



"Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all you who hope in the LORD."—Psalm 31:24

Volume 12 Number 3

March/April 2010

Spiritual Lessons in Foot Washing

By Graemme Marshall

Page 3



Christ washed His disciples' feet and told us to do likewise. What lessons can we learn from this practice?

Lessons From the Garden

By Joseph Horton

Page 6



Many of us have a garden, but have we learned the lessons they hold for us?

With the Badge Comes Responsibility

By Katherine Rowland

Page 8



What are the identifying characteristics of a Christian?

Forgiving My Brother

By Derrick Dominguez

Page 12



It is not always easy to forgive others, but the commandment to do so is not optional.

The Grace of Rahab

By Graemme Marshall

Page 16



Often we feel as if there is nothing that we can do, that anything we might do is too insignificant to count, but one person can change things in a big way.

Peace Kant Be Found

By Robert Berendt

Page 18



Peace. Millions speak of it, thousands write of it, but only One can truly bring it.

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Spiritual Lessons in Foot Washing

By Graemme Marshall

Christ washed His disciples' feet and told us to do likewise. What lessons can we learn from this practice?



AS A YOUNG BOY, I lived in an isolated forestry village. Our home had neither running water nor electricity. A bath was a once-a-week luxury. A nightly ritual before bed was to sit on the back step with a basin of warm water and wash our feet. As boys, we ran around barefoot and invariably our feet were encrusted with dirt or mud.

Christ gave a directive to wash one another's feet and, when we reflect upon it, we find a vital teaching. In the scriptural examples of foot washing for guests, we find that water was often provided so that guests could wash their own feet. Abraham provided water for Christ and the angels this way.

*He commands that
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ourselves and
follow His example.*

Abraham told them, “I’ll get some water so you can wash your feet. Rest under this tree” (Genesis 18:4, The Message). This implies that if Christ and the angels did wash (which isn’t stated), they likely washed their own feet.

When Joseph welcomed his brothers to a banquet, the steward provided water for them to wash their feet before supper was served (Genesis 43:24). The story of the old man from Ephraim who housed the traveling Levite and his concubine (see Judges 19:16-21) similarly records, “So he brought him into his house, and gave fodder to the donkeys. And they washed their [own] feet, and ate and drank” (Judges 19:21). But in Christ’s directive there is an “above and beyond” requirement to actively participate in the washing of another’s feet. This is something we do during Passover. Our annual Passover foot washing therefore teaches these important lessons:

Jesus Christ set us an example

We have the direct statements of Christ, as our Lord and Teacher, that this is what He wanted His disciples to practice: “If then I, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that *you should do as I have done to you*” (John 13:14-15). He is our Teacher. Will we allow Him to instruct us?



Jesus instituted this ordinance for His disciples, to illustrate His willingness to unconditionally serve and love us. He commands that we humble ourselves and follow His example. Beyond that, we should *want* to follow His example because we love Him and desire to be like Him. Otherwise, we risk going through the motions just because we are told to do it.

Humility and service are required

Peter exclaimed, “You shall never wash my feet!” (John 13:8). Christ’s answer was that if Peter didn’t submit to the ordinance, he would have no part in Christ. When we wash someone’s feet, we take on the position of the lowest of servants. To do it properly requires humility—the setting aside of all pride. Jesus Christ humbled Himself when He came down to this earth as a mortal man, but He further humbled Himself when He took on the duties of a foot-washing servant. That is what Peter was responding to when Jesus tried to wash his feet. In that respect, foot washing takes humility from both: the one who washes, and the one who is washed.

Christ gave a directive to wash one another’s feet and, when we reflect upon it, we find a vital teaching.

Jesus Christ said, “If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me”—you can’t have a relationship with Me. With Jesus Christ’s explanation, we understand that the act helps to build a relationship with the individual whose feet we are washing.

Paul illustrates the humility of Christ by showing He gave up His divinity to become a man (Philippians 2:5-8). In that humble state, He instructed His disciples to likewise “wash one another’s feet.”

To be Christ's servants we must be spiritually clean

Although the primary lessons are humility, love and service, there is another lesson we can learn about being clean spiritually and being an influence on others, which helps them to be spiritually clean.

When Christ told Peter that, unless Peter submitted to the foot washing, he would have no part in Christ, Peter responded, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!" Jesus said to him, 'He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean'" (John 13:9-10).

