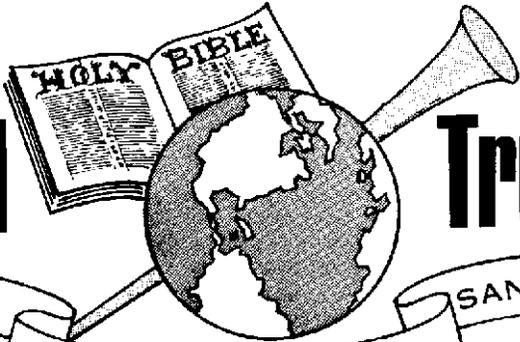


The Gospel  **Trumpeter**

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UNITY & TRUTH

"So will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day." Eze. 34:12 Jer. 32:38

"But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished." Rev. 10:7 Mal. 2:13

SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

Vol. 37 December 2007 No. 12



Church of God Tabernacle in Newark, Ohio

*"I was glad when they said unto me,
Let us go into the house of the Lord."*

Psalm 122:1

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

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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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items.

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Vol. 37 December 2007 No. 12

Guest Editorial

*"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that
which was lost."*

Luke 19:10

*"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."*

2 Peter 3:9

You Need Not Be Lost!

The great loving heart of God beats in pity as He looks upon the masses of lost humanity. He gave His beloved Son as the ultimate sacrifice, and His wishes are for each individual to turn to Him in repentance. He has no pleasure in seeing men and women go through life being separated from Him and then dying lost. He has made all the necessary preparation for all to be redeemed. What then would cause a soul to continue to live in sin and refuse the pardoning love He offers? The only conclusion is simply that the individual is not willing to seek Him. This is such a terrible mistake for a man or a woman to make. There is no need for anyone to be lost and spend eternity in hell.

God's power is the same today as it has ever been. He is able and willing to save the vilest of sinners and strong enough to break every chain that binds the soul of man. Regardless of the depth you may have gone in sin, God's arm is not too short that it cannot reach down and lift you out. Dear reader, there is hope for you, but you must turn to Him in true repentance. Can you not see His outstretched hand beckoning you to come to Him? You must forsake your way and your thoughts and accept His way. Jesus, speaking in John 6:37, said, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." You need not be lost!

Every Scripture in the Word of God that pertains to salvation is in your favor and lets you know that

God is able and willing and ready to grant you full pardon for your sins. There is no slackness on God's part, there is no weakness that could prevent Him from delivering you from sin's awful destruction. He is able to perform all that He has promised. In Ephesians 3:20 we find that God "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." With all His promises being "yea" and "amen," please note, then, that any failure to find forgiveness is on the part of the individual. There is no reason for anyone to be lost!

The long-suffering, mercy, and patience of God waits in anticipation for each man, woman, and child to make the decision to surrender and serve Him. Beware, dear one, of the danger in procrastination! There will be great calamity to those who put off their soul's salvation. Why? Because one never knows when death will come and cut off all possibility of being able to get right with God. Remember, every day that you remain under sin's dominion, eternal doom awaits you. Once death overtakes you, it will be too late to repent. Today is the accepted time. "Behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2). "To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts" (Hebrews 3:7-8).

The decision rests with you, dear friend. You have the God-given right to choose how you prefer to live in

[continued on page 27]

Galatians 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

2 Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.

3 For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to

do the whole law.

4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

5 For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which work-

eth by love.

7 Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?

8 This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you.

9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.



Standing Fast

Brother Roger L. Decker

Walking the Walk of Faith

In verse 1 of our Scripture text, the Apostle Paul said, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty [thank God for the liberty] wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." We read that it was Paul's position that the way of grace and the way of the Law were complete opposites. The way of the Law makes salvation dependent on human achievement, but the man who takes the way of grace simply casts himself and his sin upon the mercy of God.

Paul went on to point out that if one accepted one part of the Law, such as circumcision, he was to accept it all, or he was a debtor to do it all. Galatia had not started their

walk with the Lord in this matter, and the persuasion that they were under at that time was not good.

Galatians 3:1-3 reads: "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you [tricked or deceived you], that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" The Apostle Paul reminded them that it was not faith in the Law that put them in right relationship with the Lord; it was faith in Jesus Christ.

In the early church when new converts received the Holy Spirit, there was a change in their spirits,

and that change was visible. It is the same way yet today when one is converted. There is a change in spirit, but that change is so drastic that it is visible to others. The saved individual, walking the walk of faith, is a different person than one who is out in the world.

Speaking of the conversion of the Apostle Paul, Acts 9:17-22 states: "And Ananias went his way, [Remember, at first Ananias kind of balked when God told him to go down to the house where Saul was and lay hands on him. Why? He did not know that Saul had been converted. The last he had heard about Saul was that he was breathing out threatenings against the church. So he received a command. The Lord told him, 'Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my

name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel' (verse 15). Ananias went his way.] and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

"And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ."

The Power of the Gospel

Let us look at the early converts in the Book of Acts, Chapter 2. On the Day of Pentecost, about three thousand souls were added to the church when Peter preached that first message. In the same chapter you can read about those early Christians, the firstfruits of the Church of God.

Verses 42-47 read: "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common [because it is a common salvation]; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat

their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

Everyone could see that a new surge of life and power had come to those early converts. Things change when individuals are converted. A drastic change takes place when one accepts Jesus Christ. Salvation is not church joining. Joining a church cannot bring about a change in your life. Many people become religious, but no definite change takes place in their lives. When you meet Jesus Christ, a definite change will take place in your life.

That same experience had happened to the Galatians. Paul was saying that the change did not happen because they had obeyed the regulations of the Law, but because they had heard the good news of the love of God and responded to it in perfect trust. The easiest way to understand salvation is to see it working in someone's life. For a sinner to understand salvation without knowing a lot of Scriptures and without having it applied to his own heart, he must see it work in another individual's life. Many times this is where the lack is. The power of the Gospel is in the life that is lived. Whether it is in the factory, in the shopping mall, in the school, or in the home, the power of the Gospel lies in the life that has accepted it.

When one preaches the Word of God, there is a need for ones to live the message that is preached. There needs to be a cloud of witnesses. Galatia had run into a problem, and the Apostle Paul was letting the people know that the problem had affected them. In verses 7-9 of our Scripture lesson Paul said this: "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."

What was Paul saying? In essence, he told them, "You did run well. You made a terrific start." The people at Galatia had received the

Spirit of God, and God had brought them out from under the yoke of bondage of the old Law. Paul said they ran well, but someone had hindered them.

A Little Leaven Leavens the Whole Lump

The Apostle compared Christianity to a race that is run. In 1 Corinthians 9:24 Paul said, "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain." Again, Paul said in verse 8 of our Scripture text, "This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you." They had been listening to someone who had persuaded them. In other words, they were not as spiritual as they once were. They were going back under the Law, which dealt with the flesh. The word *persuasion* means "influence that has won you over or that seems likely to do so."

Paul let them know that "leaven" was stopping their spiritual advancement. What is *leaven* in the New Testament? It is used metaphorically, it is used in speaking of corrupt doctrine, and it is also used when speaking of mixing error with Truth. Paul said in verse 9 of our Scripture text, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." Persuasion that inserts leaven (hypocrisy) into your thought life will affect you. Luke 12:1 reads, "In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy."

In Matthew 16:11-12 Jesus said: "How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees."

If you study the Book of Gala-

tians, you will find that those people had started out with wonderful experiences, but they became entangled again in Judaism. That persuasion came from Judaizers, and it had slowed down their spiritual advancement. Paul discerned that they were not as spiritual as they once were. They had been hindered in the race.

Yet today people are being hindered in the race by persuasive influences. This message is up to date right in the evening time. It might not be the old Law or Judaizers who are hindering people. However, there are individuals whom the enemy is using just as he did the Pharisees and the Sadducees. We are in a battle. This is not a battle that lasts for one week and then we lay off for a week. We are in a battle continually. The devil does not take a break and back off to rest for a while. The devil is a spirit, just as God is a Spirit. About the time you think you have this thing whipped, or about the time you think you are doing really well, take heed, lest you fall.

There are hindrances that keep ones from obeying the Truth. Paul said "a little leaven" leavens the whole lump. It only takes a little false doctrine, or a little mixing of Truth with error. If it were all error, people would not accept it.

Beware of the Enemy's Deceit

In 1 Kings, Chapter 13, in the Old Testament, you can read that a man of God out of Judah was sent to Bethel with a message to cry out against idolatry. The man of God obeyed the charge he was given to prophesy against Jeroboam's altar and foretold the destruction of that altar and the idolatrous priests by Josiah. He gave Jeroboam a sign that the prophecy should be completed. King Jeroboam got stirred and reached out to take hold of the man of God, and his hand dried up, and he could not pull it back. The prophecy of the man of God came true. The altar was rent and the ashes

were poured out. Jeroboam asked the man of God to ask God to restore his hand, and God restored it.

It was customary for a king in those days to take a visitor home with him and offer him a reward. However, the man of God refused and recited to King Jeroboam the definite command that he had received from the Word of God. This command was very explicit and needed no interpretation. We can read of this in 1 Kings 13:7-10, which states: "And the king said unto the man of God, Come home with me, and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward. And the man of God said unto the king, If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place: For so was it charged me [how?] by the word of the LORD, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest. So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Bethel." The man of God went another way as the Lord had commanded him.

Church, when you stand for Truth and obey it, the enemy will always contest you: "Did you really mean it?" There was an old prophet around, and there are a lot of such prophets around today. They will try to fill your ears with trash. The old prophet deceived the man of God. He convinced the man of God by telling him, first, that he also was a prophet, as he was. Second, he told him "an angel spake unto me by the word of the LORD" (verse 18). That statement got the man of God's attention.

What did the Apostle Paul say to the church at Galatia? Galatians 1:6-9 reads: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be

accused. [Paul said it the second time] As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accused."

The old prophet told the man of God the complete opposite of what God told him. Go right back to the days of Adam and Eve, when the serpent spoke to Eve and said, "Ye shall not surely die" (Genesis 3:4), which was the complete opposite of what God said. Adam and Eve did die spiritually. First Kings 13:18 reads, "He said unto him, I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him."

Avoid Those Who Cause Dissension

If you are listening to someone who brings you down spiritually, that person is a detriment to your salvation, and you need to stop listening to that individual. There will always be ones around who are negative about everything. You need to stay away from such people, because they will drag you down spiritually.

We read in 1 Kings 13:20-22: "And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, that the word of the LORD came unto the prophet that brought him back: And he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the LORD, and hast not kept the commandment which the LORD thy God commanded thee, But camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place, of the which the LORD did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water; thy carcass shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers."

In so many words, God was saying, "You want to listen to that old prophet? All right, I am going to let that old prophet prophesy to you." For a change the old prophet spoke the truth when God spoke

through him. If the command that the man of God received needed to be changed, then the One who gave him the charge was still able to change it.

