

"For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?"

THE GOSPEL TRUMPETER
USPS #871620

Periodicals postage paid at the post office in Newark, Ohio 43055.

POSTMAN, send form 3579 to the printer:

THE GOSPEL TRUMPETER
675 N. Cedar Street
Newark, Ohio 43055

This periodical carries no subscription price; however, it is partially maintained through the gifts and offerings of its readers, with the balance of the expenses being paid by the local congregation.

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This monthly religious journal is published for the benefit of the Church of God universally. It is our supreme purpose to reach the world for Christ through the printed page. Our burden is to reveal the truth of God's Word to all mankind, to expose sin and error, war against apostasy, and to eradicate the longstanding traditions of men that have no biblical foundations.

Brother Roger L. Decker Editor
Workers Too Numerous to Mention

THE CHURCH OF GOD BELIEVES IN:

- A personal God (John 4:24)
- A divine Christ (John 1:1, 14)
- An infallibly inspired Bible (2 Tim. 3:16-17)
- Salvation from sin (Matt. 1:21)
- The new birth (John 3:3, 5-7)
- A holy life (Luke 1:73-75; Titus 2:12)
- Sanctification (1 Thess. 5:23)
- Unity of God's people (John 17:21, Eph. 4)
- Divine, physical healing (James 5:14-16)
- The ordinances (Matt. 28:19-20; John 13; 1 Cor. 11:23, 34)
- Eternal life (Matt. 25:46; Mark 9:43)
- The Trinity (1 John 5:7, 8)

**SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS
PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH**

- Jesus organized it (Matt. 16:18)
- On a good foundation (Eph. 2:20; 1 Cor. 3:11)
- Christ governs it (Eph. 1:22-23; Isa. 9:6)
- God admits members (1 Cor. 12:13-18)
- Sin puts you out of it (Rom. 11:22; Ex. 32:33)
- The saved only are members (John 15:2-6)
- Membership is offered to all (Rev. 22:17)
- Final rewards (Rev. 20:12-15; 21:3-4; 22:14)
- Bible name of the Church (Acts 20:28; Gal. 1:13; John 17:11)

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Website: www.godsacres.org

Vol. 36 February 2006 No. 2

Winter 2005 Camp Meeting Report

"Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causeth to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple."

Psalm 65:4

A GLORIOUS MEETING

What a joy and a blessing it was to be together again with God's people during the Winter camp meeting. We enjoyed the privilege of sitting in a godly atmosphere and feasting on the heavenly manna that came down from above. Our souls were fully satisfied as we fed on the goodness of God. Nothing can compare to dwelling in His courts with visiting saints, though it was only for a short time.

It is always difficult to try to explain all that our hearts have felt and our eyes have witnessed during this sweet time of refreshing. We could sum it up by saying it was glorious. I am sure that God is pleased when His people gather together for fellowship in times like these to escape from the world of trials and burdens for a short time. As saints, we need our spirits renewed, our hearts encouraged, our minds stirred, and our souls challenged. It is very necessary for each and every one to keep pressing the battle onward and upward toward the goal that awaits the faithful and true. Satan is diligently working to discourage and destroy the souls of mankind.

During the meeting, time after time, our hearts were blessed and our cups overflowed as the Lord moved in the services in miraculous ways. As the singers sang praises, many times the Spirit of God used the messages of the

songs to bring help, strength, and encouragement. What an inspiration and uplift it was to be in the presence of God as He permeated the atmosphere! The Winter camp meeting is past, yet the precious time that we spent together will be remembered for a long time to come. Whenever the Spirit of God moves into the midst, it is like the wind that blows. One cannot see it with the natural eye, but he or she certainly can see and feel the effects of His mighty power.

The Lord certainly prepared a bountiful table for His people during this meeting. The table that the Lord spreads always provides adequately for the needs of the people. He provides plenty of spiritual milk, sweet honey, and strong meat, which supplies nourishment for the needs of all mankind, regardless of what those needs may be. It is amazing how gloriously God provides for the needs of those who trust Him. He gives milk to the newborn babe so that he may grow in strength and become strong spiritually. He offers honey for sweet encouragement to those who are going through bitter persecutions and trials. He sends strong meat to satisfy the hungry soul of the mature Christian. God most graciously sends conviction to the lost souls who are groping in sin, seeking a better way to live.

In 1 Corinthians 1:21 the
[continued on page 13]



2 Peter 1:1 Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:

2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

2 Corinthians 1:18 But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay.

19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea.

20 For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

The Promises of God

Brother Roger L. Decker

God's Promises Are Sure

A *promise* is "a declaration assuring that one will or will not do something." The Apostle Paul said "the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen." In other words, they are all true and sure. The word *yea* means "in the affirmative," and the word *amen* means "it is, it shall be so, and so let it be." In a nation where there is so much uncertainty and unrest, one thing stands sure, and that is the Word of God. God's Word is true, and you can depend on it. His Word will not fail us.

We live in a world where many people lie: politicians quite often

make statements that they know are false. They promise to deliver certain things, yet they know that those things are not possible. Many lawyers tell lies, and so do many salesmen. Many people make promises that they know they cannot keep. Nevertheless, the promises of God are unfailing. You can stand on them; they are sure. The Word of God is a firm foundation. What makes the promises of God so sure? They are sure because of the One who made the promises. That is how you can know whether you can believe certain promises. Often when you get to know people, you can tell whether they are telling the

truth. God always tells the truth. The more you know God, the more you can trust Him. His Word has been proven true; He is faithful. The Old and the New Testament brethren had confidence in God. They believed what He said.

Dear one, you can stand on what God says. God's Word will not fail; it is sure. Moses, speaking to Israel in Deuteronomy 31:6, stated, "Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." Right in that one verse of Scripture are three promises. What are they? He will go with you,

He will not fail you, and He will not forsake you. God will back up every promise.

If you have recently started to serve God, you need to understand that you cannot serve Him in your own strength. You did not save yourself, and you cannot keep yourself. The Lord God Almighty who saved you can keep you. If there is any failing, forsaking, or wondering afar off, it will be on your part.

I want you to read the testimony of the Apostle Paul. You can read about his life in the Acts of the Apostles and in the epistles that he wrote. He was a man of faith, and he was in trouble most of the time, but God always came to his rescue. In 2 Timothy 4:14-17 Paul stated: "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words [or preaching]. At my first answer [or trial] no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." Paul said all men forsook him, but the Lord stood with him and strengthened him.

God Cannot Fail

I want to show you in the Old Testament that those brethren also put their confidence in God. They believed what God said, and they acted on it. Joshua 23:14 says, "And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof." What a testimony! Joshua was near the end of his life, and he was addressing the children of Israel. Notice that he said "not one thing hath failed of

all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof."

Solomon, when speaking to the congregation of Israel in 1 Kings 8:56, said, "Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant." Christian friend, you need to take heart and put your confidence in God. He will not fail you; He will not let you down.

David, speaking to his son Solomon in 1 Chronicles 28:20 stated, "Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed: for the LORD God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD." All these Old Testament brethren declared and stood on the same thing: there is no failure in God. Why? Because He is God. God is true, and He is faithful.

God cannot lie, and He cannot even be tempted to lie. Numbers 23:19 says, "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?"

Saint, you need to put your confidence in the Word of God. If you do your part, you can rest assured that God will do His part. Titus 1:1-2 reads: "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."

Another Scripture to support the thought that God cannot lie is found in Hebrews 6:17-20, which states: "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:

That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." Again, I say, it is impossible for God to lie, and He cannot even be tempted to do so. Did He not say it, and will He not do it? He is God Almighty.

Coming Face to Face With the Word

Now, there is something that many people do not like when they are confronted with God's Word: they hear the truth concerning themselves. Although people do not like that, God is not going to put sugar on them, so to speak, when they do not deserve sugar. Sometimes we will get a little vinegar. Dear one, when you are confronted with God's Word, you are not always going to like it. You are not always going to like what God has to say about you, but mark it down, what God says is true. God does not guess about things, and He does not have to listen to what someone else says before He knows the truth concerning a matter; He already knows.

In John, Chapter 4, you can read about the woman at the well. She was a Samaritan, and the Jews had nothing to do with the Samaritans. Verses 13-19 read: "Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

"Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The

woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said [you have told the truth], I have no husband: For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet." Jesus was more than a prophet.

Verses 28-29 tell us: "The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" Christ will tell you the truth about yourself, though you may not always like it.

James 1:22-25 reads: "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

When you come to Jesus Christ, He will tell you the truth about your condition, though it may hurt. Often it takes God to bring it out. Sometimes people do not want to own things, but God has ways of working to bring out the truth.

A Penetrating Sword

Hebrews 4:12-13 says: "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit [it gets right down between your natural man and your inner man], and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest [or made known] in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." You cannot escape the notice

of God.

God detects all insincerity, all unbelief, and all hypocrisy. All hearts are open before Him. You should be sincere; you should never attempt to deceive God. Do not try it, dear one. The Truth of God is all penetrating and all searching. The real thoughts and intents of the heart are brought to light before Him. If He sees within your heart insincerity and self-deception, then you have no hope of escape. Truth always has the power to bring out your true feelings and to show you exactly what you are. Whether the Word is preached, read, communicated by conversation, or even impressed upon the memory and conscience by the Holy Spirit, there is no escape from the penetrating, searching application of the Word of God.

You might have done things that no one else knows anything about, but God will not leave you alone. If what you did was a bad thing, you are going to feel bad. You may say, "Well, I don't like to feel bad." You might not like to feel bad, but you have to feel bad to feel good. God does not want you to go on in your present condition and become deceived. He wants you to feel bad so that you will do what you are supposed to do to feel good.

