

THE PSALMS AND GENEVAN MELODIES *

Rediscovering Congregational Singing

Psalm 100: A Psalm for the thank offering:

“Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the lands! Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing! Know that the Lord is God! It is he that made us, we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him, bless his name! For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures for ever, and his faithfulness to all generations.”

We have just read a short part or passage from the Bible, the Word of God. And, as most of you will probably know, the Bible consists of many books. There are in fact 66 different books which all have their own name. But, perhaps the most well-known, and also the most often read, is the Book of Psalms. This book is considered by some as the greatest collection of “the world’s best-loved poems.” There is hardly anyone who does not know at least one or more of the psalms by heart.

The Book of Psalms is not only the most often read book of the Bible, but the psalms are also quite frequently sung. We can read throughout the Bible that the people of God used singing and music to praise the Lord their God. They were happy, and they rejoiced in the mercy and faithfulness of their God. They showed their happiness, their joy, their thankfulness, by praising the Lord their God, in music and song. And in praising God they often used the Book of Psalms; they used the very words of these psalms to sing praises to God. In the psalms we encounter the words of man within the Word of God.

Psalms 100 is an good example of the fact that the call to rejoice and to be joyful in the Lord, the call to praise Him, goes out to all of us. In this psalm we are called to “make a joyful noise to the Lord...” to “come into His presence with singing...”, to “enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise...” There are of course many ways in which we can praise our God, but the psalmist, the writer of this particular psalm, reminds us of God’s beautiful gift of music; of the fact that the Lord has given us a voice so that we, with our voice, and in our songs of praise, may sing of His faithfulness, and praise Him for His steadfast love.

This psalm speaks of joy and gladness, of praise and thanksgiving. The psalms, however, describe or depict far more than simply or exclusively praise and thanksgiving. In the year 1542, John Calvin, the well-known reformer, said of the psalms: “There is no movement of the spirit which is not reflected here as in a mirror. All the sorrows, troubles, fears, doubts, hopes, pain, stormy outbursts by which the hearts of men are tossed (to and fro, RD) have been depicted here to the very life.” Therefore, in the Book of Psalms, we will find all kinds of psalms or songs.

There are psalms or songs of thanksgiving, of praise and adoration. There are psalms which are prayers or petitions, and also laments or complaints. There are psalms or songs of confession, of penitence or repentance. As well, there are songs for instruction or teaching. And let us not forget the imprecatory songs; songs that tell us of God’s righteousness, God’s justice, God’s anger and

wrath; songs of justice for, or vindication of God's people. We can find love songs for the church, and of course, Messianic songs; songs which speak about the great Messiah, the Redeemer of His people, namely, Jesus Christ our Lord. The psalms then give expression to the fears, hopes and joys of the believers. They are the faith experience and expression of those who God has drawn into His covenant community.

John Calvin, the well-known reformer who we mentioned earlier, also spoke about the Sunday worship services, and he explained that the worship services are not just a gathering of people, but a holy convocation; a holy meeting. This holiness is determined by the fact that the Word of God is proclaimed. Furthermore, John Calvin also mentions prayer, and he distinguishes two forms of prayer during the worship service: the prayer spoken by the minister and the prayer sung by the congregation. Calvin attached great importance to congregational singing, for he states, "the singing of the congregation takes place before the face of God and His holy angels, who listen to it." They hear both the words and the melodies.

For a long time, during the middle ages, the people of the Church did not sing in the public worship services. As the result of the Great reformation people again became aware of the importance of congregational singing; singing in which old and young could participate. And it was precisely John Calvin who rediscovered the Book of Psalms for the people of the Church. It was he who began the task of bringing congregational singing back into the worship services. Unfortunately there were no suitable melodies available for congregational singing. These first had to be composed.