There are two characteristics of men who are hurtful to the church and to Christian fellowship. There are some characteristics in people you need to watch for. These characteristics are in individuals who battle against the church. There are men who cause dissensions among the brethren. Any man who does anything that disturbs the peace of a church, as one commentator said, has much to answer for, for there are people who take pride in making trouble and who like nothing better than to sow the poisonous seeds of strife. The man who has brought strife to any band of brothers will answer for it to Him who is the King and the Head of the church.

Some men put hindrances in the way of others. The man who makes it harder for someone else to be a Christian also has much to answer for. The man whose conduct is a bad example, whose influence is an evil snare, whose teaching dilutes or weakens the Christian faith which he pretends to teach will someday bear his own punishment, and it will not be light, for Jesus was stern. Jesus was very implicit to any man who caused one of His little ones to stumble.

Mark 9:42 reads, "And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea." Jesus said in Luke 17:1, "It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come!" Offenses will come. To *offend* means "to cause to stumble." Be careful, church, because some people are employed by the devil, and they are set out to cause you to stumble and fall, if possible. Your stumbling or falling elevates them by saying that they were right all along. It is a terrible spirit that would want to see a brother stumble or fall.

Standing for What Is Right

Church, to stand fast you must love God more than anything else in this world. That is Bible. We read in Luke 10:27, "And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself." You need to love God even more than your family. You need to love the Truth more than you love your own husband or wife, boyfriend or girlfriend, and children.

How did Jesus teach it? He said in Luke 14:26, "If any man come to me [or becomes a follower of Me], and hate not [your love for God must be so supreme that it looks like your love for your mother or your father is almost like hate] his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Notice that He did not say that one would struggle with being a disciple, but that "he cannot be my disciple."

Sometimes family will put a tremendous strain on your experience with the Lord, especially if they go to another church. There can be a strain when you are around them. You will not feel free to discuss religion or salvation for fear that it might wind up in a heated disagreement. Therefore, you have to be careful of what you say, but you still have to stand for the Truth. You have to stand for what is right regardless of the environment.

Standing for what is right does not always mean standing with your mouth. Some people can lay it out with the tongue, but their lives come short of their words. You must stand with a life that is sold out to the message. The power of the message is not just in the tongue, but in the life that you live. The world knows the message of holiness, and they know it better than you think they know it. If you let down, someone is going to challenge you and ask questions: "Oh, you started to do

that now, huh? You didn't used to do that."

In the morning-time church three thousand souls got saved, and they were rejoicing. Acts 2:42 reads, "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." Verses 44-46 read: "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house. . . ."

Being Faithful

God puts the desire within you when you are truly saved to want to be around other people who are saved. You will not miss a service intentionally. God wants you to be faithful. Psalm 101:6 says, "Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me."

Luke 16:10-13 reads: "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

In Luke 16:8 we read, "And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." The lesson is that the sons in this world are wiser in their generation than the sons of light, and it simply means this: if only the Christian were as eager and willing in his attempt to attain goodness as a man

of the world is in his attempt to attain money and comfort, he would be a much better man.

As a Christian, if you put forth as much ambition and desire to walk in light and righteousness as a man of this world puts forth to attain riches, you will be way up the road. He said they are much wiser than we are. Some worldly people have more ambition than some who claim to be the people of God. They have more ambition in the things of this world and in attaining money and social status than people who are saved have in attaining righteousness. That is what He was dealing with.

If men would give as much attention to the things that concern their souls as they do to things that concern their businesses, they would be much more spiritual. A man will spend twenty times the amount of time and money and effort on his pleasure, such as his hobby, his garden, or a sport, as he does his time at church. Your Christianity will begin to be real and effective only when you spend as much time and effort on it as you do your worldly activities.

Again, Luke 16:10-11 states: "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?"

The lesson is that a man's way of fulfilling a small task is the best proof of his fitness or unfitness to be entrusted with a much larger task. How did you handle the first task that was committed to you when you were first saved? Could you be trusted with it? That is proof of whether you are capable of handling something greater. This is true of spiritual things as well as earthly things. No man will be advanced to higher office until there is proof of his honesty and ability in a smaller position.

Be Not Entangled Again

Again, Galatians 5:1 states, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Church, God has set you free from some things. He has really done a work on you, and you were freed from sin when you were converted, and God has been bringing you along. Do not turn back to those beggarly elements, the things that held you in bondage. Do not turn back from modesty. Styles and fads are going to change. The world is not going to be content with dressing as they did in the 1950's. Although things are going to change, the church can still be modest.

You need to stand against some things. If you are seeking a companion, the first thing you should consider is one's spirituality. How spiritual is he or she? When a couple is dating, they should never be parked in an automobile in some lonely spot or be alone in a house or an apartment together. Why? You have to fight the flesh all the time.

If you take the words of admonition, there are things that you both can do as Christians. You can go out to a meal together, attend revivals together, or get together with other young couples. There are many things a couple can do together without making it convenient for the flesh to sin. You should not wait to pray after you go somewhere together; you should pray before you go out.

As a Christian, you should stand against worldly dress. People may persecute you because of your modest standard of dress, but they will respect you if you do what is right and dress modestly.

The Apostle Paul was concerned about the Galatians. They had made a terrific start; it was a beautiful congregation. They had received the Gospel, and they were standing fast in the liberty wherein Christ called

them. However, they listened to some Judaizers, those of the circumcision, which were under the old Law, who persuaded differently. They were persuaded to go back under the Law. Paul spoke to them about circumcision and the works of the Law. He admonished them not to be entangled again and lose the liberty and freedom that Jesus Christ had called them to.

The same admonition is good for us yet, church. Today people are not influenced by Judaizers or those of the old Law, but people are going to be around who know just enough Truth to work on you. They will mix Truth with error. What is their cry? They say, "You can't judge." They need to read the Scriptures right. The ones who could not judge were hypocrites; they had no business judging. As a Christian, if you cannot judge some things, you are in bad shape.

Standing fast is necessary. The man of God out of Judah who went to Bethel had the message right. He carried out the mission that God sent him to do. However, when he was on his way back, an old prophet came down the road and found him sitting under an oak tree. The Scripture says that old prophet lied to him. What did it cost him? It cost him his life. A lion attacked and killed him along the way, and then the lion stood guard over him. The donkey he was riding stood there as well, but the lion never attacked the donkey. Normally a lion would attack a donkey, but that lion represented a message from God.

Church, you can stand fast by the grace of God. You must do what is right. You will feel so much better when you do things right. When you please God, you really feel good about it. You are free from condemnation and chastisement. You need to stand fast and stand against those things that would take you into bondage, as God has shown you.

(Compact Disk TR-156E)

Proverbs 11:27 He that diligently seeketh good procureth favor: but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto him.

Rewarded According to Your Seeking



Brother C. H. Dickerson

Seek Him Diligently

As we look at this Scripture text, it lets us know that he who seeks good will procure favor from God. To *procure* means to seek opportunity or to work hard to acquire some-thing. In other words, serving God does not always come easily. It is always the best way, but it is not always the easiest way. When you become a Christian, it will not be very long before you will find that the devil will put many roadblocks in your way.

Jesus warned about this very thing. In Luke 21:34-36 He said: "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your heart be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all

these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." Jesus let us know that the cares of life will come. They are going to crowd in upon us. I believe that we all can agree that we have never in our lives seen a time when people are as busy as they are today. Even if we could add twelve more hours to a day, all those hours would be filled with activities. The first things that get crowded out of people's lives, in most cases, are the things of God. That is the reason most people backslide. Many people go to an altar of prayer because they fail to take time to pray or to read and study the Word of God. Some people do not even take time to go to the house of God. Jesus warned that this snare would come upon us unless we take heed to ourselves. If you are overtaken with the cares of life when the Son of Man comes, you will not be ready to meet Him. You need to work very hard and seek every opportunity to serve God in order to procure His favor.

If you will do that, you will receive favor from God.

The Scripture text lets you know that you will be rewarded when life comes to an end. Scripture calls the Christian life a race in some places and a highway in others. You get on this Christian highway when you get saved and start living for God. However, whether you live for God or not, your journey will come to an end one of these days. When your life is over, you will be rewarded according to how you have lived.

Jesus said in John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." We each will come to the end of the road one of these days, and only God knows when it will be. Jesus said if you live for God, you will have eternal life, but if you do

not live for God, you will suffer eternal damnation.

In Matthew 7:7-8 Jesus said: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." There is a vast difference between diligently seeking and passively looking for something. Sometimes you may look for something, but it is not really important, so you just let it go. However, when looking for something very important, you will seek it diligently.

My wife read something in one of the periodicals that came to our house. Later she was telling me about it, and then she wanted to show it to me. She thought she knew where it was, but she could not find it. I came into the house a few days later, and she had many magazines out in looking for that article. She hunted for it for several weeks. Finally, she found it, and she said, "Here it is!" She sought it diligently.

I said this because many people say they want to be saved, but the Scripture plainly teaches that you need to seek God with all your heart; then you will find Him. The Scripture text says that when you diligently seek good, you will procure favor from God. If you do not do that, you will not receive His favor. In Hebrews, Paul said that God is a rewarder of them that *diligently* seek Him, or work hard to seek Him.

"All We Like Sheep Have Gone Astray"

According to the Word of God, we all have gone astray. When we reached the age of accountability, God appeared to us and showed us what we ought to do, but we were short of grace and unable to do it, so we went out into sin. Some of us went into deep sin, and some of us did not go far into sin. However, there is no difference between a big sin and a little sin. A little sin will send your soul to hell just as well as a big sin will. I do not like to use the words *little* and *big* when speaking of sin because sin is sin in the eyes of God. Romans 3:23 tells us, "For all have sinned, and come short of

the glory of God." Every one of us committed sin, and as a result, we do not have stones to throw at anyone else.

Isaiah 53:6 says, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Today medical science will try to tell you that this so-called alternative lifestyle is something that is inherited. On the contrary, the Word of God tells us that every man went his own way. In other words, man turned to the fleshly way simply because he wanted to have his own way, to please himself. Sin is not inherited.

Whatever condition you are in, you chose that way. If you are a saint of God, it is simply because you chose to be a saint of God. When God knocked on your heart's door and showed you that you were lost and without Him, you chose Him. God never forces salvation on anyone. God will move upon each individual sometime in his life to show him that he is lost and undone and on his way to a devil's hell. He will give that person the choice either to serve Him or to reject Him. If you are a saint, it is because you chose God. If you are a sinner, it is because you have rejected God. You are where you choose to be. You cannot blame your spiritual condition on someone else. People try to blame others for their condition and for where they stand before God. They say that some were made to be on fire for God and some were made to be quiet. However, God said that everyone went his own way, and you are where you want to be. If you are on fire for God, it is because you study and get close to God and do what God would have you to do. If you are lukewarm, it is because you do not want to be on fire for God.