Truth has power to show what man is. The Hebrew writer let us know it is a penetrating sword that lays open the whole man. The writer also said the Word of God is *quick*, which simply means "living." It is not dead, inert, or powerless. The Word has a living power; it is energetic, active, powerful, and mighty. Its power will awaken the conscience and alarm your fears. It will lay bare the secret feelings of the heart. It causes a sinner to tremble with the apprehension of the coming judgments.

What God Has Promised, He can Perform

What else makes the promises of God so secure? God can do what-

ever He has promised. He has the power to carry it out. Some people make promises when they know they cannot carry them out, but that is not so with God. Every promise that God makes, He can carry out. What did Paul say in Ephesians 3:20? "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." Paul was saying that God is able not only to do what He promised but also to go beyond anything we can ask or think.

Let me illustrate. Sometimes when it seems that the enemy has you boxed in on every side, not knowing which way to turn, God will come in and deliver you, and then you can get through the situation without committing sin and with victory in your soul. What do you sometimes say? "I never even thought of that." God can do above what you can ask or think. God is not bound to work with what you can think of. No, God is far above that.

In 2 Timothy 1:12 the Apostle Paul said, "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." Now, here is where some problems lie. Sometimes people do not commit everything to Him; that is the reason they have constant struggles. He will keep that which you commit to Him.

The Apostle Paul suffered much because of carrying the Gospel to the Gentiles; nevertheless, he was not ashamed, because he knew whom he had believed and trusted. He knew the Lord could keep all that he had entrusted to His care and that He would not suffer him to be lost. Paul said that he was persuaded that God could keep that which he had committed to Him. He had entrusted his soul to the Lord with all its immortal interests.

A man has nothing of higher value to entrust to another than his

soul. There is no greater act of confidence as that of entrusting the keeping of the soul to Jesus Christ. Those who have committed their souls to Him have found that He is mighty to save and mighty to keep. This act of committing the soul with all its interests to the Savior is a true source of peace in the trials of life. This brings peace in the time of trouble.

No doubt, you have heard the story of Abraham. When he and his wife were old, God promised him a son. Romans 4:20-21, speaking of Abraham, says this: "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform." What makes the promises of God unfulfilling? It was God who made the promises, and because God cannot lie, He can perform. He has all power to carry out that which He has promised.

Choosing the Right Path

I want you to consider some of God's promises. I hope these promises will encourage you to put your confidence in the Lord. Not all of God's promises are blessings. The Word of God is a two-edged sword. It depends on which side of the promise you are on, because the promise has two sides to it. God will carry out His promises whether you believe them or not. Unbelief does not make the Word of God of no effect. Unbelief does not stop the promises of God, because there are promises in God's Word for those who do not believe.

Deuteronomy 30:15-20 reads: "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. But if thine

heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore [this is God's desire] choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them."

Here it is written that God sets before us blessings and cursings daily. God's desire is that we choose life, but He lets each of us do the choosing. Friend, God will give you the power if you will choose the right path, but the choice is yours.

There are some universal promises in God's Word made to fit every man and woman on this earth, whether you serve God or not. Galatians 6:7-8 states: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." The promise is that we reap what we sow, and that promise is to all men. It is for those who sow to the flesh and those who sow to the Spirit. Paul said if you follow the flesh, you will reap corruption. On the other hand, if you follow the Spirit, you will reap life everlasting.

Sow Wickedness, and Reap the Same

Now I want you to read some of God's promises for those who are in unbelief and sow to the flesh. Job 4:8 says, "Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness,

reap the same." What did the Proverb writer say? Men who form plans of wickedness must reap the same; in other words, an evil life cannot produce happiness. In Hosea 8:7 the minor prophet stated: "For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: it hath no stalk: the bud shall yield no meal: if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up." Hosea wrote in Hosea 10:13, "Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies: because thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men." These promises are for those who desire to continue in their sins.

There are some examples in the Word of God of those who plowed iniquity. I want you to read about Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Numbers 16:1-4 tells us: "Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men: And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown: [Whenever men work division, that is who they try to get to join them. They do not work on those who are down and out, the stragglers, or those who are continually in disobedience. They go after the famous in the congregation, men who carry their Bibles, men of renown, or men who are well-known as leaders.] And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them [here was the charge], Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy [in other words, they were accusing Moses of acting as a dictator], every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD? And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face."

Korah, Dathan, and Abiram rose up against Moses and affected two hundred fifty men who were famous

and renowned in the congregation. God did not let them get away with their rebellion. Verses 20-21 read: "And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment." Moses and Aaron were told to separate themselves. Look at the end of those brethren.

We read in verses 28-35: "And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the LORD hath not sent me. But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD. And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them: And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation. And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them: for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also. And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense."

It was so unnecessary for all of that to happen, but when that division took hold, those men knew who to gather. They gathered men who were well known in the congregation, men of renown, and tried to use them to pressure Moses to back down, so God took control.

The Sin of Covetousness

In Joshua 7:1 we find that Achan committed a trespass. He coveted

and then overstepped the commandment of the Lord and took from the enemy's spoil, or goods. In every battle there was always the spoil, or the goods left by the enemy. Sometimes God would allow them to go in and take the spoil, but other times He commanded them to refrain from it. When Achan disobeyed, it caused the enemy, whom Israel could have easily overtaken, to triumph, and thirty-six men of Israel were killed as they fled from the little city of Ai.

Oh, saint of God, you must watch the little things. The enemy is cunning. He knows if he comes at you with something big, you will take that to God. Therefore, he will try to get you to stand in your own strength against little things, and they will do a work on you.

Joshua 7:24-25 says: "And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor. And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones." Oh, how sad for Israel of old to end up in defeat at the hands of that little city when they had such a good start crossing Jordan!

God's Word is true. You can depend on it. In the New Testament you can read of a couple named Ananias and Sapphira. It tells us a sad story. Acts 5:1-3 reads: "But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?" Sin starts in the heart. Satan filled their hearts to lie

to the Holy Ghost. You can read of the end of Ananias and Sapphira: they died and ended up in a lost eternity, three hours apart. Second Corinthians 1:20 tells us, "For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen."

Seek Him With Your Whole Heart

There are many promises in the Word of God for those who have a desire to live for God and remain true. Let us read the Beatitudes. Jesus stated in Matthew 5:3-12: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

Psalm 128:4 says, "Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the LORD." Psalm 119:2 reads, "Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart." Romans 4:7-8 tells us: "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."

There are many examples of those who stood for what is right. You can read of Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Job, David, Daniel, the Apostles, and all the brethren who stood true to God throughout church history. God never failed them. He was right

there, and they stood on His Word. God did not forsake them. He went with them every step of the way.

God has promises in His Word for you, sinner friend. If you believe His Word, then you can receive help. Proverbs 28:13 says, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." I have found it so, and many others have found it so. If you confess and forsake sin, God will have mercy on you; that is a promise for you, sinner friend, backslider.

First John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." God will forgive every sin. If you confess and forsake it, God will cleanse you from all unrighteousness.

These promises are encouraging. The Prophet Isaiah wrote in Isaiah 1:16-20: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it."

With God All Things Are Possible

Dear one, it was God who spoke these promises through holy men of God. If you believe them, you will not have to live a moment longer in sin. God cannot lie. God's conditions for salvation are yea and amen; they are unchangeable. What God has done for others, He will do for you. He is able to perform that which He has promised.

If you are struggling in your experience, believe God's Word. You need to believe God's Word as you do when you come to a stop sign and put your foot on the brake. You believe you are going to stop. You take it for granted that those brakes are going to stop you. Well, those brakes can fail, but God's Word *never* fails. God's Word will do just exactly what He said it would do.

If you are living in sin, you need to quit believing the devil and your friends who tell you that you cannot live right. You need to start believing God. There are many people who can testify that God's promises are true. The promises of God will not fail, and He will not forsake you. God will not turn His back on you. If you desire to serve God, you can. You must believe God and believe His promises.

If you are struggling in your experience, if you are unsaved, or if you need a divine touch in your body, believe God, put your confidence in Him, and He will not fail

you. God will not let you down. He will not tell you a lie. If you confess and forsake your sins, you will receive absolute mercy. Paul said he entrusted the keeping of his soul to Him, and you can too. Paul lived the life that testified to the very fact that God will keep.

I know there are some people who do not believe that a man or a woman can live holy. We are not dealing with what man can do; we are dealing with what God can do. No man can live holy without God, but with God all things are possible. If you come to Jesus Christ and do as the Scripture says, then God will have mercy. We are not talking about David or Solomon, we are talking about God. I would rather have mercy any day than judgment. I will take mercy now while Jesus Christ is on the throne of mercy; that is the time to receive it. You do not want to be caught in sin when Jesus comes off the throne of mercy and gets on the throne of judgment.

If you have a need, won't you obey God? Won't you do what God wants you to do? There is a promise in the Word of God that fits your situation. If you will take hold of it, believe it, make it a part of your life, it will work. It changes all those who believe it. If you will believe it, you will never be the same.

(Cassette C-5388E)

"The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight."

Proverbs 15:8

2 Peter 3:1 This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance:

2 That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:

3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,

4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:

6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are

kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the

heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

15 And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;

16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

17 Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.



Stirring Up Your Pure Mind

Brother Charles Ferguson

"The Lord Is Not Slack Concerning His Promise"

The very reason the Apostle Peter wrote this second epistle, as he stated in verse 1, was to "stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance." It seems that people of every generation since the beginning

of time have been somewhat alike, in that they forget things so easily. Things seem to fade away from their memory, and other thoughts occupy a place of importance in their minds. One reason that people forget is that it is just human nature. Therefore, we all need to be reminded of some things. May God help us in a special

way so that our minds might be stirred by way of remembrance concerning the things we dare not forget, the things we need to keep foremost in our minds always.

