

## Bermudian Church of the Brethren

**WEDNESDAY'S WORD** – a midweek thought from Pastor Larry M. Dentler

to share a word of inspiration ... encouragement ... challenge ... a smile ... in the middle of your week

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## What Ever Happened To Grace?

We live in an angry time. In the world of politics ... I've never experienced the venom & poison being tossed around on a daily basis the way it is today and I was a teenager in the turbulent 60s!!! Even in the life of our beloved Church of the Brethren? Frankly there doesn't seem to be much grace there either as we wrestle with serious differences in theological understandings. Some feel a new Brethren division is imminent. Everybody seems angry and emotionally enraged! Forgiveness, one of the keystones of Jesus' teachings ... seems forgotten. Road rage. School shootings. Family violence. Social media vulgar rants. Name calling. Protests. Wild West gun fights on the streets of our cities. I have to admit ... I get weary of it all. And even in congregational life, where our grace & love for each other should always be mightily evident as our Christian witness to the world, sometimes ... too often ... I see the world's ways pushing in too much instead. And in my own life ... I'm afraid I find my own attitudes being too influenced by the world rather than Christ. Lord, forgive me. What ever happened to grace?

I invite you to join me today to repent of being overly influenced by the world and culture around us in the ways we treat others. And let us pray for the Lord's Holy Spirit to help us to be more gracious. To those we love ... and to those we disagree with ... and to those who may rub us the wrong way. Grace doesn't imply that we agree with someone, or approve of misbehavior ... it simply implies grace. As Christ showed grace to us even and especially when we weren't very lovable! Grace!

Recently I had to correct one of my grandchildren. I got pretty firm. I raised my voice. One reaction may have been for the child to be angry with me. To avoid me. Instead the child came later to be held and cuddled. Their way of saying they were sorry. I might have remained angry. I might have acted distant from the child to get my point across. The Lord helped me show grace ... we cuddled. And talked calmly about the problem. Grace!

Thomas Toke Lynch was an English Congregationalist pastor in the 1800s. He wasn't very healthy. He never became a well known minister. In fact he faced some pretty strong criticism. He never pastored large churches. But he wrote a little collection of hymns called, "*The Rivulet*." He explained the name of his song book, "*Christian poetry is indeed a river of the water of life, and my rivulet brings its contribution*." One of those "contributions" is a hymn that isn't widely known but that I think is a wonderful, wonderful prayer ... especially for this day when we all need to be a bit more people of grace.

*Gracious Spirit, dwell with me; I myself would gracious be; And with words that help and heal, Would Thy life in mine reveal; and with actions bold and meek, Would for Christ my savior speak.*

*Truthful Spirit, dwell with me; I myself would truthful be; And with wisdom kind and clear, Let Thy life in mine appear; And with actions brotherly, Speak my Lord's sincerity.*

*Mighty Spirit, dwell with me; I myself would mighty be; Mighty so as to prevail, Where unaided man must fail; Ever by a mighty hope, Pressing on and bearing up.*

*Holy Spirit, dwell with me; I myself would holy be; Separate from sin I would, Choose and cherish all things good; And whatever I can be, Give to him who gave me Thee.*

Public domain. Words by Thomas T. Lynch (1818-71); music by Richard Redhead (1810-1901).

Dear friends, that's a pretty good prayer for this time in which we live. Will you pray it (sing it) with me? With apologies to Jill Jackson-Miller & Sy Miller for borrowing part of their famous lyric, "Let there be **grace** on earth, and let it begin with me!"

**"Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone."** Colossians 4:6 NLT

Grace to you dear friends in Christ! Pastor Larry <><