I read a book that a man wrote concerning Psalm 23. He wrote about how a good shepherd takes his sheep out and watches them closely. If he saw one sheep straying from the flock, he brought it back into the fold, simply because when it was away from the rest of the sheep, it was an open prey to be destroyed by another animal. Also, there is a danger of a sheep falling into a crevice where it might not be seen or found, and it could die there.

Jesus said there is a danger of people

getting separated from the flock and having nothing more than a profession instead of a possession. In Matthew 15:8 Jesus said, "This people, draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honour-eth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me." Jesus tells the shepherd to keep a close eye on people so this does not happen.

God Knows His Sheep

If you get out of fellowship with God, you are in grave danger. God wants you to stay in fellowship with Him. If your fellowship with God is not what it should be, you are an open prey for the beasts of this old world. If you do not walk in the light, you will lose fellowship with God and also with the brethren. First John 1:7 says, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Some may have more light than others; however, if we each walk in all the light that God shows us, we will have fellowship with one another.

There is a vast difference between fellowship and friendship. Friendship is man-made, but fellowship is sent from God. It may not take much to break up friendship. Sometimes all the friends have to do is disagree a little. However, fellowship comes from God. If I walk in all the light I know, and I am motivated by the Spirit of God, and if you walk in all the light that you know and you are motivated by the Spirit of God, we will have fellowship. We do not have to agree on everything. We believe in sanctification, justification, and unification, but I do not believe that any two people on the face of the earth agree on everything. A husband and wife do not always agree on everything. Spiritually speaking, we all may not see eye to eye on everything, but we can still have fellowship. Fellowship is not marred simply because you like something that I do not like. When we walk in the light, we will still have fellowship and the devil cannot destroy it.

Many people have drifted and are scattered throughout the hills of Babylon. The Prophet Ezekiel talked about this very thing in Ezekiel 34:5 when he said,

"And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered." In other words, they were scattered though they were saved, and they became a prey to man-made religions. People have gotten saved out in Babylon, in man-made organizations, but God said that He was going to bring those people out of Babylon and into one fold. In verses 11-12 God said: "Behold I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day."

God knows His sheep because they are marked. Anyone who has ever raised sheep knows that they have a tendency to get out. In a flock of sheep, the only way the sheep farmer knows whether or not the sheep are his is by the mark on them. Many people today claim to have religion. A large percentage of our nation claims to be Christians, but God knows His sheep. Many are scattered due to the lack of having shepherds that preach the Truth. The sheep were scattered in the dark and cloudy day when man was in control, but God said that He would seek them out. God's sheep are marked, and when He calls them, they hear His voice and follow Him. God calls them out of the places where they have been scattered.

Lay Aside Every Hindrance

At one time, some people rejoiced in the things of God, and then they wandered from the divine fold and went into a deep spiritual famine. They drifted further and further from God and the Truth, and they will never come out of that condition unless God awakens them. I thought of the prodigal son in Luke, Chapter 15, when he said that he wanted his share of the inheritance. His father gave it to him, and then he left home. The Scripture tells us that he wasted his substance. He wasted his life on the things of this old world.

Finally, the prodigal son got to the place where he was in want, and he went to work for a fellow who had a pig farm.

He was feeding the pigs, and he said that he would have eaten the husks that the pigs ate, but no one would give to him any. One day he came to himself and remembered how good things were at his father's house. He said that he would go back to his father's house. When people walk away from God, they are going down. They get further and further away from God. They will never see themselves unless God is good enough to awaken them.

Jesus lets us know that He wants to save the lost. In Luke 19:10 He said, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Second Peter 3:9 says, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." This lets you know that if an individual wants to be saved, he can be. However, that person must be willing to battle the hindrances. There are hindrances and powers that will try to defeat you every day. You will not be saved long until things will work against you.

Hebrews 12:1-3 reads: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith: who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."

We are warned to lay aside every weight, or every hindrance. Weights will drag you down so that you do not have time to read the Bible, pray, or attend the worship services. The devil will try to discourage you. He is an oppressor. He tried to discourage Christ, but Christ made it through. When He tried to help people, there was discouragement all along the way; Christ was a man of sorrows.

When you get saved, there will not be joy all the time. Many times the devil will try to defeat you, but you need to get your eyes off those things and get them

on the things of God. You need to get your eyes on Christ so that you do not get weary and faint in your mind. Christ went through trials, tribulations, and temptations, but God took Him through. We are serving the same God, and He will take us through. We can have victory day by day, regardless of what comes upon us.

Many people get weary in serving God and give up. That is where you will find yourself unless you keep your eyes on Christ, knowing that He can take you through. You cannot take yourself through, but God can give you power over every hindrance and everything the devil tries to throw at you. The devil will come to you in the trial and say, "Why not just quit?" You should not let anything hinder you. You need to run the race that is set before you. If you are going to be successful in this Christian race, Paul said you must lay aside every weight. You should not allow anything to hinder you. When trials and tribulations come, keep your eyes on Christ and get them off your troubles, lest you become weary and faint in your Christian experience.

Arise and Go Without Fear

God spoke to the Danites through their brethren in Judges 18:9-10 and said: "Arise, that we may go up against them: for we have seen the land, and, behold, it is very good: and are ye still? be not slothful to go, and to enter to possess the land. When ye go, ye shall come unto a people secure, and to a large land: for God hath given it into your hands; a place where there is no want of any thing that is in the earth." The Danites were seeking land to dwell in, and the first move was up to them. When you want to serve God with all your heart and seek His face, your first move is to arise and do it without fear. Many people want to serve God, but the devil has them scared. Some are afraid to even start, and some backsliders are afraid to start again.

If you are going to serve God, you must arise and go without fear. You have to get over your fear of what the devil might do. If God is on the throne of your heart, nothing can defeat you. You must not be slothful, and do not be afraid to

battle. When you get saved, you enter a war, but God has promised victory. He will give you all the grace you need.

It is precious to have fellowship with God and man. Serving God is the precious land that the Scripture mentions. It is far more precious than all that the world has to offer. The Word of God tells us there are pleasures in sin, but they are short-lived. If you get an experience with God, you will have lasting pleasure. In fact, in the Book of Judges the Scripture speaks of a place where there is no want of anything. God will supply everything you need. When you are depressed, if you will go to God, He will lift you. If you need help, God will help you. He will help you when you are sick in body, and He will help you when the devil tries to work on you. God has promised all these things.

I want you to see that having fellowship with God is most precious. Also, fellowship between congregations is precious. We can have fellowship when we walk in the light and have God's presence and His blessings upon us. This fellowship is worth everything. The Scripture says to arise and not be afraid because God is with us. Also, we are instructed not to be slothful to go into that "land" because it is to be desired; it is a land of joy and pleasure forever. This old world has seasonal pleasures, but they are soon gone. People are going out and turning away from God for just a season of worldly pleasures.

Psalms 16:11 reads, "Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Being in God's presence is a time of fullness of joy. There is joy and pleasure not only in this world but also in the world to come. When we are ready to draw our last breath and cross the river Jordan, or the river of death, God will be right there to take each of us across. It is a pleasure to serve God in this world, and it will be a pleasure to serve Him in Heaven.

Search for God With All Your Heart

The devil causes some people to think that backsliding is something that does not amount to much. They think

they can backslide, and then all they have to do is cry out to God, and He will save them and put them back on the right track. It cost the prodigal son something to go out into sin. It was not just a matter of going back to his father's house and then it was all over. No, that was not the end of it. The Scripture lets us know that when he returned to his father's house, his father ran to meet him when he returned. Yes, his father forgave him and took him back; however, it brought division in the home between the two brothers.

When God's people were in Babylonian captivity, there was a time payment. Jeremiah 29:10-14 states: "For thus saith the Lord, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the Lord: and I will turn away your captivity. . . ." After seventy years had expired, God told them to call upon Him and He would visit them.

It is a miracle that God gives backsliders another opportunity to get saved. He does not have to. After they have tasted the good things of God and then go out into sin again, it is only the mercy of God that gives them another chance. If God can see that person is honest, the Spirit of God will talk to that one again. If he or she will seek Him wholeheartedly, that person will find Him.

When an individual walks away from God, it is not easy to return. There is a payday for sin. The Israelites had to pay seventy years. Everything has a payday. Backsliders can be restored, but God does not want anyone to backslide. He has all the grace you need so that you do not have to backslide, no matter what the temptation is. The world is full of temptations, but God can give you all the power and the grace you need. You do not have to sin, but if you do, you are going to pay for it. You cannot do sinful

things and get by.

Casually looking for something is entirely different from wholeheartedly seeking something. When you have lost something valuable, you will turn everything upside down and look everywhere you can think to look. You will try to remember when you last saw the item and try to pinpoint when you last had it. If you have backslidden, you cannot get back to God by casually looking for Him. You must seek Him with your whole heart and want Him more than anyone or anything in this world – more than wanting a companion and children, more than your job, more than your bank account, more than anything.

God Can Turn Your Captivity

When you get to the place where you are willing to lay aside everything else, you will be found of Him and He will take away your captivity. When people are in sin, they are captives, though they may not believe it. They may even look down on the Christian and say, "That poor person cannot do this and cannot go here or there." On the contrary, the saint of God is free. The people of God can go anywhere they want to go and do anything they want to do. The difference is that the saints do not want to do anything wrong. The ones who are in bondage are those who are living in sin. They are bound by cigarettes, drugs, cursing, lying, and various other things.

God will break that captivity if they will hearken to Him and seek Him wholeheartedly. They may go into the house of God with alcohol on their breath or the smell of cigarette smoke on their breath, but when God saves the soul, the bondage of those things will be gone. God can break the old habits of life and set them free. There is a price for every sin that you commit, and you will have to pay the price. You might have to pay for the next ten, twenty, or thirty years; only God knows.

One songwriter penned the words: "*Standing somewhere in the shadows, you'll find Jesus. He's the only one who cares and understands.*" When you are ready to pay the price, God will visit you. He will talk to you and put you under conviction. When God visits you, if you will hear

Him and pray, He will turn away your captivity. Thank God, it does not make any difference how deep in sin you are, when God saves your soul, He will break every fetter of sin and set you free. He will give you joy that will last the rest of your life. Also, when this life is over, He will take you to paradise where you will have eternal joy.

Paul said in Titus 2:11-12: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." The Greek says that we should live godly right in this present age. The devil is trying to make excuses for people and selling them on the idea that this age is far worse than any other age and that people cannot live for God. However, the Word of God tells us that we ought to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age. It does not make any difference how bad the times are or how bad sin is or how deeply people are living in sin, if you will turn to God in this present age, He can save and keep you. He can turn your life around and give you victory so that you can live for Him.

