

Journal of Faith in Action

JANUARY 2017:

01/01 - *As I began to focus on the promise and hope of the coming New Year, I sit in quite confidence in knowing that no matter what the new year brings, the prize of my Trust in God and Faith in my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ awaits me, and that prize is the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on the day of his return. And this prize is not just for me, but for all who eagerly commit their lives to Him and look forward to His return!.*

And so on this day I pray that our God, the source of all creation and hope, will fill each of us completely with joy and peace because of our Trust and Faith in Him. And may this confident hope that overflows in us through the power of the Holy Spirit and our Faith in Jesus Christ bring honor and glory to His name - AMEN

01/29 - *For it has been written, that as believers in the living Christ we are called to seek first the Kingdom of God above all else and live righteously, and He will give us everything we need. For when our hearts become aligned with His, our desires begin to reflect His, and through those desires, " He will establish our plans."*

These are the words we are called to live by, but in this fallen world in which we live we find ourselves in a constant battle to overcome our sinful nature, and eventually we ALL give in and fall to sin at some point in our lives.

But how do we deal with those difficult times in our lives when we do succumb to sin and are overcome with feelings of shame, guilt and unworthiness, or maybe even want to give up trying because we know that we will never be perfect in God's eyes? And how can we be expected to live righteously and be good enough to be a child of God when we cannot even control our sinful nature?

Will God always love and forgive us because of our FAITH in Jesus Christ?

The answer to these questions can be found in God's word. For when we seek God's word for comfort, wisdom and strength we will find that God understands the pressures and difficulties of our life, and as believers we must never give up, we must continue to fight the temptations of this world and our sinful nature and realize that although our flesh is weak and our bodies are dying, our spirit is being renewed every day through the difficulties we must bear.

We must understand that the difficulties we face with sin and temptation can only be overcome when we humble ourselves before God and earnestly turn to Him for forgiveness and strength. For it's during these difficult times that we will find out whether our FAITH is genuine, and if we put our complete Trust and Faith in Him we will find that our Faith will begin to grow and mature as we become closer to our Heavenly Father. For it is in our weakness that God's

strength is made perfect.

We must also understand that true joy and peace in our lives comes only when we put our focus on the eternal reward of spiritual life, and not in worldly desires that bring spiritual death.

And above all, we must understand that when we do fall victim to sin, we have someone who pleads with our Heavenly Father on our behalf, and that someone is the living Christ. For Jesus Christ himself is the means by which our sins are forgiven. And when we accept God's Grace and Salvation through our FAITH in Jesus Christ, we are assured He will always forgive us and never forsake us!

FEBRUARY 2017:

02/26 - *For the past few weeks it seems like there's been a dark cloud surrounding me, continuously filling up with the struggles and difficulties of family and friends and waiting to unleash a fierce storm of darkness and gloom.*

But as I sit here today I find solace from the words of wisdom given to us in the book of Ecclesiastes where King Solomon describes the pain, frustration and inequities of this world, the uselessness and vanity of human deeds, and the limitations of our wisdom and righteousness without God in our lives, and it connects these observations with "seasons under the sun".

You see, just like history and nature move in cycles, so it is that all events are predetermined and unchangeable, therefore life really has no meaning or purpose as both the wise man and the man who does not study wisdom will both die and be forgotten.

The lesson here is that we can never fully understand what God's intentions are for us, but we should always strive to do our absolute best with where He has placed us in this moment in time, and simply revere Him and enjoy the blessings of today and the gift He has bestowed on us through His grace, and in due time He will move us into a new, more bountiful, and blessed season.

So let us all strive to be incessantly grateful and continually humble and thankful to God even when our future seems unclear, staying firmly planted in our Faith so we will never wither, but always prosper and produce good fruit.

And remember, for everything there is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven.

MARCH 2017:

03/19 - *For the past few days I have fallen victim to my sinful nature and found myself acting in ways that do not reflect the ways of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ..*

I have cursed others and laid blame for the actions of others as a way to justify my own self righteousness, only to realize that I am not a perfect person.

The Bible teaches us that our two greatest endeavors are to LOVE God with all your heart and soul, and to LOVE they neighbor just as Jesus loves us.

