



Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 5, 2010

Father Robert E Lucas, Pastor; Subdeacon Daniel J. Korba and Nikitas Tsokris, Cantors Rectory 215-862-9227; Parish Center 732-780-3158

We Are A Stewardship Parish Of Time, Talent and Treasure

The mission of our parish faith community is to teach the Gospel message in the rich tradition of the Orthodox Church; to enable people to reflect the image of Jesus Christ in every day activities of life; to offer spiritual formation through changing times; and to celebrate community among Orthodox believers in our Freehold area.

We of St. Paul the Apostle Parish dedicate ourselves to maintaining the sanctity of worship and spiritual enlightenment in a family environment that reaches and involves all ages and unifies all people.

We believe in the spirit of ecumenism in which we share our faith by word and example and extend our spiritual insights to all people.

We accept the responsibility of Christian Stewardship that through generous giving we may all experience a faith communion with Christ as the Center of our lives.

We dedicate ourselves to insuring the well-being of all people so that we may truly experience the message of Christ's salutary gospel.

We are a beacon on a hill with the eyes of many upon us; that beacon is the inspired Light of Christ which must shine brightly in our lives.

It is not ourselves we preach but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts, that we in turn might make known the glory of God shining on the face of Christ. This treasure we possess in earthen vessels to make it clear that its surpassing power comes from God and not from us. We are afflicted in every way possible, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in us 2 Corinthians 4: 5 - 8.

GLAD TIDINGS

+++ Wednesday is the most solemn feast of the Nativity of the Birthgiver of God. In anticipation, the vesperal Divine Liturgy will be celebrated Tuesday evening at 7: 30 PM. Please come and join us in prayer and praise.

+++ We remind our faithful that at the last Diocesan Council this past summer, the Diocesan Dues were raised, due to inflation and need, from the past \$50.00 per adult individual, eighteen years and older, to \$60.00 per year. Our envelope offering system still has the old amount on it, so please disregard that figure

and make your offering according to the new mandated amount. If this offering was made in the old amount, please correct it by submitting the additional amount with a notation on the envelope because the parish must send the entire amount to the diocesan chancery.

+++ We express our gratitude to all the good souls who contributed to making this past week's Pirohi Sale a success. We pray the gracious Lord continues to bless with good health all who invested time and energy in the sale for Many and Blessed Years.

+++ The sign-up sheet for both the Web Site and Bulletin sponsors is on the bulletin board in the kitchen. Please sign up as soon as possible. Do NOT make payment until your sign-up month has arrived. This will make it easier for Father to keep track of payments. Thanks in advance to all who support the parish in this way.

+++ We offer thanks to the Blessed Trinity for inspiring generosity in the souls of our faithful and the blessing of abundant grace in our midst with the offering received this past week-end: Tithe Offering, \$589.00; Candles, \$43.00; Food Coupons, \$340.00; Holyday, \$78.00; Christian Fellowship, \$10.00, for a total of \$1060.00. We express our profound gratitude to the parishioner communicants who offered their God-given treasure for the sake of the Lord and the good of our parish. God bless and reward you good and faithful souls! The attendance was 41 adults and 13 children last Sunday.

+++ As faithful believers, we intercede and associate ourselves in prayer with the following who have prayed and offered seven day lights for their intentions: Subdeacon Daniel J. & Marilyn Korba Family, Father Lucas, Pani Lucas, Louis Pasquino, +Paul Szmaida, Debra Szmaida, George Idromenos, Kent Pasquino, Kyle Pasquino, and Pani Buletza.

+++ We make a PENNIES FROM HEAVEN Canister available for our faithful to bring in pennies for our altar and its appointments. We are already in receipt of \$1576.00 from this apostolate. Even your pennies can help and are a blessing to our parish.

+++ For the expansion of our much needed parochial facilities, our parish pledge support to date totals \$104,815.00. As we thank the Lord for inspiring generosity in the hearts of our faithful, we also thank the donors for accepting the challenge of the Lord in building up His Body. We cordially invite and look forward to receiving additional and increased pledges from all our devoted parishioners.

