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THE WINE PRESS

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THE WINE PRESS



Pressing into Truth, Pouring out His Grace

October 2025

Remembered for Courage & Faith

While preparing this issue of the Wine Press, we were deeply saddened by the horrific assassination of Charlie Kirk. Regardless of one's views about his politics, Charlie Kirk was a faithful witness who spoke passionately about his faith and became a strong voice to people, especially young people, in the United States and around the world—reminding us all that Jesus is the answer. When asked how he wanted to be remembered, Charlie said it was for his **courage** and his **faith**.

In this issue, we not only want to remember Charlie Kirk, but also examine our own hearts. Are we living as lights in the growing darkness of this world? Even a small candle can shine brilliantly when the night is at its darkest!

“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. (Isaiah 60:1-2, KJV)

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Remembering Charlie Kirk

By Jeremiah J. Johnston

Charlie loved Jesus and was unashamed of the gospel. We grieve his loss, but not as those without hope.

“Man who is born of a woman is few of days and full of trouble” (Job 14:1).

Why we should read this reminder: God is sovereign over suffering and, in His time, repurposes unspeakable evil for redemptive good. The question of evil appears to be eternal, but evil did, in fact, have a beginning. And just as evil had a beginning, it will have an ending. Evil is not eternal.

Evil may wound, but it cannot win. Pain may overwhelm, but it cannot overcome the resurrection hope we have in Jesus.

On Wednesday, my heart was shattered. Charlie Kirk and I had been texting late Sunday night, finalizing details for his surprise appearance at our Prestonwood Biblical Worldview Conference. Just hours later, our brother and friend was ushered immediately into the presence of Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:8). His life was cut short in an act of unspeakable evil. He was brutally murdered and assassinated.

When we are struck by evil atrocity, our hearts cry out: Why, Lord? We feel the weight of grief pressing down, and worry and fear become destabilizing forces. But in these moments, we need a deeper anchor for our souls. Worry, even fear, is destabilizing so many of us right now. We need a steady anchor for our souls to

stabilize our emotions and help us put one foot in front of the other today.

Oh, how we all need the reminder that our God weeps with us today. Through His Son — and now through His Spirit — God has entered our world of suffering. In the midst of heartbreak and loss, He offers His presence, His peace, His hope, His joy, and the promise of eternal life, even when life makes no sense.

Evil does not make sense, so there is no spiritual value in trying to understand or make evil make sense. Evil is a disruption in all the good God has created for us. We also do not have the right words. That's OK. Scripture reminds us, “In the same way the Spirit



also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words" (Romans 8:26).

In light of this, I want to share four biblical anchors that can steady our souls as we grieve Charlie's loss and face the problem of pain and evil.

1. God allows and is in control of all my challenges

When Joseph was falsely accused by Potiphar's wife and cast into prison, he suffered unjustly for 13 long years (Genesis 39). Was he in God's will? Yes. Was God still sovereign? Absolutely.

Only years later, standing before his brothers who had betrayed him, Joseph declared, "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good" (Genesis 50:20). What was meant to destroy Joseph, God used to save a nation and preserve the line of promise that would lead to the Messiah.

The same God is at work in our pain today. That situation in your life that feels unbearable, even senseless — He is still in control. He is not absent. He is bringing good out of evil in ways we cannot yet see.

Please join me in praying for Charlie's precious wife, children, and family. We cling to the promise that "the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words" (Romans 8:26). And we take comfort in the truth that "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Psalm 116:15).

2. When evil strikes, we live on promises — not explanations

Ultimately, there is little spiritual value or peace from explanations. Explanations rarely heal a broken heart. In fact, answers alone fall flat in the face of evil.

But the promises of God never fail. As seekers of truth, we will find the assailants and pray they are brought to justice, but as a pastor, I know more peace will still be needed when "those questions" are answered.

To experience peace, we must learn to live by faith in the promises and character of God. No one lives by having faith in explanations. All of the faithful heroes of the scriptures (many who greatly suffered) lived by faith in the promises of God. Faith is taking God at His word, not asking Him for an explanation. That doesn't mean we cannot ask God, "Why?" But in my experience, God wants us to trust Him in the moment, rather than ask for an explanation.

When we suffer, we realize how insignificant our lives are apart from living them in the will of God.

Here's the key when evil strikes: Living by faith means obeying God's word in spite of feelings, circumstances, or consequences. It means holding on to God's truth no matter how heavy the burden or how dark the day, knowing that He is working out His perfect plan.

It means living by promises and not by explanations.

We may never know why Charlie's life was taken so horrifically. Evil does not make sense, nor should we expect it to. Our hope is not in explanations but in the unchanging goodness of God.

3. Suffering can confirm my faith

Suffering strips away our illusions of self-sufficiency and reminds us that apart from God, our lives are fragile and fleeting.

Think of Abraham, who was asked to sacrifice Isaac — the very son of promise (Genesis 22). That moment of unimaginable testing revealed the depth

of his trust in God. And in the right time, God provided a ram.

In the same way, when trials overwhelm us, we are given the opportunity to see God as our true provider. Suffering, as painful as it is, refines our faith, anchors our hope, and draws us closer to the Lord who holds our days.

When we suffer, we realize how insignificant our lives are apart from living them in the will of God.

When we walk through suffering, we are reminded how small and fragile our lives are apart from the will of God. Trials strip away illusions and reveal that the true value of life is not found in the temporary, but in what is eternal.

4. Someday everything will become clear, and God's ultimate purpose will be accomplished

Biblical heroes like Abraham, Joseph, and Job did not understand their trials while they were in the midst of them. Clarity only came later, when they could look back and see the hand of God at work in the crisis.

Even Jesus entered the depths of sorrow.

On the night before His crucifixion, He confessed to His disciples, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death" (Matthew 26:38). In agony He prayed, "Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me" (Matthew 26:39). Only hours later, He would endure such profound abandonment that He cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46).