I marveled on the anniversary date of when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor that so few people mentioned the occasion. Today some

people never even think about World War II. Most people seem to have forgotten the tragedy, the heartache, and the loss of life that occurred.

Dear one, do not be forgetful of the Word of God. I do want to remember some things, and I do not want to forget what God has done for me and what He is doing for me. Several times in 2 Peter, Chapter 3, the Apostle Peter mentioned that we should not be forgetful. The Apostle Paul, in his writings, admonished people along this same line of thought.

Again, in verses 2-5 of our Scripture text Peter wrote: "That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers [scoffers are people who mock the Truth and pay no attention to it at all; they scoff at it and go on their way], walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant. . . ." Dear one, may God help you not to be a scoffer.

We read in verse 8, "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing. . . ." We should do our very best to keep what God has done for us vivid in our minds so that we do not forget. I want to emphasize, as it is in this epistle, that I believe being reminded of some things that God has done and is doing for us right now is needful. I do not want to forget what He has done for me personally.

As I think about my own family, I recall that my mother died at the age of 55, my brother who was four years older than I died at the age of 47, my brother who was six years older than I died at the age of 57, my sister died at the age of 72, my father died at the age of 79, and I am 80 years old and still going. I praise

God for that! How could I forget how good He has been to me?

As I was looking through the "Evening Light Songs" hymnal one day, I looked at all those brethren's names and the dates of their births and deaths. They all were between 49 and 65 years of age when they passed away. I thought, "Lord, here I am still going." How can I forget? How can I cease to be thankful for what He has done for me? He has given me such a wonderful life. Why He ever bothered with a worm such as I, I will never know, but I am very thankful for what He has done.

"Be Diligent That Ye May Be Found of Him"

In the Scripture text verses 11 and 14 read: "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness. . . . Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." Dear one, God still has a church, and she is still without spot or wrinkle. Jesus is coming back for the church. Child of God, if you forget what God has done for you and slip back into sin, you are going to miss Heaven. He is not coming for a church full of spots and wrinkles and sin. He is coming for one that is blameless and ready to meet Him.

In verse 17 Peter wrote, "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness." Someone may ask, "Why preach a message such as this?" Well, dear one, let me ask you a question. Are you alarmed at the condition of America? Some younger people are not as alarmed concerning the prevailing conditions in America today as the older generation. Our nation is quickly drifting in a way that is not good. I am

alarmed at how quickly America is moving away from God. May God help us.

At one time, people mentioned God in many things, but today many people do not want His name mentioned in the schools and other places. The Bible plainly lets us know what happens to a nation that forgets God. Psalm 9:17 tells us, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." When people forbid God to have His rightful place in their hearts as individuals or as a nation, they are heading for chaos. The only way they can be redeemed from that condition is to turn back to God. It is impossible for it to happen any other way.

The real burden of my heart comes when I look at the church and see how many faces are no longer among us. I realize that many saints have passed on into eternity, but a multitude has walked away from Truth. They failed to be determined to stick to the goal, and they have gone another direction. That troubles me. What a beautiful message the Church of God has! The Church of God is the only true holiness church on the face of the earth.

I become alarmed when I do not see the faces that I once saw and when I see the condition that many of those people are in. Dear one, when I take an overall view of the work of God, I realize that many have forgotten what God has done for them. All you have to do is look around, and you will see evidence of the fact that many people have forgotten. They need to be reminded of the things they have forgotten.

In 2 Peter 1:4 we read, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." What a wonderful verse of Scripture! Peter was telling us that we have received great and precious promises and that we are partakers of God's divine nature. How can people forget so easily what God has

done for them? How can they forget such great and wonderful promises that He has given us? I marvel when I think that God would show me the beautiful Church of God. Sometimes I think, "Why, Lord, would You show the church to me of all people? What a wonderful thing You have shown me! How can I forget it? Lord, help me to hold it in my memory so indelibly that it will never fade away."

Many have forgotten what God has done for them. How can people act as they do if they have not forgotten? Let me ask you a question. How could a child forget such great love his mother has for him and ignore it, put it under his feet, and grind it down as if it were nothing? There would have to be something rotten in his makeup. Likewise, how can a person forget what God has done?

Verse 5 states, "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge." Friend, you need to settle it in your heart that you are going to serve God regardless of what happens. I am not responsible for what my forefather, Adam, did or for what my physical father did, but I am responsible for what I do. Likewise, you are responsible for your own actions, not your father, your mother, your sister, your brother, your aunt, or your uncle. You need to be strong in the things of God.

In Mark 5:25-34 you can read the account of the woman who came to Jesus, suffering from an issue of blood for twelve years. She said, "If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole." As she pressed and touched the hem of His garment, immediately she felt in her body that she was made whole, and Jesus turned and said, "Who touched my clothes?" He felt the power go out of Him, and she fell down and confessed that she had touched Him. Jesus said, "Thy faith hath made thee whole." Dear one, you need to touch Jesus, hold on to Him, and claim His power. God has the power to save you and the power to change you. It

would be foolish if God were to save you if He could not keep you, but He *can* keep you.

Keeping the Body Under

In 2 Peter 1:6-9 Peter wrote: "And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins."

I want you to think about those verses of Scripture. When a man drifts back into sin after having been purged from his old sins, he has forgotten those things. Once at my place of employment, a man who claimed to be a Christian was defending sin. Before that, he told me how God had saved him. He said, "I was walking down the canal bank, and as I was praying, God saved me." After the discussion was over and he was still contending for sin, I said to him, "Do you remember telling me some time ago how God saved you as you were walking down the canal bank? If God really saved you, you have forgotten what He saved you from."

Dear one, if you go back into sin after God has so graciously saved you, you have forgotten what God saved you from, and you are scoffing at the power of God and what He has done for you. Turning your back on God is a terrible thing! How can you forget such great and wonderful promises that God has given? I know people who are back in sin who never would have dreamed that they would have gone back, including some who once preached the Truth and sang beautifully.

Who would have ever thought that our nation would drift so far away from God that people would allow sodomite churches? They call

themselves "gay" churches, and they have homosexual and lesbian pastors. The world has changed the word *gay* to mean sodomy. Today people are discussing marriage and who it pertains to. What is there to discuss? In the council halls of eternity God settled it that marriage is the uniting of a man and a woman in holy matrimony, *not* the uniting of two men or the uniting of two women. That is just the way it is, and God is not going to change it.

In 1 Corinthians 9:27 the Apostle Paul said, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." Sometimes the flesh wants its own way. If the Apostle Paul needed to keep his body under lest he become a castaway, are we any different from Paul? No! Dear one, if you do not keep your body under as Paul kept his under, you will find yourself being led astray.

In 2 Peter 2:20-21 we read: "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them."

Dear one, it is best that you stay saved. If you turn back to sin, you have no guarantee that you will ever make it back into the ark of safety. The Bible lets you know that it would be better never to start serving God than to start and turn back. What terrible damage one does to the cause of Christ when he turns and goes back into sin. He puts Christ to an open shame and disgrace. May God help you not to do that. Staying saved is better than trying to get back to God after you backslide.

Many years ago a young man told me, "I owe a certain person an apology." I said, "You should get it

taken care of right away." Whether or not he took care of it, I do not know, but one thing I do know is that he is in eternity. If he did not take care of it, then he went into eternity lost. If you know something is wrong in your life, you should take care of it right away. You have no guarantee that down the road you will have another opportunity.

Pride Goes Before Destruction

Do you know why people lose out with God? In Proverbs 16:18, the wise man said, "Pride goeth before destruction." Somewhere in the lives of those who turn away from God, they have had a problem with pride. In all the problems that have come upon this earth since the very beginning of time, pride has been working. When a person goes back into sin, somewhere in his makeup is something that he wants to boast of or that he does not want to surrender or get rid of.

Some young men build up large muscles (I have nothing against lifting weights to keep in shape) and have tattoos way up on the back of their shoulders. They do not wear long sleeved shirts. They wear cut out shirts. Do you know why? Basically, they are not so much interested in people seeing the tattoos; they want people to see what is under them: "Look at these muscles, man." I marvel at how some mothers allow their daughters to dress. Why would a mother allow her daughter to wear such skimpy clothes? It is as if the mother is saying, "Look at my daughter! Isn't she something?"

Some young women get tattoos and then wear hip-hugger jeans. I am not a fan of hip-huggers on men or women. Hip-huggers can only result in one thing: going lower. They use their tattoos and body piercings to draw your attention to those areas of the body. Somewhere there is pride. Sad to say, this trend has not stayed out in the world. Some mothers around the church want their children to have hip-huggers because it is the fad. They

do not want their daughters to dress too much differently from the world. They are going down the wrong road, where there is little reverse, if any. The end of that road leads to heartache, disappointment, shame, and disgrace. Somewhere working in their lives is pride. Again, Proverbs 16:18 reads, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." In Ezekiel, Chapter 16, Ezekiel dealt with the sins of Israel. In verse 49 he wrote, "Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy." Sodomy was not the first charge against her. Somewhere in the lives of the people was pride, and they ended up in sodomy.

Pride generates envy and strife. It is the catalyst that puts strife into motion, just as fuel in a vehicle is the catalyst that puts the car into motion. Pride will destroy you. James 3:16 tells us, "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work." Pride generates envy and confusion and every evil work. Dear one, pride will keep God's people from having greater unity. You might have the attitude, "I am not going to humble myself to that brother. I am an ordained minister, and I pastor a congregation of people. Do you think I am going to humble myself to that man?" Again, James 3:16 reads, "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work."

"Draw Near With a True Heart"

Hebrews 10:20-25 reads: "By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith

without wavering; (for he [God] is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: [In too many cases people do not try to provoke one another to love. Sometimes you might have to take a lonely road to provoke them to love.] Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

I am a strong believer in church attendance. If a pastor were to stay out of the pulpit for the same reasons that some people stay out of the pew, people would not have an ounce of confidence in him. Yet when some people are gone for no reason whatsoever, they want the pastor to understand. I also do not believe you should drag into the services late. If you can be habitually tardy, you can be habitually on time.