+++ Please be certain to see Helen Karpiak or a member of the Parish Council if you would like to help our parish by using Shop Rite Food Coupons available in \$20.00 denominations. We invite ALL to be caring and supportive and use Grocery Coupons for food shopping as we have gratefully realized \$5100.00 on this project to date!

+++ We remind our faithful only those who are present for the entire Divine Liturgy should come forward to receive Communion. The entire Liturgy means "Amen" to "Amen."

+++ May all glory, adoration and worship be accorded our God in the Holy Trinity by all the faithful of our parish with one mind, one soul and one heart each day of the week!

LORD



TEACH
US

Persecution of Jesus

Though I am mocked and cursed and shamed for your sake. Even my own brothers pretend they do not know me! My zeal for God and his work burns hot within me. And because I advocate your cause, your enemies insult me even as they insult you. Their contempt has broken my heart; my spirit is heavy within me. If even one would show some pity, if even one would comfort me! For food they give me poison; for my awful thirst they offered me vinegar. For they persecute the one you have smitten and scoff at the pain of the one you have pierced Psalms 69: 7- 9, 20, 21; 1: 21.

I am a symbol of failure to all mankind; when they see me they shake their heads Psalms 109: 25.

The Lord, the Redeemer and Holy One of Israel says to the one who is despised, rejected by mankind and kept beneath the heel of earthly rulers: Kings shall stand at attention when you pass by, princes shall bow low because the Lord has chosen you; he, the faithful Lord, the Holy One of Israel, chooses you Isaiah 49: 7.

They shall see my Servant beaten and bloodied, so disfigured one would scarcely know it was a person standing there Isaiah 52: 14.

With a rod they shall strike the Judge of Israel on the face Micah 5: 1.

After they were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up and flee to Egypt with the baby and his mother," the angel said, "and stay there until I tell you to return for King Herod is going to try to kill the child" Matthew 2: 13.

Then the Pharisees called a meeting to plot Jesus' death. But when the Pharisees heard about the miracle, they said, "He can cast out demons because he is satan, king of the devils" Matthew 12: 14; Mark 3: 32.

The Pretender

Hence, declare your sins to one another and pray for one another that you may find healing
James 5: 16.

When a night club waitress in Ohio asked to see a customer's driver's license, she was shocked when she saw the photo on the ID. It was that of a fellow worker! That waitress had lost her driver's license about a month earlier and this young woman was using it so she would have "proof" she was old enough to drink alcohol. The police were called, and the customer was arrested for identity theft. Trying to gain what she wanted, she pretended to be someone she wasn't, although there was a striking resemblance.

Jacob in the Old Testament did some pretending too. With his mother Rebekah's help, he fooled his dying father into believing he was his brother Esau so he could gain the blessing meant for the older son as we read in the 27th chapter of the first book of the Bible, Genesis. Jacob did get caught after his deceitful act, but it was too late for Esau to receive the coveted blessing.

Pretending does go on in many churches today. Some people put on a false front. They use either right "Christian" words, attend church and even pray before meals. They pretend they have it all together in order to gain the approval of others. But inside they struggle with brokenness, guilt, doubt or an addiction or other persistent sin.

Our heavenly Father in his divine wisdom has placed us in a parish church, in a body of believers, under the guidance of a parish priest, a concerned spiritual father, to support one another in our pilgrimage towards heaven. There we can admit our imperfections through the sacramental Mystery of Reconciliation, there we can seek the counsel of a well-intentioned godly brother or sister in Christ, there our spiritual welfare is being guarded and guided.

Believers in Christ do not desire to hide behind sins and shortcomings and attempt to cover up failure in our challenging lives, pretending there is nothing wrong. Instead, we are grateful for the opportunity to find forgiveness and corrective strengthening grace by confessing sin and repenting. Then our God will fill our heart and soul with joyful song.

Colored Thinking

If there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things
Philippians 4: 8.

A farmer relates for us an incident regarding his two-year-old son who accompanied him to the barn one day as he did some chores.

"Dad," asked the son, "what white cat is that?"

"White cat?" he thought to himself, "we don't have any white cat." When the farmer asked the son what he said, he repeated the question, "What white cat is that?"

Then he looked and saw the cat the boy was speaking of. It was the family orange cat. And the farmer for the first time noticed the beautiful line of white on the cat's even though he always noticed the orange fur and formed his opinion about the predominant color the cat was.

