

Reflections

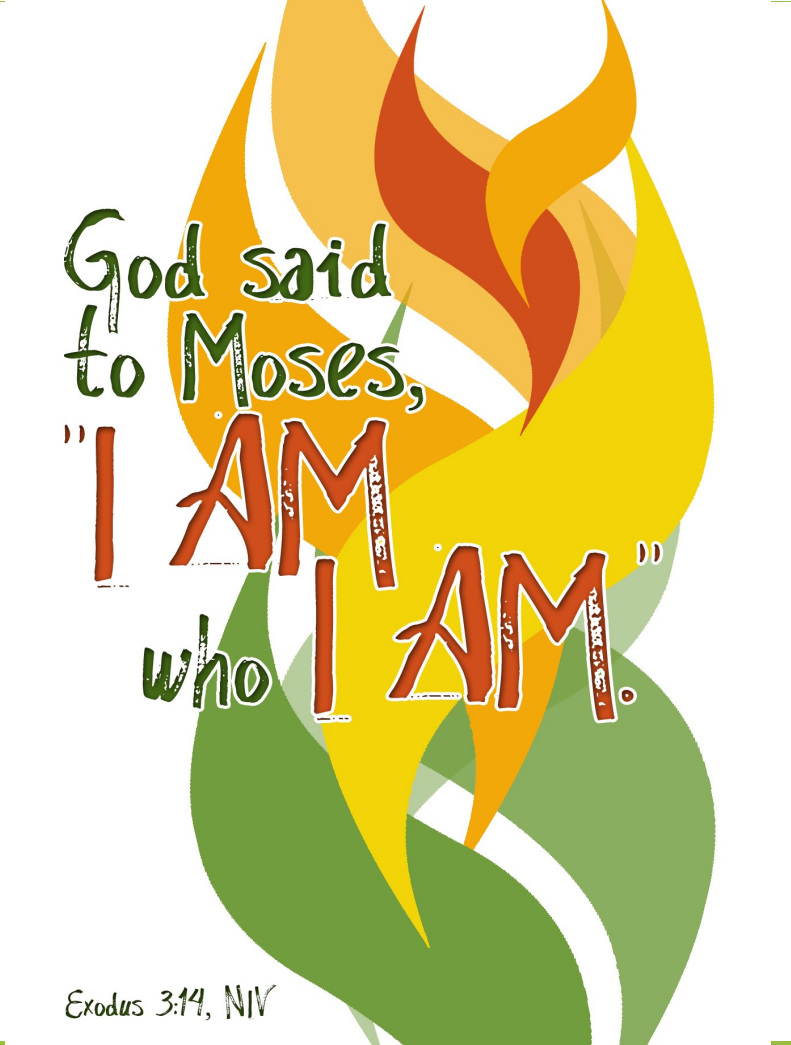
be
HOLY

May 2025

for I am
HOLY

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God said
to Moses,
"I AM
who I AM."

Exodus 3:14, NIV

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Stewardship

Many children are afraid of the dark. Perhaps we were one of those children – or maybe we still are. Part of what makes the darkness so scary is the “what-if’s.” What if there is something under the bed? What if the noise I heard is someone lurking outside? What if I walk through the living room and stop on a LEGO block with my bare feet? So scary!

What’s the best way to eliminate these fears and the what-if’s? Turn on a light!



THE LORD IS OUR SHEPHERD

Those of us who belong to the Lord know we are safe and secure. We know for certain that the Lord is our Shepherd and, therefore, we do not fear the future because our Shepherd is already there. He will walk before us every day, leading us to our eternal destination.

Sometimes we have doubts about the future. We wonder whether we will have enough to provide for our essential needs. With child-like certainty, the psalmist then tells us, “I shall not be in want.” We shall not be “in want” of anything that we truly need and that is good for us. The Lord will hear when we call because His love never changes.

WHAT IF?