In our darkest moments, we discover this unshakable truth: Jesus understands, Jesus remains, and Jesus redeems.

This week, with the heartbreaking news of Charlie's murder, we feel that same weight of sorrow and confusion. Like the great

saints of old, we don't yet have clarity on why such atrocities happen. But we cling to the same promises they did.

The writer of Hebrews reminds us: "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet he did not sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

And we hold fast to God's unchanging word: "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5).

Charlie loved Jesus and was unashamed of the gospel. Today, we grieve his loss, but not as those without hope. Because of the resurrection of Jesus, we know this is not the end. The God who provided for Abraham, who redeemed Joseph's suffering, who restored Job, and who raised Jesus from the grave will one day wipe away every tear.

Until that day, we trust His heart, we rest in His presence, and we lean on His promises.

And God promises us still: "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5).

In our darkest moments, we discover this unshakable truth: Jesus understands, Jesus remains, and Jesus redeems.

A final word

In this season of heartbreak, let us cling to Christ, our unshakable anchor. Evil may wound, but it cannot win. Pain may overwhelm, but it cannot overcome the resurrection hope we have in Jesus.

Until that day when faith becomes sight, we will trust His heart, rest in His presence, and hold tightly to His promises.

Read the full article here: <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/16CLVVT1L7/>

Charlie Kirk: Man of Christendom

By Rod Dreher

The Charlie Kirk memorial service was one of the most extraordinary, and clarifying, things I've ever seen. Charlie was an Evangelical Christian, and the service was very much an Evangelical event. Though not Evangelical, I found it very, very moving, and am grateful for my Evangelical brothers and sisters in Christ. People keep saying online that the assassin has no idea what he has awakened in this country. I think it's true. I hope it's true. The service was not officially a church event, but it was utterly saturated with Christianity.

A Contrast in Reactions

It is impossible not to observe the contrast between how the Left behaved when its martyr George Floyd — a thief and drug addict killed while resisting arrest by a police officer trying to subdue him — and the way the Right behaved when its martyr, a young Christian conservative activist, was slaughtered in the act of engaging his opponents in peaceful public debate. We know that the alleged assassin, Tyler Robinson, grew up in a normie conservative Utah family, but at some point gave himself over to deep perversion, both online and in real life. He shot Charlie to silence the voice of an influential activist who opposed transgenderism and gender ideology.

After George Floyd's death, the Left burned down wide swaths of cities, looted stores, and set off a crime wave, as

well as a revolt among institutional elites that led them to oppress people who opposed their radical racial ideology. But after Charlie Kirk's assassination, the Right? Well, it prayed.

God Writes Straight with Crooked Lines

I don't think Donald Trump is a particularly honorable man, and I thought his closing address at the Kirk event was so deflating. Maybe his purpose was to show what a life without a living faith in Christ turns you into. Seems like barely a week goes by without Trump doing or saying something that makes me cringe. But we know what the alternative is. Biden went full woke, and opened the southern border. I can put up with Trump's personal corruption as long as he gets the big things right.

Besides, we all know perfectly well that a decent, normie Evangelical like George W. Bush would never have produced a cabinet capable of standing there at the stadium and testifying as those men and women did. I thought even the non-Christians — Tulsi Gabbard (Hindu) and Stephen Miller (Jewish) — made galvanizing speeches. It's like the saying goes, God writes straight with crooked lines.

Similarly, some of the things Charlie Kirk said publicly were cringe, and I didn't agree with them. But you know what? Even when he stepped over the

line in his rhetorical opposition to leftist ideology, I am grateful that he at least had the stones to speak boldly — unlike so many priests and pastors in this country, who muted themselves out of fear of being unliked, or controversial. Christians have been desperate for leadership. It is a scandal that a young uneducated Christian man was a more courageous and effective advocate for Christian moral teaching than countless of the ordained, professional clerics.

Similarly, it is a scandal that a vulgar real-estate operator from Queens has had more courage and effectiveness in advocating and implementing basic things conservatives believe in than all the normie Republicans who preceded him. But that's where we are.

A Youth Revival?

In Europe, if there is to be Christian revival, it's going to come from young people who want something REAL, and who realize that you can just do things. The amazing, awe-inspiring Chartres pilgrimage of 20,000 French and European Catholic tradition-craving youth - happens despite the fact that most French bishops either passively don't support it, or actively oppose it. These kids, and the priests that back them, don't care. They want the faith that their elders have denied them.

I have a sense that the Charlie Kirk mourners who filled that Arizona stadium are an American version of these French Catholic kids. That is, they are patriots and Christians who are not ashamed to love their God and their country, and who want a return to normality. It is altogether fitting that Kirk was likely murdered by a young man whose life was ruined by progressive freakery. Tyler Robinson was captured by the culture of death. I'm pretty confident I don't share all the political or religious views of the people gathered in that Arizona stadium



yesterday, but I would a million times rather live in a country in which they are considered normal than the country as it is today, with its rotten elites.

Age of Authoritarianism

And you know, the thing that I cannot unsee is that America has more than a few people who would be delighted for people like me, who shared most of Kirk's beliefs, to be murdered. I can't unsee it, and I don't think any of us should unsee it. This is the world as it is.

Over the weekend, the British political thinker Philip Blond said we are entering an Age of Authoritarianism. He's not cheering for this; he's just describing what he sees happening. In both Britain and the EU today: the popular Biblical research tool Bible Gateway, a website that allows you to search various translations of the Bible, is now banned. Even in these insane days, it cannot be true that they are banning a Bible research website for the sake of "safety". Can it?

