



# August 2020 Newsletter

## *A Tour Through the Old Testament:*

*The Minor Prophets study has just started Zachariah. Our new study to be announced. Taught by Rhonda Anderson (anderson.rhonda@gmail.com) Thursday's at 4:00 PM All are welcome!*



## *Laughter and Latte*

Join us Saturday, August 22nd

9:00—10:30 AM

At the home of Amanda Riese

401 Twin Springs Road, Georgetown

No R.S.V.P. needed.

Come and bring a dish to

share for 2-3 people.



Questions, comments, or submissions, please contact Lynn Goad:

lynnhilton@protonmail.com

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# *God's Good Grace and Peace* By Kelly Hardy

The question posed and, it's a good one, "How has the Lord gotten you through these last few months." Until I sat down to think about the last few months, I believed this would write itself. The number of chaotic events, both in and outside the house, can words sum up crazy? Suddenly peace arrived as the promise, "Grace and Peace," . . . my trial walking words always in it but, dusted off for use.

Apostles open and close many letters with Grace and Peace. Hate to say it but, when things are good, I've said these words without much thought, skimmed over these words as common as "peanut butter and jelly." As a Christian, the phrase is so common to hear, I was a bit numb to the comfort, attitude altering and plain goodness these words provide. "Grace," unmerited undeserved favor poured out by my Abba Father during each event despite my acts, available to me only through Christ's act of redemption. "Peace," that settled calm during trials, storms or circumstances out of control, going well beyond my knowledge, reason and understanding. A glass of milk and a peanut butter and jelly sandwich can be a fabulous dessert for me (so ordinary and common but, rich, comfortingly sweet and yummy!). So, our Abba Father through His Son, pouring out his grace and peace on us in high chaos has been like dessert; comforting, loving, often without understanding and yes, delicious to see.

Here's a rundown on last few months, my Phil had quadruple bypass 2/12/2020, you could have knocked me over with a feather! 4 days after surgery Phil came down with a virus, added 8 days at hospital (Thanks to ladies who pray in the hospital and Tim Hamontree, blessings extraordinaire for Phil and me). 3/6/2020 "The Covid Shut Down" Phil was recovering at home and ready to receive rehabilitation after care, nothing, nada, zippo! For those who know me, I am not a nurse type and this recovery was a beast. When they cut off all Phil's medical help except by phone, the P word, "panic." Instead the words I needed, "for by faith you stand." Ok, you want this Lord so, thank you for Phil's recovery, Amen. Phil grew stronger and now, I was thanking the name of Jesus and the Father that he was cut off. April 16th, Phil's 92 year old mom fell and broke her neck; Dr. called it the "Hang Man's" break. His mother survived but, was cut off in the hospital (she's a non-believer so; her extreme anxiety made ultimate forever death a real possibility). Heard the word, "sacrifice of prayer," so, thank you God for your help and intervene with her, Amen. Despite "no contact" orders, God convinced the providers that I, non-nurse Kelly, needed to be designated special medical help for her, thank you God. Now, if you're like me it's those smaller ones that send you over the hill. Mid May 2020, just as Phil and his mother's medical needs, groceries and other rehab actions were met, plumbing, dogs with serious medical issues a week apart. The Vets are closed except to drop off, sit in a car and talk on the phone. As I write, the air condition is on the fritz.

During this ladder to crazy and seeing crazy unfold in the news, I picked up an empty journal given to me in bible study months earlier (Thanks Rhonda Anderson). I decided rather than margin write, I would write out verbatim verses which spoke to me. Interesting, when you start writing out bible verses verbatim, you actually start seeing each word; you hear the still voice of God. Your hand moves with a pen, personalizing those verses. You see words used in those verses in ways you are surprised by. Definitions put in parenthesis, noting a word used and gaining insight in the context of the verse. While I wrote out verses, I was suddenly engaging in a lot, I mean a lot of parenthesis writing. The Word of God filled blank pages with God's meaning, strengthening my understanding.