Hebrews 10:26 tells us, "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." If you sin willfully, then your sacrifice has been sinned away and you have to start all over again. You may say, "But I don't feel like I have to start over." It does not make any difference how you feel.

Consider the Laodicean church, mentioned in Revelation, Chapter 3. Sometimes I refer to it as no church at all. Why? It takes Jesus to make a church. Where was He? He was on the outside. If He had been inside, then the congregation would have been the church.

Verses 27-29 read: "But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"

Dear one, if you forget what God has done for you, oh, what your fate would be for your failure! What disgrace and discouragement your failure would bring upon family members, loved ones, the church, the pastor, and the whole Kingdom of God! I trust that you have been

successful in living for God. I want to encourage you to stay faithful and true to God so that others may be influenced to do what is right. You should want to influence your sons and daughters, your mother and father, and your aunts and uncles to serve God. Friend, do not forget

what God has done for you. What great and wonderful promises He has given us! I do not want to forget. May God help you not to be a forgetful hearer.

(Cassette C-5427M)

[Camp Meeting Report contin. from pg. 2]
Apostle Paul stated, ". . . it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." God has chosen a way to supply the spiritual needs of man, and that is through the preaching of the Gospel. When the Word of God is sounding forth with power, clarity, and anointing, it will produce a work in the heart of every man who believes and obeys.

The pure Word will save the soul and cleanse the inner man from all filthiness of the flesh. The pure Word was not lacking during this camp meeting. Faithful men of God boldly proclaimed the wonderful Words of Life, showing all who were in attendance how to live a more perfect and pleasing way before the Lord.

We have now completed

another glorious camp meeting, and we have come to the end of another year in the history of our lives and of the church. Hopefully, as we embark upon another new year, we will allow God to draw us to an ever closer walk with Him and be used of Him in a greater way.

Selected

Restitution

I was preaching in British Columbia some years ago and a young man came to me and wanted to become a Christian. He had been smuggling opium into the United States.

"Well, my friend," I said, "I don't think there is any chance for you to become a Christian until you make restitution."

He said, "If I attempt to do that, I will fall into the clutches of the law, and I will go to the penitentiary."

"Well," I replied, "you had better do that than go to the judgment seat of God with that sin upon your soul and have eternal punishment. The Lord will be very merciful if you set your face to do right."

He went away sorrowful, but came back the next day and said, "I have a young wife and child, and all the furniture in my house I have bought with money I have gotten in this dishonest way. If I become a Christian, that furniture will have to go, and my wife will know it."

"Better let your wife know it, and better

let your home and furniture go."

Would you come up and see my wife?" he asked, "I don't know what she will say."

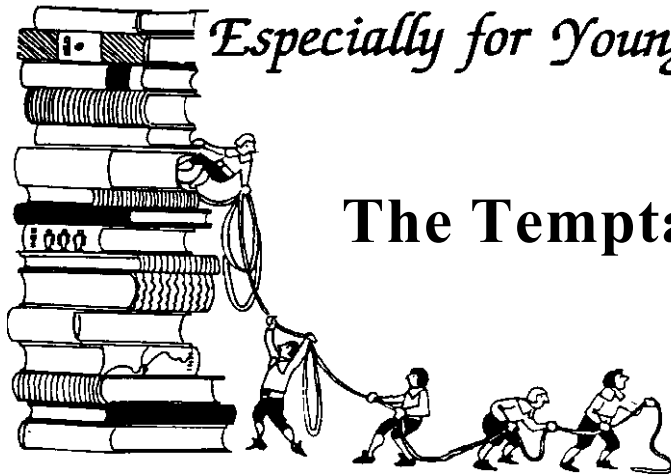
I went up to see her, and when I told her, the tears trickled down her cheeks, and she said, "Mr. Moody, I will gladly give everything if my husband can become a true Christian."

She took out her pocketbook and handed over her last penny. He had a piece of land in the United States, which he deeded over to the government. I do not know, in all my backward track, of any living man who has had any better testimony for Jesus Christ than that man. He had been dishonest, but when the truth came to him, he made it right.

No amount of weeping over sin and saying that you feel sorry is going to help you unless you are willing to confess, forsake sin, and make restitution.

D. L. Moody

Especially for Young People



The Temptation



Two boys, both about fifteen years of age, were employed as clerks in a large grocery store. Walter Hyde was the son of an invalid widow, and his earnings were her only means of support. Andrew Strong was the eldest son of a mechanic who had quite a large family depending upon him for their daily bread.

Both boys were capable and industrious; both were members of the temperance club that had been started in their church. They had but lately been employed in business.

Walter and Andrew were good friends; but they had not long been employed in the store before they learned that Mr. Bates, the proprietor, retailed alcoholic drinks.

The two boys talked together upon the wisdom of remaining at a place where liquor was sold. They had nothing to do with the sale of the liquor, but they wondered if they should work where it was sold.

"Let us talk with our folks at home," said Walter. "They will know best. I shall do what my mother says."

"I'll ask my father and mother," said Andrew. "I don't know whether they will hesitate to have me lose my job."

"Mother," said Walter Hyde, seating himself beside her easy chair, "did you know that Mr. Bates sells liquor?"

"Why, no, my son," said Mrs. Hyde, with a startled movement, "does he?"

"Yes. I did not know it for a fact

until today. What do you think about my staying there? I don't have anything to do with the liquor department, but it doesn't seem exactly right to stay where it is sold."

For a moment the mother did not answer. Poverty is a hard thing to battle with, and Mrs. Hyde knew only too well what must follow the loss of her son's job, but as she pondered, there came to her mind the memory of a boy she had known in girlhood. He was a brave, high-spirited lad with the promise of as noble a manhood as lay before her own son. How little a thing had wrecked his hopes and brought him to a drunkard's grave.

"Lead us not into temptation." When could those words be more fitly uttered than now?

"My son, let us pray together," said this Christian mother. Together they knelt in prayer in the cheerful fire light.

"I can answer you now, Walter. I would rather starve than have you exposed to such temptations. You may tell Mr. Bates in the morning that you cannot work for him any longer."

In his home that evening Andrew Strong asked the same question of his parents.

"You say you don't have anything to do with the liquor?" questioned Mr. Strong.

"No, sir, but I am right where it is all the time. I can't help that, if I stay there."

"If we were able to get along

without your wages, I wouldn't have you remain another day; but I have so many mouths to feed, and our rent is coming due. If you leave there, you may not get another job in a long time. What do you think, Anna," he inquired of his wife, "had the boy better leave?"

Mrs. Strong was worried about money, so she suggested a compromise. "Let him stay a little while," she said, "until we get the rent paid, and meanwhile look up a new job for him. We won't have him remain longer than necessary."

The next day Walter Hyde resigned his position. Walter, when he found himself out of employment, did not sit down and fold his hands in discouragement, but went about looking for another job. He picked up a little work here and there. At last a gentleman, struck by his frank, manly countenance, and learning of his history, interested himself in the boy's behalf and got him a job as a clerk in a large manufacturing establishment, a far better position than he had before.

Andrew Strong remained in the store of Mr. Bates. "It was only for a little while," said his father and mother. They intended to find him another job as soon as possible. His father made inquiries to that effect whenever he thought it advisable, but nothing turned up. At first no apparent evils resulted from his stay. Familiarity with a danger causes it to seem less dangerous, so the family

finally ceased to feel troubled regarding the temptations that surrounded Andrew. For a long time Andrew remembered his pledge and was careful to avoid the liquor department of the grocery, but as the days passed and he grew accustomed to the sight and smell of liquor, occasionally he tasted intoxicating drinks. He no longer attended meetings of the temperance club, for after he broke his pledge, he felt that he had no right to be there. He did not have the courage and resolution to confess his wrongdoing and change his ways.

Twenty years passed. In one of our large manufacturing cities, as the wealthy owner of nearly half the mills in the place was walking along the street one day, he saw a man by the roadside drunk. He stopped to see if he could do something for the poor fellow.

"Do you know this man?" he inquired of a mill superintendent who was passing by.

"No. He is a stranger here. He came to me yesterday morning to work in the mill. I hired him, and then he told me he had been out of work so long that he had been unable to get

anything to eat. I paid him for yesterday's work to help him get something to eat, but it looks as if he spent it for liquor."

"What did he tell you his name was?" inquired the factory owner.

"Andrew Strong," was the answer.

"Is it possible!" The gentleman looked long and earnestly at the tramp and then said, "Yes, it must be he." Then, turning to the superintendent, he said, "Mr. Horton, if you will help me carry this man to my house, I will do you a good turn some day."

Mr. Horton looked surprised, but he did as his employer requested.

When Andrew Strong awoke from his drunken slumber, he found himself in a well-furnished room surrounded by many conveniences. Beside him sat a gentleman whom he could not recall having ever seen before.

"Where am I? What does this mean?" he demanded as his senses returned to him. "Why am I here?"

"Andrew Strong," said the stranger, "do you remember me?"

"No, I never saw you before," was the answer.

"You are mistaken. You and I were once old friends. Don't you remember Walter Hyde, who used to work with you in the store?"

"Yes, yes," was the answer, "but are you Walter?"

"I am the same boy who talked with you about leaving the store because of the liquor sold there."

The man looked with bleary eyes into the face of his companion, and after a long pause, said, "Then I suppose you are the Hyde who owns all these factories."

A pause, and then came a groan from the poor drunkard. "Oh! that my father and mother had kept me from that liquor house. That is where I went down. If I had left the place as you did, I might now be an honored and respected man."