Politicians Talking about God

There were so many incredible things said from the stage at the Charlie memorial. As an American, I'm used to hearing politicians talking about God ... but not like this. Never like this. Here is the Catholic man who is US Secretary of State, closing out his seven-minute

tribute to Charlie:

Marco Ruio: *“One of the things he wants us to take away from all of this, is the following: his deep belief that we were all created, every single one of us, before the beginning of time by the hands of the God of the Universe, an all powerful God who loved us and created us for the purpose of living with Him in eternity. But then sin entered the world and separated us from our creator. And so God took on the form of a man, and came down and lived among us. And He suffered like men, and He died like a man. But on the Third day he rose unlike any mortal man. And then to prove any doubters wrong, He ate with His disciples so they could see. And they touched His wounds. He didn't rise as a ghost or as a spirit, but in His flesh. And then He rose to Heaven. But He promised He would return, and He will! And when He returns, because He took on that death, because He carried that cross, we were freed from the sin that Separated us from Him. And when He returns, there will be a new Heaven and a new earth, and we will all be together, and we are going to have a great Reunion there again with Charlie and all the people we love.”*

Can you imagine the foreign minister of any other country speaking that way about God, about Jesus Christ?! They must have been messing their britches on the Quai d'Orsay in Paris, and in Whitehall in London.

J.D. Vance said in his speech yesterday that though he has been a believer for some years, he hasn't spoken about Jesus as much in public ever as he has in the days since Charlie's killing. Vance was crystal-clear that the core truth that Charlie believed was that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and that every other truth flows from that. Of Charlie, he said, “He was Athens, and he was Jerusalem — the city of reason, and the city of God — in one person.” What an

extraordinary statement! He's saying that Charlie — that goofy young man from the Midwest — symbolized Western civilization. And you know, I think he's right. I barely knew who Charlie Kirk was two weeks ago. I thought he was just a MAGA youth activist. I had no idea how deep he was.

Vance said that Charlie's life teaches us that being murdered for your beliefs is not the worst fate:

“It is better to face a gunman than to live your life afraid to speak the truth. It is better to be persecuted for your faith than to deny the kingship of Christ. It is better to die a young man in this world than to sell your soul for an easy life with no purpose, no risk, no love, and no truth.”

That ought to be carved in stone somewhere.

Erica Kirk Forgives the Assassin

And then came the crowning glory of the day, when Erika Kirk said, fighting tears, that Charlie fought all his life to save young men like the one who killed him. She said, “On the cross, our Savior said, “Father, forgive them for they not know what they do.” That man, that young man, I forgive him. I forgive him, because it was what Christ did, and is what Charlie would do. The answer to hate is not hate. The answer we know from the gospel is love, and always love. Love for our enemies and love for those who persecute us. The world needs Turning Point USA. It needs a group that will point young people away from the path of misery and sin. It needs something that will lead people away from hell in this world and into the next. It needs young people pointed in the direction of truth and beauty.”

Have you ever seen anything like that? The power of it!

I'm not going to bother linking to

Trump's meandering remarks. It'll just say: he needs Jesus. But like I said above, none of these incredible testimonials would have been possible if Trump were not president. Who can fathom the ways of the Lord?

Look at this post:

My dear American friends, We British Christians would get excited when, once a year, Queen Elizabeth would make a mild but sincere reference to the love of Jesus Christ in her Christmas address. In Charlie Kirks' Memorial service, watched by tens of millions, I just heard:

- *Multiple clear presentations of the gospel from men like Rob McCoy and Dr. Frank Turek with clear calls to repentance and faith*
- *Worship songs full of Scripture sung by tens of thousands live and millions at home*
- *Personal testimonies of lives transformed by the work of Christ and the witness of believers*
- *Demonstration and explanation of the value of marriage, child-rearing and family*
- *Calls to Romans 13 for the government*

to bear the sword for the protection of good and punishment of the wicked

- Declarations of spiritual warfare on the forces of evil and promises to endure no matter the cost - Calls to be prophets and call the nation to repent

- More Scripture references and Bible readings than I can count

- And a widow publicly forgiving her husband's killer because Christ forgave his killers on the cross.

All of it done before, and by, the most powerful people in your nation and the world. You guys should be on your knees thanking God for your country. It is a light to the world. Never stop fighting for it.

That mega-Evangelical world we saw yesterday — it's not my world, aesthetically at least. But you know, that is mainstream American Christianity, and just as I think Europe's recovery depends on Catholicism, Evangelicalism is in a position like no other form of Christianity to rebalance America. I wish it were Orthodoxy, as it is in Russia and other Eastern Christian lands! But this is the world we live in. I was deeply put off by some Catholics I saw on X yesterday



getting all piously judgmental about the Evangelicalism there. Charlie's widow is Catholic! She told the NYT that Charlie died wearing a St. Michael the Archangel medal she gave him — a medal that is now stained by his blood, and that she herself wears. That couple was a model of the best kind of ecumenism — not the wishy-washy kind, but a deeply shared love of the Lord, one that transcends confessional differences.

We Have Work to Do

We need each other, we Christians. I never tire of saying how the Christians of the Soviet world jailed by the Communists learned in prison that they weren't there because they were Protestant, Catholic, or Orthodox. They were there because they professed Jesus, and refused to live by lies. And so, they prayed together, and loved each other.

In my book, Living In Wonder, I write about how we need to sort ourselves out spiritually so that we are staring at the right corner of the night sky when a comet blazes past. We all saw yesterday, at that service, a constellation of comets blazing past. By their light, we see more clearly in this present darkness. What are we going to do with that? What am I, myself, going to do? I'm thinking hard about it, and praying about it. We are accelerating towards open conflict - a conflict that is ultimately spiritual. What will your role be? What will mine? The great Kamila Bendova, a devout Catholic, told me she and her late husband Vaclav allied with courageous non-believers who were willing to live not by lies; most of their fellow Catholics kept their heads down and hoped to avoid trouble.