"There were indeed numerous melodies around in the streets, the fields, the inns and the homes. Those songs were not in any way related to Bible passages. People sang to entertain themselves and others. But melodies which were appropriate for the worship services and suitable for Bible texts did not exist. This was the great challenge: to find songs which were not for cheap entertainment, but which were directed to God's honour. The necessity was felt to search for songs which praised God and confessed His holy name. These songs were to be sung by the whole congregation as a collective prayer, and for mutual encouragement and edification.

Calvin determined the following criteria: no folk tunes, but melodies which are pleasing to God and the angels. These melodies must also measure up to high musical standards, and everyone must be able to sing them. They have to be suitable for children as well. It must be mentioned that it is a remarkable achievement to compose melodies which children can sing, but which are not children's songs. (a) In 1539 the first psalm melodies of master composer Louis Bourgeois appeared in print, and slowly the number grew, till in 1562 the Psalter was complete: a monument of texts and melodies. Every single psalm could now be sung on a skillfully composed melody. And so John Calvin, during his stay in Strasbourg (France), and in his visits to Geneva, a city in Switzerland, taught the Church to again sing her psalms. It was from this Swiss city, namely the city of Geneva, that the Genevan Psalter and the Genevan melodies received their name.

Starting already during Calvin's lifetime, the rhymed version of the psalms was printed and reprinted many times, and shortly thereafter, as it spread throughout Europe, it appeared not only in French, but also other languages. The psalms could now be heard in many countries and in a number of languages. The psalms were instrumental in the spreading of the Gospel and the

conversion of thousands of people. They were of crucial importance in aiding the preaching of God's Word. During the 16th and 17th century congregational singing of the Psalms became more and more a common occurrence and the Genevan melodies became well-known and cherished by those who heard them and sung them.

Many musicians, particularly organists, have used the beautiful Genevan melodies to improvise and compose; to make music to the praise of God and the edification of the congregation. These psalm melodies are of immeasurable value. They have shaped the Church throughout the centuries; they have given the Reformed Churches their distinct and dignified character. These psalm melodies functioned as a typical characteristic for the believers who confessed the truth of God's Word.

"The Reformed Churches have always attached great value to the Psalter as a collection of songs of God's covenant." (b) As we already mentioned, "the first complete Psalter was published in Geneva in 1562. Four years later the Genevan tunes were used by Petrus Dathenus in his Dutch versification of the Psalms. The Genevan Psalter has been associated with the Churches of the reformation ever since. When members of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Liberated) came to North America after the second World War and established the Canadian Reformed Churches, they brought with them their appreciation of the Genevan Psalter. As early as 1954, the first General Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches appointed a committee to study the possibility of introducing such a (complete) Psalter in the English language. In 1972 the first complete Book of Praise: Anglo-Genevan Psalter appeared, and English metrical versions of all the psalms could be sung for the first time to the authentic Genevan melodies of the sixteenth century. The present text, which is a thorough revision of the Psalter, was accepted by General Synod 1980 as the definitive version." (c)

"Although in Reformed liturgy the Psalms have a predominant place, our Churches have not excluded the use of Scriptural hymns." (d) The Canadian Reformed Churches added 65 hymns. Many of these hymns are in fact rhymed versions of Old and New Testament Scripture passages. They are of a different nature than the psalm melodies, yet "they too constitute a thank offering of praise when we sing of the facts of redemption by God, in Jesus Christ our Lord." (e) They can be selected in combination with the psalms.

"The beauty of the psalm and hymn melodies is not solely determined by the fact that they have historical value. Their beauty lies in the choice of tones and their progression. Many Reformed masters have shaped them. They are of the classical caliber that lasts." (f)

In summary, we will end with a few of John Calvin's own words about congregational singing, as found in his Institutes (vol. III, 20): "Certainly, if singing is tempered to a gravity befitting the presence of God and angels, it gives both dignity and grace to sacred actions, and has a very powerful tendency to stir up the mind to true zeal and ardent prayer. We must, however, be carefully aware, lest our ears be more intent on the music than our minds on the spiritual meaning of the words." And in the same context he says: "If this moderation is used, there cannot be a doubt that this practice (of congregational singing, RD) is most sacred and salutary." (g)

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*A presentation written for an "outreach" and/or information evening on the Reformed Faith.

