

COMMENTARY

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HarvestChristianMinistriesVT@gmail.com
www.HarvestChristianMinistries.net

802-447-0869

PRAISE IS ON OUR LIPS!

Greetings from beautiful Bennington, Vermont!

I would like to personally thank all of you who have continued to support this ministry in prayer and offerings. Our church body is growing every week, with new faces showing up looking for a relationship with Jesus.

God tells us, speaking through His servant Isaiah, that His Word “shall not return to Me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.” (*Is 55:11*)

God’s Word has an effect when we study it and speak it, so that is what we are doing at Harvest. This Body of Christ’s mission is to Teach, Encourage, and Send Out. Without people partnering with us in all of that, we would not be able to do what we are doing, so thank you.

As I get older and because I’ve had so many opportunities to travel worldwide, I have come to have an affinity for small town life. It wasn’t always that way.

As I have written before to you, in my twenties and early thirties, I lived large in cities. There were many benefits to living in that environment, especially at that age of wanting worldly excitement. When we leave home and launch out into the world, sailing to ignore the chart of the Word of God for our guidance, the world will powerfully mold us. As we mature and lead our own lives, what we spend our

time and effort doing is what we are actually praising.

God has been hitting my heart over and over again to the importance of praising God. The Psalmist tells us, “Let everything that has breath, praise the Lord.” The Bible, God’s Word, tells us to praise Him: what does that look like?

Psalms 117 says, “Praise the LORD, all you nations; extol him, all you peoples. For great is His love toward us, and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever.”

We give Him honor (praise) because of who He is and how marvelous His mercy is.

A few weeks ago I was mowing lawns. I’d been at it for a little over four hours and was about ten minutes short of finishing when the entire drive function on the left side of the mower failed!

I was not in a praising mood!

In my attempt to fix the mower, I was on the ground in the backyard of a rental property, covered in sticky grass. It felt like it was a hundred degrees and my eyes were stinging from the sweat rolling off my bald head (you can picture it can’t you?) After not being able to fix it, and saying a lot of choice words, I ended up pushing the large mower to the front yard and positioned it behind my trailer. After six failures of trying to push this monstrosity up the ramp of my trailer, I collapsed in defeat.

Just then, 100% certain, I heard a voice say, “Praise Him.”

Huh? I don’t want to. Why won’t You just fix it, God?! Why the lesson?

We would worry less
if we praised more.
Thanksgiving is the enemy of
discontent and dissatisfaction.”

Harry A. Ironside

Call upon Me
in the day of trouble;
I shall rescue you,
and you will honor Me.

Psalms 50:15

Lawns are kind of like
relationships -
they require maintenance,
attention, and occasionally
a little bit of extra work
to look their best.

In the spring,
at the end of the day,
you should smell like dirt.

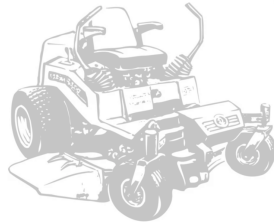
Margaret Atwood

Adversity is like a strong wind.
It tears away from us all but
the things that cannot be torn,
so that we see ourselves
as we really are.

Arthur Golden

Sometimes courage is the quiet
voice at the end of the day
saying,
“I will try again tomorrow.”

Mary Anne Radmacher



God is not transactional, He's relational.

He always answers that question, by showing me the value of the difficult times.

Difficult to mow a lawn? Really? Yes, really! My weekend was insane. Sunday night, after two church services, we drove to drop our oldest at Word of Life Camp, stayed in a hotel and drove back the next day. As soon as we got home I was mowing. I was so tired. And now, this issue in front of me was an insurmountable one. The big expensive mower would not run and I could not, *could not*, push it up onto the trailer.

I was frustrated, angry, out of God's will with what was in my heart! I knew the value of praise but I didn't want to just praise Him to get me out of the difficulty, I don't want to have that kind of relationship with Him, so out loud I said, I praise you for who You are, not what You can do for me.

Just then I heard a voice, "You need help, buddy?"

It was the neighbor I never met. I've owned this house for about five years but had never seen him. We end up pushing it up onto the trailer, and within minutes I was on my way home. I called a good friend and he was at the house in 15 minutes. We looked the thing over for a while. We couldn't figure it out.

Oh well, I thought, I'll bring it somewhere.

Just then my friend pulled some brackets on the mower, and something clicked, boom, it was working!

Wow, what a merciful Father He is. Especially when we don't deserve it! That lesson I learned is for us all, and I'm glad He taught it to me! Praise Him because of who He is, rather than what He does for us, that is what the mature sons and daughters of the Most High God should be doing.

God is not transactional, He's relational. The Lord spoke to Joshua, "This Book of the Law shall not depart

from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. (1:8) He wants us to be meditating on His word day and night! All of my life needs to be in Him. All times. All circumstances, including the unpleasant. Yea, even unto large broken lawnmowers!

So, like a good pastor, I bring it to you. Praise Him for who He is, rather than what He has done or can do for you. This will open your heart for healing. Our hearts tend to be the thing that always speaks the truth, no matter what that truth is. God is touching all the difficult places I've been holding back from Him because I didn't want the hurt, but that's what my life needed, a little hurt, so I could turn from my errant ways. He's doing it, and I welcome it. Will you welcome it into your life as well? We are in this together!

I praise You, God!

I love you, this ministry loves you,
I'll speak with you again soon.

Aaron

When you come out of the storm,
you won't be the same person
who walked in.
That's what this storm's all about.

Haruki Murakami

Seek the LORD
while He may be found;
call upon Him while He is near;
let the wicked forsake his way,
and the unrighteous man his thoughts;
let him return to the LORD,
that He may have compassion on him,
and to our God,
for He will abundantly pardon.
For My thoughts are not your
thoughts,
neither are your ways My ways,
declares the LORD.
For as the heavens
are higher than the earth,
so are My ways higher than your ways
and My thoughts than your thoughts.

Is 55:6-9

We can always find a reason to praise.
Situations change
for better and for worse,
but God's worth never changes.

Matt Redman

You have made Your people
experience hardship;
You have given us wine to drink
that makes us stagger.

Psalm 60:3

I always thought a yard was three feet,
then I started mowing the lawn.

Lettie Cowman

To learn patience
is not to rebel against every hardship.

Henri Nouwen

The pine stays green in winter,
wisdom in hardship.

Norman Douglas