Often we see the "orange" in life, or even in each other instead of the "white." When it rains for a while, people grumble about rain. When the sun shines and it is warm, people grumble and wish it would cool off. When snow flies, they wish the wind would just calm down or even better, that summer would hurry up and arrive.

Grumble, grumble, grumble! What must our heavenly Father think? Instead of forming opinions on the negative side of life, we should focus on the blessings provided by our Creator. Let's look at the "white" of life instead of the "orange." It will serve us better both spiritually and physically. Those who can see the "white" can be a great encouragement to others.

Follow the example of the two-year-old son and focus on the "white" part of life. Look at the glass of water and see it half full instead of half empty!

Be careful the way you think because you are inevitably becoming what you think! You are being formed by your thoughts!

Dispelling Lies With Charity

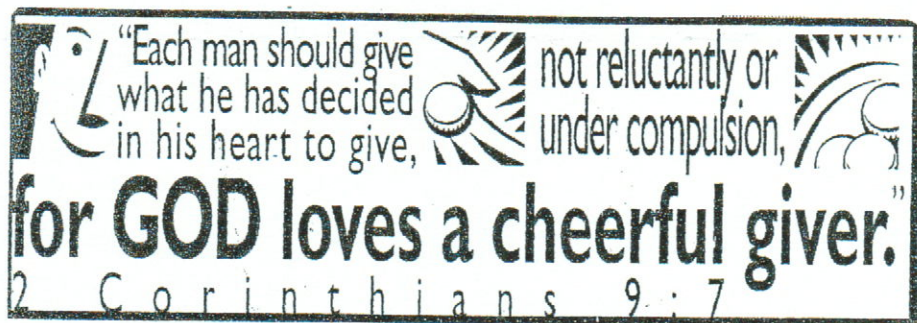
The believer readily observes that wherever the culture of death is present and entrenched, the truth is being obscured. One of the false premises of the Supreme Court decision, *Roe vs. Wade*, considers, for instance the fallacious premise on which the ruling rests: "We need not resolve the difficult question of when life begins. When those trained in the respective disciplines of medicine, philosophy and theology are unable to arrive at any conclusions or consensus, the judiciary, at his point in the development of man's knowledge, is not in a position to speculate as to the answer."

Of course, it is a matter of scientific fact that the developing embryo or fetus is a living, growing human being – neither a "blob of tissue" nor a rhinoceros. Yet, because the unborn child remains so hidden, it is easy to pretend otherwise. In recent years, as ultra sound technology has improved and become more widely available, more and more people have come to realize that "seeing is believing." Mothers and fathers alike gaze in wonder as the miracle of life is made visible with the assistance of sound waves and the child's humanity becomes impossible to deny.

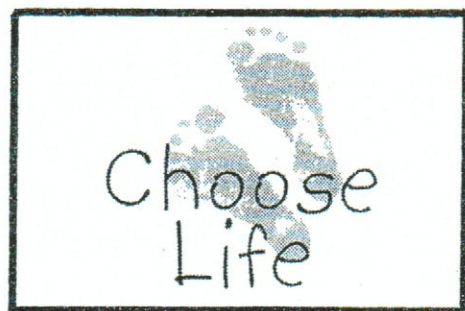
Consider also the outright lie that abortion is "safe" and that its availability is essential to the health of women. In addition to health complications and maternal death, associated with abortion, innumerable women and men have suffered psychological and emotional wounds as well. This is a reality that abortion proponents would like us to forget.

Then, of course, there is the mantra of "freedom of choice," which conveniently omits the object of the heinous choice being defended. While seeming to affirm an essential human value, the brand of "freedom" that is promoted alongside abortion is false, since it has no relation to truth and treats all choices as equal. The irony is that the frightened young woman who feels she is trapped thinks little of the cult of "choice" since she sees no other option than abortion. Authentic freedom, on the other hand, always affirms life; it is measured by the content, not the simple availability of choice.