Charlie Kirk, our Evangelical brother, did not keep his head down to avoid trouble. And he paid the ultimate price for it. His death was an apocalypse in that it showed us the worst of humanity,

and the best. Philip Blond might be right: that liberalism as we have known it is dead, and we are entering into an Age of Authoritarianism. If he's right, it's because the conditions under which classical liberalism flourishes no longer exist. This great civilization we call the West did begin as liberal, though as Tom Holland showed in Dominion, it produced liberalism and its blessings. If it is going to survive liberalism's demise - a demise brought on by casting aside God - we who believe its founding principles - especially its founding religion - have work to do.

No more living by lies, even if it means they kill us for it. Solzhenitsyn, in his 1974 letter entitled "Live Not By Lies," wrote:

"The more of us set out together, the thicker our ranks, the easier and shorter will this path be for us all! If we become thousands—they will not cope, they will be unable to touch us. If we will grow to tens of thousands—we will not recognize our country!"

Yes! Many, many of us, on both sides of the Atlantic, do not recognize what our countries have become. We don't have to live this way. What would Charlie do? We know; he showed us. So now: what will we do? Tucker Carlson said in his Kirk memorial address that it begins with personal repentance.

"[W]hat Charlie was really saying is that change begins, the only change that matters, when we repent of our sins. We! Me! A recognition that the real problem is me, how fallen I am. And that is the reason that Charlie was fearless."

Read the full article here:

<https://roddreher.substack.com/p/charlie-kirk-man-of-christendom>

“They Hated Me Before They Hated You”

By Jason Ruis

The Christian faith is naturally divisive. It divides. This isn't a bible verse that you'll find on anything at Hobby Lobby, but these words did come out of Jesus' mouth: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.." (Matthew 10:34-35). The Christian faith is naturally divisive.

Jesus prepares His disciples

In John Chapters 15 and 16 Jesus is preparing his disciples for that reality. Jesus says, "These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. (John 16:1-3). Things are about to change in the lives of the disciples and Jesus is preparing them for that reality. Not only is he going to be taken away from them, but once he's taken away from them, their entire situation is going to change. Things are going to get really difficult. Things are going to get so difficult that the disciples are going to be tempted to fall away. So, Jesus is preparing them for this.

Pay attention to this verse: "But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told them to you." (John 16:4, ESV). Why is Jesus saying this to them? Is it because he wants to prove that he was right once again? No. This is his way of preparing the disciples for what they are about to suffer. So that when they do suffer, they remember that Jesus has told them about these things. They will be prepared for the suffering.

Preparing for the Future

We know this is actually an important part of preparing for something difficult. There's always a temptation to downplay the difficulty of things, however, that often sets us up for failure. If you are preparing for a three mile run and you're repeatedly telling yourself, "This is going to be easy. It's going to be a walk in the park. I'm just gonna coast my way through it," guess what's going to happen the moment things get hard? You're going to start saying different things in your head: "What's wrong? This isn't how this is supposed to be? Maybe I should quit!" However, if you prepare yourself at the beginning of the run and tell yourself, "This is gonna be tough. There are going to be points when I want to quit and points when I don't think I'll be able to finish, but I can finish this run." Then what happens when you hit those points? You remember what you were told. You

expect them to come and then you push through them. You've been prepared to make it through the difficult points of the run.

That's what Jesus is doing with his disciples. He's preparing them to endure the hatred of the world. He says, "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you." (John 15:18, ESV). Based on the context of the passage, that "if" could better be translated "When." When the world hates you, know that it hated Jesus before it hated you. In the very next verse he says it very clearly: "the world hates you." (John 15:19, ESV). So, when the world hates you, one of the first things to remember is that it hated Jesus first.

Why the World Hates Jesus

Here's the question that Jesus answers: Why does the world hate him? Here's what he says, "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin... If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father." (John 15:22–24, ESV). Why does the world hate Jesus? They hate Jesus because he revealed their sin and showed that they were guilty. Not only that, but notice that Jesus says he removed their excuses for their sin as well.

The picture being painted here is of a world that is engulfed in sin, but repeatedly trying to cover it up and make excuses for it, constantly trying to explain it away, or pretend like it's not sin at all. Then Jesus comes and uncovers the entire thing. He reveals sin to be sin and He removes any of the excuses and cover-ups they've devised to pretend like they're not sinners. And because of that, they hate him.

Now, there's a little line in the middle that I think I need to explain further, but briefly. Jesus says, "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin." (John 15:22, ESV). Does this mean that if Jesus hadn't come they wouldn't be guilty of their sin? Does this mean that nobody was guilty of sin before Jesus came? Of course not. From the moment that Adam and Eve sinned in the garden all humanity has been guilty of their sin. So, what's this all about? Herman Ridderbos explains this very well, I think. He says, "If Jesus had not come and had not spoken of God as he has, then God would not yet have spoken his final word of love to the world and the world would not yet have given God its final answer." (Ridderbos, 524). This moment was the epitome of two things: The epitome of God's revelation of his love AND the epitome of the world's hatred and rejection of that love. Jesus' coming brought all of that into the light in a powerful way that actually ended up increasing the guilt because they rejected the increased revelation of God's love.

Jesus not only says they've rejected this increased revelation of God's love but says, "Whoever hates me hates my Father also." (John 15:23, ESV). They hate the Father. That's at the core. They hate Jesus because they hate God. That's why they have rejected God's increased revelation of his love to the world. They hate him.

We need to expect that as we show the world the real Jesus Christ and as we live the life he's called us to live, people are not going to like it. Actually, they are going to hate us for it. This is what Jesus was preparing his disciples for, and preparing us for. He says, "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you... Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they

persecuted me, they will also persecute you.” (John 15:18–20, ESV). We will be persecuted for telling people about the real Jesus and by living lives that are faithful to the real Jesus. Actually, we will be hated by the world. This will not be unusual. It should be expected by every Christian.

