



May 2024

Dear CWR/PTM Friend and Partner,

*The god of this age has blinded the mind of **unbelievers**, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God (2 Corinthians 4:4).*

Caught in traffic after leaving his office, Dave arrived at his son's first Little League game a little late. His son's team was just leaving the field after finally getting the other team out. Dave could tell his wife sitting in the grandstands was not happy with his late arrival, so hoping to make some amends he walked down by his son's dugout and called him over.

"What's the score, Johnny?"

His son, not looking that concerned, said, "28 to nothing."

Dave was shocked, and replied to Johnny, "Your team is behind by 28 runs!?!?"

Johnny said, "Dad, don't worry about it. We haven't even come up to bat yet." Johnny believed his team was not hopelessly beaten. This was Johnny's first Little League game. He was not experienced enough to be an unbeliever. *Johnny did not believe all was lost.*

The adversities and storms of life may get first crack at us. They may have the first chance to come up to bat, as it were. We head out to the field with high hopes, but by the time the other team (the enemy—this sad old world) keeps running around the bases while we are unable to even get one out, our belief starts to be shaken and then destroyed.

Finally, mercifully, while the world at large is done piling it on, we walk off the field, heads hanging low, lower lips dragging the ground, wondering when we come "to bat" how we'll score enough runs to even tie the game, yet alone take the lead. *We are beaten and whipped unbelievers.*

The score might be 28-0 but the game isn't over. **The game isn't over until God comes up to bat.** The "game" isn't over with the initial onslaught. The battle may seem to be lost. The odds may seem to be against us, but as Paul says (Romans 8:31), with God on our side *who can be against us? As Christ-followers, we believe God will come up to bat.*

After Jesus was crucified, the disciples felt the "game" was over. They were hiding in fear. They had no belief left. All the starch in their sails of faith was long gone. They felt Jesus had let them down and lost the "game." He humiliated them. He was supposed to save them. He was the Messiah. They thought and they certainly wanted him to usher in the Kingdom of God, and among other things, send the occupying army of Romans back to Rome where they had come from. But no, they seemed to be behind 28-0.

Even though Jesus had told them he would be crucified (which he had been, but before that time *they did not believe*) and that he would be resurrected (at the time they were hiding in fear he had been resurrected, but *they did not believe* such a thing could ever happen) they still felt like

Jesus should have done what they felt he should have done—which included conquering the Roman army and sending them away in utter defeat. **But no, instead of believing in what Jesus had said, they only believed they were behind 28-0.**

What things seem like to us is one thing, but the spiritual reality and the promises of God are another. All we can see is that we are hopelessly behind, and all we can believe is that the “game” is lost. As we hide in fear, God in Christ has already won the game—he has come up to bat and ended it all. He is risen. He has defeated death and the grave. He has “scored so many runs” the other team (our enemies, the world at large) can never catch up.

God in Christ has conquered the gods of this world. Here’s something on that topic written by an author I have often quoted, and by now many of you know. In his book, *The Magnificent Defeat*, Frederick Buechner says this about “The Gods Are Dying”:

The gods are dying. The gods of this world are sick unto death. If someone does not believe this, the next time he happens to wake up in the great silence of the night or of the day, just listen. And after a while, at the heart of the silence, he will hear the sound that gives it away: the soft, crazy thud of the feet of the gods as they stagger across the earth; the huge white hands fluttering like moths; the little moans of bewilderment and anguish. And we shudder at the sound because to witness the death of the gods is a fearsome thing.

Which gods? The gods that we worship. The gods that our enemies worship. Their sacred names? There is Science, for one: he who was to redeem the world from poverty and disease, on whose mighty shoulders mankind was to be borne onward and upward toward the high stars.

There is Communism, that holy one so terrible in his predilection for blood sacrifice but so magnificent in his promise of the messianic age; from each according to his ability, to each according to his need.

Or Democracy, that gentler god with his gospel of freedom for all peoples, including those people who after centuries of exploitation and neglect at the hands of the older democracies can be set free now only to flounder in danger of falling prey to new exploiters.

And we must not leave out from this role of the dying what often passes for the god of the church: the god who sanctifies our foreign policy and our business methods, our political views and our racial prejudices. The god who, bless him, asks so little and promises so much: peace of mind, the end of our inferiority complexes. Go to church and feel better. The family that prays together stays together. Not everybody can afford a psychiatrist or two weeks of solid rest in the country, but anybody can afford this god. He comes cheap.

There are the gods in whom the world has put its ultimate trust. Some of them are our particular gods, and there are plenty of others, each can name for himself. And where are they now? They are dying, dying, and their twilight thickens into night. Where is the security that they promised? Where is the peace? The terrible truth is that the gods of this world are no more worthy of our ultimate trust than are the men who created them.