- (a) (f) About Psalm Melodies and Church Organs, Dirk Janz. Zwart, Information, March 17/97.
- (b-e) Preface: Book of Praise: Anglo-Genevan Psalter.
- (g) The Origin of Our Psalm Melodies (4), K. Deddens, Clarion

THE MESSAGE OF THE FIRST PREACHING OF THE NEW COVENANT IN CHRIST'S BLOOD

By Rev. Dr. R. D. Anderson

Acts 2:38-39 is a very important text. It is situated at the beginning of the Gospel preaching of the New Testament and is often used in defense of infant baptism. It certainly instructs us as to the core of what New Testament preaching ought to be. And yet we ought not to forget that this text stands in a certain context. It is equally important that we do not rip it out of that context.

The Command of this Covenant

Anyone who was not brought up in the Reformed churches may already have questions. Covenant? Where do you find the word covenant in this text? Nowhere, that is true. Peter doesn't use the word covenant, and yet the concept of covenant is very much present in what he says. But that ought not to surprise us. Not so long ago the apostles were reclining at table with the Lord Jesus to celebrate the last Passover. Jesus had said to them: "This is the blood of my covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins" (Matt. 26:28).

As you well know, in the Bible a covenant always comes with a promise and a command. Think of Abraham. God said to him: "Walk before me and be blameless" (Gen. 17:1) - the command. But He also said: "I will be God to you and to your descendants" (Gen. 17:7) - the promise. When Christ at the Last Supper indicated that His death would inaugurate a new covenant in His blood, He also made clear where the core of God's promise in that covenant was to be found. "This is the blood of my covenant ... for forgiveness of sins". That is the core of God's promise to us, salvation in Christ's blood means forgiveness of sins - and if our sins are forgiven, then we are reconciled to God - then He has become our God - just as He promised to Abraham.

Now, what do we find in our text? Peter comes to his audience both with a command and with a promise: "Repent!" - The command. And the promise? He mentions this in verse 39: "For the promise is for you and to your children". What precisely this promise holds we shall see a little later. Let us first pay some attention to the command.

"Repent!", says Peter. To whom is he speaking? To Jews, Jews and proselytes. They were the people who had gathered here from all the ends of the earth to celebrate the feast of Pentecost with each other. Look once again at Acts 2:5. "Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven." These nations are summarized in verses 10 and 11. But why did Jews have to repent? The charge Peter made against them was crystal clear. In verse 36 he speaks of "this Jesus whom you crucified". The Jews had rejected Jesus, and yet at this feast of Pentecost there was evidence that He was still alive! Tongues as of fire had descended upon the apostles, and everyone had heard the wonder of the speaking in tongues (= languages) of the apostles. This was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy.

The Jews who were present, at least 3,000 of them, were deeply smitten in their hearts. They had only just realized that they had participated in the crucifixion of God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ - someone who was now ruling from His seat in heaven. This must have been a very frightening moment for them! What could they now expect? The psalms are full of statements showing how the Messiah will avenge Himself upon his enemies. And Peter was not afraid to refer to such psalms in his sermon. In verses 34-35 he quotes Ps. 2...

For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says: 'THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD,' SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, TILL I MAKE THY ENEMIES A STOOL FOR THY FEET.'

These Jews realized now that they had become the enemies of God. What now? "What must we do to be saved?" they ask Peter. It's not just any sin that they have committed.

Then come Peter's amazing words, words of comfort, full of the grace of the almighty, holy God whom they had so insulted. "Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins". Yes, in the name of the person whom they had helped to kill, ... on His name God would grant forgiveness of sins. There is a way back to God. Reconciliation with God is possible, despite the extent of their sin. That is the grace of our God. Even those who had participated in Jesus' death may be washed of their sins in Christ's blood. God does not cherish a human kind of revenge. And that is a great comfort to us. No sin is so great that it cannot be covered by God's grace and by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. But there is a condition. Forgiveness is not doled out randomly. God is righteous and He expects repentance. But also that was a gift of grace in the ears of the Jews. God wishes to accept our repentance! Praise be His name!