I was devouring what I was reading. This type of insight, at least for me, would not have happened without a pen and pages of blank paper, margin writing just did not cover it.



**T**he question asked centered on “going through.” Deep in His Word, each event began to have a growing peace only Christ can provide. Christ and God’s Helper walking me through. If I had no time on this road going through events, then there would be no workout with the word of God; no pen and paper and no added strength for the next event. Christ promise, “Peace I leave you but, “My Peace” I give to you. . .” Worldly peace exists between trials, temporary when all is well, not on a bumpy road. The sure constant peace in Christ, that’s the gift of always and forever, before, during and after the trials. Chaos was in my house, the country and the world, everything flipped upside down. However, in Christ peace and God’s grace my prayers became as wide

as the chaos and right side up. Each “thank you” brought more peace and each event new grace. Thank you for being in a community of believers who pray and help to lift Phil and his mom up. Thank you God for your hand on Phil who recovered from “The Widow Maker”! Mom’s hang man’s break, healing and may be a bone on bone fusion at 92 years old. Yes, even the dogs are recovering.

**T**hank you God for your Word on external chaos! 2 Timothy 3: 7-9 God promised the folly of those who are always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of truth. . . those men of corrupt minds disapproved concerning the faith, they will progress no further! Their folly will be manifest to all! Yep, God addressed chaotic times for me. God reminded me, “I know all, I’ll let them have their folly and I will control their moves.” Your mine, you just keep praising me in My Word. Peace and Grace.

**P**hil still needs prayer for full recovery of heart function, mom still refuses God and her neck may not fully fuse but, our God’s character is resurrecting and healing (Yahweh Rapha). Phil’s heart is His, as is his mother’s salvation and neck. Thank you Lord! One dog fully recovered, the other needs a surgery to repair his ACL, my God of provision (Yahweh Jireh), thank you Lord. The God who sees me in all this (El Roi), His Son Jesus, with the Helper walks through all the world throws at me.

**T**he Word tells us to look to our Good Father, seek His Kingdom first. This is the challenge, no horizontal views. Daniel at the start of his captivity, the most hopeless time if you ask me, “purposed” in his heart to follow God. That means no matter what the risk, feeling or horizontal circumstance experienced, Daniel determined to give God all praise. While our loving Abba Father gives us his good grace and peace, we don’t just passively exist. Example “Fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life.” The Fight (brawl, battle, combat), is to be faithful in God’s righteousness for us. To give him His “First Place” position in our life circumstances and thank Him in faith, all else is His victory to contend with. “Lay hold” to eternal life, yep I am to actively grab on to the might of Christ’s act of redemptive salvation and “hang on for my eternal life!”

**H**ere’s how good God is, when I purpose in His Word and allow God to walk me through while daily dining on His Word; I actively develop my faith muscle to fight for Christ to remain first place in my life. That same faith muscle grows to allow me to grab on and not let go of my right to eternal life. World life can seek to weary you and, I am not immune. If I go horizontal vision (and I do), feeling the panic/fear from a horizontal glance, I grab and lay hold of Christ promised Word, “Abide in Me and if My Word abides in you, ask and it will be done for you.” “Will be done for me,” not maybe done nor, do I do the doing! 2020, No better time and place then now to be at rest, in peace and grace as a child of God, His Son Christ and in His word, right?

# Thrive Between the Lines

By Valerie Schwarzwaelder

John 16:33 “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

Okay let that sink in for a minute.

2020 people say it is the worst year yet.... full of nothing but bad, after bad.... COVID, toilet paper shortage, inequality, injustice, riots, COVID again, everything shutting down, then opening, and then shutting down again. That's worldwide. We have our own battles and hurdles that we had to deal with. Having kids at home all the time. Trying to teach them and work. Work from home, social distance.