Christ's words that "He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet" have led some to think of the following analogy: Christ's followers are cleansed at baptism, and we are further cleansed each time we confess our sins and ask for forgiveness. But as we go through the daily "walk" of life, some of the worldly influences rub off on us, like dust gets on the feet of someone walking. If that is a valid analogy, then the Passover footwashing becomes an annual reminder of our continual need to be washed from the sinful influences of the world.

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Washing another person's feet also reminds us that we are involved in helping others to be spiritually clean. The book of Hebrews exhorts baptized members who have been "washed with water" to consider others, exhorting them in fellowship (Hebrews 10:22-25).

The book of Hebrews, in contrasting the Old Testament sacrificial system, says Christ's sacrifice cleanses our conscience from dead works so we may serve the living God (Hebrews 9:14). The apostle John wrote that on confession of sin we receive forgiveness and cleansing from unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). In our annual self-reflection, it helps to consider the cleansing we need through Christ's sacrifice, the cleansing that we have received, and the cleansing we help others to seek. Our annual foot washing ceremony helps reinforce these lessons.

Further reading

To learn more about Passover and the Holy Days of God, request or download our free booklet [*God's Holy Day Plan: The Promise of Hope for All Mankind.*](#)

Lessons From the Garden

By Joseph Horton

Many of us have a garden, but have we learned the lessons they hold for us?



LAST YEAR, AFTER NOT HAVING DONE SO for quite some time, my wife and I had the opportunity to garden on a larger scale than four or five tomato plants and a few potted peppers.

Our daughter had moved from a suburban setting to one of the state's more rural counties, and now had access to a large and (as it turned out to be) very productive garden spot. She was new to gardening but eager to put forth the effort and endure the sunburned shoulders that are often part and parcel of the gardening experience. So, with the ground tilled and ready to be seeded we began what ultimately proved to be a very "fruitful" endeavor (pun absolutely intended).

We began what ultimately proved to be a very "fruitful" endeavor.

The potato experience

My wife and daughter did much of the planning for what we would plant (I simply tried to provide the brake on going too far overboard by planting too much). They decided that potatoes should definitely be a big part of the garden, so we planted two varieties.

Because the seed had been planted in good ground, we were able to enjoy a reasonably bountiful harvest.

Now, I'm a potato lover. And two things I've loved since I was a youngster is gathering eggs and digging potatoes. So when the day came for harvesting our potato crop, I was looking forward to the task.



I began turning the dirt of the hills and marveling at the quality and quantity of potatoes that we were harvesting. I decided that we should keep track of the total harvest (how many pounds of white potatoes and how many pounds of red potatoes).

As we looked back on the planning of the garden, we determined that we had planted about 15 pounds of potatoes in all. When I totaled what we had dug, we realized that we had enjoyed a ten-fold increase (actually a bit more). We dug 167 pounds of potatoes from our little garden plot.

I realize that success is oftentimes measured in relative terms. What seems like a bounteous harvest to one might not seem so successful to another who is accustomed to enjoying far greater success as a gardener. However, when you find you have progressed from harvesting “marbles” to harvesting one-pound potatoes, you tend to see the outcome in a very positive light.

As I was totaling our harvest, I couldn't help but think of the parable of the sower. I know that we all marveled at how God had blessed us with good weather and good circumstances that led to what we considered to be a very successful gardening experience—successful enough that we are gardening on a slightly larger scale this year. We're looking forward to seeing what the result of our efforts will be.

The potato lessons

But what's the point?

Simply this: if we have the eyes to see and the ears to hear (Matthew 13:9), we have ample opportunity to be reminded, day in and day out, through very simple instruments, of the work God is doing as He interacts with human beings. Further, we have ample opportunity to teach our children and our grandchildren about the marvels of God's creation by something as simple as planting a seed.

So whether you plant a garden that ends up yielding bushels of produce or you simply plant a flower and watch it grow and brighten a small corner of the earth for a short span of time, be aware that it all reflects the genius of the One who has made us. It reflects back to us the marvelous glory of God who has made it possible for a small, wizened potato chunk to grow into a plant that produces fruit that delights and amazes the harvester who uncovers its bounty.



Finally, we are reminded that we can use these simple experiences to teach the young about the awesome creation that God has made.

Gardeners: “be fruitful and multiply!”

