



Volume 8, No. 8, August, 2020



*You Never Mentioned Him to me  
When in the better land  
Before the bar we stand,  
How deeply grieved our souls may be;  
If any lost one there  
Should cry in deep despair,  
“You never mentioned Him to me.”*

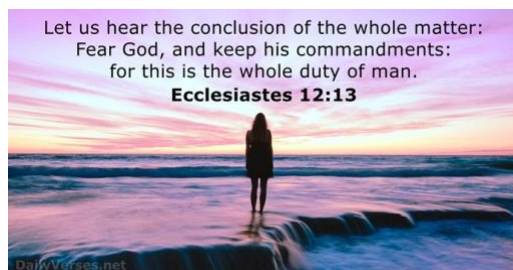
*O let us spread the word  
Wher'er it may be heard,  
Help groping souls the light to see,  
That yonder none may say,  
“You showed me not the way,”  
“You never mentioned Him to me.”*

*A few sweet words may guide  
A lost one to His side,  
Or turn sad eyes on Calvary;  
So work as days go by,  
That yonder none may cry,  
“You never mentioned Him to me.”*

**Refrain:**  
*“You never mentioned Him to me,  
You helped me not the light to see;  
You met me day by day  
And knew I was astray,  
Yet never mentioned Him to me.”*

**Words:** James Rowe (1865-1933)  
**Music:** J. W. Gaines (1880-1937)

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### **Making a Difference**

***He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you?***

***To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*** Micah 6:8

***Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.*** James 1:27

Have you ever just sat yourself down and pondered, “What am I supposed to be doing?” You would think that since I am retired and older, I would have an answer to that question. But I don’t! Especially in this weird time of being told to stay home and to social distance ourselves from others.

I’ve looked at scriptures like the ones above, and it seems that God keeps it pretty simple. Live an honest life, be forgiving of others, don’t get “the big head,” and help those who are less fortunate.

I’ve tried many ways to feel fulfilled: I adopted a small nursing home for a year and each month made things for each of the residents; I’ve worked with and tried to run a Christian mothers’ day out program; did fundraising for a Christian foundation; worked as a church secretary; and even worked at a Christian university. Each day I felt like I was doing what I was supposed to be doing to be working for the Lord. Many blessings came to me by being in those situations – but now that I’m retired, what am I supposed to be doing?

During my active years of life, I concentrated on “doing” all that I could. I tried to be busy with good works, along with trying to be a good wife and mother. It took a lot of energy! Energy I no longer have. So maybe I’m entering a stage of “being.”

Maybe I can “be” someone who receives a good work from another. Maybe I can “be” a listening ear to younger wives trying to juggle all the things going on in their lives and trying to find some balance. Maybe I can

“be” an encourager by my presence in good times and bad. And maybe I can just “be” without having to express an opinion or give advice on everything going on around me.

There are many ways to make a difference! I’m reminded of the little boy who sat on the step with the older man who had just lost his precious wife. When his mother asked him what he was doing he replied, “Nothing, I just helped him cry.”

If you have a talent you can use to make a difference for the Lord, use it! We’ve long admired Dorcas for her talent as a seamstress, Timothy’s mother and grandmother for instructing him in the faith, Lydia’s business talent which allowed her to support a household, and many others. There’s not any **one** way to make a difference, but we must find the way God wants **us** to make a difference.

Lorna Smith, Lubbock, TX

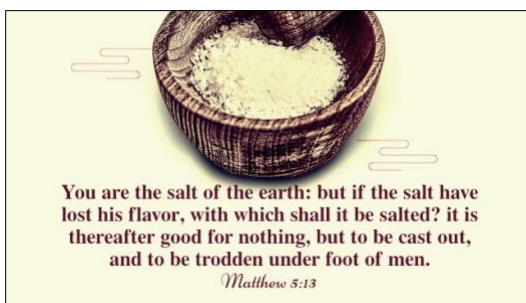
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### Living Our Purpose

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells us who we are: the salt of the earth and the light of the world. (Mt 5:13-16). In 1 Corinthians 10:31 Paul reminds us what we are to do, “so whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”

In thinking about our purpose, these two verses go hand in hand. Can my being salt and light make any kind of difference? Can I really be salt and light for God’s glory?

Passing the salt and turning on the light are common actions. We usually do both without much thought. Though small and seemingly insignificant, both can make a tremendous difference.



Salt disappears a few seconds after it is sprinkled on food. Yet, it fulfills its purpose by enhancing the flavor of meat or vegetables. It is not seen, but we know it works.