But what is this repentance here in our text? The first thing we need to note is that it is something that man himself must do. Peter gives a command: "Repent!" Literally this word speaks of a transformation of our thinking. Our thinking, our outlook, must be turned around. To put it succinctly, it means that one is not only deeply sorrowful for his sin, but also that he has a new outlook and motivation to change the course of his life. No longer does he wish to walk in the path of this sin, but to turn around and go back so as to show God that he really means to live for Him and not continue in his sin. It counts in the same way for God as for us. It's not very believable if someone keeps on doing the same sin and time and again asks: "Forgive me please". You might be sorrowful, but that is not the same as repentance. True repentance or conversion means warfare, the fight against sin, a fight that under the blessing of the Lord must slowly but surely win ground. Note that I do not say that one, in this life, will become completely free of sin. No. But the Lord asks of us that we honestly engage ourselves in this battle against sin. If we do so, He promises to show us in the symbol of baptism how our sins are washed away in Christ's blood.

In verse 37 not everything is said. Peter does not say how baptism symbolizes the forgiveness of sins, nor what precisely the blood of Jesus has to do with this forgiveness. We know the answers to these questions from the rest of the New Testament. And we must suppose that Peter also explained this to the Jews. It is not for nothing that we are told in verse 40 that Peter "with many other words solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them".

We are, however, told that Peter spoke to them of God's promise. V.39: "For the promise is to you and to your children".

The Promise of this Covenant

At this point we need to focus closely on what the text says. There are many who say: "Look, this promise must be the promise of the Holy Spirit." And it may seem, at first sight that this is so. What does Peter say? "And you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children." And yet this is clearly not the meaning of the apostle.

In order to make this clear I must first say something about the reception of the gift of the Holy Spirit. Then I will come back to the question of just what this promise is in verse 39.

What was this gift of the Holy Spirit which Peter promised? The first thing we need to say is that it is not the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in one's heart. Of course not! For that would be completely the wrong order of things. Repent, be baptized ... and only then receive the Holy Spirit in your heart? That cannot be correct. We learn very clearly in the New Testament that true faith, true conversion, is something that the Holy Spirit Himself works in our hearts. If I know for myself that I truly believe, then I may conclude that the Holy Spirit is in my heart. If I repent of my sin, then that is evidence that I already have the Holy Spirit! But Peter does not speak here about receiving the Holy Spirit, but about receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. Within the context of Pentecost he cannot mean anything else than the special gifts of the Spirit, especially, the ability to speak in tongues. That is what is promised to these Jews if they repent and allow themselves to be baptized.

They had already seen this special gift on that first day of Pentecost, but none of them had received this gift themselves. No, they had heard the apostles using this gift. It was the group of apostles who received the gift of tongues from heaven at Pentecost. No one else! All those Jews from all over the world heard the apostles speaking in tongues. Look at verse 6-8:

And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one heard them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and wondered, saying,

"Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language?"

"But now", says Peter, "if you repent and allow yourselves to be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins, you will also receive the special gift of the Holy Spirit." Yes, even they could speak in tongues as proof of the work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts. But how did this come about? We learn this further in the book of Acts. Take, for example, chapter 8:14-19 which shows us how the apostles went around granting the gift of the Holy Spirit to others by laying their hands on the heads of the recipients. See also chapter 19 where the apostle Paul came across several people who had never been baptized in the name of Jesus. Let's see how that went.

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passes through the upper country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said, "No, we have never even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" They said, "Into John's baptism." And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come

after him, that is, Jesus.” On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

And that’s how it happened. “Repent, be baptized, and then you will receive the special gift of the Holy Spirit (by the laying on of the hands of the apostles)”.