“In this world you will have trouble” Yes we hit that.... BUT TAKE HEART! GOD HAS OVERCOME THIS WORLD. So in him you may have peace. So I want to bring this to a personal perspective.

Do you pray? You believe God answers prayers? Maybe not in the way you think, but He does answer them! Do you think that GOD is using all this for his will? Maybe even to answer prayers? How many of you personally prayed to bring God back to our nation? Currently states are closing churches, but not protest, riots or casinos. And I can't help but think, do you think it is possible that there are more people turning to faith in 2020, more people than we realize?

1Peter 6-11:

6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. 7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. 8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. 10 And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. 11 To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Think of the story of Job, In Job 1:6-12, the Lord allowed Satan to take away from Job, and Job faith was still ever strong. So we must not let these worldly things burn us, bring us down, or cause us to question our faith. We are made to thrive.

So my encouragement for your today, is when you're struggling, TAKE HEART! GOD HAS OVERCOME THIS WORLD. So in Him you may have peace. Start looking in between all the bad and think of every good thing that has happened, your life personally or worldwide.

Probably the most relatable “trouble” thing we all experienced is COVID. Though there is a lot about COVID I could talk about, I am just going to focus on a few things - like an exercise to see how we find God in the bad.

Parents were forced to work from home and some people lost their jobs. However, how many of you prayed that you could get more time with your kids or family? Maybe wished for more time to finish projects, focus on something other than work and so on?

Now we are home. I personally got a lot of things done.

Can I tell you before COVID my daughter was mentally dealing with depression and medical issues in the beginning of the school year? My husband and I struggled to get through this with her. We prayed a lot over a discussion if we needed to pull her from school. While in discussion with the school, her counselor and therapist, COVID happened and she had time to heal while still being in “school”. The break she truly needed.

You may know someone who lost their job, did God still provide? Nationally God provided by adding the extra stimulus to help people who lost their jobs. Though I lost my job due to COVID and didn’t get that stimulus, however that lead me to a career I wanted. The career I have been praying for since 2018.

I have to tell you a little side note on my new job, my company has me hiring a lot of people at this time. One day I made a mistake and a mass email to all applicants requesting to interview them.... Include that applicants that we already hired and applicants the company already interviewed (before I was brought on) and rejected. Well a rejected applicant replied and said they prayed I would change my mind and give them a second chance at an interview. This made me curious so I went ahead and just re interviewed him. To this he is one of our hardest workers. I think I can say God was in that.

Throughout the society we learned who really is “essential” to make the world work. And it was the average person, not celebrities or politician’s. That was beautiful to see as a mom, who has been praying for that. Hopefully my kids now want to be more than a You-tube star, gamer or a celebrity.

I can confidently say there might be some educators out there who prayed that a parent would become open to the child behavior and stop blaming them. Educators praying that the world would see the value that a teacher brings. I know personally I always valued teachers and their positions. I think the rest of the world is catching on real quick.

In the beginning of this pandemic. There wasn’t enough medical supplies to fight COVID . Factories like FORD stopped making cars and made ventilators. Titos stopped making vodka and made hand sanitizers.

Communities, fashion designers and everyday people came together in a time of need. Making mask for others when the hospital and essential workers didn’t have enough. I remember our church helping in that.

How many environmentalist are probably breathing a sigh of relief. Globally the world had to stop traveling, factories stopped running. In return the world began to physically to heal itself. How can you not see God in all that? That’s just me talking about COVID.

So in this time of uncertainty, confusion, aggression, fear or whatever else is troubling you. Remember its all God plan. Proverbs 16:4 “The Lord has made everything for its own purpose, even the wicked for the day of evil.” He will use the all things for his good. And give it to GOD, because “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”



### *About the Author*

My name is Valerie Schwarzwaelder. I have been with my husband Karl since I was 16 years old. We’ve been married for 18 years. We have 3 children. Elora who will be 15, Daniel who is 13 and Samuel who is 3 years old. I am a 8 year Breast Cancer survivor. My relationship with the Lord developed later in my life, I am so glad he didn’t give up on me.