Light is the opposite. It is seen. Matthew says a lamp is not to be put under a bowl, but on a stand so it can be seen, to guide and illuminate.

We as disciples, are called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Salty Christians are those working behind the scenes quietly and unseen, yet influential. Taking food to someone in need, writing a letter to one who needs encouragement, watching the toddlers in the nursery during worship, giving generously to a mission effort. Other Christians are more like light. They are visible, often out front. Teaching a Bible class, leading a ministry, going on a mission trip.

Some of us by nature are introverts; others of us are extroverts. Whether you are more like salt or light, the purpose is exactly the same. To *praise* our Father in heaven! (Matt 5:16) When salt enhances food, what is praised? The food is praised, not the salt. When a light is turned on, what is revealed by the light is noticed, not the light. In the same way, like salt and light we are to reveal the Lord so He is praised. Our purpose is to be salt and light, to *praise* and *glorify* God not ourselves.

Remember, the next time you pass the salt or turn on the light, your purpose - to glorify God.

Sally Shank, Oklahoma City, OK

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### She Has Done What She Could

In Matthew 26:6-13, Mark 14:3-9, and John 12:1-7, Jesus was in Bethany reclining at the table in the home of Simon, the leper. A woman came in with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume made of pure nard. Nard comes from a plant grown in the Himalayan Mountains. It is similar to the valerian plant, and is an aromatic mixture when made into a perfume.

Mary poured a jar of nard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair, a sign of deep humility. My thought is that Mary did this from a profound gratefulness to Jesus for raising her brother from the dead. Lazarus was seated at the same table. Some there became incensed over the use (or waste, they claimed) of this expensive perfume which could have been sold and given to the poor. John identifies Judas Iscariot as the one making this statement. Judas and others present “rebuked her harshly.”

I love the next words of Jesus, “*Leave her alone. Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them anytime you want. But you will not always have me. She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. Truly I tell you,*

wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her."

I began to think about my own service to Him. Faithful Christians are to serve Him through serving others. Our service to Him can take many forms. Thinking that we have no talent really know Him is wrong. will only cause and do nothing not leave when He was talents. There are no too-small talents or too-small ways to serve Him. Jesus said about Mary, "She has done what she could." It is the same with us.



or that we don't That mindset us to sit idly by at all. God did anyone out giving out

We consider 'preaching and teaching' as 'biggies' in talents, but any way we serve Him is useful. Can you use the telephone, mail a letter or card, give someone a ride to Bible class and worship, or visit someone in the hospital? Can you cook? Does your talent lie in driving the bus or maintaining any part of the building? Whatever your talent is, use it. Sin is in not using what we have been given. James 4:17.

Remember Dorcas in Acts 9:36-39. <sup>36</sup>In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (in Greek her name is Dorcas); she was always doing good and helping the poor. <sup>37</sup>About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. When Peter arrived, <sup>39</sup> he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them. Just a little later, Peter knelt and prayed and brought Dorcas back to life. This dear Christian sister did what she could. She was a seamstress and used that talent to serve the Lord. It will be wonderful to meet that dear sister in Heaven.

We all have at least one talent, maybe more. Thank you for using whatever talent(s) you have to serve the Lord. As Christian sisters, let us all, "Do what we can!"

Mary Anna Melton, Rolla, MO

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### A Strong Church

Will our congregation have an empty seat, two less busy hands, two fewer listening ears, a silenced tongue, and two fewer bowed knees when we are gone? Will they be able to say, "He really built up this church," or, "She is irreplaceable because of her tireless work"? Think what

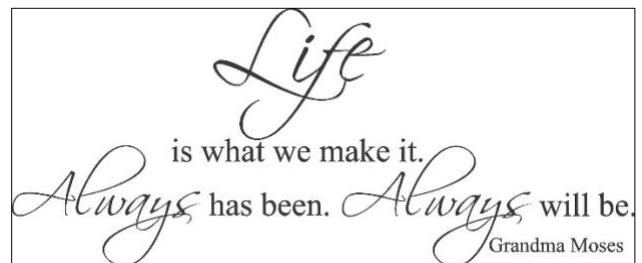
must have been said at Peter's funeral when he laid down his battle-scarred armor, after service as an apostle and elder (Matt. 10:2, 1 Peter 5:1). What of Aquila and Priscilla, who were always assets to the church (Acts 18:26)? Did the Colossian church miss Philemon, Apphia, and Archipus (Philemon 2; Col. 4:17)? Some of God's greatest New Testament servants were "just church members" who lived faithfully till death (Rev. 2:10). May they be able to say that at our funerals.

