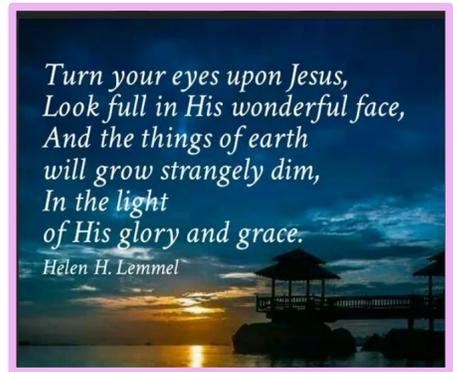


**GREAT EXPECTATIONS!**

*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord (I Corinthians 15:58, KJV).*



Greetings Dear Sisters & Brothers in Christ.... I just snuggle in this powerful KJV, two words that are too "olde" even for spell-check! Because somehow, this scripture has the perfect command verbiage to get me eager and stirred up for the season of Lent, and the countdown to Easter.

In fact, I Corinthians, Chapter 15 (all 58 verses) is arguably the New Testament's longest and most detailed storyline of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. It can become our marching orders of how to live our lives after Easter, and the rest of our lives! And as we get really drummed up for our upcoming 2022 Convention.... ***For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works,*** (Ephesians 2:10a).

In our penitent Lenten season, we dedicate ourselves to reflect on the spiritual meaning of Easter and the most sacred Sunday of the entire year. And Paul's friendly admonition to his people holds the **great expectations** God has for us: to be steadfast, immoveable, knowing that our labors for Him, ministering in this sinister, suffering, and fallen world, shall not be in vain.

Have you ever had a tune in your head, and just can't get it out? Well, yesterday, I began to gather all my thoughts for this very special HUG, and as I went through my red Lutheran Hymnal, it was not there! My old red Hymnal has but 25 Easter hymns, and "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus" was not there.

So, I "googled" this song I'd memorized as a child and found this priceless story: it was written in 1863 by the daughter of English immigrants, Helen H. Lemmel. \* A very gifted singer and writer, in her tragic mid-life, she went blind! Despite being blind then, her refrain seems to encapsulate what I think Easter is all about and welcomes us to remember: *Turn your eyes upon Jesus, Look full in his wonderful face, And the things of earth will grow strangely dim, In the light of his glory and grace.* (\* She lived to age 93.)

His great expectations of us... ***to be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord,*** sets us on course to weigh earthly things and use our precious time on earth for Him and His will for us.

I found dozens of synonyms for the word expectations. \*\* And in my mind, it created a sort of an endless, working circle. He dwells in us, our cornerstone of Love & Grace, and our natural reaction to that should be to focus, with our mission hearts, on the directions that leads us and to set worthy expectations of ourselves, when in turn we have to lean on others and have expectations of others to make it work, all leading to glory to God. SEE! (\*\* belief, conjecture, forecast, suppositions, assumptions, surmise, prediction, **assurance**)

**So here we are.** And Lent gives us the privilege and personal seven-week-journey to focus right up to our most sacred Resurrection Sunday, on the very lifeblood gift of love, mercy & truth, in our Lord Jesus Christ and his death upon the cross. When we come to the foot of the cross and participate in the Sacrament of Communion, .....we look to his face ***in the light of his glory and Grace.***

We have much to do now in the coming Spring weeks ahead, as we focus on our Convention 2022; ladies & gentlemen: May your Great Expectations, and your role in making it be a most glorious communion of saints and sisters, all come together. Remembering.... ***That your labor is not in vain.***