—Frederick Buechner, *The Magnificent Defeat*

- God does not depend on science, politics or military might. No matter how formidable the foe might seem or actually be, God is more than up to the task.
- God eradicates deeply rooted fears. He can move mountains of grief. He can stop the storms of doubt and despair.
- God defeated Pharaoh’s armies. God cut a path through the Red Sea so that the nation of

Israel could be delivered from the military might of Egypt, and from its religion and all of its gods.

- God overcomes injustices, suffering, death, grief, disease, warfare, hatred and racism.
- God defeats giants and turns our enemies into toad stools.
- God beats swords into plow shares and spears into pruning hooks.

Back to Johnny as he played in his first Little League game, and let's see it as a metaphor of you and me as we play our positions in the "game" of life. We prove to be inadequate to stop the other team from scoring. We make errors. We are not as skilled as those on the other team. And if we allow those realities to dictate and determine how we live, then we will live as *unbelievers*.

However, we are on God's team. When all is said and done, it doesn't matter if we even know which end of the bat to hold or which hand to put the baseball glove on. It doesn't matter that no one on our team is as talented or athletically gifted as the players on the other team. God is on our side. When he comes up to bat, game over.

The "game" was over for Martha and Mary—their brother Lazarus was dead. All hope was lost. Death had won, they had lost. Jesus, like Dave, Johnny's father in our story, had arrived "to the game" after the enemy had scored so many runs, taking the life of Lazarus, so it seemed to Martha and Mary all was lost.

Jesus said to her [Martha], "*I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?*" (John 11:25-26).

My friends—my brothers and sisters in Christ. We are Christ-followers. *We believe in him*, no matter how dark the night might seem, no matter how overwhelming our situation might be. By God's grace, we believe.

Your brother in Christ,



Greg Albrecht
President, Plain Truth Ministries

P.S. We share this note of thanks from a friend in Kentucky—and **THANK YOU** for your generous and faithful support of the ongoing work of CWR/PTM.

Thank you so much for these monthly Partner letters. They help so much in keeping the correct focus (on Jesus) during such troubling times! Please keep up the good work.

CWR/PTM Prayer List—May 2024

These requests for prayer represent just a few of the thousands we receive and pray for. We invite you to join us in praying for these and the others that space does not permit us to include here. Thanks for joining with us as a CWR/PTM Prayer Partner.

Please pray for my husband who has cancer. Pray that he'll find peace in Jesus and experience his love.—Kentucky

Please pray for me and my wife. I injured my feet and ankles, and now I often lose my balance. Please pray that God will heal me and that he will comfort my wife through this ordeal.—Georgia

Please pray for my wife who is going through chemotherapy for breast cancer. Please also pray for me as I am going to rehab for surgery to insert a stent. Thank you for your prayers.—Washington

Please pray for our family health concerns and financial strain. Thank you for prayers.—Massachusetts

Please pray that our children will grow in their relationship with Jesus and that religious issues with our daughters will be resolved.—Idaho

Please continue to pray for peace in the Middle East, in Ukraine and worldwide.—Texas

We pray God will continue to bless PTM in helping lead us to faith, grace and Christ Jesus.—California

Please pray for our marriage, that we will enjoy good health, and pray for our children.—Oklahoma

Please pray for my friend who is only 27 years old and has been in and out of the hospital several times for heart valve malfunctions. He has seizures and his lungs collapse at times.—Wisconsin

Thank you for your prayers for my cousin. She passed away after several years of suffering with diabetes and kidney failure. Please pray for our entire family as we grieve.—North Carolina

Please pray for me—my foot and leg are infected and antibiotics do not work for me.—Texas

Please pray for my vision and pray that the whole world will find Jesus, the WORD of God.—Indiana

Please pray for my daughter who is having kidney problems. Thank you for all you do.—California

Please pray for me, as I am looking for work. Thank you so much for all you do.—Georgia

Please pray for my brother who suffers with alcoholism. I pray for everyone at PTM.—Michigan

Thank you all for praying for my sister. She is suffering with many severe health issues. Please that Christ will help me, as well as her children, in dealing with her decline and impending death.—Virginia

Please pray for my husband who has failing kidneys and for me as I have heart trouble. Thank you for all your wonderful help and literature you have sent us over all these years.—Kentucky

My wife and I are seniors and we are experiencing more and more health troubles. At the moment we are managing them. We would appreciate your prayers on our behalf.—Texas

Please pray for my wife who has "Long Covid." Please pray for me. I am mentally exhausted from my long daily commute for 20-plus years.—California

Our Father in Heaven: We thank you for your grace, mercy and love. You love each of these individuals, and we thank you in advance for the answers you will provide for each request. With thanksgiving for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, our suffering servant who heals us, in whose name we pray—Amen.