Bobbie Scroggins

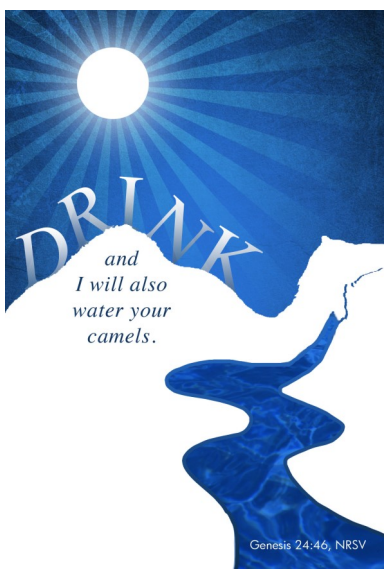
Genesis 24:34-58

So he said, “I am Abraham’s servant. The Lord has blessed my master abundantly, and he has become wealthy. He has given him sheep and cattle, silver and gold, male and female servants, and camels and donkeys. My master’s wife Sarah has borne him a son in her old age, and he has given him everything he owns. And my master made me swear an oath, and said, ‘You must not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I live, but go to my father’s family and to my own clan, and get a wife for my son.’

“Then I asked my master, ‘What if the woman will not come back with me?’

“He replied, ‘The Lord, before whom I have walked faithfully, will send his angel with you and make your journey a success, so that you can get a wife for my son from my own clan and from my father’s family. You will be released from my oath if, when you go to my clan, they refuse to give her to you—then you will be released from my oath.’

“When I came to the spring today, I said, ‘Lord, God of my master Abraham, if you will, please grant success to the journey on which I have come. See, I am standing beside this spring. If a young woman comes out to draw water and I say to her, “Please let me drink a little water from your jar,” and if she says to me, “Drink, and I’ll draw water for your camels too,” let her be the one the Lord has chosen for my master’s son.’



“Before I finished praying in my heart, Rebekah came out, with her jar on her shoulder. She went down to the spring and drew water, and I said to her, ‘Please give me a drink.’

“She quickly lowered her jar from her shoulder and said, ‘Drink, and I’ll water your camels too.’ So I drank, and she watered the camels also.

“I asked her, ‘Whose daughter are you?’

“She said, ‘The daughter of Bethuel son of Nahor, whom Milkah bore to him.’



Reaching out to others

"Then I put the ring in her nose and the bracelets on her arms, and I bowed down and worshiped the Lord. I praised the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me on the right road to get the granddaughter of my master's brother for his son. Now if you will show kindness and faithfulness to my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, so I may know which way to turn."

Laban and Bethuel answered, "This is from the Lord; we can say nothing to you one way or the other. Here is Rebekah; take her and go, and let her become the wife of your master's son, as the Lord has directed."

When Abraham's servant heard what they said, he bowed down to the ground before the Lord. Then the servant brought out gold and silver jewelry and articles of clothing and gave them to Rebekah; he also gave costly gifts to her brother and to her mother. Then he and the men who were with him ate and drank and spent the night there.

When they got up the next morning, he said, "Send me on my way to my master."

But her brother and her mother replied, "Let the young woman remain with us ten days or so; then you may go."

But he said to them, "Do not detain me, now that the Lord has granted success to my journey. Send me on my way so I may go to my master."

Then they said, "Let's call the young woman and ask her about it." So they called Rebekah and asked her, "Will you go with this man?"



"I will go," she said.

When Eliezer told his story to Laban, he spoke openly of God and His goodness. Often, we do the opposite, afraid that we will be misunderstood,

rejected or seen as being too religious. We should openly share what God is doing for us.

Genesis 15:1: *"Do not be afraid, Abram. "*

Genesis 46:3: *"I am God, the God of your father," he said. "Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there."*

Exodus 20:20: *"Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning."*

Deuteronomy 1:21: *"See, the Lord your God has given you the land. Go up and take possession of it as the Lord, the God of your ancestors, told you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."*

1 Chronicles 28:20: *"David also said to Solomon his son, "Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you until all the work for the service of the temple of the Lord is finished."*

Psalms 23:1: *"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not be in want."*

Lord God, it is a glorious reassurance to us that You are our Shepherd and that in Your hands we are safe and secure. Amen.



WHAT TO DO WHEN WE ARE EXPERIENCING FEAR

1 John 4:18: *"There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in*

deal with any situation that life might hand out.

Fear carries a very dark shadow over the future. But when we find refuge in the living Christ, we realize that regardless of how ominous things might appear, everything is still under God's control. The Lord God Almighty reigns and has not abandoned His creation. To believe that God is working out His divine plan, in spite of man's sinfulness, enables us to maintain a well-balanced and calm attitude. We can either look at the future without God and feel depressed and fearful, or we can believe in God's plan of redemption for mankind and approach the future with trust and confidence.