Chosen out of the World

Here’s what hit me this week. The world will hate us because of something Jesus did for us, and this wasn’t something Jesus did accidentally. No, he did this on purpose, knowing that it would cause the world to hate us. He says, “If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.” (John 15:19, ESV). Why does the world hate us? Because Jesus chose us out of the world. That’s why. Jesus saved us from the world and set us apart from the rest of the world. That’s why they hate us.

It is foolishness for the world to hate the truth. So, we can never shy away from speaking the truth clearly and boldly. Speaking the truth clearly and boldly is not giving the world “cause” to hate us but they will hate you for this. Living lives that refuse to take part in the foolishness and wickedness of the world is not giving the world “cause” to hate you, but they will hate you for this anyway. We must be willing to be hated for our faithfulness and not our foolishness.

Thankfully, Jesus also reminds us that we have some help in the midst of these difficulties. He says, “But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.” (John 15:26–27, ESV). The Holy Spirit has been given to us to lead and guide us through the minefields of this life. The Holy Spirit is

with us when we are hated and attacked by the world, giving us strength, endurance, perseverance, and hope in the midst of the suffering. The Holy Spirit is there to give us wisdom and insight on when to speak and when to keep our mouths shut. The Holy Spirit is there to give us guidance when we open our mouths to guide the words that come out. The Holy Spirit is with us to guide us into the truth so that we don’t get lost and caught up in lies. As Jesus tells us here, the Holy Spirit will bear witness about who Jesus truly is AND will work in us so that we can tell the world who Jesus truly is.

There is a glimmer of hope in the midst of these hard and difficult words. Jesus also says this: “If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.” (John 15:20, ESV). This is a glimmer of hope in some ways. As has often been said throughout the Gospel of John, the world hated Jesus—but not all of them. Some believed. Some heard his word, believed his word, kept his word and received eternal life. The same will be true for us. Many will hate us. Many will reject us. Many will refuse to hear anything we have to say. But not all of them.

Some will hear what we have to say and some will believe what we have to say. Some will repent and believe in Jesus Christ, they will turn from their sins, be forgiven and set free, and receive eternal life. This will happen because we have been faithfully following Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit and faithfully sharing the gospel by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Read the full article here:

<https://www.jasonruis.com/p/the-world-hates-you>

It is Well With My Soul

By Kristen Wetherell

In the middle of suffering, can you say, “It is well with my soul”?

While sick on the couch one week, I read the Shunammite woman’s story in 2 Kings and was immediately helped. I’d been fighting fear because I was terrified that our infant daughter would catch my sickness, and because I had no idea how I would care for her in such a depleted state.

I’m not proud of the fruit I bore that week: frustration, unkindness, negativity, I is well? What?! Didn’t her son, her unexpected gift from God, just die on her lap? How could she say this?

Remembering God’s Faithfulness

And the woman conceived, and she bore a son about that time the following spring, as Elisha had said to her. (v. 17)

This Shunammite woman’s very decision to find Elisha is an act of remembering God’s faithfulness to her. He had provided her a son, as Elisha had promised, and she knew she could return to this God, and his man, in her time of need.

One of the hardest things in suffering is remembering, because the most glaring, urgent thing is in front of our faces, and it doesn’t seem good. Rather than remember, we try to solve our problems. Our trials threaten to take up our attention, and our wayward hearts distract us from how God has worked in

the past, leading us to fret and forget. This is why we seek to remember his faithfulness.

Do you need to pause right now in your suffering and remember? Remember how God has proven his great love for you by sending his Son to die upon a cross. Remember how he raised him from the dead, to give you resurrection life forever, to ultimately defeat every suffering, and wipe away every tear.

And, remember how he’s been faithful to answer your prayers in the past; to make you like his Son even when the answer was no; and not to waste a thing, from the smallest to the hardest of trials.

Remember God’s faithfulness, and you too will be able to say, “It is well with my [soul](#).”

Clinging to Christ

And when she came to the mountain to the man of God, she caught hold of his feet. ...Then the mother of the child said, “As the Lord lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” (v. 30)

Hear the desperation and trust in the Shunammite’s words as she refuses to leave Elisha’s side “as the Lord lives.” Her hope is in the Lord, who lives forever, and in God’s prophet—in his very word.

When suffering comes, we can move one of two directions: toward Christ in faith, or away from him in anger and

bitterness. We can quickly turn to creature-comforts to deliver us from our afflictions, keeping God at arm's length, or we can cling to his Word and hope in Christ alone.

You too can cling to Christ, the incarnate Word: his character, works, and promises. He'll do what is best out of the goodness of his character; he will give you what you need to stand up under suffering; and he will satisfy you with his unfailing love. But even this trust is impossible apart from the power of the living God at work in us. So we say along with the Shunammite, "As the Lord lives, I will not leave you" because we believe the Word-made-flesh will never leave or forsake us, and will help us trust him by faith day by day.

Cling to Christ, and you too will be able to say, "It is well with my soul."

Rejoicing in the Resurrection

The child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes....And when she came to [Elisha], he said, "Pick up your son." She came and fell at his feet, bowing to the ground. Then she picked up her son and went out. (vv. 35-37)

Elisha journeys to the woman's home, and after praying and stretching himself out upon her son, the Lord answers his prayer, raising the boy miraculously from the dead.

Friend, we don't know if our suffering will end in this life. It may not. But we do know that something greater—resurrection life—awaits us in Jesus Christ. Whether or not we are delivered here and now, someday we will be healed completely from the brokenness of this world. We will rejoice in the new heaven and new earth, where Jesus will be our light forever, where we will live in the splendor of his perfection and the restoration of all things, where sin and its effects will be no more.

No matter what you're going through today, rejoice in Christ, for the resurrection is your sure future, and death no longer has a hold on you. You will finally come into the presence of Jesus, fall at his feet, and exult in his beautiful glory—and your pain and suffering will be wiped away for good.