But what is LOVE?

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres." (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)

When we exhibit this type of love, people notice these qualities because they are not the world's typical responses. Yet on our own, we could never love others as God loves us. This type of love can only come from the Holy Spirit that dwells within our hearts when we surrender our lives to Jesus; whose life and ways are a reflection of our Heavenly Father.

And so today I pray in humility to confess my transgressions and plea for redemption that I may continue to live my life in reflection of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, so that others will know and say, "You look just like your Father."

Heavenly Father,

I come to you today to ask for your forgiveness for my selfish words and acts towards others, for I know that this is not the way you've taught me to live my life, nor is it a reflection of the ways of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Please renew my my mind and spirit so that I can do what is just and right in your eyes, and show constant love towards others so that I can bring honor and glory to YOU! - AMEN

APRIL 2017:

04/16 - HE HAS RISEN!

The most profound statement in all of history, and the core foundation of all believers of the Christian Faith.

For those of us who believe, these words represent the culmination and fulfillment of a promise foretold by our heavenly father and written long ago; a promise of a Savior who would come into this world to serve, teach and become the ultimate example of love by sacrificing himself for the sins of all humankind so that we may be born again as children of God and begin living a new life for His glory.

Jesus Christ, our sacrificial lamb, our Savior, our God, our Redeemer - he laid down his life as our sacrificial lamb to pay for our sins. And in His dying breath, came the the end of the laws and regulations given to Israelites of old, and opened the door to a new and everlasting covenant for both Jew and Gentile.

And when he rose from the dead on this day of remembrance over 2000 years ago He gave victory over our eternal separation from God (that is sin and death) to all who put their Faith and Trust in Him. This is the new covenant - an everlasting life spent with God through Faith in all that Jesus Christ has done and continues to do for US, even today!

For all of us who believe in the Son of God, we know in our hearts that this testimony is true. And to those who don't believe this are actually calling God a liar because they don't believe what God has testified about his Son through His word.

And this is what God has testified:

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

“Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3b-4, KJV)”

“He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. And whosoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God's Son does not have life. (1 John 5:10-12, NLT)”

So on this day let us all give thanks and praise to ONE whose ultimate act of Grace, Love and Mercy has given us Life, Hope and the promise of a day when there will be no sorrow or pain, but only peace, joy and love on earth as it is I heaven when He returns.

“If you confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, we will be saved.” (Romans 10:9, NLT)”

MAY 2017:

05/17 - *It is Mothers Day, a day to recognize, celebrate and honor our mom's. But for those of us who no longer have our moms it can be a difficult and challenging time..*

It's over 5 years now since I lost my mom to cancer, and I miss her dearly everyday...

I miss visiting with her and seeing her face

I miss our weekly lunches together when we would talk and enjoy each others company

I miss her food, her smile, her smell, her touch, her laugh, the way she talked.. I miss HER!

Today I visited her at her grave site and wondered if she could hear me talking to her and could see the person I've become since I last saw her and witnessed her last breath.

I wondered if she could now see her mom, whom she missed so much in this life and longed to be with in heaven.

I wondered if she would be there when it's my turn to leave this physical world.

Losing my mom was the most difficult time in my life, and as believers we often ask ourselves

WHY? "Why must we continually face difficulties and struggles in our lives?"

But if we turn to the scriptures we will find that Jesus answers this question when asked why a man was born blind....The sins of this man or the sins of his parents did not make him to be born blind. He was born blind so the work of God would be seen in him." John 9:1-3 (NLT)

Paul also responds with these words of wisdom and assurance... "And we know God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them." Romans 8:28 (NLT)

So you see the real question is, will we trust our Heavenly Father and rely on our Faith in Jesus even when we don't understand the adversity or challenging circumstances we face?

And the answer for me is YES!

And so today as I sit here in quiet reflection of the wonderful mom I was blessed with, I stand firmly planted in my Faith and trust in Jesus Christ, for I will continually worship, honor and glorify His name, for He is the rock of my salvation and the bearer of comfort and peace during my times of need.

