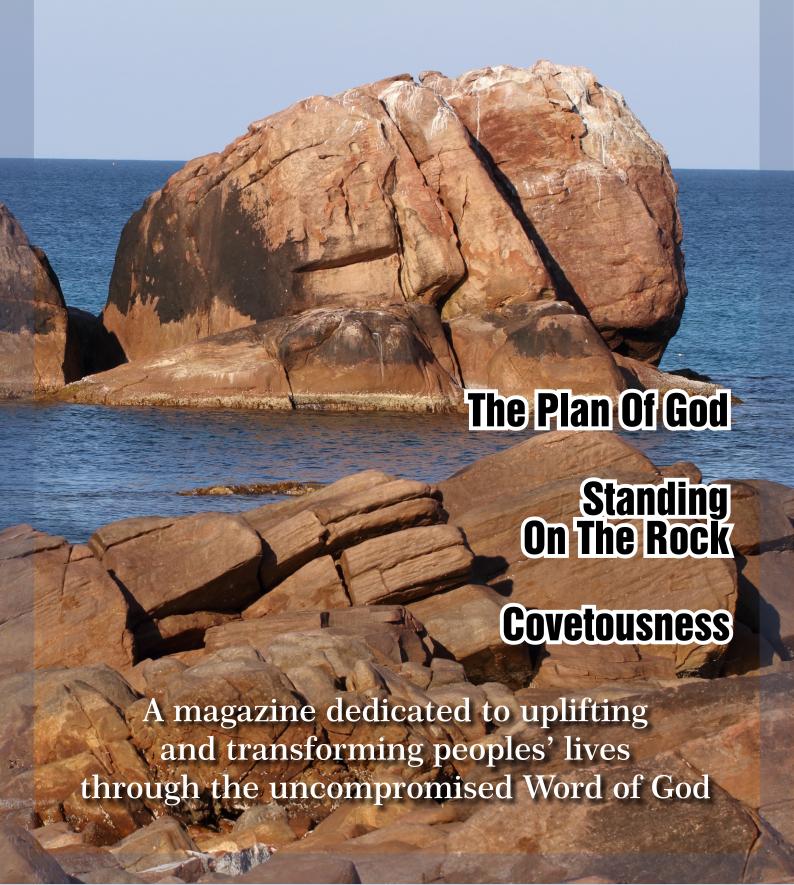
THE EDIFIER

Volume 29

Church of God (Seventh Day) Australia

February 2023



THE EDIFIER



The truth will make you free

- **Expensive Grace**Jesus our Lord and Saviour
- Covetousness
 Constantly seducing our hearts
- The Plan of God
 God's plan is perfect and complete
- Called, Chosen & Faithful Responding to the call of God
- Standing on the Rock
 The Sermon on the Mount revisited
- Sermons We See
 Show me by your example

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About:

The Edifier is published by the Church of God (Seventh Day) Australia, and is dedicated to sharing the uncompromising Word of God. Subscribe at https://www.cog7.au/edifier.html

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Editors:

John Klassek Richard Todd

Cover Photo:

The solid rocky shoreline, battered by pounding waves, stand as an enduring metaphor for our anchor amidst tempest, looking to and standing on the promises of our Lord Jesus Christ

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EXPENSIVE GRACE

esus' closest disciple John left us with a remarkable testimony. His writings form an essential part of the theological message of the Bible. After several decades of sharing the good news in Christ, the aging John devoted his efforts to recalling the central protagonist of all Scripture, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. John's written testimony takes us directly into the deity of Jesus, as he personally had experienced for those three or so years of discipleship. He spends much of his gospel testimony on just the few weeks surrounding Jesus' teaching, suffering, death and resurrection. In doing so, John takes us into the "bosom" of our Lord and Saviour.

In his introduction to Jesus, John chooses to tell us that we have received from Him "grace upon grace"; that Jesus is full of "grace and truth", and that the expensive grace that affords us redemption and ensuing glory will abound forevermore.

For us today, "grace" is our response to the suffering around us. Our willingness to minister to the broken, blind and beaten. Expensive grace has been given to us, and undeserved forgiveness towards others is what we are compelled to share.

The depth of grace we extend to others of course comes from above. God has shown us unmerited, divine favour in redeeming us from certain death. He did this by paying the penalty of our sins, not by our blood, but by the blood of His Son Jesus.