The heart of the culture of death is a web of lies and deceit; the heart of building the culture of life, therefore, must be the practice of charity in truth. This is evident in the constant work of the revelation of God to us about life in the heart of the Church. The Church offers hope and help to those suffering to find healing through its charitable works. We must continue to give more help to maternity homes to provide loving environments for women in difficult situations, thus laboring to counter the darkness and despair of the culture of death with the light of Christ's love.



**...THERE IS NO LACK OF SIN
IN TODAY'S WORLD.**



*You can complain because roses have thorns,
or you can rejoice because thorns have roses.*

Loving The Eucharist

Many who consider themselves faithful believers show an attitude that is not proportionate to the gift and mystery of the Eucharist. The Eucharist is the very oblation of the Body and Blood of the Lord. It is not merely a reminder that Christ offers his Body and Blood for our sake; rather, it *is* that offering. Jesus himself instituted the Eucharist to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross and make its grace available to us. In receiving the Body and Blood during the Divine Liturgy, we enter the timeless dimension and are present in mystery and grace at the Mystical Supper. The Eucharist, the heart of the life of the Body of Christ, is the banquet and living memorial of Christ. When we worthily partake of the Eucharist, we participate even now in the very life of God.

Gathered with his Apostles, Jesus entrusted the Eucharist to the Church at the Mystical Supper. At each Divine Liturgy, the priestly celebrant repeats the words by which the Lord instituted the Eucharist: "Take and eat, all of you; this is my Body which is given for you....Take and drink of it, all of you. This is the cup of my Blood, of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all that sin may be forgiven. Do this in memory of me"

We hear this words so frequently, but do we grasp their significance?

Since the Eucharist represents, or makes present again the death and Resurrection of Christ, encompasses the entire essential spiritual wealth of the Church. It brings us into union or communion with the Blessed Trinity and with one another, with all believers. It puts us in touch with the unending, eternal liturgy of heaven, that utterly joyous and eternal worship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit for which we were made and for which our hearts long.

The more we think about it, the longer we meditate upon what the Eucharist actually is, the less optional it becomes for the serious and sincere believer. The very names used to describe the Eucharist witness its centrality and vitality. The very word *Eucharist* refers to the thanksgiving we owe God. The description, "Divine Liturgy" speaks to our mission not only to share the grace of this Mystery but to be enlivened by its richness as together with other believers we glorify our God in the Trinity. God's revelation to us in Scripture refers to the Eucharist as "Breaking of Bread" literally sharing in the Body of the Lord as nourishment and sustenance, that makes us one. Holy Communion tells us that the Eucharist unites us to

the Blessed Trinity and to one another in the Body and Bride of Christ here on earth, to continue for all eternity. It means sharing company with the bodiless powers of heaven and with all the glorified saints.

Not only is the Eucharist the very heart of the priesthood of Christ, but the lifeblood of believers. Only validly ordained and commissioned priests may confect and celebrate the Eucharist.

The Eucharist was prefigured in the Passover. When Jesus gathered with disciples in the Upper Room, they celebrated a Passover meal that commemorated the deliverance of the people of Israel from the slavery of Egypt to the freedom of the Promised Land. This deliverance foreshadowed the great deliverance we experience in the Eucharist from the slavery of sin to the freedom of a new life of grace Christ wins for us.

Each time the Eucharist is celebrated, the sacrifice of the Cross, the Mystical Supper and the joy of the Resurrection is made present. We are spiritually and mystically removed in time to witness and participate in these salutary events. While the sacrifice of the Cross occurred in a bloody manner, the Eucharist is offered in a bloodless manner through the signs of bread and wine made known to us by the Author of our salvation.

Jesus makes his sacrifice of love available to us so we can, together with him, in union with him, offer our lives, our joys, our sorrows and our daily activity in union with to the eternal Father, as an acceptable and worthy sacrifice of praise. It is the most perfect prayer we can offer for our loved ones, both living and departed.

We can better understand our need for the Eucharist by focusing on how Christ is present in a true, real, substantial, encompassing way with his Body and Blood, his soul and divinity. Indeed the Church shows us our proper human dignity that our Creator God makes known to us our need to be enlivened and nourished on the very Body and Blood of our Creator God. This leads us to the respect and reverence we owe the Eucharist enshrined and enthroned in our parish church in the tabernacle on the altar table.