Happy Mothers day Mom. I love you and I miss you, and I know that you have found peace and comfort in the loving arms of our Heavenly Father!

JUNE 2017:

06/18 - *Today is fathers day, a day to recognize, celebrate and honor our father's.*

It's been almost 2 years now since I lost my dad, and although my Dad made some bad choices in his life that left a lasting mark on our family, I choose to remember the positive memories as a child growing up, and how his dedication as a father and provider set the example for me to become that man I am today.

I miss the times when we used to have lunches together at the Don Bosco Senior Community Center, taking him to the grocery store and the VA for his regular medical check-ups, and our talks together about his life experiences in the Navy and his days spent with my mother, and I'll always remember his words of gratitude for always being there to care for his needs in his final years.

I know in his heart he was truly regretful for all the wrongs he had done in his life, and I pray that he is now in a better place where he can now join hands with my mother and feel the comfort of God's loving arms and finally find the peace and forgiveness he longed for in this life.

RIP Pops, I love you and I miss you!

06/25 - *When I think back on my life I can see God's fingerprints all over it, and I am grateful and humbled by His presence in my life and the blessings and gifts He has provided for me and my family.*

But have you had those times in your life where you felt so alone, like one of the survivors of the Titanic, just sitting there in a lifeboat and waiting...waiting to live, waiting to die, waiting for an absolution that you hope will come??

You see no matter how hard we try to live our lives with integrity, confidence and hope, we all find ourselves facing doubt, and loneliness at some point in our lives.

In the book of James it tells us that we must remain steadfast and joyful when we face the tests and trials of this life, because it is during these difficult times that we will learn to grow and mature in our faith.

Yes it is true that pain, difficulty and doubt can break us, but it also has a way of strengthening and deepening our relationship with Christ.

The difference is how we respond..some people respond to pain, difficulty and doubt by becoming hardened, bitter, or angry. Others may become jealous of those who seem to have everything going right. But if we want to grow in Christ and enjoy life to its fullest we can't afford to let either of those things to happen. Instead, we must turn to the Lord with complete trust and faith so that we can mature in our faith and receive the joy and confidence that can only come from the power of the Holy Spirit that dwells within. And in our maturity we also gain a sense of compassion for others as we share in their pain because we too have faced it ourselves and can testify in confidence to its healing power.

So let us all come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will find and receive His mercy, grace and the strength to help us when we need it most.

For JESUS has shown us the way of life, and will fill us with the joy of His presence if we only believe!

JULY 2017:

07/23 - *Life is full of difficulties and challenges, yet as I sit here today I am reminded of the strength and courage necessary to face this world with the hope and quite confidence to make it through each day.*

These words of wisdom and encouragement written by the psalmist hold true to today as they did thousands of years ago..

“For the LORD is my rock, my fortress, and my savior; my God is my rock, in whom I find protection.
He is my shield, the power that saves me, and my place of safety.

The LORD is my light and my salvation— so why should I be afraid? The LORD is my fortress, protecting me from danger, so why should I tremble ?

I love you, LORD; you are my strength.

Keep me safe, O God, for I have come to you for refuge. I say to the LORD, "You are my Master!

Every good thing I have comes from you. I know that you are always with me. I will not be shaken, for you are right beside me.

The wicked are too proud to seek God. They seem to think that God is dead. But I trust in your unfailing love. I will rejoice because you have rescued me

The LORD is a shelter for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. Those who know your name trust in you, for you, O LORD, do not abandon those who search for you.

Listen to my voice in the morning, LORD. Each morning I bring my requests to you and wait expectantly. O LORD, you are a shield around me; you are my glory, the one who holds my head high."

Let us all be strong and courageous, all you who put our hope in the LORD!

AUGUST 2017:

08/19 - FINDING JOY AND PURPOSE THROUGH FAITH

All creation has been groaning since the beginning of time as if we were experiencing the pains of childbirth. And we as believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us to make us aware of our future glory...for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering as we wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, and give us the new bodies he has promised us.

We were given this hope when we were saved. (If we already have something, we don't need to hope for it.) But if we look forward to something we don't yet have, we must wait patiently and confidently.*

For it has been written, that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose for them.