Allen Webster via Voice of Truth International

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### It's What You Make of It

My niece, Michelle, has multiple sclerosis (MS) and now lives in a nursing home. That may sound depressing to many of us, but Michelle has a remarkably positive attitude. In a recent letter, she said, "We have good food here. I'm lucky. I have good food and good friends and a lot to do. I really am not bored. You would think these places were awful, but this one isn't. I came back here because I knew this place was really not that bad. It's what you make of it."



Michelle is now in her 40's, but she has been struggling with health issues since she was not quite 14. At that time, she got a severe case of infectious mononucleosis. Her MS mostly likely began with the Mono, although it wasn't diagnosed until 15 years later. Those 15 years were extremely difficult for her and her family. In addition to the MS, she is also bi-polar.

She was 24 when her son was born, and he brought her great joy. She was too sick to take care of him very much at all after he was six months old. The ensuing years were a terrible struggle for her. She tried various treatments for the MS, married her son's father then divorced him, and moved into and out of her parents' home several times. A second marriage proved to be disastrous. She lived in two different nursing homes and an assisted living facility, then eventually moved to a group home. That was her residence when she contracted pneumonia, which almost killed her. Partially as a result of the pneumonia, she contracted her third major illness--COPD. After that, she moved to her current nursing home facility.



Pain is her constant companion. She has trigeminal neuralgia (associated with MS) which is pain caused by the facial nerve and mimics a bad toothache. For the past 5-7 years, she has had increasing pain from the MS which is sometimes associated with numbness. The pain is severe enough that she takes Morphine to control it. Yet her closing sentence in her remarks above reflects her attitude. *"It's what you make of it."*

Michelle was baptized into Christ on February 24, 2010. Since then, she has come to terms with her lot in life and is, her mom believes, happier and more content than she has been since she was a child.

The apostle Paul had many struggles in life also. He described some of them in 2 Corinthians 11:24-28, "Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches."

Yet after all that, he stated in Philippians 4:11, "I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am." He elaborated on that in 2 Corinthians 12 where he spoke of having been given a "thorn in the flesh," and how he asked the Lord three times that it be removed. But the Lord replied, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in weakness." Paul therefore said, "Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong." (2 Corinthians 12:9b-10).

In 1 Timothy 6:6, he further added, "But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment." Michelle has reached that contentment with her lot in life. Others have also learned contentment after much trauma and loss, including Horatio Spafford who wrote a beloved hymn, "It Is Well with My Soul." His entire family planned to sail for Europe, but he was delayed by business. His wife and four daughters sailed ahead of him and were on the SS *Ville du Havre* when it collided with a sailing ship and

sank quickly. All four of his daughters died, but his wife survived and sent him a telegram saying, "Saved alone." Shortly afterwards, Horatio traveled to meet his grieving wife. As his ship passed near the place where his daughters died, he was inspired to write the hymn that means so much to so many.

Michelle has endured much trouble and suffering in her life and has learned to rise above it all. She truly is an inspiration to those of us who know and love her.

### **Author's Note**

*"It's What You Make of It," was written and published in Sunrise in 2011. Michelle continued to suffer with many major health issues. Numerous stays in the hospital for pneumonia occurred over the years, and each time, we feared she would not bounce back. She was extremely resilient in her lifetime and overcame many such illnesses. At one point, she began teaching a Bible class in her care facility as often as she was able to do so. On June 19, 2020, she lost her final battle when COVID-19 did what all her other problems could not do. Because of the circumstances, her mom could not be with her in her final hours. She was comforted by the fact that a physician assistant and a nurse in the hospital sat with Michelle and held her hands and gave her very personal care during those last hours. Michelle truly met life head-on, and it was okay with her because she believed, "Life is what you make it." Thank you to all those of you who knew of her situation and prayed for her and sent cards of encouragement to her during her last days. She truly made a difference for her fellow sufferers, the professional staff who cared for her, and for all her many family members and friends.*

Evelyn Waite, Rolla, MO

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*Sunrise* is a monthly newsletter written and/or assembled by members of the Rolla Church of Christ. Sunrise is printed and distributed (primarily via email) to individuals and congregations around the country. All previous issues can be accessed by going to <http://www.seekgrowserveandlove.org>. Click on the Resources tab, then on Sunrise Newsletter. You will find the current issue plus all previous issues.

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