# Vespa

A dog's tale: As told to Marci Guevara

I was born in Santa Rosa, California to my mom, Gucci. There were a bunch of us. I can't count so I don't know how many but we were all wiggles fighting for food, exploring our territory, wrestling with the others, and being cuddled by humans. When I was 8 weeks old, I was flown to Fort Collins, Colorado to my puppy raiser, Joy. She spent 12 months raising me and taught me all kinds of commands and took me places to socialize me. One day, I was put on an airplane again and ended up back in California in a facility in Oceanside. I really missed Joy but it was there that I was put through lots of tests to determine what direction I would go from there. They kept us very busy. Because I was very intelligent and would do anything for food, I was chosen to be trained as a hearing service dog.

Of the five facilities across the US only two train hearing service dogs. The one I was sent to in Northern California (Canine Companion for Independence Charles Schulz's facility in Santa Rosa, Sonoma County), and the one in Florida. That's a lot of traveling for a young dog like me.

I had fun there making new fur friends. My kennel mate was Paz. We had fun with our trainers. They worked us hard but also made our days fun. We loved going on field trips all around town. We had to heel and stay really close to our trainer. No goofing around. It was serious business. Elevators were cool but trying out those moving stairs was a bit unnerving. I finally got used to them and then it was fun. One of the hardest jobs was sitting under a table in a restaurant. Oh, my, all those wonderful smells filled my nose and I had to stay "under" and ignore them.

One day, Paz, Tetris, Chance, Vino, Jasmine, and a couple other fur friends were taken to a big room where we worked with some strangers. These strangers were learning how to work with us and how to train us to alert them to specific sounds like a smoke alarm, a door bell, a door knock, a phone ringing. We stayed in kennels near by or worked with the trainers while these strangers sat and listened to lectures about our training and care for us.

I really liked Marci. But when it came time for the trainers to pair up dogs with the trainees, Marci was paired with Vino. I was so disappointed. I stayed with the instructor, Ken, while the trainees went to rooms to "bond" with their new partner in the pre-match. Vino knew I liked Marci so he must have had a plan because about 10 minutes later Marci came out and told Ken that Vino went ballistic with so much pent up energy and wouldn't listen to her. So, Ken gave me to Marci and see how things worked out. As I went by Vino, he gave me a knowing look.

I went with Marci into the training room. I immediately went over to her and put my head in her lap and looked up at her and we knew we were meant to be together. I knew I was finally going to be with the right human and would get to use all I had learned to help her. We acted like a team and I was so proud to show her how well I knew how to do those moving stairs. Marci said she had asked God for me and He answered her prayers. I'm so glad.

Marci can hear but there are sounds that she can't hear. One of the most important for safety is the smoke alarm. When that goes off, if she is in bed, I jump on her chest and push her with my nose to alert her to that sound only. If the micro wave goes off, or the doorbell rings, or a knock on the door, I go to her and nose her hip. Then she says "What?" and I take her to a pre-determined spot which tells her it is the door or the microwave going off. In California she would often forget to turn off the sprinklers but with me, she learned to set a timer and I could remind her to turn them off.

We graduated May 28, 2018. It wasn't long before I made another long trip (these were getting to be a part of my life) and this time to Texas which was apparently going to be our new home. Here, I go with her when she works in various schools in the county. I stay under the teacher's desk when she is substituting and under a table when she is tutoring kids. They are learning to not pet me unless they first ask and then Marci has to say the "magic word" (shhhh ...its release") which tells me I can be petted and enjoy the attention. I am a licker which means I love you. They are my kisses.

Marci brings me to church and a lot of people recognize me as a service animal but aren't sure what I do. I hope my story helps answer those questions you might have about me. You can always ask Marci, too. I do know that I am an answer to Marci's prayers. I'm not sure what that means but I do know that we were meant to be together.

