

## Today's Quick Word 2 Corinthians 3:4-5

*By Bruce Christian*

**2 CORINTHIANS 3:4-5** Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy. . . . Again, if the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle.

I can really relate to what Paul is writing here! One of the problems I have always struggled with in terms of my inherited DNA is my debilitating lack of self-confidence. Everything I do in the Lord's work (including writing these TQWs!) is quite stressful for me. (The Lord who organised my DNA in the first place [Psalm 139:13], and who called me to serve him in ministry, obviously knew all this, so he provided me with a loving wife who is a great supporter and encourager - for which I am extremely grateful.) For this reason I can readily identify with Paul's "Not that we are competent in ourselves . . . but our competence comes from God". It makes me feel better that even Moses had the same trouble, although he did have to weather

the LORD's words of rebuke: "Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the LORD? Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say." (Exodus 4:11-12). Gut-wrenching as it might be to have to live constantly with the 'butterflies' flying around inside, I have to learn to trust the God who always keeps his promises! Nevertheless, the thing that I really have to take note of as I read today's verses is what Paul says in the lead up to his admission of lack of competence: "Such confidence as this is ours THROUGH CHRIST BEFORE GOD"! I must learn to take God at his word and put all my confidence in Christ (and to keep reminding the butterflies that this is what I am doing!). As Paul wrote to the Christians at Philippi: "I can do everything through him who gives me strength." (Philippians 4:13).



### Today's Quick Word Luke 16:25-26

*By Bruce Christian*

**LUKE 16:25-26** “But Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.’” - Jesus

During the last 2,000 years, many professing Christians (and whole churches) have tried hard to avoid or explain away the Bible's very confronting teaching on the reality of hell, and the fact that we only have our time in this life to take hold of God's gracious provision of a way of escape from it through faith in Jesus alone. However, Jesus' Parable of 'The Rich Man and Lazarus' recorded in Luke 16 does not allow us to find

'comfort' in such attempts! The mediaeval church's invention of the concept of 'Purgatory' is one such attempt, as are the modern fantasies of 'universalism' (hell is empty) and 'nihilism' (unbelievers cease to exist at death). If Jesus is to be believed at all, we cannot ignore or escape the point he is making in this parable. Reflecting on all this should cause us to do two things: to run for refuge in the 'Rock of Ages' (if we haven't already done so) so as to escape this torment ourselves while there is yet time before we are run over by the proverbial bus; and to take every opportunity, while there is yet time, to warn others about what awaits all who persist in refusing to avail themselves of God's gracious provision of salvation through faith in Christ alone.

## Today's Quick Word 2 Corinthians 9:2

*By Bruce Christian*

**2 CORINTHIANS 9:2** For I know your eagerness to help, and I have been boasting about it to the Macedonians, telling them that since last year you in Achaia were ready to give; and your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to action.

Interestingly, as I watch the evening news these days, I find that the US Presidential election contest has been trumped by the continuing spread of the coronavirus around the globe! It is having such a devastating effect on people's personal health and well-being, on tourism and global economies, and on important travel plans of families (eg for weddings, funerals and other significant, non-postponable events), that we are being constantly warned to take special precautions because it is so contagious. At our church last Sunday we were all asked to forego our regular habits of greeting each other with hugs and kisses, and there were bottles of germ-fighting handwash at strategic locations throughout the complex. I don't think my hands have been so spotlessly clean for years! With all this in

mind, as I read through 2 Corinthians 9 as part of my M'Cheyne Bible Reading program, I was struck, and challenged, by what Paul says about how 'contagious' enthusiastic godly living and example can be. Even without social media, the believers in Macedonia were 'stirred into action' by the obvious enthusiasm of their Christian brothers and sisters to their south in Achaia. I had to ask myself, "How enthusiastic do I get about expressing my love for the Lord Jesus Christ, God's inexpressible gift to me (15), and how clearly is this conveyed to others around me at church, in professional and social engagements, and among my friends and neighbours?" "Are others likely to 'catch it' from me?" Or "Am I guilty of practising protective self-isolation for fear that I might 'infect' others with God's Good News?" I must admit that my DNA bends me in the 'self-isolation' direction, so today's verse challenges me to seek God's help to modify my DNA and become a bit more 'demonstrably enthusiastic' about the Gospel.