Recommended reading

For more information, please request or download our free booklet, [Making Life Work](#).

With the Badge Comes Responsibility

By Katherine Rowland

What are the identifying characteristics of a Christian?



FIVE DAYS A WEEK, I wear a bright red lanyard with an elementary school’s name on it, on which a photo I.D. hangs. This lanyard represents different things to different people. To me, it represents my workplace and my obligations to that entity. By putting it on, I set aside my other responsibilities and obligations and take up those of the school. Wearing it reminds me that I have made a promise to uphold the values of my school and its administration, and to safeguard the students with whom I interact.

A symbol of something more meaningful

To the staff and administration in the township, this lanyard and badge represent belonging. It signifies that I am a part of the group of educators and support staff that make up our school district. I am not an interloper at meetings and functions—I belong there. I am a part, no matter how small, in the goal of educating the children of our community.



To the students of the school, this lanyard represents authority. I am not a volunteer or a visiting parent. I am wearing the insignia of office and have the authority to tell them what to do. It also represents safety. Wearing this lanyard is a signal that I am there to help, and that I am a safe person—someone who will help or get help for a student in trouble—whether that student is sick, lost or just failing his or her math test.

To parents and other members of the community, I represent the school and the school district. My behavior and bearing at public functions helps shape public perception of what my school and my school district are all about.

Since taking the job at the elementary school, my face has also become my identification to the children and families with whom I interact. I am spotted almost every time I go to the store or to the library. I'll hear, "Mom! It's my library teacher!" Instantly, I become very aware of what I'm wearing, what I'm saying, and what is in my grocery cart.

The responsibilities of an ambassador

My job in the public eye has made me an ambassador, whether I am wearing my identification or not. As Christians, we are ambassadors too—ambassadors of a place that none of us have ever visited. We don't wear badges around our necks that identify us as ambassadors, or swipe cards that allow us members-only access and privileges. But we are ambassadors all the same—ambassadors of the Kingdom of God.

Wearing this lanyard is a signal that I am there to help, and that I am a safe person.

In Colossians 3:12-14 we are told: "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity" (New International Version).



Instead of visible symbols of our role and our office, we are given a list of attributes that we are to put on. Much like I slip on my school identification every morning, we are to put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. We cover them over with love, like a giant safety pin holding it all together. We're told to put them on—an instruction that makes it clear that these are not necessarily natural ways to behave. Like a small child doesn't naturally want to walk quietly down the halls of my school, we as humans are not naturally prone to compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness

or patience. Love is not our natural language.

When we put these things on, we choose to set aside our other inclinations and desires in favor of the duties of the Kingdom. These attributes should make it clear that we represent something greater than ourselves. Practicing these qualities reminds us that we are not as we were before our calling. We are no longer of the world, but of God's Kingdom. We are called to a higher set of standards.

Maintaining a good example is critical

When I'm not at school, I can do anything I want to. I can have ice cream for lunch. I can wear pajamas all day. I can run down the hall at will. When I am at school, however, I cannot simply please myself. What I do when I wear this badge represents how people ought to act, ought to dress and ought to conduct themselves. If I buy only ice cream for lunch while telling the kids that they need to buy an entrée and two vegetables, I become a hypocrite. I have to think of the things I do in a whole new way. I am representing to these kids what adults do and to what the kids should aspire.

As Christians, we are ambassadors too—ambassadors of a place that none of us have ever visited.

We represent what God's people do. If we come to church every week, but then whine about being there, it's a poor example. If we explain that people ought to be compassionate but then spend hours complaining about other people, that's a poor example. We absolutely must do what we preach; we must live up to our I.D. We represent a way of life that we would like all people to come to one day. Just as I must do at school, we must be careful to watch what we're doing and saying when we're with others. In contrast to my lanyard, which I am able to shed when at home, my Christianity must be a part of me at all times. I must do my best to keep it on at all times.

When we "put on" God's identification of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience and love, we are sending a message to one another as well. We are wordlessly telling one another, "I belong to this group. I willingly take on the attributes of God's Kingdom and live as a stranger in the land of my birth for the sake of the cause we all follow."

Our identification represents authority, as my school badge does, but it does not represent (at this time) authority over others. It represents authority over ourselves. It is an indication that we are working to put aside the "old man" and live as a new creation (Colossians 3:8-10).

