

Dear Lutheran Watchman,

I have a loved one who has messed up but is making an honest effort to get back on the right track in life. I foresee some troubling times in the near future and was wondering if you could suggest a few passages to give them the strength to overcome the difficult challenges that lay ahead. Any advice you have to offer is greatly appreciated.

My Dear Friend, Thank you for your letter of concern.

You don't say whether or not your loved one professes to be a Christian. However, I assume because you ask for Scripture passages, they are open to hearing God's Word.

The most important thing in any of our lives is, of course, our relationship with God. In other words, that we confess we are sinners and we repent of our sins and know Jesus as our Savior - If we place all our trust and faith in Him - the road through this life with all it's troubles and temptations will have purpose - the goal of heaven. We can know all our sins, those of our past as well as those we commit in the future through weakness or ignorance are forgiven and so we press on through all trials in this life towards the goal of eternal life in Christ.

As St. Paul says in his letter to the Philippians: "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, **forgetting those things which are behind**, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:13,14)

You might also read them a sermon I wrote on this text entitled: "Running the Race". Here is the link: <http://lutheranwatchman.weebly.com/quinquagesima-sunday.html>

One of my favorite passages of comfort is Matthew 11:28-30 where Jesus tells us:

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Another is: "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." (Proverbs 3:5-6)

And one more favorite... All of Romans, chapter 8:

1There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

2For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

3For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

4That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

5For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

6For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

7Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

8So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

9But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

10And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

11But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

12Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

13For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

14For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

15For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

16The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

17And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

18For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

19For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

20For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope,

21Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

22For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

23And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

24For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

25But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

26Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

27And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

28And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

29For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

31What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

32He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

33Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

34Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

35Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

37Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

38For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

You will also find many comforting Psalms that will benefit your loved one, as well as many more passages elsewhere in the Bible. But I will leave it to you to search through those, as searching the Scriptures is good for the soul as well!

I know in my heart, these passages will strengthen you and your loved one. I also pray for you both that you might be strengthened in faith towards God.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if I can be of further service.

In Christ, the Lutheran Watchman.