

Worship services are being cancelled until further notice because of Covid-19. However, we will have worship services through the Internet Zoom platform every Sunday at 10:30 AM in NB, NS and PEI. The Zoom link for this service will be sent to you by email. The telephone numbers for Zoom always remains the same but the Meeting ID and password number change every week.. Please let Mr. Vautour know if you would like to be added to the weekly email list. See the bottom of the bulletin for the contact information

If you have friends or acquaintances who want to join in the worship service, please do not hesitate to share with them the Zoom links to join with us in the worship our great God.

For more information about special activities happening in GCI international, please see the website at [www.gci.org](http://www.gci.org). On the left-hand upper side of the screen, click on “PARTICIPATE”. Click on it. A drop-down menu will appear. Click on “GCI UPDATE”.

Please note that audio and video sermons are available at [www.worshiphim.ca](http://www.worshiphim.ca) and video sermons are now available on YouTube – GRACE COMMUNION INTERNATIONAL-MONCTON (see link below)

**Zoom Church Meeting with the Saint John congregation: Thursday, November 12 at 7:30 PM**

Please take note that November 29, we will have services from head office in the USA. Exceptionally, worship services will be at 1 PM on that day

If you have a prayer requests, other events you would like to announce and/or praise to our great God you would like to share, please try to contact Mr. Vautour by email, text or telephone no later than Saturday in the morning.

To see specific prayer requests from the church, please go to [www.worshiphim.ca](http://www.worshiphim.ca) – under “Members Only” and type the password.

- Let us pray for the Church to put first things first which is **to love God with all of our heart, with all of our soul and with all of our mind**. The secondary commandment and flowing from the first is **to love our neighbour as ourselves**.
- Let us pray according to God’s will as per his instructions: “**1 ¶ First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. 3 This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.**” (1Ti 2:1-4 ESV)
- **Let us pray for the universal church of which Jesus is head** to realize that we belong first of the kingdom of God and then live in the kingdom of this world. Help all of us to realize that Jesus is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Let us pray that the church of Jesus will be His light in this world where there is much confusion, conflicts, division, anxiety and where nature is gone awry. Let us pray for God’s will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. He alone is the source of true hope!

**Offerings:** you can send your offering directly to the following address: **Grace Communion International- Canada, Suite 203A, 2121 Airport Dr., Saskatoon, SK 7SL 6W5**. If you prefer, you can also call **1-306-653-2705**. Thank you for your continued generous giving to God by giving to this part of God’s church, his body.

**For those living in Moncton area, if you wish, you can drop your offerings in our mailbox. I will mail them with the ministerial expenses at the end of each month.**

**From Mr. Bill Hall – GCI Canadian Director** “We will continue to process the donations we receive in Saskatoon.

Members are urged to mail them directly to our office for the time-being. They can also donate via phone using a credit card, or via Canada Helps using **the donate button** on our website [www.gcicanada.ca](http://www.gcicanada.ca) located at bottom of the page on

the right side as you scroll down. We are waiving the provision that all donations given via Canada Helps go toward national expenses for the time being. We will credit all donations received via Canada Helps to a member's local congregation, if we can identify where they attend."

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### Help in Times of Disaster



Greg and Susan Williams

Dear GCI Family and Friends,

The year 2020 will be remembered as the year the world faced a pandemic that stopped much of the economy, sent people to “shelter in place” in their homes and churches revised the way they get together for worship. It will also be remembered for several natural disasters—fires, earthquakes, severe drought and volcanic eruptions. Some wonder if we’ve reached “the end of time”; others understand these cataclysmic events have always been with us. The Bible is transparent in letting us know that trials, persecution, plagues,

famines and weather events are a part of our fallen world. Notice the words of Jesus:

***And the rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. (Matthew 7:25 NRSV)***

Over the years we have experienced many natural disasters with our extended family around the world. Some have asked what our GCI Disaster Relief fund is for and how we have used it. The purpose of this letter isn't to solicit donations, but to inform and to show our appreciation.

Since the inception of the Disaster Relief fund in 2005, over \$800,000 has been distributed to provide relief to the GCI family from the effects of hurricanes, earthquakes, flooding, drought, and Ebola, just to name a few.