The notion of the "substitutionary sacrifice" traverses much of the Old Testament, where a male lamb was regularly sacrificed as a sin offering. For us, Jesus' one time supreme sacrifice paid our irreconcilable debt. More than just being appreciative, we completely surrender and submit to our Saviour's Lordship and Pre-eminence. He saved us from eternal death.

The death and resurrection of Jesus is central to the Bible, and it is *the* primary Christian doctrine. Thus the salvation, justification and redemption we have compels every follower of Jesus to extend the same forgiveness received to others who, perhaps by our human standards, least deserve it. It's called "grace"! It is very expensive grace!

John Klassek



ovetousness is subtle and sneaky. It can catch you in its grip, hide in your heart, and even begin to consume you, all without you being aware. Covetousness is a lusting after, an inordinate excessive desire to have!

Of course, our flesh, our culture, and our enemy are creatively and constantly seducing our hearts to want more. Covetousness never brings satisfaction, compromises your spiritual life, ultimately lets you down, and can even destroy your soul.

God says it can make you fall into temptations, sins, foolish and harmful lusts, drown you in destruction and perdition, it is the root of all kinds of evil, and can pierce you through with many sorrows.

I Timothy 6:6 says, "Now godliness with contentment is great gain." Jesus says, "I am

the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst."

Losing your satisfaction in Christ is really the foundation of this sin. Our fight of faith is really a fight to keep our heart contented in Christ. Otherwise, we begin to crave other things to satisfy the deep longings in our heart.

May we be fully satisfied with the riches of Christ, be content, and not allow our circumstances to manipulate our heart, not compare ourselves with others, and not dwell on things that might have been. We serve a good, righteous, sovereign, and just God, so put your trust in Him. Rest in Him. \square

Brian Larson pastors the Church of God (Seventh Day) in Spokane, Washington, USA

If it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." (Romans 7:7 ESV)

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s with everything God does, His plan regarding mankind, from his creation to his salvation, is perfect and complete.

Nothing has caught God unawares. Nothing is incomplete. Nothing in His plan has failed, nor will fail. It covers every conceivable aspect and eventuality. If we can know the 'wiles of the

devil' (Ephesians 6:11), then how much more can God, having created Satan, know all about His adversary.

God unawares!" Some have foolishly claimed that God didn't envision the role and capability technology would have in the advancement of man's progress. Today a prominent technocrat and futurist says that mankind will not need eternal life or God because technology will replace them both. It's saddening how Satan is using the same lie that he used in the garden of Eden: "You shall be as God."

But no matter how much technology advances, it cannot by-pass the fundamental laws of physics that underlie creation. Take away the power of Jesus Christ, as Creator, and the power holding together ALL physical matter will cause it to collapse.

"He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together." (Colossians 1:17).

> So certain and complete is this plan, that there was never at any time a plan "B".

As the apostle Paul wrote, "If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most

to be pitied." (1 Corinthians 15:19).

God's plan is as perfect today as it was before the earth and heavens existed. Upon their creation, as the opening words of Genesis declare, "In the beginning", God's plan came into effect. Adam and Eve's sin did not catch God unawares. God knew that it was just a

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"Adam and Eve's

sin didn't catch

matter of time before that happened. Interim measures had been planned and then put into place in the form of the 10 commandments and the first covenant.

However, this first phase of God's plan ended 2,000 years ago, when Jesus speaking His last words on the cross pronounced, "It is finished!" Not His life, but His mission to do the will of His Father. That is, "to destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8). Victory is not just assured through the promises written in scripture, but is firmly established and evident as a down payment and guarantee. Baptism seals us with God's Holy Spirit.

Phase two of God's plan commenced with the tearing of the veil separating the Holy of Holies, signifying that the door is now open and that we have direct access to God through His Son Jesus Christ. The life force present within Jesus prior to his death, which He shared with His Father,

was restored to Him along with a crown and kingdom when He was resurrected.

The plan could not have otherwise proceeded unless He returned to the Father. "It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you." (John 16:7).

Eternal life is assured for all who accept their calling. The plan has some time to go. That is necessary so as many people as possible may come to the wedding feast (Matthew 22:9). A period of grace now exists for that purpose. God, as it were, is holding back the waters of the Red Sea whilst His people, called out from the world, pass safely to the other side.