"My poor friend, do not despair," said Walter Hyde. "It is not yet too late for you to reform. I will help you."

He did help him. Andrew Strong became a man respected by his fellows and a blessing to society.

Selected

Cheerfulness

God bless the cheerful man, woman, or child! Would to God there were more cheerfulness and not so much gloom! Over and above every other social trait stands cheerfulness. What the sun is to nature, what the stars are to night, what God is to the stricken heart that knows how to lean upon him, are cheerful persons in the house and by the wayside. Man recognizes the magic of a cheerful influence in woman more quickly and more willingly than the potency of dazzling genius, of commanding worth, or even of enslaving beauty.

If we are cheerful and contented, all nature smiles with us, the air seems more balmy, the sky more clear, the ground has a brighter green, the trees have a richer foliage, the flowers are more fragrant, the birds sing more sweetly, and the sun, moon, and stars all appear more beautiful.

Cheerfulness! How sweet in infancy, how lovely in youth, how saintly in age! There are some noble natures whose very presence carries sunshine with them wherever they go. How such a face livens every other face it meets, and carries into every company vivacity and joy and gladness! Look at the bright side.

Keep the sunshine of a living faith in the heart. Do not let the shadow of discouragement and despondency fall on your path. However weary you may be, the promises of God will never cease to shine like the stars of night to cheer and strengthen. A hopeful spirit will discern the silver lining of the darkest cloud. The times may be hard, but it will make them no easier to wear a gloomy and sad countenance. It is the sunshine and not the cloud that makes the flowers. Let us try, then, to be the sunshiny members of the family who have the inestimable art of making all duty seem pleasant, all self-denial and exertion easy and desirable, even disappointment not so blank and crushing.

Have you not known people within whose influence you felt cheerful, amiable, and hopeful, equal to anything? Oh for that blessed power and for God's grace to exercise it rightly! I do not know a more enviable gift than the power to diffuse around us an atmosphere of cheerfulness, piety, truthfulness, generosity, magnanimity. Reader, covet this grace.

Ezekiel 33:10 Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel; Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live?

11 Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

THE DEATH OF THE WICKED



Brother Allen Polston

"To Every Thing There Is a Season"

It is a well-known fact that we all are on a course that one day will lead us to a place of death. None of us can make provision by which we can escape the appointment awaiting us down the road of life. As I speak of such a solemn occasion that awaits each of us, it is not to dampen your spirit or to cause you to lose your joy. Ecclesiastes 3:1 states, "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven."

People need to settle down and think seriously about the course on which they are traveling. We each need to stop and look around to see which road we have taken and where the end of that road leads. I trust that you will not to be offended

by this message, but that it will cause you to think soberly. You need to give your utmost attention to the Word of God and seek to find what God has for you.

God has always worked through human instrumentality. Some may scoff at this idea or at that which the minister says. Others may seek to know something greater or seek a sign. However, Jesus said in Matthew 16:4 that a wicked and an adulterous generation seeks after a sign. God has chosen pastors, those who have committed their lives to Him, to speak through. As it was in Ezekiel's day, so it is in the day and time in which we are living. This is God's means of offering help to people.

As the preaching of the Gospel goes forth, some people want the man of God to hurry through it so

they can go about their own ways. They are there only because they feel it is their obligation, and they are glad when it is over. God's Word should be taken much more seriously than that. He sets the stage for the moving of His Holy Spirit because He knows that a day is coming when each of us will stand in His presence. One cannot escape that time, and when we go, we will go alone. When you go before Him, you will not be able to call on others to defend you or to plead your case. You will meet God on a one-on-one basis.

Verse 11 of our Scripture text begins, "Say unto them. . . ." Even in Ezekiel's day, God was using an individual who had the frame of mind to communicate with Him and to speak to the people of that day. Friend, God has something to say to

you. You need to engage your mind on the things of God for a little while and forget what might happen tomorrow or what others might say or think. You need to think seriously and soberly as you consider this message. The enemy is after your soul, and once he has your soul and you leave this world, you will go to a place from which you can never return.

False prophets in our world are telling people there will be a thousand year reign and that there will be a time beyond death in which they can seek God. On the authority of God's Word, this is not so. God has allotted each of us a span of years, which differs quite a bit from person to person, and during that time each of us can choose to repent or to rebel.

Heed the Warnings

God has always used messengers to deliver His messages. It is amazing how people readily accept other means of receiving messages, but often they turn off their minds when it comes to the preaching of the Gospel. Many people readily accept the idea of having various forms of communication to receive messages. Many people sit in Holy Ghost services and try with all their might to get their minds on other things. Nevertheless, each of us needs to let God have an audience with us.

Some people may balk at the preaching of the Gospel, but it is the means by which God has chosen to send His messages, and it has been that way for many hundreds of years. Someone may ask the questions: "How long is a message valid? How long is it up to date? Does it need to be updated annually? Does the message ever need to be overhauled?" Certain products have a "Best if used by" date printed on the carton. However, God's message is valid forevermore. God's Word is not outdated. It is very accurate, and it is exactly what it ought to be. Moreover, when God speaks, the

Holy Ghost is the convincing Agent. The very fact that the Bible is approximately 2800 years old, yet God speaks to us through it as if He were standing right next to us, should convince you to heed the warnings. When God's tender Spirit begins to talk to your heart, you ought to realize that is your opportunity to leave the paths of sin and have your life changed.

Ezekiel said in verse 11 of our Scripture text, "As I live, saith the Lord God. . . ." This message is valid for as long as God lives. That which God has to say is always up to date. Someone may ask, "How long do you think God is going to live?" In Revelation 1:18 Jesus said, "I am alive for evermore." God loved us so much that He allowed people to hang Jesus on Calvary's Cross. He did not want us to be lost. What could possibly eliminate God? Nothing could be so powerful and have so much ability as to eliminate God.

The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:13, "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself." Even if you should choose not to believe in God, that cannot change His existence or take Him out of the picture. He would still be as much alive and as real as He ever was. Some people say, "Well, I don't believe in eternity, and I don't believe in hell." Nevertheless, hell will be just as hot for those who do not believe in it as for those who believed in it all their lives.

Friend, unbelief does not change God. It only keeps you from experiencing His sweet fellowship and love. Rejecting God and rebelling against Truth will not cause His life to cease. It will only prevent you from knowing Him. God is greater than cancer, and He is not weakened by time. As time goes on, our strength is not what it was in times past, but God's ability is not decreased as time continues. He does not age or become unable in any area. God is eternal, and He lives forevermore. God will never change. In Malachi 3:6 the Prophet Malachi

recorded these words: "For I am the LORD, I change not." What a relief it would be to many if they could refuse to believe in God and thus escape judgment! Friend, it will never be that way. God is alive forevermore.

God's Word Is Everlasting

You may think that as time continues and things change in the world, the requirements of being saved or the means by which one gets saved will change. Contrariwise, even if people change, God will always stay the same. Thinking that you are going to come to a time when the requirements to enter Heaven will be different from what they have always been is useless. I was talking to a young man once about this very thing. He told me that he wanted to get saved sometime. I believe that many people, in the back of their minds, will admit that they want to be saved sometime. They think it will be easier at another time down the road.

Friend, we have a flesh that is going to be flesh until we leave this world, and the flesh will rebel against God and rise against righteousness. Whether you are young or old, married or unmarried, educated or uneducated, the flesh will resist conforming to God's way. As long as you live, it will never change. Therefore, the flesh must be put under, or crucified. In other words, it has to be denied.

You will always be faced with overcoming the flesh. The devil, working through your flesh, will always tell you to delay getting saved a little longer. He often tells people, "Wait until another time, a more convenient season." Friend, that more convenient season will never arrive. The best time to get saved is when God first begins to deal with your heart. You need to think seriously. You have no guarantee that you will live until tomorrow. None of us is assured that there will be another week before our appointment with death. You are

given no confirmation that the death angel is not circling to call you out of this life.

What would it be like, having rejected God's tender, loving mercy, to stand at the Judgment? What regret a person would feel, knowing that he had turned God down! Oh, how dreadful one will feel when the utter terror of eternity becomes a realization, knowing he is lost forever! How sad when the harvest is over and the summer has ended, yet an individual is not saved! This is a serious time. It is a time that God has allotted you the opportunity to get saved. Sinner friend, this is the time that God is affording you. If you have things in your life that should not be and you are outside the ark of safety, God is extending His loving, merciful arms to you.

You may try to ignore what God has to say, but that is not going to change the message or cause it to go away. The message that God had for Ezekiel's day is for us today. God's Word is everlasting. The message is the same, whether you accept it or not. You need to come to the place where you have the determination to turn away from the devil and serve God with all your heart. It will never be any easier.

Meeting Bible Conditions

The devil is a liar. He tells people to delay getting saved so that he can wrap his tentacles around them in a greater way. He convinces people that there will be a more convenient season so he can get them mixed up in relationships, drugs, or alcohol. When he gets them tied to this world in a greater way, then he will make it ever more difficult for them to tend to the matters of the soul. If you are lost, do not go on unsaved. Do not turn away from the pleading of God's Spirit. When He deals with your heart and speaks to you, that is proof that He will change your life completely. God deals with precious individuals, troubles them, and gives them the feeling within their

hearts that He is working.

Friend, if He is working with you, that is evidence that He wants to do business with you. That is proof that God wants to change you. He can make you a new creature! In your present condition, you could never live the Christian life. That is the reason God does not want to leave you in your present condition. God can change you and make you a new person if you will yield to Him.

You cannot live for God in your own strength. Peer pressure from friends, co-workers, family members, and others would cause you to turn back to the life of sin. You cannot live the Christian life in your own strength. God can make you a new creature, and you will not have the same spirit you used to have. He will give you His Spirit, and He will give you joy that you have never experienced. God can make your life rich and rewarding.