In other words, if God is for us, who can ever be against us?

Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else?

Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love?

Does it mean He no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, are persecuted or hungry, destitute or in danger, or even threatened with death?

No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved (and loves)

us.

And so I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

For everything comes from God and exists by His power and is intended for His glory.

And it is this very message of truth and hope that is revealed to us when we have Faith;

That if we confess with our mouth that Jesus is our Lord and Savior, and believe in our heart that God raised him from the dead, we will be saved! For it is by believing in our heart and confessing with our mouth that we are made right with God. Only then will we begin to experience true Joy and Peace in our life and fulfill God's divine purpose for us!

SEPTEMBER 2017:

10/09 - *It seems that everyday we are faced with challenges and difficulties that leave us wondering just how we can ever endure. Yet through it all we can find encouragement, comfort and hope in the truths of God's word, if we just Trust in him...*

For it has been written..

“That the Kingdom of God is not just a lot of talk, but rather it is living by God's power. For His word is a lamp to guide our feet and a light for the path we are to follow.

He is our refuge and our shield, and His word IS our source of hope.

For our Lord and God will work out his plans for our life and He will never abandon us, for His faithful love endures forever.”

10/10 - THE POWER OF LOVE

For it has been written...

“That if we could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't love others, we would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

If we had the gift of prophecy, and if we understood all of God's secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if we had such faith that we could move mountains, but didn't love others, we would be nothing.

If we gave everything we had to the poor and even sacrificed our body, we could boast about it; but if we didn't love others, we would have gained nothing.

There are three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is LOVE.

LOVE is patient and kind.

LOVE is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude.

LOVE does not demand its own way.

LOVE not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged.

LOVE does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out.

LOVE never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance."

Therefore let us all strive to always be on guard, and stand firm in our faith. Be courageous, strong and do everything with LOVE.

For it is LOVE which binds us all together in perfect harmony, and it's only when our FAITH is expressed with acts of love for one another that we truly are exemplifying the fullness and spirit of our Faith in our Lord and Savior - Jesus Christ

OCTOBER 2017:

10/21 - WALKING IN HUMILITY AND GRACE

For it was written long ago that God has dealt a tragic existence to the human race and everything going on under the sun is meaningless—like chasing the wind. And if we are to find any meaning and purpose to this life we should learn to just enjoy the simple pleasures of our daily life, such as eating, drinking, and enjoying one's work; all of which are gifts from the hand of God, and submit to God's will and purpose for our lives, for this is our duty.

Yet as simple as this sounds, why do we still find ourselves struggling in our day to day lives? How do get through this life when everyday we feel the impact of the evil that surrounds us and are constantly bombarded with challenges, difficulties and hardships that seem to drive us to the brink of despair and hopelessness?

To answer these questions, we must again turn to the word of God who revealed to us His blessings for those who put their complete Trust and Faith in Him during those most difficult times in our lives...

In the book of Matthew 5:3, Jesus says to us “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

To be “poor in spirit” means to be humble. And to live our lives in HUMILITY means to admit our frail and sinful nature and surrender our lives to Jesus Christ. For when we humble ourselves before the living God and accept his free gift of GRACE we will discover an inner peace and confidence in knowing that no matter what difficulties or struggles we face we are not alone. For in our weakness God’s strength is revealed, and we will persevere to receive the heavenly prize for which God has given us through his son Christ Jesus if we just trust in Him!

Yes, everything in this world IS worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus. So let's not get tired of doing what is good, right and just in His eyes, let us devote ourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful and humble heart, and always make the most of every day and every opportunity. Only then will we find the strength, courage and confidence to make it through each day, and at just the right time we will reap the harvest for which we've been promised if we don't give up!

NOVEMBER 2017

11/07 - It's now been 6 years since my beloved mom left this world to return to the loving arms her creator and heavenly father, a day which will forever be etched in my memories as a day of overwhelming grieve, pain and loss.

Again as I reflect back on that day, I will never forget the moment I heard the news that my beloved mom had terminal cancer, the journey we walked together and the witnessing of her final moments here on earth. Words cannot express the experience of watching someone you love pass on in front of your eyes, and the helplessness and pain that follows.