Rejoice in the resurrection, and you too will be able to say, "It is well with my soul"

The Story of Horatio Spafford

By Dr Hawn

*When peace, like a river,
attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot,
thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.*

With this hymn comes one of the most heartrending stories in the annals of hymnody.

The author, Horatio G. Spafford (1828-1888), was a Presbyterian layman from Chicago. He had established a very successful legal practice as a young businessman and was also a devout Christian. Among his close friends were several evangelists including the famous Dwight L. Moody, also from Chicago.

Spafford's fortune evaporated in the wake of the great Chicago Fire of 1871. Having invested heavily in real estate along Lake Michigan's shoreline, he lost everything overnight. In a saga reminiscent of Job, his son died a short time before his financial disaster. But the worst was yet to come.

Hymnologist Kenneth Osbeck tells the story: "Desiring a rest for his wife and

four daughters as well as wishing to join and assist Moody and [his musician Ira] Sankey in one of their campaigns in Great Britain, Spafford planned a European trip for his family in 1873. In November of that year, due to unexpected last-minute business developments, he had to remain in Chicago, but sent his wife and four daughters on ahead as scheduled on the S.S. Ville du Havre. He expected to follow in a few days.

“On November 22 the ship was struck by the Lochearn, an English vessel, and sank in twelve minutes. Several days later the survivors were finally landed at Cardiff, Wales, and Mrs. Spafford cabled her husband, ‘Saved alone.’”

Spafford left immediately to join his wife. This hymn is said to have been penned as he approached the area of the ocean thought to be where the ship carrying his daughters had sunk.

This hymn came to life for me in the summer of 1981. I had taken a group of youth to Chicago to work in an inner-city church that housed several congregations of immigrant groups. I chose to attend the Vietnamese service, which I was told consisted of refugees from the Vietnam War—the famous Boat People who had fled Vietnam after the fall of Saigon in 1975.

I hadn’t been back to the Chicago area since I had graduated from a college in a nearby suburb in 1970. During my time in college, the draft was reinstated, protests of the Vietnam War were numerous and the riots surrounding the 1968 Democratic National Convention in the city were infamous. Returning to Chicago 11 years later, the memories of the Vietnam War were fresh on my mind.

As the Vietnamese congregation gathered to worship, they sang the same song

every Sunday to begin their worship, “It Is Well with My Soul.” I didn’t need the words in English as I had memorized them as a boy. I was amazed at how closely this text, written over 100 years earlier, coincided with the struggles of these immigrants as they fled a hostile Vietnam in frail ships, miraculously arriving in Australia and other places.

As the Vietnamese congregation, now residing in Spafford’s hometown of Chicago, sang the final stanza, I understood the power of a hymn to transcend time and culture to address human tragedy with assurance. Though the hymn begins with loss, it ends in eschatological hope for the day when “faith shall be sight.”

For me, be it Christ, be it Christ hence to live:

If Jordan above me shall roll,

No pang shall be mine, for in death as in life

Thou wilt whisper Thy peace to my soul.

But, Lord, 'tis for Thee, for Thy coming we wait,

The sky, not the grave, is our goal;

Oh, trump of the angel! Oh, voice of the Lord!

Blessed hope, blessed rest of my soul!

And Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight,

The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;

The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,

Even so, it is well with my soul.

Read more here:

<https://kristenwetherell.com/2019/07/10/it-is-well-with-my-soul/>

<https://www.hymnologyarchive.com/it-is-well-with-my-soul>

Run with Patience the Race Set Before You

By Bradley P Owens

In a very real way, our lives are like an ultramarathon that tests the limits of our spiritual endurance.

I have learned, in my role as a Professor of Ethics, that some students feel that life isn't turning out quite like they had anticipated and that life has been a lot harder than they thought it would be. Some feel that the pace of life is way too fast and that they can't keep up. Some have questions they can't currently answer and others feel frustrated because they have waited a lot longer than they had anticipated for righteous desires to be fulfilled.

I have prayerfully thought about how to help my students—and anyone else who feels weary in their mortal journey—to find the renewed strength they need to keep going with faith and patience. To frame some key principles, I want to relate a true story I heard a few years ago that still surprises me to this day.

The Cliff Young Story

In 1983 a sixty-one-year-old farmer contacted the organizers of a 544-mile ultramarathon from Sydney to Melbourne, Australia, and asked to be registered for the race.² Since the other entrants were well-known and proven ultrarunners—with some holding records³ and others bearing sports sponsorships—this farmer's request was met with skepticism.

"Do you know how long this race is?" the race officials asked. "What makes you think you can complete it?"⁴

The farmer insisted that he understood how long the race was and that he believed he could finish it because, being from a poor farm family who couldn't afford horses or four-wheelers, he had often run in his knee-high gumboots to round up nearly 2,000 sheep over a very large area in advance of a storm, sometimes running for three days to round up the entire flock. He figured that if he could run for three days, he could also do it for five or six days and complete the race.

The race officials reluctantly allowed the farmer to register. On the morning of the race, the other runners showed up with experienced support teams in mobile homes with showers and nice beds for their runners. In contrast, this farmer drove up in a rusty old van, with an inexperienced road crew and one pair of running shoes.⁵ The starting gun went off, and the runners tore through the streets. Observers noted that this farmer's stride looked more like a shuffle than a run, his pace being much slower than that of the others.⁶ The newspapers viewed this farmer who trained in gumboots as a novelty in the race,⁷ and almost no one took him seriously as a contender.

However, to the shock of the entire



nation and the global racing world, this sixty-one-year-old farmer named Cliff Young not only won the ultramarathon but beat the previous record by two days, finishing the 544 miles in five days and fifteen hours.

How did this happen?