When there is no one left to be called, or rather, when no one else is willing to accept the Father's call, then He will direct His Son to return and claim His kingdom. This second phase of God's plan culminates in the destruction of the saints' enemies (in realty God's enemies – "you will be hated for my name's sake"), and the cleansing of the world with fire, in preparation for God's everlasting kingdom.

The third phase of God's plan is the millennial reign of Jesus Christ on earth. During this period, He will subdue all peoples and nations, ruling them with a rod of iron. With the help of the saints Jesus will physically teach and govern all people, showing them how they should live and conduct their lives.

"The rod of iron" does not indicate cruelty, harshness or a burden. That is man's inclination when gaining absolute power. A good example of man's way can be found in 1 Kings 12:10.

But as Isaiah 55:8 says, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord."

"The rod of iron" does not indcate cruelty, harshness or a burden.

The "rod of iron" is indicative of the unwavering determination of Jesus to do the will of the Father. During this period man will not have the freedoms and free-will choices that were formerly available to him. A contrast will be made between life as it existed

under the rule of Satan and that under God. Jesus will not tolerate any rebellion or disobedience. Justice and punishment will be swift and everyone will be taught the fear of the Lord. However, there will also be bountiful blessings for those people and the nations that obey.

When everything is subject to Jesus Christ, and all his enemies have been put at His feet, then He will hand everything back to the Father, at which time this final third phase ends with the New Jerusalem descending down to the earth. The vision given to John is quite a spectacle and feat in its own right and should inspire us onward and upward in faith. \square

Richard Todd Adelaide, SA

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Called, Chosen & Faithful

ur Heavenly Father calls us to Christ. Jesus, then, in choosing us, further makes His disciples into "fishers of men," equipping us according to the spiritual gifts given to us. But there are many who baulk at Jesus' invitation. In Luke's narrative in chapter 7, he tells us that those Jesus beckoned into service often made lame excuses.

One wanted to follow Jesus just for the perks. Another wanted to first see his father's life out before committing to Jesus. Others simply procrastinated. See Luke 9:57-62.

In his search for willing disciples, Jesus often encountered those who cited some kind of pressing, interfering need. How easy it is, from our carnal, limited perspective, to often relegate something more important than the Lord's beckoning! God doesn't want to rate second to our work, family, hobbies, studies or anything else.

This should be cause for sombre reflection in our own personal lives and calling. Jesus spoke of the impossibility of serving God and mammon. In His parable of the sower, He cited the dreadful attrition of why good seed failed to produce. How might the lessons in the gospel accounts apply to us?

It's important to remember that Christ chose us; we didn't choose Him – as an optional extra in our already busy lives. Our intellectual reasoning or intuitive prowess didn't bring us before the throne of grace! No, rather, our Heavenly Father called us. Christ chose us. We did not choose Him. Our portion is to respond in faith.

In meditating and examining our current life trajectory, we must sense and respond to a compelling meaning, purpose and identity founded on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and in the transcendent certain promises contained therein.

Do we really comprehend the nature of our high calling in Christ? What radical changes have happened in our lives since following Jesus? And how have those changes affected us and those around us?

And, may we add, what remaining course corrections are we still to make, as we grow up into the image and stature of our Lord Jesus Christ, as we expand our lives into His grace and knowledge?

Have we adequately filtered out the cacophonies of worldly noise and the forms of inappropriate entertainments and distractions that can deafen our ears to heeding the true and righteous word of the LORD? Our own hearts, according to scripture, can deceptively lead us into sinful ways.

How authentic is our attunement to His will and purpose? Do we genuinely hear and obey the still small voice of the Holy Spirit?

Our response to Jesus' offer must be radical and sure-footed, especially considering His instructions as recorded in Matthew's testimony: "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things [food, clothing and shelter] will be added to you." (Matthew 6:33)

When God called each of us individually to His Son and into community, He had a purpose in mind. Often that purpose is intended at a specific time in history.