In just the last couple years, donations have helped the GCI family in the following disasters:

- Hurricane Dorian – Bahamas
- Taal Volcano – Philippines
- Cyclone Idia – Mozambique
- Flooding – Nepal
- Hurricane Maria – Dominica
- Hurricane Harvey – Houston, TX

Because many have given to this fund before a disaster has struck, we have been able to quickly send aid as soon as needs are made known. We want to thank the congregations who have contributed and allowed us to provide aid in times of need.

The Disaster Relief fund is never meant to cover all costs related to any emergency; rather, it is designed to provide help where we can, and perhaps where other help is not available. It is our practice to have those affected by natural disasters seek the help provided from government and other relief agencies because we do not have the capacity to cover the extent of long-term needs or complete rebuilding, in some instances. Your superintendent, national or regional leader can help lead you to resources available.

Being able to provide financial relief in the event of a natural disaster is just one of the ways that we live up to the word “international” in our denominational name Grace Communion International. It is a blessing to be a global family connected and able to display our compassion and love in times of disaster.

Again, a special thanks to all of the congregations that have contributed. You are much appreciated.

Keeping you informed, Greg Williams

***P.S. I want to be clear that the bulk of our offerings and donations are meant for the work of sharing the gospel through the life and ministries of our local churches. So, please understand that this letter is not meant as a solicitation for the Disaster Relief Fund.***

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## THE GOSPELS: MARK 4:10-13 – A LESSON ABOUT HARD HEARTS

Again Jesus began to teach by the lake.... The Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. He told them, **“To those on the outside everything is said in parables so that, ‘they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!’”** ([Mark 4:1, 10-13](#))

At first glance, this passage seems to say that Jesus taught in parables specifically for the purpose of preventing people from understanding what he was talking about. A closer look, however, reveals just the opposite.

### Master teacher

Jesus was not deliberately trying to prevent his listeners from understanding what he was talking about. He was doing just the opposite—using parables as a means of relating the invisible kingdom of God to everyday, visible, real life examples and situations the common person could easily relate to.

Parables were a teaching method quite familiar to Jewish teachers and audiences. They were tools for making things easier to understand, not more difficult. In the hands of Jesus, the great master teacher, these tools would have been even more effective. He came to bring good news to the poor, not confuse them with stories impossible to comprehend.

### Faithful

The key to understanding this passage lies in the scripture Jesus quoted to make his point to the disciples about the use of parables. He was quoting [Isaiah 6:9-10](#), a passage that chided Israel's blindness and deafness to God's love. The translation is easily misunderstood unless the context of Israel's struggle with God throughout its history is taken into consideration.

The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, noted this problem, and took care to include the sarcastic tone of the wording in its translation. The Septuagint, we should note, was the foremost translation of Jesus' day. In his commentary on Mark, William Barclay paraphrased Jesus' intent this way: *“Do you remember what Isaiah once said? He said that when he came with God's message to God's people Israel in his day they were so dull in understanding that you would have thought that God had shut instead of opening their minds; I feel like that today”* (*The Gospel of Mark*, Westminster Press, 1975).

Israel, as God's own people, had already failed to keep their covenant with God and had ended up a conquered people and an occupied nation, first by the Babylonians and eventually by the Romans.

But God promised to be faithful to his covenant regardless of Israel's unfaithfulness (compare [Malachi 4:6](#)). He promised to redeem them in spite of themselves (compare [Hosea 11:8-11](#)), and he would do it through the Messiah, the Anointed One, who would be sent to redeem the people and bring them back to God.

But God knew that in the hardness of their hearts, they would also reject their own Messiah. As John wrote in the fourth Gospel, **“He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.”** But even that would not stop God from redeeming his people, and through them, the whole world.

In their rejection of Messiah, Israel's sin against God would reach its full measure. They would kill their Savior, but God would raise him from the dead, and his death and resurrection would become the very means by which God would transform the hearts of not only Israel, but also the gentiles.

### New heart

Jesus was saying that stubborn, hard-hearted people cannot understand the things of the kingdom of God even when they are taught in the plainest possible language. It takes a new heart, a heart only God can give (compare [Ezekiel 36:26](#)).