The night that God saved me, I knew I was a sinner and that I was bound for hell. I realized that if I walked away from that place, I might never get right with God. (I very well could have been lost for eternity.) When the time came for the altar call, I weighed the options that were laid before me. I could have left the service to get my mind off the things about which God had been talking to me. I could have gone out and involved myself in entertainment, drugs, or alcohol to escape reality for a little while, but that would not have changed God's message one bit.

As I stood there during the song of invitation and counted the cost, I came to the realization that sin is a deceiver and that the devil is a liar. Satan was working on me so that he could damn my soul. He was using those whom I thought were my friends, but I came to the realization that they were only there when I had something they wanted. They were just out for their own profit and would have forsaken me as quickly as they had come around. I weighed my options and realized

that I needed God.

As God was dealing with my heart, I went to the altar. I knew that I was a sinner, so I said, "Lord, I want to be saved. I want to turn away from the life I have been living and serve You with all my heart." I did not know much about what was supposed to happen, and I kept waiting, thinking that I would have a lot of feelings, but one brother told me, "When you meet Bible conditions, you can step out by faith, and God will do the rest."

Friend, when you meet Bible conditions, you may not necessarily have a lot of feelings when you get saved. If you do, then thank God. The important thing is that you meet Bible conditions. When you do, God will take note. He is not willing that any should perish, but that all men should be saved. God will do a work in your life if you really mean business with Him.

The night that I went to the altar, I realized that I was never going back to sinful things again. I knew I had some things to start doing immediately, and God gave me the power to do those things. I have never smoked another cigarette since. Friend, God can deliver you and set you free! He can make you a new creature in Christ. He can change your heart and your life, and you can be different from the way you have been living. I am not saying that everyone's experience will be exactly as mine was, but God will do a work in your life and give you a personal testimony that you can share with others. God will save and deliver you if you will wholeheartedly turn to Him. You may reject God, but doing so will not change His Word.

Does God Take Pleasure in Your Life?

In our Scripture lesson God told Ezekiel to tell the people, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked." God has no pleasure when a wicked individual draws his last breath, unprepared to meet Him. God does

not say, "Ha, Ha! He had it coming!" He is not that kind of God. God gives every individual an opportunity to be saved, but there comes a time, after knocking for so long, that He stops knocking. Sad to say, people are leaving this world by the multitudes only to awaken to utter terror and destruction.

Dear one, if you are lost, won't you hearken to the Word of God? Let this be something about which you think seriously. Are the sins that you are engaged in and the pleasures that you find so enjoyable worth spending eternity lost without God, separated from everything that is good? Is the cost of losing your soul worth the thrill that you are receiving? You need to make a move toward God. Have you not been around sin long enough to realize that it does not pay? When the reaping of sin begins, that will be proof that it was not really worth it. Friend, you need to think soberly about what God has to say.

Our Scripture lesson suggests that God *does* have pleasure in some things. The tormenting reality that every lost individual discovers upon awakening in eternity without God is not one of those things. The Psalmist wrote in Psalm 147:11, "The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy." God takes pleasure in people who fear Him. Do you fear the Lord? Do you reverence God or are you just going through life doing whatever you think feels good to do? Friend, you ought to have a reverential fear upon your heart for God.

You need to be careful to consider how God will view your actions. Unfortunately, most people are living haphazardly, doing just whatever they please. Whatever they want to do, if it feels good, they do it.

The Psalmist also wrote in Psalm 149:4, "For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people." God takes pleasure in those who give their hearts to Him. Friend, God will take pleasure in you if you will serve Him faithfully

and remain true. Sinner friend, would it not be a relief just to know that you can stand before God in a condition with which He is pleased? What a relief it was for me after being converted to know that I was clear with God! That alone is a great relief on the mind and conscience of one who was once a sinner. What a relief it is to know that God takes pleasure in you!

The Prophet Haggai stated in Haggai 1:8, "Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD." God takes pleasure in the building up of the Church of God, or the house of God. If you are engaged in activity to build up the Church of God, I want you to know that God is smiling about that. He takes pleasure in that. He does not take pleasure in those who are causing division and trying to tear down the Church of God. He takes pleasure in those who, through it all, are riding out the storms and building up the church. God is pleased with those who are faithfully engaged in His work.

Luke 12:32 tells us, ". . . for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Seeing you grow in the things of God is pleasurable in God's eyes. Babylon and false religion do not have much to say about growth and spiritual progress. They just want your membership and your money, and then they are happy. On the other hand, God takes pleasure in His people and in their growing and laboring in the work of God.

Call Upon the Lord While He Is Near

Life sometimes gives people a feeling that they are invincible, that they are going to live forever, and that they have plenty of time. As a young person, I know this to be true. Often people feel that they have many days ahead of them. Perhaps you feel that you have all the time in the world. Friend, death does not

discriminate. Sometimes death visits those who are young and takes them out of this world. It would be sad if the death angel called upon someone who had rejected an offer from God to be saved, never to have such a privilege again. We all need to face the fact that we are going to die one of these days, either as a wicked person or as a righteous individual. The Apostle Paul wrote in his letter to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 5:10, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." He did not stop there. He went on to say in verse 11, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men."

The preaching of God's Word is not just to scare you. However, it is as the Apostle Paul said, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord [knowing that God's Word is true and knowing that there is an eternity for the righteous and for the wicked], we persuade men." We speak the Scriptures to try to persuade men not to be as foolish as the rich farmer that you can read of in Luke 12:18-19 who said: "I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, . . . take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." No doubt, he thought, "I have plenty of time."

Dear one, do not be so foolish as to think that you are going to live forever or that when you get ready, then you will decide to live for God. We read in Isaiah 55:6, "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near." This verse lets us know there could be a time when God cannot be found, when He will not be so near. The thief on the cross, in the final moments of his existence in this life, got right with the Lord. On the other hand, God is not so near when those who have rejected Him come to their last moments in this life. I would not want to risk being lost for eternity.

The Terror of Hell

Friend, you should not take a chance on your soul being lost forever. The wise thing for you to do would be to turn your back on sin, the world, and your worldly friends, and run to God. That would be the best thing you could do. It would show that you have really come to wisdom if you would turn away from these wicked things and serve God.

You need to realize that the preaching of the Gospel is an effort to persuade you. It is an attempt to convince you to change your mind. Friend, it is out of love that we do not want you to be lost. Even if you were to live a hundred years and enjoy all the pleasures that this world has to offer, it would not be worth losing your soul.

If you were to gain all the glamour and the wealth of this old world and yet lose your soul, you would end up on the losing side. You would still be on the wrong end of a bad business deal. God wants you to be saved. He wants you to think seriously. Words are not sufficient to describe how scary hell really is. I could use many descriptive words to portray the terror of hell, but they would not be sufficient.

All the scary materials that people have ever created could not rightly compare to how frightening an eternity without God would be. All the miseries that have ever been felt or witnessed on earth are as nothing compared with what will overwhelm those who choose to spend their lives in wickedness. Think of all the suffering and the pain that are taking place in this world, maybe even what you have experienced. It cannot begin to compare with a Christless eternity. Our sufferings cannot even come close to that of hearing the words, "Depart from Me."

Why does God not enjoy the due punishment of those who have refused Him? Why does He not find pleasure in the death of the wicked? There is not one thing joyful about

one going to hell. Oh, people sometimes joke about going to that place and having a party when they get there, but there will be no celebrations of any kind in hell. It will be dark and void of everything that is good. There will be no pleasant hymns or songs to make you feel better. There will be no love of any kind in hell. One will only find torments, anger, remorse, rage, and regret.

Friend, in hell there will be no compassion or care from any source for your pain. A good wife or a good mother is compassionate when you do not feel well. She will help you and extend little acts of kindness that comfort and help you, but no compassion will be found for those who go to eternity unprepared to meet God. Not one smile will be found in hell, other than possibly the smile of Satan as he realizes he has won you and you have no way out.

There will be no laughter in hell. Nothing is cute where Satan dwells. No one will be thankful or appreciative in hell. There will be nothing but hopeless misery. Fruitless desires will be experienced by every poor, wretched individual who chooses to go to hell.

Making a Wise Choice

Someone may ask, "Why would God send anyone to such a terrible place?" God simply honors the choices that people make. He made us creatures of choice. If you choose to walk away when His Spirit knocks on your heart's door, God will honor your choice. He will not go beyond your decision of rejection and drag you to an altar of prayer. If you make that choice, God will honor it, and it may be the choice to go to hell.

Making a choice to walk away from God, to allow needs in your heart and life to go unmet, is very dangerous to do when God offers you help and hope. God does not send people to hell, but rather they make the choice on their own. Sinner friend, is it really worth it to

you? Is what you are experiencing, what the devil has you carried away with, worth being lost forever? Is it worth being banished from everything that is good? When you choose to reject His tender knock on your heart's door, you are choosing to separate yourself from all that God has labeled good, and that is an unwise choice.

Dear one, God does not want you to be lost. He has set this opportunity so that your life can be changed and you can start traveling toward Heaven today. Perhaps you have backslidden, and you are thinking, "I don't know if I could do it again." If you really mean business with God, He will give you the grace and the power to live this holy life and experience victory. You do not have to backslide again. You can set your heart to serve God. Like Daniel of old, while many others around him were partaking of the king's wine and the king's meat, he purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself. He determined that he was going to live for God, and that is exactly what he did.

I know about being bound in sin. I was bound when I knelt at an old altar. I had many things that God had to address in the hours and days to come, but God was faithful to me, and He will be faithful to you, friend. God is loving and kind. He will not call you and then forsake you. When the Lord calls you, He will help you every step of the way. He will work with you through your problems and situations. The devil may come along and say, "You need to get some things worked out first: your home, your marriage, your relationship, and your employment." On the contrary, what you need to do is let God save you, and then He will help you, step by step, to work things out. He will put things in the proper order. If you reject God and try to work things out on your own, you will only create a greater mess and cause things to become more confusing and complex. Won't you open your heart and let God come in?

