

<sup>6</sup> *The voice said, “Cry out!” And he said, “What shall I cry?” “All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. <sup>7</sup> The grass withers, the flower fades, because the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. <sup>8</sup> The grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of our God stands forever.”*

Text: Isaiah 40:6-8 A 11-10-24 1 Peter 1:22-25 Matthew 7:24-27 Psalm 1 Resp. Ps.: 119:24ff.  
Hymns: 285, 775, 294, 283

## THE WORD OF OUR GOD STANDS FOREVER

Dear fellow believers in Christ,

It is said, “You can never go back.” We may go back to see the house we grew up in. But if we haven’t seen it in many years, it will probably look smaller. Maybe the whole block will look smaller. Probably none of the friends we grew up with will still live in the neighborhood. Things won’t be what they used to be. Wouldn’t it be nice if there were something we could depend on to never change, to always be the same? Actually, there is.

We’re told, “*The voice said, “Cry out!”*” (literally from the original, “*The voice kept saying, ‘Cry out!’*”). God wants us to keep what He’s telling us in our hearts and minds. God says, “*All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, because the breath of the LORD blows upon it.*” Right now we’re in the first part of November. It has rained some lately, and the grass is still green. Most of the flowers are done blooming, but we can still see a few. It’s really pleasing to see the green grass and the pretty flowers. But we know that in a few weeks the grass will be brown and we won’t see any more flowers till spring. We love the green grass and pretty flowers, but we know they don’t last.

We’re told, “*Surely the people are grass.*” We live a lot longer than grass and flowers. Babies are cute. Young people in their prime are blessed. As we get older our bodies don’t work as well as they used to. Sooner or later our bodies don’t work at all, and our life is over. Human history has been summarized in these words: “A man is born, he lives, and he dies.” People do all kinds of things to live longer, but it doesn’t change the fact that we die.

King Tut was buried with loads of treasure for the afterlife. But he’s dead, and all his treasure is in museums. A woman was buried in her expensive Mercedes, apparently to drive in the afterlife. But she’s dead, and her Mercedes is a pile of rust. A man who spent lots of money on his hobby said, “He who dies with the most toys wins.” But he’s dead now, and all of his “toys” belong to other people.

The Bible says, “*Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned*” (Ro. 5:12). Adam and Eve became sinful. We all come from Adam and Eve. Therefore we’re all sinful. Because our bodies aren’t perfect, but sinful, we all die. We don’t just die physically. Because of our sins we face eternal death in hell.

People try different things to escape the reality of hell. They come up with all kinds of religions that boil down to earning God's favor and being good enough to get into heaven. But how are they ever going to know for certain that they've been good enough to make up for all of their sins and make it to heaven?

God says, "*All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*" (Ro. 3:23). God says that no matter how hard we try to be good, we can't be good enough to make up for our sins and deserve to go to heaven. God says, "*The wages of sin is death*" (Ro. 6:23). The irony is that instead of earning our way into heaven by our good works, the only thing we've 'earned' is eternal death in hell because of our sins.

The Bible says, "*God sent forth His Son, ... born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law*" (Gal. 4:4). Jesus lived a perfect life in our place. Jesus suffered and died on the cross for our sins in our place. By His perfect life and innocent death, Jesus earned heaven for us. "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved*" – Acts 16:31. By faith in Jesus, our sins are forgiven, and we're saved.

Jesus says, "*I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die*" (Jn. 11:25-26). Jesus died for our sins and rose again. Because of Jesus, we don't have to be afraid of death. By faith in Jesus, our death is just the passageway from life here on earth to eternal life with Jesus in heaven. Jesus promises us, "*Because I live, you will live also.*" (Jn. 14:19)

How do we know this is true? We know it's true because God says in His Word that it's true. Jesus prayed to His Father for us, "*Sanctify them by Your truth. Your Word is truth*" (Jn. 17:17). God's Word tells us the way to heaven by faith in Jesus. And God's Word tells us the way He wants us to live while we're here on earth.

So many things change in life. We keep getting older. Friends, family, and loved ones keep getting older. Society's views on right and wrong and truth keep changing. The place where we grew up has changed – it's not the same, or it's not just how we remember it, or maybe it isn't even there anymore. The world we grew up in isn't the same world we're living in now. People and things we thought we could rely on maybe aren't as reliable as we thought they were. Maybe some people and/or things in our life have changed a lot, and it has affected us and maybe hurt us very much.

"*The grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of our God stands forever.*" God's Word never changes. Our salvation by faith in Jesus never changes. What God says is right and good, and wrong and bad, never changes. Everything the Bible says is the truth, and never changes. The Bible says, "*God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should [change His mind]. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?*" (Nu. 23:19). We can place complete trust in everything the Bible says.

Sometimes our conscience and the devil accuse us and condemn us: “Why should God love you?” “Why should God forgive you?” We find the comfort and assurance we need in God’s never-changing Word. *“If our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart”* – 1 John 3:20. God assures us, *“I have loved you with an everlasting love”* – Jeremiah 31:3. *“Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us”* – Romans 8:33-34. *“Where sin abounded, grace abounded much more”* – Romans 5:20 (my emphasis). Romans 5:8 says, *“God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”* Each of us can say, “I confess that I am a sinner. Jesus died for sinners. Therefore Jesus died for me.” Hold onto God’s promises of forgiveness in His Word. Satan cannot stand before God’s Word. God’s Word calms our troubled conscience.

The unbelieving world opposes us and persecutes us for standing up for God and His Word. They want us to approve of their godlessness, and join them on the broad path leading to hell. We hold onto God’s Word that never changes, and He keeps us on the narrow path leading to heaven (Mt. 7:13-14). In Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness, He showed us what to do. Every time Satan tried to tempt Him, Jesus turned to God’s Word (Mt. 4:1-11). When the world tries to attack us, when the world tries to lead us astray, we turn to God’s Word. Jesus says, *“Whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”* (Mt. 7:24-27)

Wouldn’t it be nice if there were something we could depend on to never change, to always be the same? Actually, there is. **THE WORD OF OUR GOD STANDS FOREVER.**

O Word of God incarnate, O Wisdom from on high,  
 O Truth, unchanged, unchanging, O Light of our dark sky –  
 We praise Thee for the radiance That from the hallowed page,  
 A lantern to our footsteps, Shines on from age to age.

It floateth like a banner Before God's host unfurled;  
 It shineth like a beacon Above the darkling world;  
 It is the chart and compass That o'er life's surging sea,  
 Mid mists and rocks and quicksands, Still guides, O Christ, to Thee.

O make Thy Church, dear Savior, A lamp of burnished gold,  
 To bear before the nations Thy true light as of old.  
 O teach Thy wand'ring pilgrims By this, their path to trace,  
 Til, clouds and darkness ended, They see Thee face to face. Amen. (TLH #294:1, 3-4)