God Can Break Every Fetter of Sin

I want you to realize that although God has given everyone the opportunity to be saved, the devil will tell you: "You

are too far gone. You cannot live above sin." I want you to remember one thing: the devil is a liar. He always has been, and he always will be. If you will seek God with all your heart and want Him more than anything else, He will break every fetter of sin and set you free. He will take away your captivity.

One night a man called me on the telephone and asked, "What do you teach out there?" I told him to come out and see. He said, "I will." The next service when I came out of the prayer room, I looked in the vestibule and saw someone who looked very bad. I preached that night, and before we began to sing the hymn of invitation, he went to the altar of prayer. A few weeks later, little by little, he began to look like a man. He had been on drugs, but when God saved him, He set him free. God delivered him from his sinful habits, and today he is rejoicing in the things of God.

Before I was saved, I was bound by the habits of life. Whenever I went to the altar, I always had lots of cigarettes on hand. The devil would tell me, "You just finish them up, and then you can serve God." When I came to the place where I threw them away and turned away from them, God moved on my soul and saved me. God set me free from them. I have not touched one since, and that was more than fifty years ago. You should not let the devil tell you that salvation and this joy are for someone else and that you

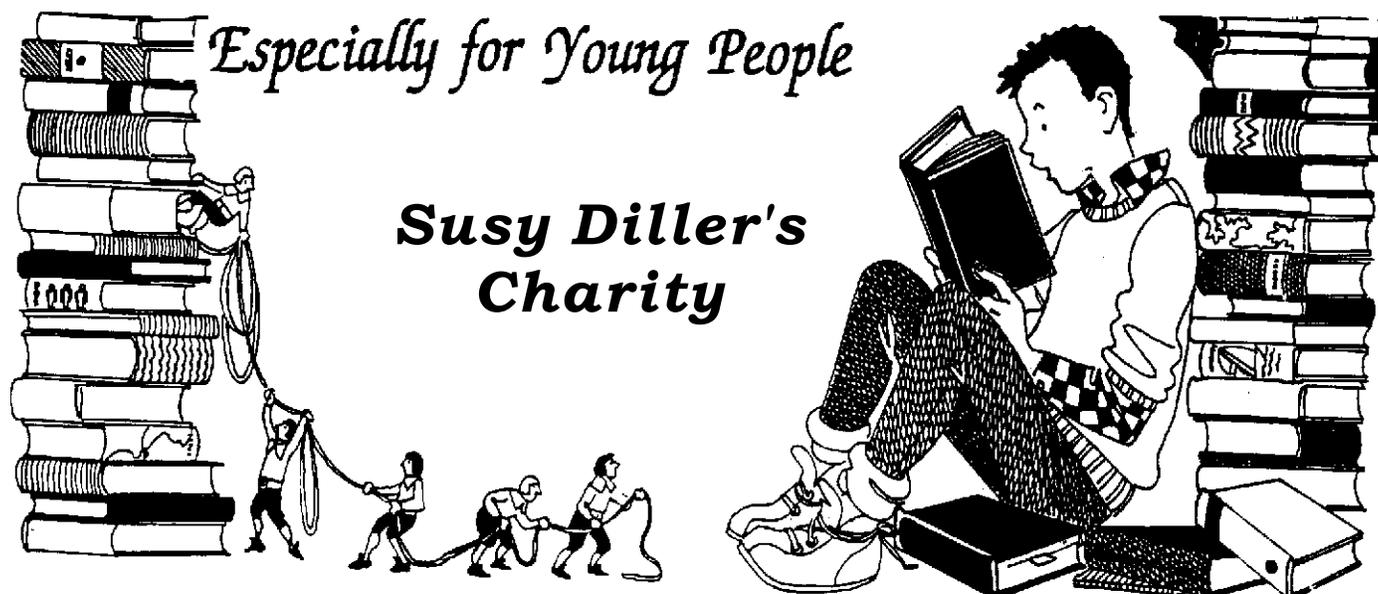
cannot have victory over whatever has you bound. God can break every fetter of sin, set you free, and deliver you from every habit of life. However, you must be willing to turn away from sin. If you are, God will save you and give you victory.

Young person, there is nothing out in sin. You can talk to anyone who is a Christian who has been down that road. One day my wife called me and told me that a man in the hospital wanted to see me. I went into the hospital and talked to him, and he got saved. He used to smoke, drink beer, and curse, but God delivered him from all those things. When he got out of the hospital, he came to the church services, and his tongue was clean. He went home and cleaned out the refrigerator and threw away his pipe and tobacco. In the services he often stood up and turned around to the audience and told the young people, "Don't ever go into sin." He testified to them how God can change a person.

No matter how deep you are in sin, how bound you are, or how much the devil lies and tells you: "There is no need to try anymore. You might as well quit trying," if you will turn your life over to God, He will move in and change your heart. He will put a new Spirit within you. He will put His Spirit within you and give you the grace to do what He wants you to do.

(Cassette C-5316E)

*When the Spirit prompts the asking,
When the waiting heart believes,
Then we know of each petition,
Everyone who asks receives.*



Especially for Young People

Susy Diller's Charity

"Pleas'm, only a penny. I'm most froze and starved!"

The carriage stood at the edge of the sidewalk, and Mrs. Linley was just going out shopping with her two children. Nellie was all scarlet and ermine, her sweet, happy face framed in with golden curls, and Frank not a whit behind in elegance, though a trifle more haughty, as you could tell by the wide distance he gave the miserable little beggar.

"Get away!" said Mrs. Linley, with a disdainful sweep of the hand.

The woman and the child looked at each other—one of those glances that stamp a face upon one's memory. Mrs. Linley was always afraid of street trash. They might have a fever or small pox or some other infection lurking in their rags.

The carriage drove on. The children were happy and well-behaved. They spent all the pleasant, sunshiny middle of the day going from shop to shop. What hosts of tempting things! Frank and Nellie laughed and talked and ran to Mama with a hundred pretty things, but did not tease.

"Poor children love to play just as well as rich children, don't they, Mama?" said grave, sweet Nellie.

"I hope you will never forget, my dear, that we are all created alike, and that all the poor little ones are just as precious in God's sight."

"And Christ the Lord was born for everybody," Frank added in a reflective manner. "My teacher told me so

on Sunday,—so that all little children might be saved."

"Some are very poor and sick, and nobody seems to care for them—like the little beggar girl who stood watching us when we started. O Mama! Isn't it hard? What becomes of them?"

The sweet face was full of tender pity.

"God takes care of them, like the sparrows," said Frank.

Mrs. Linley did not answer. Already her heart condemned her, for after all, she was a kindhearted woman. She half expected to find the wretched object on her doorstep. If so, she would try to make amends for her harsh words, but she was not there.

When they returned home from shopping, they shivered with the cold and ran to the register. Then Papa came home, and they had the happiest evening imaginable. Of course, one cannot make one's charities go all around the world, but Mrs. Linley thought she had stretched hers a long distance. So she had, and yet she might have given the child at her door a few pennies. But street beggars were so often thieves!

Meanwhile the little beggar girl wandered on. For nearly a week she had slept in the station house and begged a little during the day, just enough to keep body and soul together. She used to sell matches and pins, but she had no capital to buy a new stock, and there were so many in the trade. A month ago the old woman

with whom she had lived died suddenly; then she had to live the best she could.

She went on asking now and then for a penny. Some gave the forlorn little beggar a scowl, some did not even deign to look, and one or two men spoke roughly to her. Oh! She was so hungry and so cold.

The bright sunshine did not seem to warm her a bit. She looked wistfully into basement windows. She stared at the merry, happy children who ran by in warm clothing. Her shoes were out to the ground; her tatters flapped in the biting wind.

It was growing colder and colder. She ran along, until she came to a restaurant. Such a delightful, savory smell came through the grating, and a faint warmth that was most grateful to her. Not a mouthful of anything had she eaten since yesterday noon. People went along with great market baskets full; men with bundles in their arms, girls and boys all hurrying homeward.

"Move on, move on, there!" said the stern voice of a policeman.

What if she was arrested and sent to prison? She would have something to eat, and the pain gnawing at her stomach was so hard to bear. There was a jacket she might steal—the men around would be sure to see her. She reached out her hand.

No, she couldn't! She never had been a thief. She remembered her mother, who had died two years ago. The pretty lady getting into the car-

riage had made her think of *her!* Oh! How good it was that the dear mother could never be hungry again. She had said, "Jennie, *never tell a lie, never steal.*"

She sat down on a doorstep and began to cry. It was very cold now, and she was so chilled that the tears froze on her thin cheeks. She curled herself up in the corner. If she could only get to sleep.

"Hello!" said a cheerful voice, and someone shook her by the shoulder. "You'll freeze to death here! It's pinching cold! You'd better run home."

"Lemme be. I haven't any home. And I was almost asleep. You've brought all the old pain back."

Sturdy young Susy Diller, herself a poor working girl, dragged up the forlorn little object and scanned the thin, blue face.

"Where have you been?"

"Station houses and such," the child answered sullenly. "After old Molly died, they turned me out. I hadn't any capital, so I had to go out of trade. I've tried to beg—"

Susy stood considering. What would Granny say if she brought the poor thing home? "Don't you ask another one to dinner," she had said already. "There won't be room for 'em to stand on one foot." Susy drew her sleeve across her eyes. Somehow her heart had grown very tender since she had been going to the mission school. A little scene flashed into her mind: On Sunday, Mr. Linley, the most splendid man in the world, Susy insisted to Granny, had been explaining to the boys and girls how even the Savior of all the world had been houseless.

"I wish I'd been there!" said Susy bravely, "I'd a' took Him in."

"Susy," replied Mr. Linley, "when we do such a thing for the very poorest and meanest, we do it for the Lord." Then he read the beautiful commendation that the Savior was to bestow at the last upon those who did what they could in this world, picturing their blessed joy and surprise as they said: "Lord, when saw we Thee hungry and fed Thee, or sick and ministered unto Thee?" He had a way of making such vivid pictures that the children used to listen wide-eyed and

open-mouthed.

Susy had work in a factory and took care of Granny, who was too old to do much of anything, and was almost bent double with rheumatism. They had a room on the second floor of a tumble-down barrack, and one small bedroom out of it; but Granny thought it almost a palace, because Susy was so good to her.

Now here was one more to share their dinner. What would Granny say! But the young missionary did not stop long to consider the matter,—here was a case of real suffering, and Susy's conscience quickly adjusted itself.

"Come along," said Susy to the little vagrant, thinking somehow of the Lord of all who had not where to lay His head.

"For maybe if He was here," she soliloquized, "we shouldn't be able to tell Him from anyone else. And it's just—anybody."

Susy took the little stray by the arm, and hurried her along. Poor little Jennie! Her feet seemed hardly to touch the ground, they were so cold and numb. She didn't much care even if she was being taken to the station house.

But she wasn't. After a while she felt the warmth and heard the voices, but she was so tired and sleepy that she dropped into a little heap before the fire and only heard her young rescuer say, "Let her sleep, Granny; it'll do her more good than anything else."

