

## Trends

Once again in 2018 abortion was the leading cause of death in the entire world (although not officially recognized). In 2018 ~41.9 million babies were aborted accounting for ~42% of deaths worldwide. By way of comparison, worldwide cancer deaths were only a fraction of that (8.2 million). For every 33 live births worldwide in 2018, 10 babies were aborted. About 23% of all pregnancies end in abortion. Over 93% of all abortions worldwide were performed for "convenience" of the "mother."

- via Worldometer

**Romans 1:28, 29, 31:** "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; 29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, ...without natural affection..."

## Sentence Sermons

"I felt good about my abortions (She's had 3 abortions! cvt)."

—Alana Edmondson, abortion activist and a leader in the "Shout Your Abortion" movement

**Timothy 3:1, 3:** "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves...3 unloving, unforgiving..."

## News & Notes

Pray for one another: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (Jas. 5:16)

Please pray for Ron Halbrook. He arrived home safely from his 72nd preaching trip to the Philippines. If you would like to contribute to the Philippine effort see brother Craig.

Please pray for one another! "comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing." 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Please pray for Ryan & Jennifer and the brethren of the Northern Michigan church of Christ. They are now meeting in their newly purchased building in Roscommon, Michigan.

Please keep sisters Virginia Brown and Wilma Cardwell in your prayers. Their faithfulness sets a great example and gives encouragement to all! Ditto for Al (our Barnabas!).

Pray for all the lost souls, especially those in the greater Bloomington area. Pray that Westside might be an influence for good in this community.

Pray for the all of our students: elementary, secondary and college. Our young people face many trials and temptations at school.

There are many needy saints, including preachers! Can you help?! Let me know.

If you know of any in need of our prayers please let us know!

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# Words of Life

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"Lord, to whom shall we go? You  
have the words of eternal life."

John 6:68



**The Power That Works in Us**  
Craig Thomas

The letters Paul wrote to the churches at Ephesus, Philippi, and Colossae, along with the epistle written to a man named Philemon, are often called the "prison epistles." Paul wrote these epistles in AD 60-62 while he was a prisoner in Rome during his first imprisonment. He spent this two-year period in house arrest which many believe is verified in Acts 28:16: "when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard; but Paul was permitted to dwell by himself with the soldier who guarded him."

Earlier on his third preaching journey Paul wrote the epistle to the Romans from Corinth (Rom. 16:23). In it he expressed his desire to visit the saints in Rome. For example, in Romans 1:10 he expressed this intent when he said he prayed "if, by some means, now at last I may find a way in the will of God to come to you." At the time, little did Paul know the amazing chain of events God's providence would unleash that ultimately fulfilled his prayer.

Paul's journey to Rome began in Acts 21 where Paul was almost killed by a mob in Jerusalem for what they falsely perceived as his desecration of the temple. He was rescued by the Roman garrison but arrested. In time he defended himself before the Roman authorities in Judea and appealed to Caesar (Acts 25:11). Paul's voyage to Rome began in Acts 27 and included a shipwreck, an encounter with a poisonous snake, and a preaching stint on the island of Malta.

Even though Paul was under house arrest in Rome for two years, he was given enough freedom to interact with others and teach God's word. Luke records this in Acts 28:30-31: "Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, 31 preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him." Paul's mention of "those who are of Caesar's household" in Philippians 4:22 also supports the view he wrote the prison epistles from Rome.

One thing I find so amazing and encouraging in the prison epistles is the number of positive and upbeat passages Paul writes. For example, in Philippians he writes of his confidence to boldly "speak the word without fear" despite his "chains" (Phil. 1:14). He expresses a clear purpose in life and death: "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (Phil. 1:21). He is determined to put his past behind him and reach "forward to

those things which are ahead" and "press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:13-14) He expresses his ability to look beyond his chains and "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!" (Phil. 4:4) And, despite being in chains he was able to "Be anxious for nothing" and experience "the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding" (Phil 4:6-7). The number of lessons and applications for us from these epistles is nearly inexhaustible!

However, the verse I want to focus on is found in the epistle to the Ephesians. It is one of my personal favorites. In Ephesians 3:20 Paul writes, "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen."