The choice is a daily one

Every day that I get up, put on my lanyard with my I.D. and carry out my responsibilities to the school, I choose to continue working in that job. In the same way, we must choose to work every day in our pursuit of something better, something sure, something still in the future.

By accepting employment at the elementary school library, I have taken on a daunting task that I would never have thought to seek out on my own. But because I wear this badge, I accept the responsibility. I choose every day to put aside my own preferences for the needs of a school and for the needs of the people who look to me as an example and a leader.

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We, as Christians, have an even greater task with farther-reaching consequences. Sometimes, our responsibilities may seem overwhelming. We did not seek out this role, but we have accepted it, and in accepting it we have agreed to be emissaries of our great God and of His plan and Kingdom. Let us continue to uphold this responsibility, to spread the knowledge and the example of the place where we have set our hearts. Let us remember to put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Let us go out each day as well-equipped, dedicated and willing ambassadors of the Kingdom of God.

Further reading

To learn more about the responsibilities that are a part of being an ambassador for God's Kingdom, please request or download our free booklet, [*The Church Jesus Built*](#).

Forgiving My Brother

By Derrick Dominguez

It is not always easy to forgive others, but the commandment to do so is not optional.



FORGIVENESS DOES NOT COME EASILY for most of us. Our natural instinct is to recoil in self-protection. We don't naturally overflow with mercy, grace and forgiveness when we are wronged.

In Luke 17:3-4, Jesus Christ said, "Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him."

How is it possible to obey this command from Jesus Christ? Even the apostles were stunned at this statement that their duty was to forgive their brother seven times a day! Their reaction is in verse 5: "And the apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith.'"

The command to forgive is most difficult because sometimes we don't want to forgive. We want to strike back, we want justice, we want the other person to know the pain he or she has inflicted on us. We want to wear it on our sleeve, as it were. If we forgive someone seven times, aren't we just letting someone get away with a wrong? If we simply forgive, won't we just be allowing people to take advantage of us?



This is a natural, human response to hurt—but look at an example of how Christ further illustrates this teaching for us in what is commonly known as the Lord's prayer: "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us

from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.” He then explains, “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matthew 6:12-15).

In Luke 11:4, sin is represented here under the notion of a debt, and it’s in the plural form—indicating it has amassed or piled up. We cannot ask God to forgive our debts and sins if we are not also forgiving. The only way to have these debts absolved is to forgive others. If we show mercy to men, we receive mercy from God.

Seven times

Our nature does not want to forgive.

What should we do if our brother repeats an offense seven times? Proverbs 19:11 states, “it is his [our] glory to pass over a transgression” (King James Version). Address it, resolve it if possible, forgive it and move on! Vengeance is God’s alone. It is not ours (see Deuteronomy 32:35 and Romans 12:19).

But what if it’s a great wrong? Not forgiving is a greater wrong. In injuring you, others have committed an offense against man, but in not forgiving them, you commit an offense against God. Forgiveness reflects God’s character. When we forgive, we reflect the Father’s love.

The standard is this: Forgive as He has forgiven you. Forgiveness gives us the opportunity to extend to others what God has extended to us—and our purpose in life is to develop God’s character. But our human nature and its accompanying pride are the antitheses of forgiveness. Pride opposes and resists our need to forgive. It demands justice and wants to get even. Our nature does not want to forgive.



Those who deal with human relationship problems see this firsthand. For example, Catholic priest Robert L. Hagedorn said, “When I was first ordained a priest, I believed that over 50% of all problems were at least in part due to unforgiveness. After 10 years in the ministry, I revised my estimate and maintained 75-80% of all health, marital, family, and financial problems came from unforgiveness. Now after more than twenty years in the ministry, I have concluded that over 90% of all problems are rooted in unforgiveness.” He makes a good observation of the degradation that a failure to forgive brings to society, and it’s directly linked to the command that Christ gave. Human nature is vindictive. Do unto others as they do unto you and more! That is the way people think. You can see this desire for revenge, retaliation and mudslinging in our entertainment—on the movie screen, in music, on television—but also in society, in business and in politics. It surrounds us; but in spite of all this evil, confusion and hatred, we are told to forgive, as often as we have opportunity.

