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August 1, 2008

## “On this AUGUST Occasion...”

Dear Friends & Family,

(7/18) I felt the need to write this evening, as in about 36 hours I leave for a five-day trip to Buffalo, NY. I will be ministering at a conference there to the children & youth, the former in the morning & the latter in the evenings. I'll be preaching six times & performing four “Time Machine” dramas over a period of three days. It's roughly 400 miles each way & about 7 & ½ hours of driving. My truck & trailer are just about loaded, albeit they're baking in the hot sun! The “August Occasion” mentioned in the title above refers to our youngest son Caleb's wedding, a week after I arrive home from this ministry trip. Of course, this is a huge historical event in our family, as he is our last to move from the “nest”. How often I have wished that my “Time Machine” really worked! I'm sure our children are glad it doesn't! They know dad would keep them kids forever! ☺ Three days after our son's wedding, I head out of town again for an evening camp service in Carlisle, PA, about three hours away. I will get home very late (i.e., very early the next morning!). Two days later I head out again to my own Jr. camp which I direct every year. As I said in last month's newsletter, I believe this will prove to be the busiest summer of my life. I love every minute of it, yet I find myself deeply & constantly relying on our God for even the most routine tasks. With all on my plate, in my weakness, I often get drained, unmotivated, discouraged, etc., and then, oh, so graciously & sweetly, The Living Christ strengthens me—again. I “feel” the weight of His words, that apart from Him we can do nothing. In our humanness, this can be such a cause of duress, that you are so desperately dependent on Someone outside of yourself, but that is the essence of faith, & of the Christian life.

## “Oil's Well That Ends Well”?

There is much talk of oil prices these days. There is much debate in Congress re: finding new sources of crude to supply America's glut for fossil fuels. There are many who believe there exist vast resources of untapped oil supplies underneath the surface of Alaska, in a place called Anwr. I have discovered such oil fields myself, in the Holy Scriptures. The more often & deeper I dig, the more oil of illumination & insight I discover. I deeply grieve that the glorious doctrines of sovereign grace, with which the Scriptures are so replete with, are so very often “walked over” & never drilled & tapped, even though they beg to be discovered & expounded. So many Christians settle for “cheap gas” on the other side of town, spending the money they'd save “driving there” to do so! As I previously wrote, when the awesome doctrines of redemption & grace are not “tapped”, there is an enormous vacuum created that must be filled with something! If you view the landscape of current theological fads & emphases, you can see that this is exactly what has happened. The Lord Jesus' glorious Person & work are so seldom expounded upon. In my “continuing series” of “Christian myth debunking”, I'd like to expound on Him a bit, along with His inexplicable sufferings upon the cross. I pray by doing so we shall discover some “Barrels of Crude Biblical Oil”. **Myth: One drop of Jesus' blood could take away the sins of the world**”. Again, as with the other errors we have looked at, so very often, those expressing them *mean well* ! While the life-blood of the precious eternal Son of God *could have* saved the world, given Who He was, a.k.a., the “God-Man”, God had not ordained it so. The Lord had determined & decreed that the life of a person was in their blood (Lev.17:11). No man has ever died from shedding one drop of blood. The average amount of blood in a middle-aged man Jesus' age was about five quarts. Hence, He must needs spill it all. Even then, being divine, He declared that “no man takes My life, but, I lay it down...” (Jn.10:18). Hence, despite His horrendous loss of blood on the cross, He still had to commit His spirit to His Father in order to die.

## **“One Man, One Piece of Fruit, One Bite, One Time”**

I recently hit one such Biblical “oil well” recently, after re-digging in the same place, namely, one of the most important passages of Scripture in the whole Bible, Rom.5:12-21. For years now, I have studied, meditated upon, memorized, preached, & even drawn little symbols to help me understand & remember this crucial text, & still, I’m drawing “fresh oil”. When our sons were younger, I remember them playing the “Super Mario Brothers” video game. It was a maze game. The little man on the screen would run under a block. The player would have him hit his head on the underside. Certain blocks “spouted” out gold coins by doing so. My sons would often run on ahead before they exhausted the gold coin supply. I could never understand why. While this might be to one’s advantage in playing video games, it certainly isn’t in Scripture study! This passage in Rom. 5 teaches that by Adam eating the forbidden fruit, four major things happened to ALL mankind: they all died (vs.15); they all received the sentence of condemnation to judgment (vs.16); death reigned over all (vs. 17); & all were made sinners (vs.19). All of this, Beloved, happened by one man, taking one bite, of one piece of fruit, one time. If this most-severe & widespread judgment & punishment happened to the whole world, i.e., *billions* of souls, by one man, taking one bite, of one piece of fruit one time, what is the judgment now, which awaits the billions of souls who have lived since Adam, times millions of sins per soul in the average lifetime?! When I first saw this a few years ago, my spirit deeply sighed, “God is holy...God is holy”...God is holy”. That awestruck fear of God came over my soul. It is the kind of fear that causes you to want to crawl in a hole & throw dirt over you for the awesome majesty of His Glory & Name. Now, ponder this, Beloved. In Heaven, in eternity, the company of the redeemed from the earth is a number that no man can count (Rev.7:9). Ponder the quadrillions of sins of this number, if you can, imputed or transferred to, i.e., laid upon, the Lord Jesus Christ. If the judgment, wrath, punishment, & repercussions were so very all-encompassing & devastating for “one bite”, what was our Precious Lord Jesus going through for those six hours on Calvary, where the judgment of quadrillions of sins of His people were placed upon Him? Worthy is the Lamb Who was slain! I hit “oil”! While being in awe of this recently, the words from Handel’s “Messiah” came to my mind, words that you never hear sung like you do “The Hallelujah Chorus”, but nonetheless replete with richness! “Thy rebuke has broken His heart...He looketh for someone to have pity on Him...but there was no man, neither found He any to comfort Him...behold and see, if there be any sorrow, like unto His sorrow...” (Ps.69:20; Lam.1:12). Oh, what more can I write?! Words are futile to convey what I feel as I ponder once again this most climactic event of history! My deepest prayer for the Church in a day when She is being infected with worldly, “relevant”, toned-down, man-centered doctrine? May She be “determined to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified” (I Cor. 2:2). God, help us.

On behalf of Kim, Caleb (for the last time), & myself, thank you so very much for honoring us with your taking the time to read this, for praying for us, & for helping us to continue to fulfill God’s calling on our life.

## **Michael**

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[Please make all tax-deductible gifts payable to: Elim Fellowship, 1703 Dalton Rd, Lima, NY 14485. Thanks!]

[Michael is an ordained Elim Fellowship itinerant home missionary, endorsed by his local church. He supports his family & his ministry by faith in the Lord & His provision through His people.]

**Ministry/events for AUGUST & those not listed in last month's newsletter:**

**Aug. 1,2: Our son Caleb's rehearsal, dinner, & wedding, Immanuel Church, Wilmington, DE**

**Aug. 5: Camp Pinnacle, Philip Bonjorno Retreat Center, Carlisle, PA: Jr. camp service**

**Aug. 9-15: Tel Hai Camp, Honey Brook, PA: Hopewell Network Jr. Camp-pastoral director**

**Aug. 19: Hopewell Christian Fellowship, Elverson, PA: camp board mtg.**