Given the compelling beauty and enduring centrality of this sublime gift of Christ's Body and Blood, our blessed mother, the Church, the Body and Bride of Christ, rightly obliges us to participate in the august celebration of the Divine Liturgy without which we have no life. Just as our physical bodies need continuing physical nourishing, the soul of man is in need of similar heavenly food. If we are aware of any serious sins committed, we avail ourselves of the sacramental Mystery of Reconciliation to be freed of them that worthily we approach the Lord to identify with and become like him.

Did You Know That ...

...love has uncounted miracles in store for us if we become one with it?

...we should do to others what you would have others do to you?

...if we ask the animals of the land, the birds of the air and fish of the sea; they will tell you, 'Let God teach you'?

...a fire rises at the bottom, becoming a burning bush, reminding us we are on holy ground?

...communicants of the Church are bound together into one sacred community of faith?

...we live to be a blessing to others?

...we are put on earth as little beams of light that we might learn to bear beams of love?

...a myriad of faith experiences weave the authentic fabric of our lives celebrating wonderment, joy and exaltation?

...hope can and will come from the least expected quarters, whether in the secret corners of our own hearts, or those of others?

...compassion seems to be powerful element in the soul?

...we live and work to bring all people into union with our heavenly Father and with one another?

...when caught in the grip of fear, like St. Joseph, we come to rely on the Presence that says 'Do not be afraid'?

...as we celebrate the gift of life, may we all have quiet moments to listen to the voice of our heavenly Father?

...often should we recall the people, places and things that have touched our life and give thanks for them?

...we should often feel grateful for the special friends we have?

...all creation shouts for joy as we celebrate the goodness of soul in people around us?

Nativity of the Birthgiver of God

Believers in Christ hold sacred everything associated with the earthly life of our blessed Saviour. The land where He lived is called the Holy Land. The water of the Jordan in which He was baptized is still considered sanctified and baptized persons visiting there jump into its slow moving waters. We respect and love every foot of ground upon which the feet of the Lord walked. The cave in which He was born in the flesh, the shores of Galilee, the town of Naim, the city of Capernaum, Jacob's well in Samaria, the road to Emmaus, the pool at Bethsaida, the road to Jericho, the mount of Transfiguration, the Garden of Gethsemane, the very mention of all these places brings a new glow of gladness to the heart and soul of followers of the Lord.

What shall we say of the cross upon which He died? How sacred we hold the wood which bore the Lord in death! And what of the borrowed tomb in which He was buried, the spot from which He rose in triumph?

Thinking about these places brings a glow of joy to the soul, permitting the grace of the Holy Spirit to generate new life in us! If this is so concerning such material things as wood, roads, cities, gardens, water and the like, what about the Mother who gave human birth to Jesus our Saviour, who shared our flesh with the Son of God? What about the woman who journeyed to Bethlehem bearing this heavenly child? What about her who hurried to Egypt, hiding the eternal prize? She cared for the infant Son of God, nurtured him, brought him into manhood and was the first to adore and kiss him at birth and the last as He was placed in the tomb.

Should we not honor the Mother of our Lord? No wonder, then, that our blessed Church honors and reveres this Birthgiver of God whom in theological Greek we address as *Theotokos*. It is only good common sense. Today we celebrate the very first feast, the first holyday of the new liturgical year which began September 1. It is the time of her earthly Nativity and in reality the continuing beginning of our salvation in Christ.

The story of the Nativity of the Mother of God comes to us from the ancient tradition of the Church in which we learn her parents' names were Joachim and Anna, descendants of the royal and priestly families in Israel.

Their lives were without reproach and they practiced what they preached, giving public witness to their love of God and neighbor. It is said they divided their income into three parts: one they offered to God; the other to the poor and the final portion, they used for their own sustenance. Theirs was a happy and peaceful marriage for some fifty years, but there was a dark cloud under whose shadow they lived, day by day. They were childless and often prayed in sorrow, especially when their friends and neighbors talked about them derisively.

Among God's people of the Old Covenant, it was considered somewhat of a shame not to have a family. This was so because all were expecting the promised Saviour to be born and every new-born male child brought particularly joyful anticipation that he in fact might be the anointed one of God.