Turn From Your Wicked Ways and Live

Jesus said in Revelation 3:20, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." Any man, no matter how deep in sin he is and no matter how wicked he is, can be saved if he will just open his heart to Jesus. If you are not saved, you are considered wicked, whether you realize it or not. Someone may say, "Why, I don't do bad things. I have never had one drink of liquor in my life." Friend, that is good, but without God you are wicked. God can wash you clean and change your heart and life. I am not talking about trying to make outward reforms. I am telling you about a power that will change you from the inside out. True salvation is not just going to an altar to repent and then getting up to say, "Okay, I will *try* to do better." No one could live for God successfully that way. If you will sincerely seek God for a heart change, He will make you a

new creature. That is God's desire for you.

Some people hear His voice, yet they go on foolishly as though nothing has happened. Others rebel against the Truth, and sometime in their lives they join nominal religion. Some get bitter and push God away. All of those people are choosing to die in wickedness. Some backslide and fail to get back to God. That is a choice to go to hell. If you do not know God and you reject His plea, in the near future you may go unprepared to the judgment bar of God. Friend, if you have a need in your life and God's Spirit is speaking to you, the wisest thing to do is to break loose from those forces that are hindering you from turning to God. Also, you need to forget what others may think and forget any plans that you have made and press your way to an altar of prayer. If you touch the hem of His garment, you will never be sorry.

God, through Ezekiel, said in

our Scripture lesson, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live." You can start experiencing real life today. Partying, carousing, and living in sin is not real life. First Timothy 5:6 tells us, "But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." Real life is when Jesus comes and sets you free; then you can start enjoying real peace and happiness. You can start enjoying the simple things in life, such as sunsets more beautiful than you ever imagined them to be. You can start today by turning from your wicked ways.

Will you turn from your wicked ways and live? God is pleading; He is interceding. Will you hearken to Him? The reaping of sin cancels the pleasures of sin. If you have a need, do not let anything hinder you from seeking God. Do not let anything cause you to stay in that sinful condition. This would be a good time to get saved and start living your life as God intended you to live. You can be clear in your soul, with no condemnation. God can replace your guilt with joy, if only you will be willing and obedient. You can eat the good of the land if you will listen to God.

If God is speaking to your heart, that means He wants to save you. It is proof that He will change you from what you are right now to what you really ought to be. When God speaks, it is not in vain; it is for a reason. God loves you, dear one. He sent His only begotten Son to die for you, and He does not want you to die unprepared. God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Won't you turn from your wicked ways and get right with God? Do not worry about what others think. They are not going to be there on the Day of Judgment. You need to worry about what will happen if you continue to rebel. That is what you ought to think about. Won't you get inside the ark of safety before the devil gets hold of you in a greater way?

Instantaneously Healed

In the year 1830, in the town of Shelby, New York, a woman of middle age lay very sick for a long time under a doctor's care and pronounced by all as incurable. As I was praying one Sunday morning, without thinking of her case, a voice came to me from some source which was as distinct as man could speak, saying, "Go and pray for that woman." I went to her home and tried to make her comfortable. She was apparently in a dreamy state. I left the house without prayer, and thought no more of it until a day or two after, when my father and I went to the same place of business. She saw me and beckoned me to come to her, and I did so. She whispered to me, asking why I did not pray for her the other day, and added, "Something told me you came to pray for me." I told her I was sent to do so, but diffidence and timidity prevented at that time. I felt no call to pray then, but a day or two after, while I was going by the place, without thought on the subject, the words came to me again, as plain as a man could speak, "Go and pray for that woman." I went in and called the family together, and while we engaged in prayer, an invisible power was felt by all in the house, and that woman was healed at once, and was well.

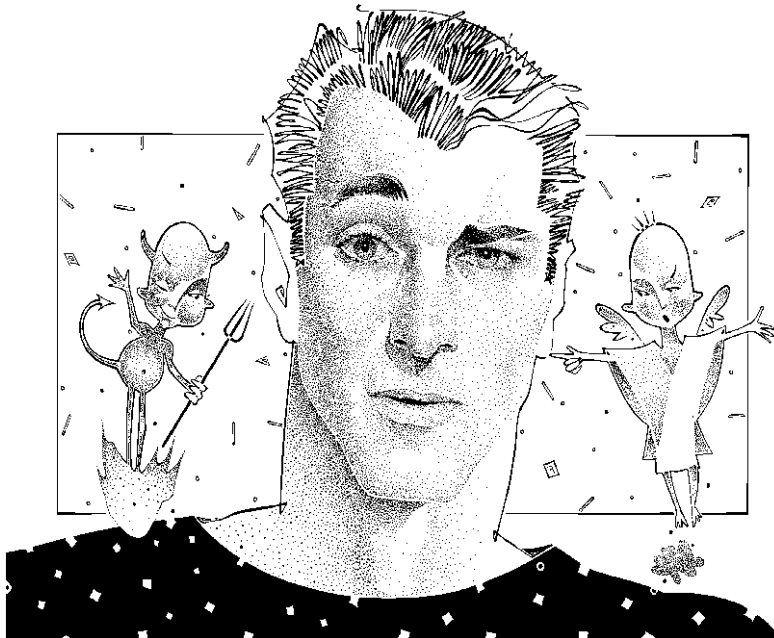
E. B Williams

(Cassette C-4984E)

John 14:1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

Psalm 14:1 The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.

Satan Is Real



Brother Calvin Foster

The Snare of the Devil

As we look about the world in which we live and see the many inventions of man and as we look at a beautiful sunset, the brightness of the moon at night, and the beauty of the stars, we wonder how anyone could say, "There is no God." The Scripture says, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."

God is real. The fact that we are fearfully and wonderfully made proves that He is. He has given man the wisdom and the ability to do wonderful things. In this message I want to drive home the truth that Satan is real. Satan is not a myth or

an imaginary creature that preachers have made up. Man, with all his instruments of science, cannot find Satan; nevertheless, he is real. Many people do not believe that, but it is true.

We read in Job 1:6-7: "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." Satan has intelligence, a will, and emotion.

Second Timothy 2:24-26 says:

"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will." Many people have been taken captive and are caught in the snare of the devil. I was once in Satan's snare, but God delivered me, thank God!

Zechariah 3:1-2 states: "And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his

right hand to resist him. And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" Whatever God wants you to receive from this message, the devil will try to keep you from getting it. He would much rather that you spend your time enjoying the things of life than to be praying or going to church to hear the Word of God. Satan is trying to prevent you from getting the blessings of God.

The enemy has many different names in the Scriptures. One is *Satan*, meaning "an adversary or an opposer," and another is *devil*, meaning "a slanderer and an accuser." He is also referred to as "the evil one." Nowhere in the Bible is he referred to as Lucifer. If you study Isaiah, Chapter 14, you will find that where the name "Lucifer" is mentioned, it is in a proverb against the king of Babylon. Also, Ezekiel, Chapter 28, is speaking of the fall and ruin of the king of Tyrus. Again, nowhere in the Bible is the devil referred to as Lucifer. People have been telling that falsity so long that the world believes that it is the truth.

Matthew 13:19 tells us, "When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side." When you hear the Word of God and do not understand it, the Scripture says, "then cometh the wicked one." Satan wants to take away your progress. He wants to take what God has given you in your heart to keep. He is a thief, and He is called "the god of this world."

Satan's Spiritual Influence

Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 4:3-4: "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious

gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." The Gospel is hid to those who are lost. People will ask you questions such as, "Why do you people love to go to church? Why do you love to sing the songs of God? Why do you want to suffer for Christ's sake and live your life for Christ?" Satan has their minds blinded to the glory in serving God.

Jesus said in John 12:31-32: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." Jesus called the devil "the prince of this world." This refers to his power over the evil world system, men, and demons. Look at what Jesus said in John 14:29-30: "And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." Praise God! The prince of the world has come, but he has nothing in Jesus. If Jesus dwells within you, the prince of this world has nothing in you. If he does have something in you, you need to pray.

Ephesians, Chapter 2, describes Satan's spiritual influence throughout the world. Verses 1-3 read: "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." These verses describe Satan's spiritual influence throughout the world. He is the prince and the power of the air. He is the spirit that works in the children of disobedience. Young person, I want you to know that Satan is real. We had our "conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh,

fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind." Satan's nature is to destroy.

Jesus had an encounter with the devil. Look at how He dealt with him. Matthew 4:1-4 tells us: "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." The devil tried to confuse Jesus, saying, "If thou be the Son of God. . . ." Satan knew that Jesus was the Son of God, but Jesus put the Word on him. That is also how we must deal with him. Jesus told him, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." You should not try to reason with the devil or try to give him your ideas or opinions, but you should put the Word of God on him.

Self-Destructive Behavior

The devil is a murderer and a liar. In John 8:44 Jesus told the Jews, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." You should not believe anything the devil tells you. He is a liar and the father of lies. His nature is to kill, steal, and destroy. In John 10:10 Jesus said, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

The devil causes some people to have self-destructive behavior. Let us read about a man who had demons in him and to see how this self-destructive behavior works.

Mark 5:1-19 states: "And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes. And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit [this man was living in the tombs in the graveyard], Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. [This man was full of demons, and he was very strong. He was a wild man. If you try to tell people who are dealing with drugs what is right, you will find that they have an uncontrollable demon in them.]

"And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones. But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him, And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not. For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit. And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many. And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country. Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding. And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.