All have sinned

All people sin, therefore all need forgiveness. There isn't anyone who doesn't need to be forgiven. And just abstaining from "getting even" doesn't cut it. Bitterness and resentment will occur, even if you do not retaliate, because without forgiveness you'll never get rid of your inner turmoil. The score is never settled; the anger and pain are never gone. There is a very sobering example that Christ uses so that we can grasp this concept of forgiveness.

Bitterness and resentment will occur, even if you do not retaliate, because without forgiveness you'll never get rid of your inner turmoil.

It's a parable of a king and his servant. The servant owed the king ten thousand talents. "But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made" (Matthew 18:25).

The servant begged for forgiveness, and the master forgave him his debt. Soon after the same servant came across a fellow servant who owed him a debt and demanded it be repaid. This fellow servant could not pay and also begged for forgiveness, but the servant who had just been forgiven refused and had the man jailed. When the king heard of this, he was very angry that his servant had not also been forgiving and sent the man away to be punished until he could repay (verses 32-34).

What Christ is doing here is contrasting two debts. The first servant owed the king a fortune, 10,000 talents. The second servant owed a measly 100 denarii. Let's say that the servants' debts were to be paid in nickels—100 denarii could be carried in one person's pocket. However, it's been estimated that 10,000 talents (in the form of nickel-sized denarii) would take an army of 8,600 lined up single file, in a line that stretched five miles long. This is with each of the men carrying a sack of nickels weighing 60 pounds! What an enormous contrast.

Remember the Lord's Prayer

The amount owed really doesn't matter, does it? The point is that nothing men can do to us in any way can compare with what we have done to God. We pray for that merciful reprieve that only God can give, taking away our accumulated piles of shortcomings and failings.

Author C.S. Lewis once said, "To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable, because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you."



Forgiving is a major part of loving others. When Jesus gave us the outline that we call the Lord's Prayer, it was a part of His Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), which also teaches the necessity to love everyone.

We also see the forgiveness of Christ in the story of the adulterous woman (John 8:3-4). A Good News article titled "[The Transforming Power of Forgiveness](#)" explains:

"The religious leaders had caught a woman in the very act of adultery. They brought her to Jesus, reminding Him that the law stated she deserved to die.

“Yet Jesus knew they were also sinners and hard-hearted men who lacked compassion and mercy for others...

“Jesus...told them that yes, they could stone her to death—and whoever was innocent among them should throw the first stone. After Jesus said this, they all slunk away, condemned by their own consciences” (*The Good News*, July/August 2002).

Part of what Christ was teaching the apostles and us was: You are not the judge.

Part of what Christ was teaching the apostles and us was: You are not the judge. My Father will decide who's forgiven and who is not.

Forgiveness is an act of faith. By forgiving someone, we are trusting that God is better at justice than we ever could be. God does everything out of love, not spite. When forgiving, we give up our desire to get even and leave all of the issues of fairness for God to work out. We leave in God's hands the scales that must balance justice and mercy.

By doing so we are following the Scriptures and we can truly say, “I will forgive my brother, not seven times only, but as many times as is necessary.”

Further reading

For more on forgiveness, read the rest of the article “[The Transforming Power of Forgiveness.](#)”

The Grace of Rahab

By Graemme Marshall

Often we feel as if there is nothing that we can do, that anything we might do is too insignificant to count, but one person can change things in a big way.



IN THE TWO ISRAELITE SPIES' "CHANCE" MEETING with Rahab, they discover she knows much about Israel. She is, in a way, counting the cost of leaving her polytheistic background. Could God have led the spies directly to her, as He did Peter to the gentile centurion Cornelius? Did God intend to call her to the faith? We can't say for sure from the account but we can read how her faith is commended twice, once in Hebrews 11:31 and once in James 2:25.

Rahab, in her fledgling faith, is more concerned over saving the spies than about telling a misleading story to the king. By her subterfuge, the king's troops are misdirected to the fords of Jordan while the spies hide under drying bundles of flax on Rahab's roof. After the troops are gone she goes to the spies with a remarkable confession—she recounts her newfound faith:

"I know that the LORD has given this land to you" (Joshua 2:9). This shows Rahab's belief in the power of the true God. She continues, "terror of you has fallen on us, and all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you" (verse 9). This offered the military intelligence the spies are to report back to Joshua. It shows God's hand already at work to bring the overthrow of Jericho.