Based on my reading of Cliff's biography and other articles detailing this astonishing result, a key reason Cliff Young won was that almost nothing went right for him the first day of the race.

So what went wrong?

First, during the initial hours of the race, due to a poorly marked section of the course, he got lost following another runner who didn't know the way.⁹ This experience galvanized Cliff's resolve not to mimic what other racers were doing, including their pacing and strategy, but rather to run this race by doing what felt right to him.

Second, to make up for getting lost and running slower than his competitors, Cliff ran a couple more hours on the first night than he had originally planned. When he

finally finished running around midnight, certain members of his road crew had fallen asleep and didn't do the one job they had been given: to have a warm dinner ready for him. Though frustrated, Cliff just ate something cold out of a can and then collapsed in exhausted sleep.¹⁰

At the time, it was common wisdom among racers that you had to sleep at least six hours a night during these multiday marathons in order to maintain enough energy to make it to the end, so Cliff's crew chief, Wally, was responsible for waking Cliff up at six in the morning to get an early start.

But the third problem for Cliff and his team occurred when the alarm went off and Wally nodded back to sleep. He then awoke with a start and, without putting on his glasses, ran to the vehicle where Cliff was sleeping and said, "Cliff, get up. I've slept in. It's past six!"

Cliff bolted upright, put on his shoes, and tore down the road, thinking his competitors were already running. But when the sun didn't come up for what seemed like hours, Cliff finally asked Wally what time it was.

Embarrassed, Wally said it was four in the morning. He had accidentally set the alarm for two thirty rather than six. Cliff had barely slept two hours that night.¹¹ But instead of getting upset or calling it quits, he just kept moving forward one step at a time. He found that he could run all day just fine with two to three hours of sleep while eating very simple food out of a can. Doing so helped maximize his running time each day, which drastically changed the outcome of the race. The unanticipated difficulties he experienced during the first part of the race actually worked together for his good. His resilient response to unexpected challenges led to unexpected advantages.

On the fifth and final day of the race, it seemed that the courage and determination of this unlikely hero pulsed through the hearts of millions of Australians with every step Cliff took toward the finish line, uniting the country in a national celebration. That day Cliff became a symbol of Aussie grit and determination.

In a very real way, our lives are like an ultramarathon that tests the limits of our spiritual endurance. The apostle Paul taught, “Let us run with patience the race that is set before us.”¹² This mortal experience, which has been carefully designed as part of our loving Heavenly Father’s plan, is meant to help us develop as disciples of His Son and reach our fullest potential. However, this experience can feel overwhelming at times. We can grow weary and may wonder if we can actually make it.

Just as no one believed Cliff Young could finish—let alone win—the race, we may also have doubters who try to get us to believe we cannot make it successfully through life. These doubters may be other people, the adversary, and sometimes ourselves. But through scripture, the Spirit, and patriarchal blessings, you know you are

a child of God. Heavenly Father believes in you. You have made the wise choice to come to this earth to run this all-important race, and you have made many good choices since then that have brought you to where you are today. This can give you growing confidence that you can not only complete this mortal race but do so in a magnificently successful way. Regardless of the current challenges or disadvantages that you may think you have, you can silence sources of doubt to do and become more than you can imagine.

The key for all of us is to fully yoke ourselves to the Savior. Speaking of this vital key and some themes from the heroic story of Cliff Young, I want to invite us all to consider four essential decisions we can make that I know will help us to continue to run with patience this mortal RACE that is set before us.

Repent and Realign Regularly

First, decide to repent and realign with the path regularly. Like Cliff Young, we can sometimes get lost, veer off course, or follow someone who doesn’t know the way.

This principle of repenting and realigning continually is emphasized first because much more important than our speed or pace in this race is whether our current direction is aligned with our desired final destination. Frequent course corrections are needed because life can be a distracting, misdirecting, and detour-enticing experience.

L. Andersen wrote, “With constant prayer, a determination to keep our covenants, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, we navigate our way through life. When personal difficulty, doubt, or discouragement darken our path, or when world conditions beyond our control lead us to wonder about the future, the spiritually defining memories from our book of life are like luminous

stones that help brighten the road ahead, assuring us that God knows us, loves us, and has sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to help us return home.¹⁶

Embracing the role of joyful repentance and constant realignment to the covenant path will help us run with patience the race that is set before us.

Anticipate and Accept Adversity

Second, decide to anticipate and accept adversity. While we can't know in advance the specific challenges we will face, we know that each of us will experience significant forms of adversity in life. We can prepare now by accepting this reality, building positive coping mechanisms and resilience, and setting our hearts on eternal things that do not change. In our lives, just as in Cliff Young's race, unexpected adversity can lead to unexpected advantages, providing us with insight and greater self-awareness that can positively change our habits, direct our course of action, and help speed our progression on the covenant path. Jesus Himself promised, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."¹⁸

Our sense of adversity is closely tied to our perception of the degree to which our experiences align with our expectations. One way to "think celestial" about the future is to try to replace expectations with hopes. It has been said that "expectations are premeditated resentments," but hopes entail a future-oriented sense of gratitude. While hopes lead to grateful yearning and proactive flexibility, expectations are often associated with discontented entitlement and rigid resistance. While hopes are centered in God and eternal promises, expectations are based on people and circumstances. While hopes are tied to an eternal identity, expectations are tied to mortal roles and identities.

By seeing our lives and the adversity we face through this lens of hope, we are more able to anticipate and accept adversity as a vital, meaningful part of the journey, which will help us run with patience the race that is set before us.

Cleave unto Christ and Covenants

Third, and most importantly, decide to cleave to Christ and to the covenants He makes possible. In contrast to Cliff Young's inexperienced road crew, Jesus Christ has been leading and empowering souls to successfully complete this mortal race for a very long time. When the scriptures say He is "mighty to save," it means He is very, very good at it. In a way that we don't fully understand, through the process of His Atonement the Savior generated an infinite supply of spiritual power. The covenant path is lined with this power in a degree and intensity that is not found anywhere else. Cleaving to Christ and covenants, especially through seeking Him in His holy house, will help us run with patience the race that is set before us.

