

Lumpy Luther and the Iron Furnace

Imagine a clump of iron ore, Lumpy Luther, resting inside the earth on a mountain slope in the Shenandoah Valley. Then one day, he hears voices followed by hammering above. It's not long until, for the first time, he sees the sunshine as the overburdening soil and vegetation are peeled away. Picks and shovels proceed to pry him loose from his peaceful bed and raise him from his slumber. He is none too happy about this rude disturbance.

Luther is loaded with other lumps onto a wagon and carted down the mountainside. Eventually, the horses whoa beside a massive stone pyramid that is belching smoke and sparks. Luther can feel the heat radiating from it, and, as the day goes by, he is moved closer and closer to the furnace's open top. He watches as bushels of charcoal are dumped into the yawning mouth of the hungry beast.

Then it's his turn. A sweat-drenched man shovels Luther and his friends from the wagon and heaves them into the fire. He can't believe the pain. With temperatures exceeding 3,000 degrees, he's overwhelmed with fear and anger. His hot wrath rages against those who ruthlessly dug him up, the horses who pulled his wagon, and the laborer who pitched him into this inferno.

But then, in the midst of the flames, Luther notices something. The impurities that had always clung so tightly to him were melting away. He suddenly feels stronger and purer than ever before. He senses a freedom from pride and worldly values that had cemented him to his useless existence deep in the earth for so long. He realizes that the fire is liberating him from his hindrances.

Just then, a door of escape opens, and he flows out into a trench where he begins to cool and regain a solid shape. Luther is lumpy no longer. After lying there a while, some workers lift and load him onto another wagon for an even longer ride to the riverbank, where he is transferred to a ferryboat for a smooth float. Next comes a train ride to Richmond through beautiful countryside he's never seen before. Eventually, he is reheated and fashioned into a plow that finds its way back to the Shenandoah Valley, where he helps a farmer feed his young family.



As he slices through the spring soil, cutting a furrow for seeds, he realizes that his hardships were for his good and everyone else's benefit. Instead of a useless lump, Luther is now a valuable tool that can produce much good for many.

Hebrews 12 reminds us that God disciplines those He loves. When we go through fiery trials, it means that He sees something valuable in us, and He melts away those characteristics and qualities that keep us from becoming all He desires. May we not become bitter in our furnaces but allow God to purify us, and, like Luther, to remove our lumps and bring out our best qualities, making us stronger and more useful.

George Bowers – CBC Ex. Board

Weekly Prayer Point

“Why do you look for the living among the dead?” **Luke 24:5 (NIV).**

We begin this week with our glorious celebration of our Lord's Resurrection! Perhaps there were folks with your church for Easter worship who were new, or who do not attend regularly. Pray for these folks specifically that being with the church for Resurrection Sunday may make a significant impact and lead them to a new and deeper walk with Christ. Pray for your congregations, your Regions, and the CBC's efforts to win the lost to Jesus. It is our highest calling! The CBC Executive Board meets at our national office in Fairmont, WV, on Friday and Saturday for our Spring face-to-face meetings. Pray for the Holy Spirit to clearly guide these meetings.

Please pray for these congregations and pastors:

- Mill Creek in Tryon, NC and Pastor Andy Parker
- Ministerio Evangelica La Gloria de Jehova Cafarino Zarco Mosquera in Panama and Pastor Cafarino Zarco Mosquera
- Ministerio Evangelistico La Puerta Estrecha in Venezuela and Pastor Jairo Hernandez
- Ministerio Internacional Centro Cristiano in Venezuela and Pastors Angel & Carmen Franceschi

CBC Prayer Committee