For example, Noah found favour with the Lord and is remembered as a key player in a salvation narrative. Abraham, as God's friend, was also a notable protagonist in a bigger generational story. Moses talked with the Lord as with a friend, and is remembered as powerfully pivotal in God's hands. Esther was a woman of her time, called and raised to save her people from genocide. Ruth the Moabite woman stands notably in the lineage of Jesus Christ. Also born for his time was Peter who later led the first century church. Paul,

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an intriguing man of his time, took the gospel to the Gentiles with great fervour and tireless energy.

What about us? God's call is also an invitation, and it can be thrust on us when we perhaps least expect it. Moses was called into service at 80 years of age, and we're quite familiar with how he protested at the mere thought of what was before him. Samuel was called to serving ministry just after being weaned. Jeremiah experienced God's call at just 17 years of age. "Don't say that you're too young," God told Jeremiah. Elisha also had some quick decisions to make when calling and ministry was thrust upon him

You see, the prophet Elijah's ministry was coming to the end, and God told him, among other things to anoint Elisha into service. (See 1 Kings 19:19-21)

Elisha immediately realised that there was no turning back from the LORD's beckoning. So, what did he do? He killed his twelve oxen.

Remember, animal stock was often the primary source of wealth and provision in ancient times. However, Elisha invited his neighbours and friends, lit a big BBQ with the timber yokes of the twelve oxen, sacrificed to the Lord and hosted a feast for everyone that day. Elisha truly "burned his bridges" in the sense that he was determined to never be tempted to return to his former occupation. He then followed Elijah in ministry.

If we follow the narrative, Elisha wasn't shy about embracing the daunting scope of work he was called to facilitate in the legacy and footsteps of Elijah. He asked for a double portion of the Holy Spirit! And from the ensuing story, it seems that God granted just what he asked for!

Let's fast forward to the gospel accounts, as recorded in John chapter 21. Peter and Andrew, together with John and James, were former fishermen. They were the sons of promise for their father's seafaring livelihood.

However, Jesus had called them three years earlier to become "fishers of men". After the confusing horrors of Jesus' crucifixion, however, the post-traumatised disciples returned to

Galilee. "I'm going fishing," said Peter. The others followed. So they fished all night, and caught nothing.

In the morning, Jesus was waiting for them on the shore, with freshly baked bread and barbequed fish on a welcoming fire.

Jesus fed them breakfast before re-commissioning Peter back into ministry service with four injunctions. He said to Peter, "Feed my lambs," "Tend my sheep," "Feed my sheep," and finally, "Follow me."

The early chapters of Acts then show a remarkably transformed Peter. He was fearless, articulate, and passionate for His Saviour. Never would he again deny his Lord!

The Body of Christ today, at home and around the world, is in need of Godly men and women to hear and respond to God's calling in their lives.

We've heard that in our current post-COVID era that church attendance is significantly down throughout the Christianised world. Perhaps it is.

We are undoubtedly in an age of increasing unbelief and faithlessness. But that's not where we the people of God are. We endure and grow by faith. We learn how to respond. We learn what sacrifices have to be made. We learn to implicitly trust Jesus, and to put our hands to the plough for the Kingdom of God – and all it might mean!

Within our churches we see a new generation of young people embracing God's calling for their lives. And those of us who are older in the faith must mentor, edify and encourage this next generation so they more clearly see and embrace God's purpose for them.

Do we see every little boy attending church services with their family as a potential pastor, a missionary, a man of God? Are we equipping our little girls into Godly service and mission?

Should we not pray that God would raise many faithful, humble, servant leaders in our time who are willing to take up the mantle (pick up their cross) and run their race in the name of Jesus? Such prayers or aspirations are not presumptive. They're absolutely necessary.

Standing on the Rock

During the latter portion of His sermon on the mount, Jesus Christ warns us about the broad path that leads to destruction, to beware of false prophets and not to build our "house upon the sand" (see Matthew 7:13-27). The urgency of His caution is conveyed in a series of contrasting word pairs:



n this passage, Jesus indicates that many are on the path leading to destruction, and only a comparative few on the path leading to life. It is very important that we do not make the mistake of aligning our understanding with the beliefs and doctrines of that which is astray from the scriptures. Rather we must maintain a close personal relationship with God through faith, obedience, continuous prayer, and diligent study of His Word; to continue sharpening our Godly knowledge and character.

Jesus warns us about false prophets, which "come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves". How often do we see those who preach only the things that would garner them the most popularity with their audiences, focusing often on theatrics,

showmanship, pleas for donations, rather than scriptural truths and doctrines that authentically reveal God's will?