But what then is the great promise of which Peter speaks in verse 39? That Peter cannot be referring to the reception of the special gift of the Spirit is clear from the fact that this promise is for everyone - even descendants who are far off. The special gift of the Spirit could only be distributed by the apostles. When they died, the special gift of the Spirit died out with them. But Peter makes it clear by his own words that this is not what he means. For, although it is not very clear in translation, he refers back to the words of the prophet Joel. The great promise is the promise of the prophet Joel, the promise of salvation, Acts 2:21...

And it shall be that whoever calls on the name of the lord shall be saved.

In the prophecy of Joel 2:32 we can read the rest of that verse. There it reads:

And it shall come to pass that all who call upon the name of the LORD shall be delivered; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the LORD has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the LORD calls.

It is clear that for Joel the promise concerns salvation/ deliverance. Now those last words of Joel “whom the Lord calls” are precisely the words which Peter refers to “The promise is for you and your children ... as many as the Lord our God shall call to himself.” In the original Greek we see Peter adapting the words of Joel to his own sentence. It is unfortunate that this is not indicated in most translations. Peter uses the standard Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint. And it is this promise of salvation from Joel that he is thinking of here. This also agrees with what he has just said: “Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins”. Forgiveness of sins is the essence of our salvation! This is the great theme of Peter’s admonition as verse 40 confirms:

And he testified with many other words and exhorted them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation!”

Peter was concerned with their salvation. And God gives this promise not only to the Jews who were present here, but also to their children and for all who are far off. There is forgiveness of sins for all.

But now we come up against an important problem. Peter says: “Repent, and let each of you be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins.” But most of us were already baptized as children! Is that not in contradiction to the order presented to us in this text?

Our text says, first the command (“repent”) and then the symbol of the promise (baptism). That is clear. But the order in our text ought not to appear strange to us, for God had given the same order to Abraham. Abraham had to first believe. Only then did he receive the symbol of the promise, in his case circumcision. In Gen. 17 the Lord comes to Abraham with his covenant and the sign of circumcision. But years earlier, in chapter 15, God had recognized Abraham’s faith. There in

chapter 15 God states that Abraham's faith was reckoned for righteousness (15:6). In Rom. 4 the apostle Paul discusses the significance of this fact.

What is my point? The order, first repent, and then let yourself be baptized, is the normal order for people who are admitted into God's covenant, both in the Old Testament and in the New. But if you have been admitted into God's covenant and have received the covenant sign yourself, then God gives that same promise not only to you but also to your children. It is extremely significant that Peter also speaks of God's promise of salvation in this way - and then to a group of Jews. The promise is for them and for their children. God had said the same to Abraham. Abraham knew that, because of that, the sign or symbol was not only given to him as an adult believer, but also to his children. The Jews who heard Peter all knew the history of God's dealings with Abraham. The connection between salvation for the believer and the promise for both the believer and his children could not possibly have been missed.

It is true that this connection is only implied in the context here. Peter does not explain everything in our text, at least not for us. For the Jews he gave much extra explanation. We read about that in verse 40. But we have the rest of the New Testament to fill in the details for us. Think of Col. 2:11-12 where Paul instructs us that baptism has come in the place of circumcision. Think also of the rest of the book of Acts where time and again we are told that entire households were baptized. God's grace is not only for adult believers, but also for their children. Praise Him for that great grace!

Dr. R. D. Anderson

What is Sin?

Whenever you use the word "sin", people look at you in amazement. "What do you mean, "sin"? Are you calling me a sinner? I live a decent life. I do an honest day's work, I'm entitled to enjoy the good things in life. I donate a little to worthy causes, and I try to give everyone a "fair go". I even go to church every so often."

"Sin" isn't very real to most of us. The term suggests too much for our comfort: accountability, judgment. Our world prefers to avoid it... perhaps because it comes from another; it comes from God, He speaks to us of sin.

The Bible tells us how sin came into the world. God, the Almighty Creator, made Adam perfect, without sin. Adam was even given the honour of representing God - he was holy, devoid of evil. There was complete harmony between God and Man. God cared for His creature and surrounded him with absolute love, and Adam knew and honoured his Creator in absolute purity.