Such a time as they had! They were so crowded around the table that they had hardly elbow room. They made jokes, laughed, drank Granny's health in the fragrant coffee and were as happy as the happiest.

Meanwhile, over at Mr. Linley's they were having a grand time. Mrs. Linley played the piano, and they had sung some charming songs.

They had two or three songs sung also at Susy Diller's. Susy had learned them at the mission school. Finally, Jennie begged to lie down in the corner by the stove, for she felt a little chilly, and her head was aching.

"O Susy, won't you sing again?" she pleaded. "It's like Heaven. Mother used to tell me about it. Do you sup-

pose that the Lord Jesus cares for little girls who have to live on the street and sleep where they can?"

"Yes, He *does* care. Mr. Linley told me so. You see," and Susy laid her forefinger in the palm of the other hand, "this is the way: He puts the thought into other people's hearts, 'cause He isn't here to do the work."

"Oh!" said Jennie slowly, and with a sage nod, "wouldn't it be good, Susy, if He would put it into the hearts of rich folks? They could do so much."

"Sometimes He does. Look at the newsboys' dinner! And there's a good many things."

Poor Jennie sighed a little. She could not make it out straight in her tired brain.

The next day was Sunday. Susy begged Mr. Linley to come and see the little sick girl at her house, for Jennie, the little beggar girl, was very sick. Cold and hunger had done their worst. It had been so hard and dreary since her mother died, with no one to care for her, and to have to dodge around continually, kicked and cuffed and almost starved.

"She's a pretty sick little girl," said Susy, "but Granny and I will do our best to pull her through."

Mr. Linley felt the pulse and shook his head. The fever was high and there was no strength to battle with it.

Then he looked into Susy's great, wistful eyes and was touched to the heart. The child had learned the sweetest and noblest lesson of all. She had gone out into the highway and hedges, and she had gathered in the lame and the halt and the blind.

"You see, I've grown fond of her, a'ready," explained Susy. "I'd do anything for her."

"I'm afraid it's too late. I will send in a doctor, and some delicacies from the house."

"If you please, I'd rather not have you do the last. You see, Granny spoke a little cross at first, and now she's trying to make it all up to her. She'll feel better if she does everything; and she's a good heart, has Granny."

What a point of conscience here amid poverty and ignorance!

"The lessons have not all been on

my side," said Mr. Linley to his wife afterward. "The poor little factory girl has taught me something that I shall never forget. To think of her going without her coat that she might provide a dinner for some homeless, hungry children. I wish you would go and see them, my dear." Mrs. Linley went with her husband.

Susy stared as if she had seen an angel. Granny dropped a curtesy, and dusted a chair with her apron.

"Little Jennie," Susy whispered, "poor little girl, can't you open your eyes a minute?"

She opened them — wider — wider. Then she rose a little and stared around — stretched out her trembling hands toward Mrs. Linley, and cried:

"O Mother! Mother! Susy said I should find you. I tried to be good, not to lie or steal, though I was nearly

starved. Susy's been so kind. She brought me in to dinner."

Mrs. Linley caught the swaying form in her arms. The last words quivered slowly on her lips and her eyes drooped. She remembered just where she had seen the child, and a pang of bitter self-upbraiding pierced her heart. She kissed the still lips for her mother's sake, and laid her gently down. Had Susy and Granny entertained an angel unawares, while her blind eyes had not been able to discern "the least of these?"

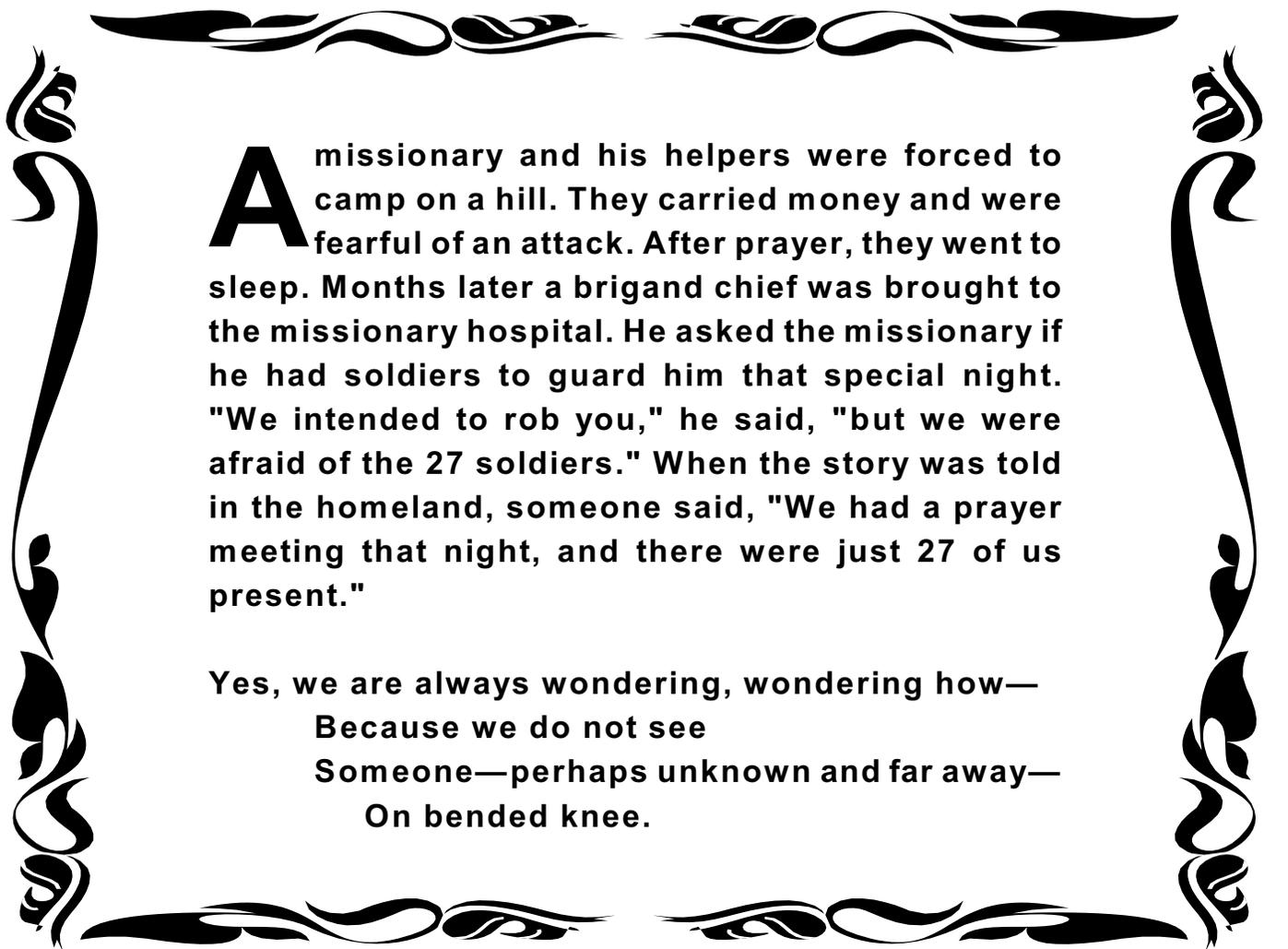
"Oh!" said Susy sobbing, "I'm so glad you came. I s'pose she thought it was her own mother, for she has talked about her all the time. Poor little girl! I shall always be thankful that I brought her in out of the cold, though I never guessed she was going to die."

"The fame of your charity has gone up among the angels, Susy," said Mr. Linley reverently. "And now, my dear girl, have little Jennie buried where you like, and bring the bill to me. I want a little share in your good work."

Mr. and Mrs. Linley walked home quietly.

"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me" (Matthew 25:34-36).

Selected



A missionary and his helpers were forced to camp on a hill. They carried money and were fearful of an attack. After prayer, they went to sleep. Months later a brigand chief was brought to the missionary hospital. He asked the missionary if he had soldiers to guard him that special night. "We intended to rob you," he said, "but we were afraid of the 27 soldiers." When the story was told in the homeland, someone said, "We had a prayer meeting that night, and there were just 27 of us present."

**Yes, we are always wondering, wondering how—
Because we do not see
Someone—perhaps unknown and far away—
On bended knee.**

Luke 18:18 And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

19 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God.

20 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother.

21 And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up.

22 Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.

23 And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich.

24 And when Jesus saw that he was

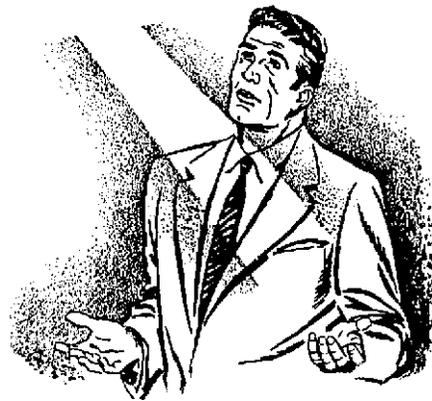
very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

25 For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

26 And they that heard it said, Who then can be saved?

27 And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.

YET LACKEST THOU ONE THING



Brother Irwin Seshier

Do You Have True Riches?

As I read these verses of Scripture, my mind went to the day in which we live. The way in which Jesus was talking to the rich ruler was no different from how Jesus speaks to people today. Some individuals turn their heads when Jesus commands them to do something to follow Him. If you are going to do anything for God, friend, you need to do it right away.

We have so much as a nation in comparison with other countries. We are so richly blessed. The sad thing is that we are extremely poor spiritually as a nation. You may inquire, "How can that be when we have religious organizations and so many churches and Bible colleges established throughout the country, and we praise the name of the Lord?" Those are nothing more than outward works without the Spirit of God. Our nation is spiritually op-

pressed.

Many people ask, "What must I do to be successful in the things of God?" The rich, young ruler was trying to find out what he could do to be successful, but without giving up the thing that was really close to him: his riches. Friend, you must give up *all* if you are going to follow Jesus Christ. You cannot withhold anything. I do not think anyone wants to go through life unsuccessfully. Most people think of being successful as having an education, investing their time and money wisely, and having a ready supply of income. They might have everything they need for retirement, but friend, that is not being successful spiritually. You need to have everything clear between you and God. Sad to say, too many people have their lives so categorized by what the world considers being successful that they do not think anything about God. They have much material wealth built up here on

earth, but they do not have a burning desire down deep in their souls to follow Jesus and to shun the world and the lusts of this old world.

This may not be a very popular message with the world, but if you are going to make Heaven your home one day, you must shun the world and follow Jesus. Friend, the Lord sees your heart, and He knows exactly what you possess. He knows you for what you really are. You cannot fool Him. God knows whether or not you are spiritually wealthy.