Endure to the End

Fourth, decide that you will never, ever give up, that you will endure to the end.

When asked about his strategy for the race, Cliff Young simply said it was "to run to the finish line." He told his crew that if he began this race, there was no way he was going to stop until he reached the end.

Taking steps—one foot in front of the other, over and over—in a race seems rather simple and repetitive, yet these steps accrue across long distances and lead to impressive and inspiring accomplishments, such as those of Cliff Young. Similarly, making continual spiritual progress in our mortal marathon happens through simple and repeatable steps that include heartfelt prayer, scripture study, joyful

repentance, service, and renewing and striving to live covenants. And in contrast to the physical steps that are energy depleting, these spiritual steps or habits are energy renewing. Any one of these steps enacted in isolation results in spiritual momentum. But when we combine all these steps together, our strength and our momentum really begin to build, and we begin to love the race. We gain growing clarity and even certainty that because of Christ we can successfully reach the celestial finish line. Resolving to endure to the end by daily embracing the renewing power of the gospel's sanctifying steps that invite the Spirit's daily companionship will help us run with patience the race that is set before us.

Conclusion

In closing, I bear witness that because of Jesus Christ we can not only complete this mortal marathon but can do so with magnificent success: with joy, with meaning, with growth, and with service to others. Resolutely making the decision in our own hearts

to repent and realign regularly, to anticipate and accept the role of adversity, to cleave to Christ, and to endure to the end will yoke us to Christ in a relationship of continual renewal. Regardless of perceived disadvantages, limited experience, past mistakes, people we have trusted who have let us down, or the fact that life hasn't been going well lately, we can all successfully make it because of Jesus Christ, for we are promised that those who center their hope on Him "shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." And so "let us run with patience [and with Jesus] the race that is set before us" and let Him, who is "the author and finisher of our faith," help and renew us every step of the way. I testify that He lives. I testify that He loves each and every one of us. And I testify that this is His work. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Read the full article here:

<https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/brad-owens/let-us-run-with-patience-the-race-that-is-set-before-us/>

Hebrews 12:1-2

RUN THE RACE

looking unto Jesus



Check It Out: Books, Apps etc.

Please send in your recommendations of books, podcasts, apps or shows to:
contact@thewinepress.org

Books

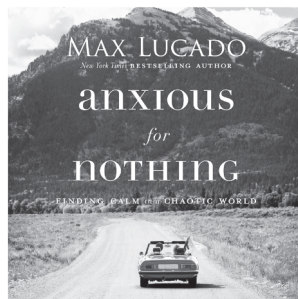
The Righteous Mind by Jonathan Haidt

Why can't our political leaders work together as threats loom and problems mount? Why do people so readily assume the worst about the motives of their fellow citizens? In *The Righteous Mind*, social psychologist Jonathan Haidt explores the origins of our divisions and points the way forward to mutual understanding. His starting point is moral intuition - the nearly instantaneous perceptions we all have about other people and the things they do. These intuitions feel like self-evident truths, making us righteously certain that those who see things differently are wrong.



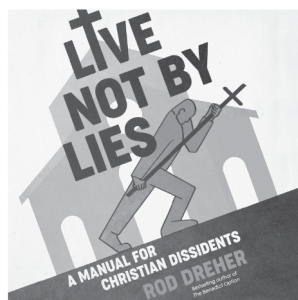
Anxious for Nothing By Max Lucado

Does the uncertainty and chaos of life keep you up at night? Is irrational anxiety your constant companion? Let God help you win the war on worry and receive the lasting peace of Christ. We all experience anxiety, but we don't have to let worry and fear control our lives. *Anxious for Nothing* provides a roadmap for coping with and healing from anxiety.



Live Not by Lies By Rod Dreher

In *Live Not by Lies*, Dreher amplifies the alarm sounded by the brave men and women who fought totalitarianism. He explains how the totalitarianism facing us today is based less on overt violence and more on psychological manipulation. He tells the stories of modern-day dissidents - clergy, laity, martyrs, and confessors from the Soviet Union and the captive nations of Europe - who offer practical advice for how to identify and resist totalitarianism in our time.



Prayer Focus

For Courage & Boldness

This month, we want to focus our prayers on courage and boldness to be witnesses for our faith. In a world that often resists the truth of the gospel, it takes the power of the Holy Spirit to stand firm, speak up, and share the hope we have in Jesus Christ. Let's pray that the Lord will fill us with His Spirit, remove fear from our hearts, and give us the words to say when opportunities arise. Let's ask Him to make our lives radiant with His love, so that we will not shrink back in silence but step forward in faith - pointing others to our Savior who changes lives. May the Lord give us boldness to proclaim His name with joy, courage, and unwavering confidence.

Acts 4:29–31 “And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word... and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.”

Romans 1:16 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.”

Joshua 1:9 “Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.”

2 Timothy 1:7 “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”



Salt & Light

By Charlie Kirk

Salt changes the flavor of everything it touches, and light drives back the darkness wherever it shines. Charlie Kirk reminds us: if your faith isn't changing what's around you, it might not be shining bright enough.

“Christ wants us to be around people who aren't like us. This is why I go to college campuses. One of my life's callings is to go to the darkest places humanity has, college campuses, and to fight for righteousness and goodness, and I'll prove it to you by what Christ told us. What Jesus told us is to be salt and light. Now, we hear that, but we don't think deeply about what it means. What do salt and light have in common? They change the environment that they come in contact with. Light brightens up a dark place and salt will make something saltier. They do not affirm, they do not conform, they change for the better. That's very important. We, as Christians, are called to change the environment we come in contact with.”