"We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites...whom you utterly destroyed" (verse 10). This was a remarkable statement. Although the two kings were fairly recent news from across the other side of Jordan, the Red Sea event occurred some 40 years prior. How old was Rahab? When did she learn this? Did it come from her parents when she was a child? It shows significant awe of biblical events had spread during the wanderings—neighbouring nations were familiar

with Israelite history. The defeat of the two kings suddenly brought the “end time” into sharp focus for a city next on the list. Rahab believes the reports and is now converting to Israel’s God. It seems too that her parents, brothers, and sisters are all equally believing. We know this because the spies tell her all must remain in the house and not leave. It appears they obeyed (see Joshua 6:25)—and were saved through the grace offered Rahab.

She acknowledges, “for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven and on earth” (Joshua 2:11). The spies trust her to not tell the king of their escape until they are safely across the Jordan. In return for their safety they vow to protect her when the Israelite assault begins, provided she abides by two conditions. One: she and all her family must stay inside her house during the attack. Two: she must tie a piece of red cord to her window on the wall to identify the location to attacking troops. This way her house would be unobtrusively identified to an Israelite search party. The red cord tied to the window was to be the proof of grace given her from God. The two spies no doubt excitedly explained all these events to Joshua who in response accepted the vow to protect Rahab and her family.



As the Israelites approached Jericho, God explained He would collapse the walls (Joshua 6:5). Joshua must have wondered how the vow would be honoured when the walls were to fall. Did it mean ALL the walls, or enough of the wall structure to enable the troops to rush in and take the city? It must have been astonishing when the dust settled to see that the section of wall with a red cord was tied to a window *still stood upright*. What amazing deliverance. What a lesson of trust and grace for not just Rahab and her family, but also Joshua and the Israelites. (Yet how short-lived was the awe from this miracle when it came to the next conquest of Ai!)

Joshua immediately told the spies to take Rahab and her family outside the Israelite camp. Then they burned the city.

What the blood on the doorposts on the first Passover night in Egypt was to Israel, the scarlet cord in the window to the house of Rahab. It became Rahab’s identification as one to receive grace in a day of calamity. Her sinful years overlooked (Acts 17:30), she became the ancestress, as did Ruth, of David and of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:1,5-6).

The red cord tied to the window was to be the proof of grace given her from God.

On Passover, Christians celebrate deliverance from the bondage of sin. With confidence in God’s grace, we march on towards our Promised Land—just as the Israelites and Rahab did many years ago.

Further reading

For more on Rahab, see her entry in our [Profiles of Faith](#) series. For more about Passover, read about it in our [Frequently Asked Bible Questions](#).

Peace Kant Be Found

By Robert Berendt

Peace. Millions speak of it, thousands write of it, but only One can truly bring it.



ABOUT FOUR YEARS AGO, I was able to visit the homeland of my grandparents—the part of the world once known as Prussia (now part of Poland). I visited the small village of Gros Arnsdorf (now Jarnoltowo) and to my great surprise, I noticed a plaque on the wall of its small school stating that Immanuel Kant had tutored there for four years in the mid-1700s. At this point in its history, the area has been torn apart by wars for hundreds of years. About 700 years before this, a leader named Mieszko, the head of the Polani tribe, united several Slavic tribes together into what became Poland. Since then, the country had become the political equivalent of a football—pressured from all sides, overrun and ruled by different individuals and groups. It was a land that rarely knew peace.



My father was a young man in the Polish forces that withstood the Red Army around 1920, and he migrated to Canada in 1925. My mother's father foresaw more violence, and sent his family to Canada and Argentina around 1926. Poland is very fruitful and beautiful, with plenty of fresh water, rich agricultural land, forests and mineral wealth. The salt mines near Krakow brought great wealth and, subsequently, interest from outside to the south of Poland hundreds of years ago. All of this contributes to making Poland a desirable land. (As an aside, I cannot help but remark that we constantly ate in outdoor restaurants and went for walks through

fields and undergrowth without one mosquito bite! That in itself was an added attraction for this lovely land.)

Immanuel Kant is one of the world's most eminent philosophers, and I recognized his name from my university courses in philosophy. Kant was born in Königsberg, East Prussia and rarely went much further than 100 miles from his home city. He saw wars and knew the strong interference of Catherine the Great (of Russia) in Polish affairs. He longed for peace as most average people do. I was intrigued with a paper he wrote in 1795 entitled "Perpetual Peace," in which he referred to "THE PRELIMINARY ARTICLES FOR PERPETUAL PEACE AMONG STATES." His complete work can be found online [here](#).