When we confront a problem in life, we must never forget to go to the One who mercifully offered to be our Father, the One who sees us through distress, anxiety and confusion. We find consolation and strength in Jesus Christ because He cares for us and He fully understands our distress and anxiety. When we go to the throne of mercy, lay our problems before Him, give ourselves fully to Him in serious prayer and supplication, we can then experience the serenity and peace of mind that only He can give.

Thank You, God, that You lay Your hands on us to guide us safely through the labyrinth of life. Amen.

John 15:4: *"Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me."*

It is worth remembering that the stars

are still shining, even when clouds hide them. Remember, too, that behind the dark patches of life, the eternal love of our heavenly Father is still shining brightly. The life that Jesus promises us if we remain in Him is such a challenge that some people hesitate to accept it and instead choose to remain in a religious rut that promotes neither joy nor spiritual growth. Life in Christ creates inner peace, a constructive purpose and provides the strength to achieve and maintain a life through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Dear Father, You desire all people to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. We know our Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Give us conviction and courage to witness our faith to those who do not know You. Ground us in Your Word that the Holy Spirit would work saving faith in those with whom we share it. We pray they believe Your Word and have eternal life. In Jesus' name. Amen.



... fear not,
for I am with you;
 be not dismayed,
for I am your God;
 I will strengthen you,
 I will help you,
 I will uphold you
 with my righteous right hand.

Isaiah 41:10



CRYING OUT WITH THE STONES

“As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples.” He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.” (Luke 19:37-40, ESV)

“And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, “Truly this was the Son of God!” (Matthew 27:51-54, ESV)

“And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men.” (Matthew 28:2-4, ESV)

As Jesus was approaching Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the Pharisees chastised Him, saying that His disciples should not be praising Him. To this Jesus replied, “If these were silent, the very stones would cry out,” implying that one way or another He would be praised, if not by His disciples, then by the very stones crying out.

When the worship of the crowd died out, indeed when the crowd turned against Him and demanded His crucifixion, when He hung dying on the cross, when the worship of His disciples ceased, did then the stones cry out? When His humiliation ended with His death on the cross, when He had completed the work His Father had given Him, when redemption had been won and His state of exaltation began, who was there to sing His praises? When His disciples had abandoned Him, when the worship of the crowd on His entrance into Jerusalem turned to scorn, when everything seemed to be a loss but was instead a glorious victory, who was there to declare His kingship, to give Him the praise He rightly deserved? Did then the stones cry out?

When the angel from heaven descended, accompanied by an earthquake, and rolled back the stone at Jesus’ tomb, was this the stones crying out in praise? Was the worship of the crowd at His entrance to Jerusalem replaced by the praise of the stones at His death and resurrection? Did the stones cry out?



We have the advantage of hindsight. We can see these events for what they really were. Jesus’ death on the cross was not the end of a man who had shown great promise, who had done supernatural signs and wonders, but was instead His crowning victory over sin, death and the devil. His inevitable resurrection, since He was the all-powerful Son of God through whom everything was created, was the bookend of His three days in the belly of the fish, His descent into Hell and declared victory. What appeared to His disciples at the time as a horrible loss, as the end of their leader and their hopes, was anything but. Their terribly



Reaching out to others

sad “loss” was actually their wonderful “victory.” Jesus had fulfilled His role as the sacrificial Lamb of God and had opened the gates of Heaven not only to them but to all who believe and trust in Him.

As I am writing this article it is the Saturday between Good Friday and Easter Sunday. Last night was the well-done Tenebrae service, which, although it is not a Communion service, is one of my favorites. Tomorrow the barren cross will be adorned with flowers and the “Hallelujahs” missing during Lent will return. We will sing with joy on this day, the annual celebration of our Lord and Savior’s resurrection, the culmination of His victory, and ours, over sin, death and the devil. We will give thanksgiving to our God for all that He has done for us, for His incredible act of love and mercy in becoming man and taking on our punishment, for His opening the Kingdom of Heaven to us miserable sinners. We will celebrate that we, who deserve only His wrath and punishment, have been given the opportunity to spend eternity in His presence, something we definitely do not deserve.