You may fool the pastor, the congregation, the people at your place of employment or where you attend school, but you cannot fool the Lord. You cannot get by Him. He knows your soul, and He knows what your soul pants after. He knows whether you go to church to worship Him in spirit and in Truth. He knows whether or not you truly desire to go to the house of God. When the alarm clock goes off on Sunday morning,

do you say, "Oh, I need to get up and get ready for Sunday school" or do you hit the snooze button on the alarm clock and go back to sleep?

Does your soul truly desire the things of God? We have only a short time to be here in this life. We need to work for the Lord. You may attend the worship services, but are your thoughts on the shopping mall? Are you thinking about what you are going to do after the service, hoping the preacher will hurry so that you can get out by twelve o'clock? There will be no clocks or calendars in eternity. Also, there will be no exit signs or cooling zones in hell.

If you have a need in your soul, thank God you can get that need met on this side of eternity. Sad to say, preachers in nominal religion are unconcerned about the condition of men's souls. They just want people to feel good. Friend, if you are going to make Heaven your home, you must be saved.

What Is Holding You Back?

In verse 18 of our Scripture text, the rich, young ruler asked Jesus, "Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Of course, Jesus told him the basics and got right down to the root of his problem. When one enters the military, he goes through basic training. They tell the men the basics of how to survive if they are out on the battlefield, how to take care of their weapons, and how to help one another. Those are some basics the soldiers need to fight a battle.

Christian friend, we are in a battle of all battles. Jesus gave the rich, young ruler the basics of being a child of God. As children of God, we must obey the commandments given by God. We must not overstep His commandments. If you want to be a child of God, you must do more than the basic Ten Commandments found in the Old Testament. What more must you do? A genuine child of God always strives to do more than what he needs to do. You should not cut back and try to get by with doing the minimum. You should strive to do more.

What do you hold on to that is better to you than following the plan of salvation? Friend, nothing is better than following the plan of salvation. Nothing is greater than being a child of God and experiencing the true spiritual indwelling of His Holy Spirit. It is so wonderful! If you have truly been born again, you will want to be where God's people are. We need one another. The Lord needs you to be a witness for Him.

Jesus knew exactly what the rich, young ruler's downfall was. It was his riches. Friend, Jesus knows exactly what is holding you back. You should want the Lord to check you out. Many things hinder people from truly serving God, such as riches, pride, wrong attitudes, envy, and jealousy, just to name a few. If I did not name it, the Spirit of God will name it for you. Let the Spirit of God check you out. What is holding you back? Not one thing that you can name is worth going to hell over.

This world is waxing worse and worse every day, and the devil is constantly scheming and devising ways to take up people's time. Time on this side of eternity is critical. The time that you spend for the service of God is going to determine whether you will call Heaven your home or whether hell will be your doom. If you allow the enemy to rob you of your time, you will become weak spiritually.

Taking Time for the Work of God

Time is precious. You take time to sleep, you take time to go to the stores, and you take time for yourself, but do you have time left to do the work of God? What is going to last eternally? It is the work of God. Do you take time to go on visitation? Do you take time to call on the sick or those who have been missing the services? If you are a Christian, you must take the time to do the work of God, because one day you will stand before God and give an account of your time.

Romans 13:11 reads, "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we

believed." Too many people are asleep spiritually. They have been lulled to sleep by the devil. Friend, you must hear and obey what the Bible says if you want to make Heaven your home.

One day it could be you in a nursing home facility or lying in a hospital bed needing visitation. Then you will want someone to come and pray with you, sing to you, and encourage you, but was there a time when you did not have time for others? I am not trying to put you on a guilt trip, but friend, you must take time for others. Your time is coming when you will want others to take time for you.

Family holds many people back from serving the Lord as they should. Saint of God, when the Lord gloriously saves you, it is just you and the Lord. Let the Lord work out family situations. The reason some people do not gain the victory in their souls when they go to an altar of prayer is that right there the enemy says: "What about your family? What are you going to do about this and that?" Friend, you need to get your condition taken care of first, and then let the Lord take care of the rest.

If you are saved and your companion is not, you should not entertain the idea lagging behind in order to win him or her to the Lord. If you do that, then you will go down. Sometimes condemnation works on people's hearts. If your spouse sees you living for God and doing what you ought to do, it will become very difficult for you and your spouse to get along; but do not back away from serving the Lord. You need to stay true to the Lord. Just remember what the Lord saved you from, how He brought you out and established your goings, and how He gloriously saved your unworthy soul. You must not allow your heart to be turned back to what the Lord saved you from. There is nothing back there. It has not gotten better; it has gotten worse. Sin never gets better; it only gets worse.

Time is very short, and you need to make your calling and election sure, and then get into action. Child of God, you need to ask the Lord where He wants you to go and to

whom He wants you to witness. Ask Him to lead you to a soul. The Lord saved you to be in His service.

What Are You Lacking in Your Christian Experience?

What else hinders people in their walk with God? Children can affect one's salvation. When I was growing up in the home, I had no choice about church attendance. I did not try to negotiate with Mom and Dad. I was attending the services while I lived under their roof. I did not dictate to them what I wanted to do. When it was time to go to the services, I got myself ready to go to the house of God. Had I failed to attend, I would have faced repercussions later. There was nothing that I could say or do to get my parents to see it *my* way. Why? I was living in their home. This still works today.

Too many parents give in to their children's demands. A child may say, "But I have too much homework to go to church." When I did that to my mom and dad, they said, "Okay, as soon as we get home, you get to the kitchen table and get the homework done." I knew that I had better get the homework done. Often parents do not realize that the teacher gave little Johnny and Suzie time to get that homework done in class, but they failed to use their time wisely.

I have been in education for more than thirty-three years, and when a teacher gives children the time to get homework done in school, 99.9 percent of the class does not do it. I have gotten notes from parents saying their child did not get the homework done because he or she had too much of it. Well, the real problem was that they did not use their time wisely and complete it when they had the opportunity to do so in school.

What is the one thing that you are lacking in your Christian experience? What is in your heart that is taking up the space that Jesus should occupy? Is it your wants? Is it your desires? Friend, if that is the case, you are too self-centered and selfish. You were created to serve God. You have a soul that is going to live eternally, and God created you for His

service. You need to pray that the Lord will direct you in the way you should go.

Luke 16:13 says, "No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." When you get real salvation, your ideas about the world and its ways change. You will no longer want to go back to the world, to the things that God saved you from.

When you truly get your eyes open to spiritual things, you will see how much of a slave to sin you really have been. When living in sin, the devil was a very hard taskmaster. Perhaps you have done things that you thought you would never do, gone places you thought you would never go, and kept company with people whom you never thought you would. You did not do these things in the very beginning, but it was a gradual process. When the Lord saved you from those things, you realized just how sin caused you to indulge in particular habits and ungodly acts.

Jesus Gives Joy and Contentment

I am thankful that the Lord saved me from sinful ways, and He keeps me from them. I have no desire to go back to the sinful things of this old world. You may want to quit sinful habits, but without Jesus you are powerless to quit them. How many people do you run into that say, "I wish I could quit smoking" or "I wish I did not have to drink"? Many people have a desire to quit doing those things, but they lack the power of God in their lives. God is the only One who can break the power of sin. You have no power without Him.

Perhaps you keep telling yourself, "I am not going to do that again," but when the weekend arrives, you cannot keep from doing it. That is how sin is. Friday night you get that paycheck in hand, and off you go. You are powerless against sin. Friend, Jesus can give you the power to turn away from those things, if you will turn to Him. He will give

you new desires and different places to go. When Jesus Christ saves you, He will give you peace, joy, and contentment that this old world cannot give. Jesus gives joy unspeakable that is full of glory! Jesus can give you a drink of Living Water. The water that He gives is spiritual water.

When I think about what Jesus Christ did for me, my eyes start watering! He gives me joy and contentment. I thank God for Jesus! This peace and joy cannot be found in a joint or by going bar hopping. It is found in salvation. It is found when you realize that you are lost in sin without hope and you turn to Christ. When you are living in sin, you are hopeless, but with Jesus Christ you have hope. He changes everything. You will go from darkness to His most glorious light. It is marvelous and wonderful to be a child of God!

Salvation is more than having your name on a church book or shaking a preacher's hand. Jesus gave His all to mankind. I want you to read something that someone gave to me. The title of it is "You Ask Me Why." It reads:

*You ask me why I follow this Jesus.
Why I love Him the way I do?
When the world has turned away
from His teachings
And the people who serve Him are
few.
It's not the rewards I'm after
Or the gifts that I hope to receive.
It's the presence that calls for
commitment.
It's the Spirit I trust and believe.*

*The Lord doesn't shelter His
faithful
Or spare them all suffering and
pain.
Like everyone else, I have burdens
And walk through my share of rain;
Yet He gives me a plan and a
purpose
And that joy only children of God
have known.
I never know what comes tomorrow,
But I know I'm never alone.
It's the love always there when you
need it.
It's the words that redeem and
inspire.*

*It's the longing to ever be with Him
That burns in my heart like a fire.
So you ask why I love my Lord
Jesus.*

*Well, friend, that's so easy to see.
But the one thing that fills me with
wonder
Is why Jesus loves someone like me.*

Why would Jesus love me? Would it not make sense for me to love Him just as much? We all face trials, have burdens, suffer bouts of depression, and go through times when we think no one cares; but we have Jesus to take us through. We have the Lord to lean upon. He is the One who gives us hope, encouragement, and peace of mind.

When people say: "Look at those people. They look as though they are having so much fun, but they are living in sin," I tell them, "One time of the day they have to pillow their heads." When they lie on their pillows, do you not think that God speaks to them? I am sure God does when everything is quiet and they are trying to get to sleep. Sinner friend, if God is speaking to you, you are privileged.

Overcoming Power

John 16:33 says, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." How much of the world do you want to overcome? You are going to have to overcome the entire world to follow Jesus. Do you want to overcome the world? That is the question. Do you want to live a better life than you are living today? The world will wrap its tentacles tighter and tighter around you, and you will not really realize it or understand its damnable effects. The devil wants to keep you away from things that are holy, clean, and pure.

The world does not care about Jesus, as was evident when Jesus walked on this earth. People saw the miracles and the healings, yet those things were not enough to convince them. It is the same way today. People still want their sin more than they

want Jesus. I thank God that I have been called out of this world, and by the grace of God, I want to stay out. John 15:19 reads, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

Friend, if you are living a life pleasing to God, the world will not be your friend. You are going to face persecution and opposition. You are going to be talked about and slandered, but do not give up your love for God. Jesus loved you so much that He died for you. You do not have to follow the world's agenda.

Jesus Christ gave you the gift of salvation, and you can experience that gift 365 days a year. When you have been born again, every day is a blessing because you know you are doing what the Lord wants you to do. When the world wants to partake of worldly entertainment or go to Babylonian functions, a true child of God can just say, "I do not want to go there." I do not want to partake of anything that God has poured His wrath upon.