How often do we meet professing Christians who lead lives little different to those of non-believers? As friends of the world, it seems they're happily and sometimes even proudly engaging in their sinful lifestyle. Their actions deny the calling and example of Christ.

The scriptures warn us about those who cause contention, spread gossip, or engage in silly talk. Included in this is a prideful attitude that seeks to exalt self above others. Walking not in the spirit but in the flesh, and frequently speaking doctrines contrary to scripture, our calling must not be aligned with that of the world.

Now we must admit, situations as described above, we hope to never appear wanting where God's Word is authentically preached. God certainly has put a protective

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hedge around the Body of Christ, the church. We should nonetheless keep our guard up for those "wolves in sheep's clothing" that may attempt to infiltrate church life. Such can be identified by their fruits and their spirit of disobedience to God.

At the conclusion of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, we find a wake-up call to listen and obey and to follow Jesus. Those who do the will of the Father are those who are granted entry into the kingdom of heaven. Those who both hear and do the sayings of Jesus are the ones that are able to withstand those worldly temptations, the flood of persecution, or the winds of deception in this fallen world.

In summary, maintain obedience to God and be continuous in prayer. Constantly sharpen Biblical understanding through ongoing study. Always seek to strengthen your relationship with God. Watch out for false prophets. Be like the Bereans, testing what is being spoken by referencing that which is written in the word. Hearken only to obedient followers of Christ. Avoid foolish teachings and babbling of those who work iniquity and whose actions are contrary to Jesus.

Genuine faith is always demonstrated by good works. Ensure that all things we do are in harmony with the will of the Father. Remember, do not be like the foolish man who built his house on sand; build your house on rock – that Rock being Christ.

Michael Surnak Adelaide, SA



Sabbath worship locations

PERTH:

11:00am 1470 Stoneville Road, Mundaring, WA

ADELAIDE:

10:45am Thirteenth Ave, Woodville Nth, SA

SYDNEY:

11:00am 44A Macquarie St, Auburn, NSW

For times and other regional venues, please see details at https://www.cog7.au/worship.html

Continued from page 7

Called, Chosen & Faithful

God has called us to be faithful with the gifts He's already given us. We need to ask what strides of faith we have taken to develop those individual gifts for the benefit of the Body of Christ? And, moreover, are we willing to suffer for Christ in His service? The message of scripture is clear. Deny yourself. Pick up your cross. And, follow our LORD.

Think back to our early days of faith in Christ when we were compelled to seek baptism. "I surrender all, Lord Jesus," we may have cried out in prayer. What we experienced is known as "first love". And as we were raised from that watery grave, in the Holy Spirit, we became a new creation. Then, growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, into His stature and image, at some point the call of discipleship became unmistakably clear.

We learn to love the Lord with all our heart, mind, soul and strength. The Holy Spirit gives voice to Jesus' words, and if we are listening carefully, it is a call to Kingdom service and ongoing testimony.

God's hand is on you; don't resist Him. Don't follow a path counter to what He's calling you to. Jesus knew the risks of those who turn back. He said of when He returns, "Will the Son of Man find faith on earth?"

God is encouraging and imploring us today into service and stewardship. His calling and gifts are irrevocable, as they are precious and priceless. May we eagerly embrace all our Lord calls and equips us for!

The apostle Paul signed off from one of his letters with the certainty that: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." (2 Timothy 4:7 ESV)

On that glorious day, may we too hear our Lord's crowning words: "Well done, good and faithful servant..." (Matthew 25:21 ESV)

John Klassek, Spencers Brook, WA

From our Readers

"Thank you for sending me the Edifier magazine. Yes, I would like to re-subscribe."

"I appreciate seeing your magazine growing into a polished publication."

"We don't use computer, mobile phones, and we still use cash. Of course, we enjoy reading, and we would love to re-subscribe to The Edifier magazine. Please accept the enclosed stamps to assist with postage."

The only sermon
we have, told each
week in different
ways, is:
the Word of God,
spoken at creation,
written on parchment,
codified in law,
personified in Christ,
internalised, and
ultimately glorified
in the saints
on the day of
resurrection.

