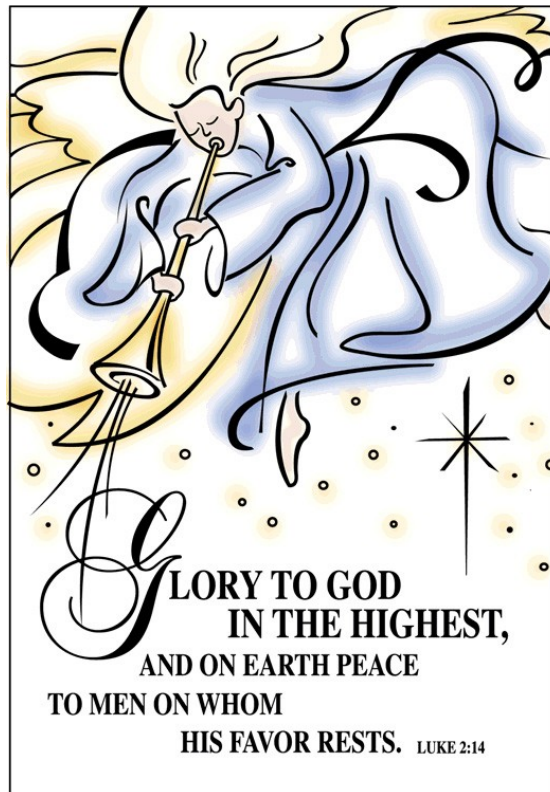


Exeter Church of Christ



December 22, 2019

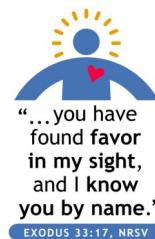
320 East Firebaugh / 592-2909

DECEMBER

22, 2019

• "It is the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore his protection and favor."

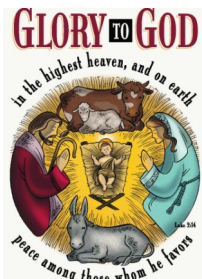
— George Washington



TODAY'S Word: **GLORY TO GOD**

"Favor"

What does it mean to receive God's Favor?



Grace featuring **Max Lucado**.

TODAY we finish the DVD series *Irresistible*, by **Andy Stanley**. **NEXT SUNDAY** we will begin a new series on

WE WILL NOT meet this Wednesday, Christmas day, for Bible class. "Kids for Christ" will not meet Thursday either. Both activities will resume next week, January 1 & 2, and "Kids for Christ" will add a class for teens.



I brake for Christmas



"Be still, and know that I am God!"

I AM EXALTED AMONG THE NATIONS,
I AM EXALTED IN THE EARTH."

PSALM 46:10, NRSV

The bumper sticker caught my eye. Made me think. Even aroused some guilt. I was on the freeway as his car was pulling off. My day had been full and it was far from over. Stuffed in my pocket was a list; most of the items not yet purchased. A little panic rushed over the back roads of my mind as I divided up all the things yet to be bought in those few days left before Christmas. The guy didn't seem in much of a hurry, which irritated me a bit, yet it told me his sign was for real. I began to study the words in my head. They started making sense. I BRAKE FOR CHRISTMAS.

Easing up on the accelerator and releasing my frown, I began to calm down my inner motor with questions like: Why the hurry? What's the rush? Could this explain the reason you've been unable to enjoy the spirit of the season? Psalm 46:10 drifted into my mind like the sound of a distant bell on a clear morning.

"Be still and know that I am God..."

- Charles R. Swindoll, *Come Before Winter*

AFTER recent tests, **Larry Thompson's** cardiologist thinks he may have heart blockage. He is now scheduled for an angiogram on January 7. This will mean his brain surgery which was to take place on that date will have to be rescheduled, pending results of this latest test. **REMEMBER** the 5th Sunday night community church service, December 29, 6:00 pm.



Under His Wings

"The Lord recompense you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the Lord, the God of Israel, *under whose wings you have come to take refuge*" (Ruth 2:12).

This pictures God as a great winged Eagle and Ruth as a threatened little eaglet coming to find safety under the Eagle's wings. The implication of verse 12 is that God will reward Ruth *because* she has sought refuge under his wings.

This is a common teaching in the Old Testament. For example, Psalm 57:1 says, "Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, *for* in thee my soul takes refuge; in the shadow of thy wings I will take refuge." Notice the word "for." Be merciful to me, *for* in thee my soul takes refuge. Why should God show mercy to Ruth? *Because* she has sought refuge under his wings. She has counted his protection better than all others. She has set her heart on God for hope and joy. And when a person does that, God's honor is at stake and he will be merciful....



But we must ask how Ruth's love for Naomi and her leaving her own family relate to her seeking refuge under the wings of God. The most likely suggestion is that Ruth was able to leave the refuge of her father and mother in Moab because she had found a refuge under the wings of God which was far superior. And evidently she saw a need in Naomi's life and sensed God calling her to meet that need. The Eagle moved toward Naomi, and in order to keep enjoying the refuge of God's wings, Ruth moves, too, and commits herself to care for Naomi with the care she is receiving from her Eagle.

So the relation between taking refuge under God's wings on the one hand and leaving home to care for Naomi on the other hand is that being under God's wings *enabled* Ruth to forsake human refuge and give herself in love to Naomi. Or another way to say it is that leaving home and loving Naomi are the *result and evidence* of taking refuge in God.



So now back to Ruth's question in verse 10, "Why have I found favor?" The answer is that she has taken refuge under the wings of God and that this has given her the freedom and desire to leave home and love Naomi. She has not *earned* mercy from God or Boaz. She is not their employee. They are not paying her wages for her work. On the contrary, she has honored *them* by admitting her need for their work and simply taking refuge in their generosity.

(continued on back page)

Church of Christ

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Church web site: www.exeterchurchofchrist.org

Sunday
Bible class 9:30 AM
Worship 10:30 AM
Wednesday
Bible class 7:00 PM

(continued from inside)

This is the message of the gospel in the Old Testament and the New Testament. God will have mercy on anyone (Palestinian or Israelite or American) who humbles himself like Ruth and takes refuge under the wings of God. Jesus said,

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! Behold, your house is forsaken and desolate.

All the Pharisees had to do was to take refuge under the wings of Jesus. Stop justifying themselves. Stop relying on themselves. Stop glorifying themselves. But they would not. Ruth was not their model. No falling on their face before Jesus. No bowing down.

No astonishment at grace. Don't be like the Pharisees. Be like Ruth.



God is not an employer looking for employees. He is an Eagle looking for people who will take refuge under his wings. He is looking for people who will leave father and mother and homeland or anything else that may hold us back from a life of love under the wings of Jesus.

- John Piper