return to full service will take time. The ransomware group recently announced that it would cease operations since its web servers were seized and cryptocurrency was drained from its accounts.

NASA's Perseverance rover finds rocks

NASA's Perseverance rover on Mars has photographed rocks in various sizes in the Jezero Crater, where it landed on February 18 of this year. The rover is studying its nearby rocks in detail using its rock-zapping SuperCam laser and the WATSON camera at the end of its robotic arm. The mission team is awaiting more info to determine whether these stones are volcanic or sedimentary in origin. Volcanic rocks allow the researchers for a better understanding of the crater since they serve as geological clocks. Sedimentary



rocks formed through the deposition of sand and dirt over a prolonged period of time can inform of life in Mars if it ever existed at the Jezero. The Mars helicopter Ingenuity will continue to fly sorties for the Perseverance team at NASA to identify rock formations that need an up-close inspection.