BIBLE WORD SEARCH

V F B X R Y P I C O M M A N D M E N T S V G Y R E R W P U U X B I B L E J Z O P RAAHSWRBZLKMWHFDTKIM R F B B U W E A F I V O R H Z Y U A C L F C S J R E V Y G G N V M E W Z Y S A B A X Q O R J E L O T R U T H U I G W Q B PYEKLNDSKVGOODNESS T Q E M C S A E N A J E R U S A L E M Y HAAGTOTZVLXGSOKJESUS LSCAIYIMKVGHDFCQB E E O W O T Z A B E W C J V K G E S W U Y M N S N W A T G S R S P I R J Y G Q B N T C I S A B B A T H Y V H LLKPOHCOPJAHMWMLAW ZOXFZPLDQNUFWHUBKQTD REDEMPTIONBDBSYKEPFL I M I V D K X Y V B L O V E W U V N E Z G Q H T P U O G K T D P V V E R P W W V P V S A N C T I F I C A T I O N E F R U J V M V R M Q A G R A C E A X H U M O P

LOVE
SABBATH
SALVATION
JERUSALEM
SPIRIT
GRACE
COMMANDMENTS
REDEMPTION
SANCTIFICATION
LAW

TRUTH
RESURRECTION
FAITH
GOD
JESUS
BIBLE
PEACE
GOODNESS
REVELATION
JOY

Exploring essential Biblical doctrines of the Church of God (Seventh Day)

This We Believe

https://www.cog7.au/this-we-believe-series.html



Michael and Erin Surnak are pleased to announce the birth of their daughter Skye, born 20 December 2022 weighing 2300g. She arrived naturally four weeks early.

Michael commented that, "It has been a challenging six and a half weeks of confronting the unknown, changing countless nappies, lack of sleep like never before, minimal down time and the added pressure of resisting unwanted medical coercion." Michael added, "We have been very blessed to receive a daughter who is in perfect health, and we are looking forward to the years to come; watching our little Skye grow and mature, and teaching her in the ways of the LORD."

Sermons We See

I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day; I'd rather one should walk with me than merely tell the way. The eye's a better pupil and more willing than the ear, Fine counsel is confusing, but examples always clear; And the best of all the preachers are the men who live their creeds, For to see good put in action is what everybody needs.

I soon can learn to do it if you'll let me see it done;
I can watch your hands in action, but your tongue too fast may run.
And the lecture you deliver may be very wise and true,
But I'd rather get my lessons by observing what you do;
For I might misunderstand you and the high advice you give,
But there's no misunderstanding how you act and how you live.

When I see a deed of kindness, I am eager to be kind.
When a weaker brother stumbles and a strong man stays behind
Just to see if he can help him, then the wish grows strong in me
To become as big and thoughtful as I know that friend to be.
And all travellers can witness that the best of guides today
Is not the one who tells them, but the one who shows the way.

One good man teaches many, men believe what they behold; One deed of kindness noticed is worth forty that are told. Who stands with men of honour learns to hold his honour dear, For right living speaks a language which to everyone is clear. Though an able speaker charms me with his eloquence, I say, I'd rather see a sermon than to hear one, any day.

By Edgar Guest, (Public Domain)

Submitted by Carlo Tedesco Adelaide, SA

What we do speaks louder than what we say!



The Edifier _______ *11*



Joshua and Leah Anderson are pleased to announce the birth of their fourth son, Ezekiel James Anderson, born on 11 November 2022. Ezekiel is a delightfully happy and healthy baby adored by his three older brothers, Manasseh, Titus and Nathaniel. The Andersons attend the Church of God (Seventh Day) in Mundaring, WA.

Join Bible Study

Australia Bible Study via Zoom

Tuesday evening 4:30pm WA time; 7:30pm NSW/VIC; 7:00pm SA time. Zoom Meeting ID: 993 136 2668

Passcode: Church2020

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March 3-5, 2023 - Friday to Sunday

SABBATH SERVICE

Theme: Sowing - Watering - Reaping

Begin each day with a free breakfast hosted by the Adelaide church, followed by engaging workshops, worship services, discussion and fellowship, youth/children studies, free lunch and a concert on Sabbath afternoon.

Address: Woodville North Community Hall
Thirteenth Ave Woodville North SA

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

(Philippians 4:6-7 ESV)

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