"And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea. [The pigs did not want the devil in them, but today people are walking around with the devil in them. Notice that this man was crying out and cutting himself. People nowadays are getting tattoos all over their bodies and piercing them-

selves.] And they that fed the swine fled, and told it in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done. And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. [When Jesus comes into your life and casts out the devil, you will become a changed person. You will no longer walk the way you used to walk or talk the way you used to talk. You become a new creature in Christ. After Jesus cast out the devils, that man was clothed and in his right mind. When the people saw him, they were afraid of him. They had previously been afraid of him and now they were afraid of him again.]

"And they that saw it told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and also concerning the swine. And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts. And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him. Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." When God changes you, you should go home, go to work, or go to school and tell people what Jesus has done for you.

I am not saying that everyone who is unsaved is as Legion was, but the truth of the matter is that those who are unsaved have the devil in them. Now, this man was an extreme case; he was possessed with a legion of demons. If you are unsaved, you have the devil in you, and he is telling you not to get saved. God reveals Himself to every man that He is real, yet many people will not get saved. The devil is telling you to put it off till another day, and while you put it off, the devil is trying to kill you. He does not care about you. He does not care about how happy your home is, how long you have been saved, how long you

have sung in the choir, or how long you have been preaching. The devil hates you, and he wants to destroy your life.

Your Adversary the Devil

Young person, the devil does not want to see you grow up and become an outstanding man or woman for God. The devil wants to kill you while you are young. He wants you to get involved with drugs, quit school, run the streets, and do something foolish. He wants you to mess up your life. He hates you, and he hates to see you attend church, the young people's meetings, and the prayer meetings. He hates to see you spend time with the saints. The devil prompts self-destructive behavior.

Paul wrote in 1 Peter 5:6-8: "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil [notice that he says, 'your adversary the devil'], as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."

The devil is hungry for souls, and he is on the prowl. He is clever and cruel. The devil works on the man in the pulpit. He is as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. He does not care how often you attend Sunday school, revivals, or camp meetings; he wants you. He is as a roaring lion. He wants to get between a husband and a wife to cause them to fight and argue. If you are a minister, he does not care how long you have been preaching. Many preachers have thrown away their ministry by listening to the devil. Many people have left the Truth and lost their salvation by listening to the devil. I repeat, he is on the prowl, he is clever, and he is very cruel. Friend, he will mess up your life and your home.

The devil should never be taken lightly. You should not play around

with the devil. If you want to be saved and to make Heaven your home, you cannot entertain Satan. You should not try to fool yourself. Satan has thousands of years of experience. You cannot whip him without Christ. You must deal with him just as Christ dealt with him: put the Word on him. You can tell him, "Satan, you are lying to me; get behind me. I rebuke you in the name of the Lord." Satan will try to put thoughts in your mind and feelings in your flesh. When this happens, you need to tell the devil, "Satan, I refuse you! I am not going to do it. I am not going to listen to you, by the grace of God."

Having Grace to Stand

Jesus said to Peter in Luke 22:31-32: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Then Peter said in verse 33, "Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison and to death."

You may say, "I attend church every Sunday, I am faithful to sing in the choir, and I work on the church grounds." Remember this: Satan desires to have you. You need to realize how much he wants you. Jesus knew Peter. In verse 34 he said, "I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me."

Verses 54-62 read: "Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them. But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him. And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not.

"And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of

them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilaeen. And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly."

Peter did not have the strength that he thought he had. Friend, you should not testify on someone else's grace. You had better get some oil in your own lamp. You need to be sure that you know God personally if you want to get to Heaven. One cannot get to Heaven without having oil in his own lamp. Friend, you must have a personal experience with God. Young man, you are going to have to go out and get a job and work. You need to have a backbone. When you face people who have the devil in them, you should tell them that you are a Christian. The time may come that you have to look the boss or the supervisor in the face and say, "I am not going to do that because it is against my God. I can't tell that lie. If you fire me, I am sorry, but I can't do it." Could you say that, young person?

The Tares Among the Wheat

The devil plants tares, or counterfeits, in the camp of the saints. Matthew 13:24-28a reads: "Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy

hath done this."

The devil will put people in the congregation of the righteous who try to act the way saints act but who do not have the goods. Therefore, God said to wait until the harvesttime. Jesus said in verse 30, "Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn." That is the reason the man of God does some finger pointing. People who do not want to do right will not hang around long.

The Apostle Paul faced false brethren. In 2 Corinthians 11:26 Paul wrote, "In journeyings often, in perils [or dangers] of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren." Friend, do not be a false brother. You should not let the devil divide you from the saints and cause you to become messed up. Let us be true to one another. The devil will make a fool of you. You can make your mouth say anything, but do you really mean what you say about the grace of God?

First John 4:5-6 says: "They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error." You need to take note of the words that people say and the attitudes and the behaviors that people possess. If they say they are saved and living for God, why do they act like the devil? Why do they let the devil use them?

We are living in a time when some people who claim to be Christians need a man of God to look them right in the eye and say, "You are not saved because of the way you are acting." The saints need to heed the Word of God and be watchful so that they do not become

devil possessed. As long as you stay with God, walk with God, and obey His Word, you will not become devil possessed. We find in the Book of Acts accounts of when people had the devil cast out of them, and believers were added to the church. I want to emphasize to you that Satan is real.

Be Not Ignorant of Satan's Devices

How can you defeat Satan? James 4:6-8 tells us: "But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded."

Acts 19:13 says, "Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth." Verse 15 states, "And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" What happened to them? Verse 16 lets us know that the man who had the evil spirit leaped on them, overcame them, and they ran out of the house naked and wounded. Friend, you cannot mess around with the devil without Christ as those men did. Do not go to the devil's territory without Christ.

How can you defeat Satan? You must not be ignorant of his devices. Second Corinthians 2:11 reads, "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices." If you are ignorant of Satan's devices, he will take advantage of you.

In 1 Timothy 3:6-7 Paul instructed Timothy not to put an unqualified man in a pastoral position, "lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil." If God has His hand on you for the ministry, you need to be very careful. Being a

pastor is more than what it appears to be.

If you are married, how can you defeat Satan? One way is that you should not deprive your marriage partner of intimacy. This will give Satan an opportunity to tempt you or your spouse. First Corinthians 7:4-5 reads: "The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency [or lack of self-control]." The devil will get into your marriage if you deprive your husband or wife of intimacy.

What is another way that you can defeat Satan? You should not hold anger. If you hold anger, you will give place to the devil. Ephesians 4:26-27 says: "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil." If a husband and wife argue before they go to bed at night, they need to get it straightened out before they go to sleep. Ephesians 4:26-27 warns: "Be ye angry, and sin not [if you do so, you are letting the devil get in]: Neither give place to the devil."

Isaiah 45:5-7 tells us: "I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things." God created the devil to be your adversary. Satan is not God's adversary. After Jesus rose from the dead, He said in Matthew 28:18, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

Paul wrote in Ephesians 1:19-22: "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who

believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church." Saint of God, you do not have to worry about Satan's power, because he should be under your feet. Paul said in Ephesians 1:21 that God's power is "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."

How Can You Defeat the Devil?

Friend, do not play with Satan. A story is told about a man who took care of a snake when it was cold. He held the snake until it was warm. Then when the snake was warm, it bit the man. The man said, "Mr. Snake, why did you bite me? Don't you realize how I took care of you and how good I was to you?" The snake told the man, "You knew I was a snake when you picked me up."

If you play around with the devil, it will be just a matter of time before you will no longer be saved. If you are a minister and you play around with the devil, it will be just a matter of time before your ministry will no longer be founded on Truth. Church, we must bruise the devil's head. Christ came to destroy the works of the devil. I thank God that He destroyed the works of the devil in my own life. First John 3:8 states, "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." Saint, you must put on the whole armor of God and keep it on to defeat the devil.

The devil will try to get everyone he can to listen to him. God made each of us free, moral agents; therefore, He will not make anyone serve Him. The devil is going to gather anyone who will listen to him, including those who do not want to be saved and those who want to attend church where they do not teach people how to live right. You may sing, preach, or hold the position of a deacon, and everyone may think you are a Christian. The devil would love for you to do that and yet be unsaved. Satan is gathering everyone he can, but the

Lord has promised to punish him and those who refuse to serve Him.

Revelation 20:10 reads, "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." Friend, you need to make your choice. I hope you will make the wise choice. I cannot express it strongly enough that Satan is real.

Won't you listen to God and obey Him, friend? If you have been dragging your feet in serving God or if you are a sinner, won't you ask

Christ to help you? Satan is out to destroy you. The Gospel is to save your soul from hell. You need to stay close to the fires of the Gospel.

We are living in a time when people say, "You read too much. You pray too much. You go to church too much. You drive too far to church." That is ungodly counsel, and it is coming from the devil. Your soul is at stake, my friend. May God bless you and help you to draw closer to Him.

(Cassette C-5431E)

Winter 2005 Camp Meeting Tape List

TAPE NO.	DATE	MESSAGE TITLE	MINISTER
C-5515M	12-25-05	Is Your Heart Overcrowded?	Bro. Roger L. Decker
C-5516E		Things to Which We Must Pay No Attention to Be Lost	Bro. Roger L. Decker
C-5517M	12-26-05	The Danger of Turning Your Heart Away From God	Bro. Irwin Seshar
C-5518E		The Sweet Gifts That Come From God	Bro. Allen Polston
C-5519M	12-27-05	Taking the Cup of Salvation	Bro. Jerry Miller
C-5520E		The Danger of Too Much Gospel	Bro. Calvin Foster
C-5521M	12-28-05	The Assurance, Conviction, and Witness of Faith	Bro. Adam Wolf
C-5522E		Christian Self-Esteem	Bro. Calvin Foster
261	2005	Winter Camp Meeting Songs #1	
262	2005	Winter Camp Meeting Songs #2	
263	2005	Winter Camp Meeting Songs #3	

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