So, let’s cry out with the stones! Let’s celebrate His death, yes, His death, since that was His taking on our punishment, and His resurrection! Let’s do this not just this weekend but throughout the year. While we can never begin to repay Him for what He has done, we can worship Him, we can praise Him, we can show Him our greatest gratitude! So, let’s do this. Let’s give Him our worship, our praise, and our thanksgiving, not just on Easter weekend but throughout the year. Let’s give Him what He deserves! Let’s cry out with the stones!



Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed! Hallelujah!



Make decorative stones as reminders of God’s many great attributes.

What you need:

- Flat, smooth stones
- Printed, decorative napkins
- Paintbrush
- Clear-drying craft glue
- Scissors
- Permanent marker

What you do:

1. Unfold the napkin, carefully separating the printed side from the solid side.
2. Brush a thin layer of glue atop a stone. Lay the napkin (printed side up) on the glue and press down. Paint more glue over the napkin. Let dry.
3. Turn the stone over and paint more glue on the back. Wrap the napkin edges around the stone, trimming as needed. Paint more glue over the napkin. Let dry.
4. On the stone, write an attribute of God (loving, wise, powerful, merciful, etc.).
5. Repeat with more stones. Use them as gifts, paperweights, table decorations, etc.



Missional Outreach



Missional Outreach Opportunities

Each month, groups from Ascension share the Word of God and hymns of praise with the residents of HHR and Regency. This month, the schedule is as follows:

HHR - 5/14 & 5/28 at 10:15 AM

Regency - 5/8 & 5/22 at 10:45 AM

The agenda is as follows:

Welcome

Song 1

Song 2

Old Testament Reading

Song 3

Song 4

New Testament Reading

Song 5

Song 6

Gospel

Song 7

Message

Song 8

Song 9

Toni Hypes 05/02	Elizabeth Charnock	05/12
Anna Peebles 05/03	Kathy Kiehl	05/13
Crissi Patterson 05/03	Janet Smith	05/14
Philip Fraley 05/05	Jonathan Stoddart	05/17
Colin Ford 05/07	Rick Hilst	05/19
Debbie Fraley 05/09	Shane Charnock	05/19
Hawley Cheney 05/09	Jean Shaver	05/20
Jason Maas 05/09	Andrew Langefeld	05/20
	Patrick Hurst	05/21



Harvey and Betty Fischer	May 2 (55 years)
Rob & Ellen Rosson	May 2 (27 years)
Greg & Olivia Yates	May 18 (7 years)
Mike & Carla Jo Peebles	May 21 (3 years)
Jimmy & Sharon Damron	May 25 (42 years)
Philip & Debbie Fraley	May 29 (43 years)
Bob & Vanda Beamer	May 31 (44 years)
Keith Ward & Hawley Cheney	May 29, 2025



May Calendar 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2 6:00 PM - Co-op Home School Rewards Night	3
4 8:00 & 10:45 AM - Worship 9:30 AM - Classes 9:45 AM - Regency	5 3:00 PM - Confirmation 6:00 PM - Worship	6 10:00 AM - Women's Bible Study	7 6:00 PM - Choir	8 10:45 AM - Regency 3:00 PM - Call Committee	9	10 10:00 AM - LWML
11 8:00 & 10:45 AM - Worship 9:30 AM - Classes 9:45 AM - Regency	12 3:00 PM - Confirmation 6:00 PM - Worship	13 10:00 AM - Women's Bible Study 6:00 PM - Board of Directors	14 10:15 AM - HHR 6:00 PM - Choir	15	16	17
18 8:00 & 10:45 AM - Worship 9:30 AM - Classes 9:45 AM - Regency	19 3:00 PM - Confirmation 6:00 PM - Worship	20 10:00 AM - Women's Bible Study 6:00 PM - Board of Elders	21 6:00 PM - Choir	22 10:45 AM - Regency 3:00 PM - Call Committee	23	24 8:30 AM - Men's Prayer Breakfast
25 8:00 & 10:45 AM - Worship 9:30 AM - Classes 9:45 AM - Regency	26 3:00 PM - Confirmation 6:00 PM - Worship	27 10:00 AM - Women's Bible Study	28 10:15 AM - HHR PM-ish - Wedding Rehearsal	29 3:15 PM - Ward/Cheney Wedding (Family Only)	30	31