My friend, you are walking on treacherous ground if you return to something that the Lord has brought you out of. When the Lord calls you out of Babylon, you had better stay out. You may say, "Well, I have friends down there." Then you need to pray for them. You should pray that the Lord will call them out like He called you out. Do not go back down there and play around in Babylon, because you might get hooked again. Do not think that you are so spiritual that you can go down there and not be affected. Do not let the enemy try to talk you into something that you do not want to do. That is the time to get on your knees and ask God for help, strength, and guidance.

Are you lacking anything in your life spiritually? Do you want just a little closer walk with the Lord? He can fill that desire. Are you struggling with little things that keep you from having complete victory in your life? Jesus Christ has the power to give you complete victory. Jesus

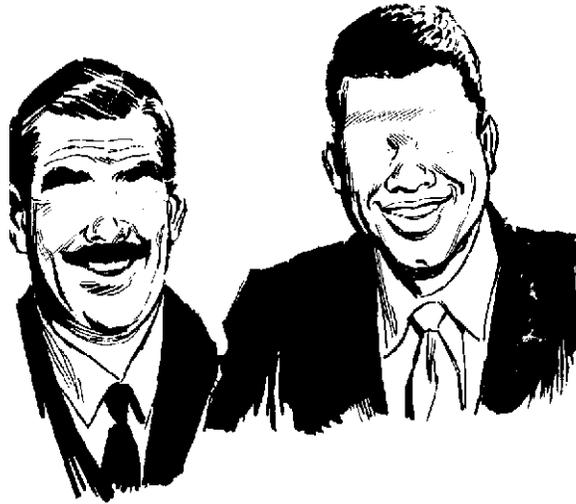
Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Little things will work on you. Song of Solomon 2:15 reads, "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes." It is those tender things that the enemy wants to take away from your experience to rob you of the richness of Jesus. You see, your life and your soul are so precious in the sight of God. I am not talking about a house, a job, or a car. You can replace those things, but you cannot replace your soul. If you do not take care of anything else, do not neglect your soul.

Friend, it does not have to be something great or large to bring you down, but the little things can work on you. That is the reason you need to be where you should be with the Lord. When the Lord points things out in your life, you need to take care of them right away. If He has shown you what you need to do, you ought to take care of it. You need to measure up and go forward with God. Do not ever get in your mind that your need is no big deal. God wants you to live a better life for Him. He wants you to lay aside every hindrance in your walk with Him.

You need to ask yourself these questions: "Am I clear with the Lord? Have I done everything humanly possible to get my life in a position so that the Lord can mold me and use me in His service?" I am sure more ground could be gained for the Lord if you let the Lord have His way. It is a time to go forward with God. I want to remind you that the title of the message is "Yet Lackest Thou One Thing." You do not want to come up to the Day of Judgment and find out that everything was fine in your life except one thing. The saddest thing would be that you knew what that one thing was and failed to take care of it. At the Day of Judgment, it will be too late to do anything about it. It just makes sense to get things taken care of on this side of eternity.

(Cassette C-5673M)

Lingering Too Long in Sodom



Brother E. David Stegmeier

Staying Behind Too Long

I can remember hearing on the news and reading in the newspaper days before the eruption of Mount Saint Helens scientists warning the people who lived on that mountain of the impending peril, yet many of them refused to leave the area. David Johnston, the scientist who alerted the world of the impending explosion, died in the dreadful and horrifying blast. Located near that volcano is the large city of Vancouver, Washington, just across the Columbia River from Portland. On the radio Mr. Johnston warned the city of the eruption of Mount Saint Helens. His last words were these: "Vancouver, Vancouver, this is it!" Moments later he lost his life in the dreadful inferno.

We had a pilot in our congregation at that time, and he asked if I wanted to fly over Mount Saint Helens just after it erupted, and I said, "Yes, I would like to do that." So we did, and I saw the angry, boiling lava down inside that volcano. It was a very dreadful sight. The President, Mr. Carter, flew over the

volcanic crater and the surrounding area devastated by that blast, and he said this: "The moon looks like a golf course compared to what is up there." According to scientists, it will take one hundred years for the area to completely recover.

I remember waking up that morning and discussing the situation with my wife and also talking to Brother and Sister Mullen. We felt that we needed to go to Montana to hold a revival meeting. We were advised to go south because of the ash in the air and the damage it would cause our automobile and the injury that we might sustain to our lungs, so we took a southern route.

I related that event because of the subject of this message. A shroud of godly fear accompanies me all my waking hours. Someday I must give an account of the thoughts that I allowed to permeate my mind, the actions that I did, and the words that I used to express myself. My greatest problem and your greatest problem is in keeping self exactly where God wants us to be. I am extremely responsible. When I step behind the pulpit, through the Spirit of

God, I am operating on souls. A literal operating room is a very serious place, but God is operating on you right now through this message. You either live or die in response to God's voice. One of my favorite Scriptures is John 10:10, which says that Jesus came to bring life and to bring it more abundantly. I want to live this abundant life, don't you?

Fifty-seven people on Mount Saint Helens foolishly lingered behind and were killed by the deadly blast. I want you to consider for a moment the word *linger*. In the Scripture it means "remaining too long" somewhere that God says to leave.

I remember in the 1940's coming to the Church of God. At that time, we were in the Anderson movement. I listened even as a little boy. I was always spiritually minded, ever since I can remember. Ministers took me to meetings and always took me under their wing, so to speak, and I appreciate it. I have a tremendous heritage. They saw that I had a desire to live for God, so they often took me with them. I rode with my pastors here and there as a young boy, and they talked to me and

schooled me in the things of God.

I remember going to an Anderson meeting at Flathead Lake, Montana, when I was a young boy. My pastor was ostracized because he was too straightlaced for them. I remember that well. Then in 1955 we took a stand for Truth and came out of Anderson. We had never heard of God's Acres, but thank God, He put us together, and I still come here. I still feel the same Spirit today that I felt years and years ago. I remember those pastors telling us, "The Bible says to flee Babylon and to deliver every man his soul." We fled from Babylon, and we have not been back since. I thank God for the Truth that has been preserved at God's Acres.

Flee the Midst of Babylon

Lingering too long means "remaining behind." About forty-five or more of us left the Anderson congregation where Brother and Sister Mullen had been our pastors, but some stayed behind. We gathered in a little house in town. Some other movements sent ministers in. Someone from one group pulled me aside and asked me, "Do you want to go to Heaven?"

I said, "I sure do."

He said, "Then you had better get off that instrument." Contrary to that idea, the Bible says in Psalm 87:7, "As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be [future-tense verb] there." This is speaking of the New Testament Church of God. We saw that was not the way to go. The church is a divine institution, and I would fear to put my hand against it. I was taught as a little child this great reverential fear of touching the Church of the Living God. Do you know what is wrong in our society today? People do not have enough of the fear of God. You should be afraid of saying anything against the church or against any man of God.

Jeremiah 51:6 reads, "Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the LORD'S vengeance; he will render unto her a recompense." Jeremiah said to "Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul." In other words, he was saying: "Do not linger or hang

back; do not delay leaving. Let every man deliver his soul." Next, Jeremiah said not to be cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the LORD'S vengeance." The word *iniquity* is very comprehensive, and it takes in rebellion, unlawfulness, and sin.

I have read many accounts of the Jews and the Jewish Holocaust, when six million or more Jews lost their lives. Those people suffered horrible things because they did not listen to God. They were no longer God's chosen people because they had turned their backs on God. Millions of children, fathers, and mothers were baked alive in large furnaces. I do not believe that we can imagine how horrible those cruelties were that happened in the Holocaust, but similar atrocities happened in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. It is a fearful thing to arouse God's anger.

God Is Not Mocked

I believe that God allowed Mount Saint Helens to erupt to awaken part of our country. The latter part of Jeremiah 51:6 states that "he will render unto her a recompense." What we sow, we are going to reap. We cannot get around that. In Galatians 6:7-8, Paul, writing to the church at Galatia, said: "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."

If a pastor is of a disposition to be quarrelsome, fighting, bickering, striving, he will breed that into his congregation. I have lived long enough to see that, as the pastor is, so are the people. I want a very wholesome congregation, with good, godly fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, good citizens, good employees, and good employers. The only way that will happen is to have wholesome teaching, wholesome doctrine, and wholesome living.

The Word of God is as sure as anything. Jeremiah 51:7-9 reads: "Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD'S hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad

[or crazy]. Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed: howl for her; take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed. We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed. . . ."

Babylon is a place of much confusion. I thank God that I am not confused, and the spiritual people in my congregation are not confused. They see the Truth and the right very clearly. God can speak clearly today. I tell God repeatedly, "I must have contact with You." God can lead us, and those who are led by the Spirit are the people of God. I grew up in a divine institution as a boy. Every minister of the Church of God, the world over, is to have divine contact with God; that is how the church operates. I call Headquarters throughout the week, and I seek the Head throughout the week for my orders. My orders come directly from God.

Jeremiah 51:9-10 continues: ". . . forsake her, and let us go every one into his own country: for her judgment reacheth unto heaven, and is lifted up even to the skies. The LORD hath brought forth our righteousness: come, and let us declare in Zion the work of the LORD our God." Zion is a beautiful place. In the Church of God we have the most beautiful hymns. I was brought up on an old green hymnal, entitled *Spiritual Hymns and Songs*, which contained hymns that were written by great men and women of God. One song we used to sing was "Peaceful Zion." Whenever there is trouble, dissension, bickering, and strife, it ceases to be Zion. My Bible says nothing will enter in that will hurt or destroy. If someone is hurting or destroying Zion, he or she is not in her. Everyone in Zion builds her up, works to establish her, and will not thwart her progress, but will strengthen one another's hands in God.

Serious Warnings

Amos 3:7 says, "Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." God works through human instrumentality, and it is needful that we listen to the men of God. I have had good pastors, and I had the privilege of

sitting under the late Brother Emerson Wilson for a period of time. I listened very intently because I want to make Heaven my home. I want to live so that people following me can also make Heaven their eternal home.

Countless numbers of people have carelessly ignored the warnings about the seriousness of allowing ungodly attitudes to permeate their minds, attitudes that are not right. I know when an attitude that is not good is beginning to work on me. I know when an attitude is contrary to God's will, because I have the Book. Attitudes can permeate your mind. It is important to keep your heart free from malice, hatred, ill will, and wanting to get even with somebody. You need to leave people with God. The Bible says that God will bring justice; He will render a recompense. You should not try to take matters into your own hands. If you do, you will make an absolute mess of things. Romans 12:19 says, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

It is important to keep your heart free from jealousy. You may say, "Oh, I have never been bothered with jealousy." You are also a liar. Jealousy has knocked on the hearts of every one of us, I am sure. We need to realize when it knocks, and work to get it out. One can become jealous because someone has a better car or a better home or because someone is better looking, has more talents, has a larger congregation. You need to be just what God wants you to be. Every one of us has a place in the work of God.