There is so much in this life to beat us down and challenge our faith. Every day Satan puts more stumbling blocks in our path. I became a Christian nearly 50 years ago in the state of Indiana. However, I lived in other places for over 40 years before returning back to live again in the Hoosier state. Upon permanently returning to Indiana five years ago I found one thing quite disconcerting: an astounding number of Christians I knew from my early years had departed from the faith. Brethren who I never thought in a million years would fall away had broken marriages, broken homes, unruly and unfaithful children, had quit attending services, had slipped back into the world, and some even defected to denominationalism. Sadly, and obviously, they forgot the lessons of the prison epistles!

We can find great comfort, strength and encouragement in Ephesians 3:20. Our great God is not just "able" to help us, but His ability is "exceedingly, abundantly, above all that we ask or think"! No matter how much life beats us down, no matter how much Satan "sift[s]...[us] as wheat" (Lk. 22:31), God is able to sustain us! Whether it be the tragedy of a loved one's death, the dread of a cancer diagnosis, a financial disaster, false brethren, a powerfully strong temptation; it doesn't matter! God's power can empower and sustain us and "deliver us from the evil one." (Matt. 6:13)

How is this possible? Paul said God "is able to do" these things "according to the power that works in us." What "power" is that? It is "the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power" (Eph. 1:19). Imagine that! God's "mighty power" works for us and "works in us"! That power is with us and in us 24/7, 365 days a year! In Ephesians 1:20-23 Paul describes four aspects of that power:

- (1) It is the power "which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead";
- (2) It is the power which "seated Him [Christ] at His [God's] right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.";
- (3) It is the power which "put all things under His [Christ's] feet,";
- (4) It is the power which "gave Him [Christ] to be head over all things to the church, which is His [Christ's] body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."

There is only one potentially weak link in this powerful chain: you and me. Do we have the faith to believe and rely on "the working of His mighty power" in us? Let us pray daily for the faith to rely on "His mighty power" which "works in us." Let us meditate daily on the fact this power is in us and available to us if we willingly, by faith, take hold of it and apply it in our daily walk with Christ. Christ promises to be with us "always, even to the end of the age." (Matt. 28:20) Let us submit our lives totally and completely to Him and allow "His mighty power" to work in our lives each day. If we do there is nothing we cannot overcome!

## What One Tolerates, the Next Accepts

Mark White

John Wesley once wrote, "What one generation tolerates, the next generation will embrace." Both sacred and secular history have proven the truth of this assessment time and time again.

Everything from dancing to drinking, from abortion to mercy-killing, has gone from toleration to acceptance. In the home and in the church, everything from immorality to immorality has been first allowed and then endorsed. Adulterous marriages, gambling, and other similar sins, have gone from being permitted to being sponsored. Remember when wearing shorts and attending dances were generally condemned as sinful? Now, in some places shorts are being worn to church services and dances are sometimes held in church buildings! Truly, "what one generation tolerates, the next generation will embrace."

One generation tolerated sprinkling for baptism if a person were seriously ill. The next generation accepted sprinkling for baptism as an option for everyone. One generation approved a "head" elder. The next generation appointed some elders "bishops." One generation introduced instruments of music as an aid to poor singing. The next generation demanded we worship with instruments. One generation accepted the "fellowship hall" (which, at first, was just a few tables in the basement for social meals). The next generation built gymnasiums and "Family Life Centers." One generation apologized for "hard preachers" who opposed denominationalism. The next generation saw their sons and daughters joining those denominations. One generation spoke of the need to reach out in a "non-judgmental" way to our Catholic and Protestant friends. The next generation welcomed Presbyterians into "our fellowship" with only a handshake. One generation spoke of congregational singing as "one of our traditions." The next generation defended choruses and choirs. One generation applauded preachers who closed their sermons without an appeal for sinners to be baptized for the remission of sins. The next generation denied the gospel plan of salvation in general and baptism in particular.

What does this say to us? What is our responsibility? "You shall observe to do therefore as the Lord... hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left" (Deut. 5:32). "Hold fast the form of sound words" (2 Tim. 1:13). "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them" (2 Tim. 3:14). "Mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Rom. 16:17).

The next time we are tempted to deviate from the word of God, let us remember that what we tolerate, our children will embrace.