It was a land that rarely knew peace.



God tells us that we humans do not know the way of peace (Romans 3:17). That does not mean we do not seek peace or that many do not want peace—it means that although we seek peace, other factors prevent it from remaining constant. Immanuel Kant thought about perpetual, ongoing, never-ending peace. That is in God's heart too, and He will bring that condition to pass. Paul called God the "God of peace" (Philippians 4:9). Intangible factors such as vanity, ego and pride contribute to the failure of human attempts at peace. Additionally, there is the influence of the great power of darkness that God, because of mankind's decisions, has allowed to roam on this earth. Revelation speaks of a "horse that was red; and power was given unto him that sat on it to take peace from the earth" (Revelation 6:4). But despite this formidable flock of enemies to peace, it is a great and noble task to seek after peace on earth. Those who recognize the need to make the earth a better place for future

generations are starting out on the right foot as far as God is concerned. It is, after all, what He is working toward as well!

Immanuel Kant made some interesting statements in "Perpetual Peace." He wrote, "No Treaty of Peace Shall Be Held Valid in Which There Is Tacitly Reserved Matter for a Future War." In other words, any peace treaty that fails to resolve all issues between two or more groups will only result in a temporary suspension of hostility. That certainly is recognized as the underlying cause of the Second World War. And we need only to look at the manner in which the boundaries of nations were drawn in the Middle East or Africa to see the seeds of unrest and turmoil that have not stopped in those lands.

Another factor Kant saw as essential for perpetual peace was that "No Independent States, Large or Small, Shall Come under the Dominion of Another State by Inheritance, Exchange, Purchase, or Donation." He saw the state as a society of men, and only they had the right to command or dispose of themselves. Foreign dictation of conditions for existence created conditions in which peace could not survive. It is quite startling to find these points carefully considered and written over 250 years ago when we consider the incredible wars that have taken place since then, as well as the ongoing tensions that exist today.

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Several other points in Kant's writing also express dreams that, if followed, would do much to promote perpetual peace. The world's collective failure to adhere to these principles gives us

insight into why peace has remained unattainable: we lack the necessary collective willpower and the strength of character needed to follow through. Kant continued to write that, in a world of perpetual peace, “Standing Armies...Shall in Time Be Totally Abolished,” “National Debts Shall Not Be Contracted with a View to the External Friction of States,” and “No State Shall by Force Interfere with the Constitution or Government of Another State.” Kant concluded the section with the requirement that “No State Shall, during War, Permit Such Acts of Hostility Which Would Make Mutual Confidence in the Subsequent Peace Impossible...”

Peace begins in the heart and flows out from there. It is a hope and a dream that needs to be nourished.

There are human words of hope seen in Kant’s writings. The words and ideas were no doubt born out of the viewing of the hostilities extant in the region. In Section II of his paper, Kant admits, “The state of peace among men living side by side is not the natural state...the natural state is one of war.” Such a statement brings us face-to-face with reality—but it does not mean we need to accept the status quo quietly or without resistance. We ought to seek ways of peace. We need to learn to solve our differences with dignity and concern for all, beginning right within our own homes. Nations are becoming more and more fractured because we cannot find peace within marriage and our own homes—let alone within the boundaries of a nation or continent. Peace begins in the heart and flows out from there. It is a hope and a dream that needs to be nourished. Yet, as Kant did, we all must acknowledge that peace is not the natural state among people. Differences arise and change is constant, so we do not have the tools or the understanding prerequisite to designing a perpetual peace—but there is hope.

God does have the needed tools—and the understanding! That is the bright and hopeful lesson Jesus teaches us. Thousands of years before Immanuel Kant published his work, God inspired Isaiah to give us this hope. Isaiah 2:2-4 reveals God’s promise of perpetual peace. One law, one religion, justice for all nations, armies abolished and warfare no longer learned. Perhaps Kant read some of these lines in his musings and ponderings. Continued failure has taught us that peace must come from God—the God of Peace. His children will be like Him!

Further reading

For more on the subject of peace (like why we lack it and how to obtain it) read “[‘Peace, Peace!’ When There Is No Peace](#),” as featured in our free periodical, [World News and Prophecy](#).