Joachim was accustomed to journey on great feast days to the temple in Jerusalem for worship. He went there to bring an offering to the Lord, but the high priest would not accept his offering telling him, "The Lord has taken away his blessing from you because of your sins." Other people in the temple pointed fingers at him because he had no children. The people could not understand outer appearances may be deceiving. God had another purpose for this couple. Sadly and dejectedly, Joachim went into the desert to pray some forty days that the Lord would respond to their prayers and have mercy on their marriage and exalt it with a child.

He poured out to our heavenly Father all his sadness, his dejection and the pain in his heart and soul. He implored God to bless them and take away their stigma and reproach. Anna was at home when she finally found out what happened to her husband. A profound sorrow overwhelmed her, but she did not become frustrated. Instead she prayed as she looked upon the birds of the air: "O Lord, happy is all your creation, even the birds have their young, but look upon me and listen to my prayer."

Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared to her and told her she would bear a child through whom the entire world would be blessed. She would be named Mary.

WISDOM! BE ATTENTIVE

Your Nativity, O Virgin Mother of God heralded joy to the universe; for from you arose the Sun of Justice, Christ our God. He took away the curse, He gave us ever-lasting life. Troparion, Feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God.

Through your holy nativity, O immaculate One, Joachim and Anna were freed from the reproach of childlessness, and Adam and Eve, from the corruption of death. Delivered from the guilt of sin, your people celebrate this when they cry out to you: "She who is barren gives birth to the Mother of God and the Sustainer of our life!" Kontakion, Feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God.

My soul extols the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour. Prokimenon, Feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God.

Mothers cannot be virgins, nor virgins mothers; but in you, O Mother of God, both virginity and motherhood were present. Therefore, all the people of the earth unceasingly extol you. Hirmos, Feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God.

O Virgin, today you were born a most noble child from the two just ones, Joachim and Anna, as the angel had promised in his announcement. To God you are a heaven, a throne, and a vase of holiness; to the whole world, a herald of joy, the cause of our life, the blessing that wiped out the curse. You are the reason for all the blessings of God. O Maiden whom God has chosen, on this day of your nativity obtain peace and great mercy for our souls. Vesper Hymn, Feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God.

Indeed, some famous women have given birth by the will of God. But the nativity of Mary surpasses all births in honor and splendor, as it is worthy of the majesty of God, for she was born in a miraculous way of a barren mother and she herself gave birth in the flesh to the God of all, incarnate in her womb without human seed. She alone is the door through which the only-begotten Son of God has passed while leaving it sealed, as he had planned in His eternal wisdom. Thus did He bring salvation to all mankind. Vesper Hymn, Feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God.

THE "REAL" MOSES

When we think about Moses, one of the most important men of the Old Testament, most of us probably conjure up the image in our minds of the "Hollywood" version of this revered saint played by Charlton Heston in the epic film, "The Ten Commandments." This Moses is a strong, powerful character, fearlessly standing up to Pharaoh as he attempted to free the Israelites from their lengthy period of captivity at the hands of the Egyptians. In this movie classic, Moses is also shown as a decisive leader, directing their 40 years of wandering in the wilderness in search of the Promised Land with courage and conviction, doing things "HIS WAY."

This, however, is hardly the Moses that we read about in the Scriptures. By his own admission, he lacked the charisma that one associates with someone given the daunting responsibilities with which God entrusted him. When Moses tried to convince God that he couldn't even speak well enough to get His message across, God counters by telling him his brother Aaron would be his "mouthpiece!" In the Book of Numbers, we are given this description of him: "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men who were upon the face of the earth." That's hardly a ringing endorsement of the man, is it? But from the time of his first encounter with God in the Burning Bush, Moses realized what we ALL must realize: it is only through God's divine help that we can accomplish anything. He was God's instrument, willing to allow God to work through him. If the people were to be fed and given water, Moses turned to God. If there was an enemy to fight, Moses raised his hands to heaven for assistance. If there was a dispute to settle among his followers, Moses placed it in God's hands.

Of all the wonderful things we can say about Moses and the impact he had on the nation of Israel, the best thing we can say is that he was always a faithful servant of the Lord. May the same be said of all of us one day!