But what I didn't realize on that day was that God was setting into motion the most amazing journey of my life, a journey that would reveal to me the true meaning of Faith and a profound truth that would forever change my life...

You see life in the physical world in which we live is temporary...we're born, we live our lives and eventually our bodies grow old and die leaving only dust and memories for those left behind.

For some, it's money, material things or pride in our achievements and recognition from others that give meaning and purpose to the life they live.

But for most us, there is a hope of something greater than ourselves, something that we can hold onto to that will help give meaning and purpose to our lives and make our lives worth living. And it is this Hope that is revealed from Faith in the living God, a God of omnipotence, grace and mercy whose written word reveals to us (His creation) a profound truth that explains to us the true meaning and purpose of our lives.

So on this day I want to one again give thanks to God the father and our Lord Jesus Christ for allowing me to share my life, love and experiences with my beloved mom, for I will forever hold onto the memories I had with her. But most most of all I want to thank my mom for the ultimate gift of love she left behind...the gift of Hope and Faith that was sparked by her passing - I love you mom, I miss you and I will see you again - AMEN

11/11 - Living a life in Faith is a journey, with each day bringing new opportunities to help us grow and mature in our Faith and relationship with our Heavenly Father...

One of the keys to maturing in our Faith is to be consistently grateful and humble for the gift of grace that our Heavenly Father has given us through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and to

remain focused on God's word as written through the scriptures. For all scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us the truth and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right, it prepares and equips us to fulfill His purpose for our lives. And it is through the scriptures that the grace of God has been revealed, bringing salvation to all people while we look forward with hope to that wonderful day when the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be revealed.

The truth of the scriptures teaches us that Jesus gave his life and blood to cleanse us and free us from every kind of sin in our lives so that we could be made his very own, a child of God totally committed to living our lives with acts of tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience and forgiveness. And above all with LOVE. For it is LOVE which binds us all together in perfect harmony, and it's only when our FAITH is expressed with acts of love for one another that we truly are exemplifying the fullness and spirit of our Faith.

But living our lives by these sound and wholesome teaching is not always easy...it requires us to keep a clear mind in every situation, and never be afraid of suffering for our Lord and Savior as we carry out the ministry and purpose for which God has given us. It requires patience and endurance as we look forward to the prize that awaits —and that prize is the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give us on the day of his return. And this prize is not just for me but for all who put their complete trust and Faith in our Lord and Savior - Jesus Christ.

DECEMBER 2017:

12/24 - *As we approach the Christmas and Holiday season, let us not forget the reason for the season.*

The Christmas season is a time of great joy. It is a time for reflection and healing. It is a time for the gathering of families to recognize and celebrate God's great love for us.

For it was over 2000 years ago that God sent into this world a son whose birth would bring great joy to the world. Shepherds, wise men, and angels all shared in the excitement of knowing about this great event. They knew this was no ordinary baby. The prophets had told of His coming hundreds of years before and a star stopped over Bethlehem just to mark the way for those who were looking for this very special child.

Luke 2:4-19 (NIV) testifies to this great event:

"So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "*Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy*

that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.

This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart."

But why did God send His son into this sometimes cruel and hard world?

To answer this question we must remember that from the beginning God created us to have a close personal and loving relationship with Him, but because of our sinful nature we lost that relationship and were condemned to die, both physically and spiritually.

However, because of God's great LOVE for us, He decided through His GRACE to offer all of us a final choice of Salvation and Hope through FAITH in his son Jesus Christ, who was born into this world to fulfill a promise foretold long ago; a promise of a Savior who would come into this world to serve, teach and become the ultimate example of love by sacrificing himself for the sins of all humankind so that we may be born again as children of God and begin living a new life for His glory.

So on this day, let us remember the true meaning of Christmas and invite Jesus into our hearts and lives, and no matter what struggles or difficulties we may be going through we can rest assured that we are God's children, and the joy and peace you will receive will last all year long as you look to God for all your needs to be met.

Jesus Is The Reason For The Season!

So let us all Rejoice!