Sin alienates us from God, and since we are all sinners, we are all alienated from God — not because he rejects us (he is eternally faithful), but because we reject him. In our alienated state, we are incapable of reconciling ourselves to God. We neither know God nor want him meddling in our lives. Even our concept of God is askew; we think of him as a great butler in the sky who is not worth his salt unless he does everything we ask, or as an angry super-being who is always ready to dish out punishments.

Unless God himself takes the initiative to reconcile us to him, we remain helpless, with no future beyond death. That is exactly what he has done in Jesus Christ. In Jesus we learn exactly what God is like, because Jesus Christ is the exact representation of the Father ([Hebrews 1:3](#); see also [Colossians 1:19-20](#)).

### Gift

We learn through Jesus that God is merciful, patient and full of grace. God is not against humanity; he is for it. **“For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world,”** Jesus said, **“but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned...”** ([John 3:17-18](#)). Through Jesus, our minds are released from the bondage of sin, and we are freed to put our trust in our Creator and Redeemer.

No one understands the things of God apart from the grace he has made manifest in Jesus Christ. **“The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you”** ([Mark 4:11](#)), Jesus told the disciples. Yet before his ascension, even they did not understand the parables, because their hearts were still hard, too. The Holy Spirit, who leads us into all truth, especially the truth of the gospel, soon melted their stony hearts into hearts of flesh, just as God had promised through Ezekiel.

God never forces us to love him, for love forced is not love at all. Instead, God frees our minds and hearts from all the barriers, rooted in sin, that would otherwise stand in the way. “His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life,” Peter would later write, **“through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.”** ([2 Peter 1:3](#)).

Freedom, however, is worthless unless it is exercised. That will be the topic of our next lesson, as we look at the parable of the sower.

Author: J. Michael Feazell, 2004

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### Remembering...

(From Day by Day daily Devotional – GCI.uk (<http://www.daybyday.org.uk/>)

***“Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them fade from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them.”***

#### **Deuteronomy 4:9 (NIV)**

On November 11<sup>th</sup> or the nearest Sunday to that date, the world stops to remember the fallen from warfare. In Britain it is called Remembrance Sunday. It is a sombre occasion marked by local and national parades and a two-minute silence at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour, commemorating the First World War armistice. The poet Rudyard Kipling, who himself lost a son, wrote a poem entitled ‘*Recessional*’ in which he penned the line “lest we forget”. The phrase has become synonymous with global acts of remembrance and is featured on many war memorials.

It is ironic, is it not, that humanity, though each year remembering the sacrifice of millions, still cannot find a way of peace? The apostle Paul declared in [Romans 3:17](#) “and the way of peace they do not know”. Remembering sacrifice is not enough to sanction peace. It is right and honourable to pause to remember those who paid the ultimate sacrifice – but does it bring peace? What have we learned for the future in these acts of remembrance? The psalmist had the answer when he wrote in [Psalm 34:14](#) “Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it”.

Wars begin in hearts and minds. Our human memory is short lived, we move on too quickly from remembering. For those bereaved by conflict this is not possible, but for the rest of the population, they get on with their lives – and forget the price of peace. God beseeches us to turn from evil and do good – to actively seek peace. How can we seek peace? The place to begin is with the Prince of Peace – Jesus Christ. The prophet Isaiah used His name in [Isaiah 9:6](#), “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

Our acts of Remembrance need to be combined with a fervent desire to seek the Lord Jesus Christ and His will. God does not forget the promises He has made concerning us “He remembers his covenant forever, the promise he made, for a thousand generations,” ([Psalm 105:8](#)). Those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice have a future because of that promise. We, the living, need to remember not only them but also the Saviour of all mankind. It is He who will finally bring lasting peace to a war-weary world.

#### **Prayer**

***Great Prince of Peace, we thank you for the sacrifice you made for us, we thank you for the hope it gives in a world which of itself has none.***

*By Irene Wilson is a Deaconess in the Watford Congregation of Grace Communion International, where she also serves on the Pastoral Council*

**GCI principle website and Moncton Websites**—a) [www.gci.org](http://www.gci.org) , b) [www.worshipim.ca](http://www.worshipim.ca) , c) <https://www.facebook.com/GCIMoncton> ; d) *Grace Communion International-Moncton* <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgKazyWhmKmDZy69vJcFfPg>

*For a wealth of helpful articles about God, grace and his plan for salvation, who we are, etc., please see the GCI.org website.*

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