Man's destiny was to live on this earth, which had been prepared especially for Him. God had endowed it with incredible wealth and energy: minerals, air, water, fertile soil, plants, animals; and heat, light, electricity, and nuclear power. He had also given Man the insight and ability to put the earth's potential to work; to achieve a rich and diversified culture. Furthermore God had allowed

Man an infinite capacity to reproduce and thus to play an active role in fulfilling the great plan of life.

Adam's life was completed by receiving a woman to stand beside him. With her, Adam could live in joyful love. She would be a help to him, and "the mother of all living." This incomprehensible wonder of God's creative power - the first human partners - received this mandate: "Be fruitful and increase; fill the earth and subdue it."

Obviously, this could only happen under God's guidance and in conformity with His laws. As gifted as he was, Man could never complete the job without the great Architect. On the other hand, Man would also never be merely a tool, he received a mind, a will, perception, and responsibility. Of his own volition, Man had to place his gifts in service of God. To test Man's allegiance God gave a command: "I am giving you every plant and fruit tree for food, except one. Of that one tree alone Man was forbidden to eat... upon pain of death - the loss of communion with God.

God's demand was wise and just. But still the catastrophe occurred: Man ignored God's command and listened to Satan's temptation. Genesis 3 describes this sad occasion. This is the origin of sin.

Sin is the breach between God and Man. Man rejected God's love, and embraced God's great adversary, Satan. The consequences were infinitely terrible. There was an immediate punishment for Adam and Eve. God's curse struck them and all of Creation. They would have to struggle to survive: sickness, pain, and all sorts of trill would come upon them. The final separation, death, would be total.

But worst of all was the break in communication with God. They were now under dominion of Satan, and he would do everything to keep them away from God. Ultimately, he would drag them into eternal damnation.

And if that had been all ...

These two people represented the whole human race...we would be born from them, and so we fell with them. Sin is like a hereditary disease which has infected Man's core and is irrevocably inherited by all his descendants. The fall in Paradise was an event which irreversibly changed the direction life on earth. We are all born sinners and are inclined by nature to transgress God's commands. And we can never find our own way back to God.

If this is hard to believe, just read the Ten Commandments. (Exodus 20:1ff) God has given them to protect our broken lives. ..

Is there even one that you can satisfy completely? Also in the light of Christ's summary of these laws in Matthew 22:37-40? Do you love God above all else and your neighbour as yourself.' Do you even want to? Does anyone?

All of life disintegrated, literally, when the breach with God occurred. Look at all the misery and distress around you: sickness, poverty, hunger, hate, disasters, and war. You experience it every day. And after suffering through it all there is not one person who can avoid the final agony of death itself.

And how do we stand in relation to sin? Most of us would like to avoid the issue. If we are worried we tend to try and solve it in our own way, but that rarely achieves real results. Be honest, don't we all have things we'd rather not give up, even though we know they're wrong? Or we avoid facing up to the depth of our corruption: we put on a brave front, try to appear unconcerned and pleased with ourselves. There's always time to change later, if we need to.

But we can't expect God to swallow that! He knows us to the bottom of our souls. And when God speaks of sin, He has specifics in mind. He points to very real things in our lives, and says, "This, and that too, proceeds out of your evil and sinful heart ... get it out of My sight!" "Everything you do and say reeks of corruption. You don't reckon with me, you go your own way!" "You are wasting your days, and if there is no change, in the end you will lose your life!"

Is there no way out, then?

Yes, for God was so deeply moved by our fall away from Him that He reached out to us, and to all of creation. He did not desert us. He wants to see depraved sinners return to Him. He calls them back, like the lost children they are. He has even provided a way by which we can return - Jesus Christ, Who took the guilt of our sin upon Himself. He has made payment for all our debts. Our only hope of salvation is with Him. Read what God's Word says:

"This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us." (1 John 1:5-10).