Proverbs 27:4 says, "Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?" It looks to me like envy is on the top of the list as to its destructive force. The root of the majority of problems is envy.

You need to beware of the danger of spreading discord among brethren. You see, we know that sexual sins are bad and that murder is bad, but let us read what the Bible says is *really* bad. Proverbs 6:16-19 says this: "These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false

witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren."

I have learned that wherever there are people, there are problems. We have many spiritual brethren, and they get along beautifully. However, there are people out there who sow discord. Let me give you an example of someone sowing discord. Suppose someone comes to me and talks to me about a certain brother and speaks against him, and then the next time that certain brother and I meet, our relationship is not the same. That would hurt that certain brother. God hates the individual who talked to me against him and caused that problem, according to the Scripture. There is too much talking. If you talk to an individual about someone else, and those two people have a problem, God will hold *you* responsible. This is an elementary principle and Truth in the Word of God. If you talk to somebody against me, and that person is different toward me than they used to be, God hates you for that.

Unity is beautiful. God loves unity. David wrote in Psalm 133:1-3: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore."

We will have unity with all God's people who are walking in the light. That is a basic Bible principle. If there is no unity, someone is walking behind light. Oh, the blessings that we can enjoy and experience if we maintain this type of unity! Many people in the world are looking for this. There is nothing like the Church of God. She is the only one of her mother. This unity is a beautiful condition.

There is such beauty and dignity in the Word of God! In many places the Church of God has lost its dignity. I grew up looking at the Church of God as a very dignified organization with dignity in the ministry and in the people, in the way they lived. Sadly, in most places today it has become a grotesque and despicable organization. An

older man, who has since passed away, came from the Anderson movement and said this to me: "This [congregation] represents what I see in the Word as the New Testament Church of God."

"The Wideness of God's Mercy"

Genesis 19:15-17 reads: "And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed [or destroyed] in the iniquity of the city. [Look at this next clause.] And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city. And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed."

I ask you to keep in mind Amos 3:7, which reads, "Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." There have been a few times in my life when God has spoken so emphatically to me. This Scripture brings to my mind a time when God spoke very strongly to me and told me to go to Montana to help someone with whom I had grown up. He had left his wife and children and began to chase a prostitute. My wife and I got in our car and drove approximately two thousand miles. We had only one week. I found him, and he did not act surprised. He came out and got in my car, and I asked him, "Why weren't you surprised?"

He said, "I knew you were coming."

I asked, "Who told you?"

He said, "God."

We talked, and he began to weep profusely. He said, "I wanted to see you so bad, but not in the condition that you have found me."

I worked with him every day for the next several days, night and day. I said, "I'm unsure why, but God told me that you need to get out of here. I don't know why, but it is an absolute must. You need to get back to the Lord." He

had inherited a cattle ranch there. On Friday he said, "No, I just can't go."

I said, "All right, I am very sorry. I just feel that it is the end. I have to go back." I got up the next morning and we had family worship, and we read Genesis 19:15-17. God said, "You go back [seventy-seven miles], and read that Scripture to him." That was Saturday morning.

I went to find him and found him out feeding his cattle. He got in my car, and I said, "I am going to read some Scripture. I am not going to argue. We have been talking, and I have been trying to persuade you. I am not going to do any of that. I am just going to read you a portion of Scripture." I read him the portion of Genesis 19:16, which states, "And while he lingered, the men [the angels] laid hold upon his hand [Lot's], . . . and they brought him forth."

I said, "Is God speaking to you?"

He said, "Yes, yes, yes."

I said, "What are you going to do?"

He said, "I'll go with you." The congregation in that location had been overcome with a spirit of bitterness. You see, if bitterness springs up in you, it does not stop there. You will taint many others. That is Scripture!

I said, "I have to go. I am supposed to be at work Monday morning, and this is Saturday. There is no way I can make it in time, but I have to at least start that way."

He said, "I'll come." At one o'clock the next day, we headed for Newark. On the way home I called the principal of the school where I was teaching to tell him I would be there as soon as I could. We rolled into Newark about five-thirty Tuesday morning. I showered and shaved and went to work. I told my wife, "Find out where there is a revival. This man has to get saved." She called and Brother Emerson Wilson was preaching in Medina. I had not slept, so I slept a little in the car on the way there. My wife and I sang with my mother. We sang, "The Wideness of God's Mercy," and he knelt at the altar of prayer and wept and cried, and he got gloriously saved. It was awesome!

We paid his ticket back home; that was March 1970. God called me to pastor in Oregon in June of 1970. I saw

him at a meeting later, and he went to the altar. I dealt with him, and he said he was struggling. He said, "The woman that I had been playing around with, now she is coming to church with my wife, and there they both sit. The pastor there is counseling me to marry that prostitute." I said, "You need to flee for your life." In August he moved to Oregon, with just his truck and his belongings. There I remarried him and his wife. The next November, a little over a year later, I received a call at four o'clock in the morning: he had died in bed from a heart attack, at thirty-seven years of age.

Saying that God does not direct the lives of His people is very close to blasphemy. If you attribute to the flesh or the devil what the Holy Ghost does, you are blaspheming. There needs to be more godly fear in the hearts and the minds of people today. I was brought up the old-fashioned way. God still works through His prophets.

Godly Principles

The Scripture that we read in Genesis, Chapter 19, says that while Lot lingered, the men (or the angels) took hold of him and led him out. We need to consider Lot's family a little. Lot was very wealthy, and Abraham was very wealthy. They could not dwell together because there was strife in the lives of their herdsmen. (Any godly man detests strife. One earmark of a godly man is that he is not in the middle of strife. I do not like strife in the home, in a classroom, or in a congregation.) In essence, Abraham said, "Let there be no strife, for we are brethren. Lot, you choose which way you want to go, and I will go the other way."

Lot, being the younger, should have had more ethics than he had. He should have had more principle than he showed and said, "No, Uncle Abraham, you go ahead and choose first," but he did not. It is so important to stress godly principles and to implement them in your life. If you are guilty of violating one divine principle, you are guilty of violating them all.

I am not a detective or a policeman, but I teach my congregation godly

principles. I do not visit their homes to see what they have. I do not peek in their windows, and I do not have spies. I never grew up that way. I grew up with very wholesome teachings and practices by very godly men. I teach my people principles that they are to implement in their homes, in their places of business, in the schools, and in the community. The essence of what I teach them is this: if Jesus cannot be with you while you are doing it, then you had better not do it. That is the bottom line. All these things happened, the Bible says, for our instruction. We need to take heed.

We can learn so many lessons from Lot and his family. God warned them. God has warned me of things, and I take those warnings very seriously. I can still remember warnings that I had when I was a child. Lot waited too long. He and the citizens of Sodom felt they were safe. They were resting in the security of a flourishing society. As Americans, we often rest in carnal security. Many people think, "We have a flourishing society, so what is there to be alarmed about?" I think we are living in a most insidious environment, a very insidious time. I think this is a more treacherous time than I have ever seen in all my life. It is more treacherous and more dangerous than any time in which I have lived.

Heed His Still, Small Voice

Ezekiel 16:49 states, "Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread and abundance of idleness." One time a man said: "I will never go to a public altar to be saved. I really feel that I want to be saved some day, but I will never do it publicly." He could not be saved until he marched forward and got rid of that pride, and thank God he did. Some people have said: "Oh, I would never do that. If they think I will do that, they have another thought coming." God hears that, and that may be required of you, otherwise you may lose your soul. God hears all the words that we say.

Ezekiel wrote about a people who were haughty. To me, the word *haughty* means they were not willing to listen to

a superior. I can remember well one time when I spoke back to a principal. God gave me such a licking, I said, "I am not going to do this again!" God said, "You go and apologize to him. He is over you. You will learn a good lesson."

So I said, "God, would You make it easy for me?"

The next morning the principal was standing by the door, and I said, "I am really sorry for what I said. I was chastised and corrected for it, and I am very sorry." Before I left that school, he asked me to have prayer with the faculty on the last day of school.

If someone is older than I am, I think I need to listen. As a child, my father would never let me call an older person by his or her first name. It was always, "Mister" or "Mrs." I was taught divine principles.

The iniquity of Sodom was that they were haughty, and they committed abomination. Therefore, God said He took them away as He saw good. Sodom and Gomorrah had been warned repeatedly. In 2 Peter 2:6 Peter wrote, "And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly."

The Word of God is replete with examples. I have been a pastor for thirty-eight years and have preached since I was a young man, and I have never seen anyone prosper who has left a thriving, healthy, wholesome Church of God congregation. There is no exception. And this is a very healthy, wholesome, thriving Church of God congregation. We must preach without fear or favor. A pastor goes through scores of souls to find good soil. I wish it were not that way, but that is the way it is.

Peter continued in verse 7, "And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked." Numbers of times I have gone to the school principal where I teach and said: "I don't like what he is teaching in the class and some of the videos he is showing." On one occasion the principal said, "Well, Dave, they see all those things on television." I was raised in a holy, godly environment, which causes me to be

very sensitive to that which is wrong. We ought to be very keen to that which is right and ignorant to that which is wrong. Some people are too knowledgeable about that which is wrong. We need to know what the Spirit says, know how He speaks, and discern what He speaks; then we will not be deceived. We must listen to His still, small voice. He will not speak contrary to His Word.

"The Choice Is Yours"

Peter said in 2 Peter 2:8-9: "(For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." God will deliver the righteous. He does not destroy the godly with the ungodly. Because of the flesh and carnal motives, Lot made some very bad choices. We each are a product of the choices that we make.

Years and years ago, when I first started teaching, the high school where I teach arranged for a panel of inmates to come from the Montana State Prison to speak to the student body. Above that panel they hung a large banner, which read, "The choice is yours." Murderers, thieves, and whoremongers spoke to the student body. One of them said, "In essence, we are where we are because of the choices that we have made." Lot made some bad choices. Apparently strife did not bother Lot as it did Abraham.

Jesus said in Matthew 5:9, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." Martin Luther, one of the greatest men of God that I ever read after, said, "Peace if possible, but truth at any cost." Truth has been preserved. We must have the Truth. One thing that the Church of God possesses above everything else is the ultimate Truth. I do not hold allegiance to people. I have had to separate from many ministers in my growing-up years, but my allegiance is to God and to all those who are standing for what is right.

Truth has separated me from my family until I stood absolutely alone. I have learned in the Bible that the majority almost always, if not always, is wrong; it is the minority that is right. I grew up learning that as a young boy in Sunday school, and then at home with Elsie Egermeier's Bible storybook. I want to know *what* is right. God can still speak to you and me. I plead with God every day: "God, I must have Your divine direction. I have to hear from You today. Should I step on this airplane or should I stay home? Should I go in my car to go here or should I stay home? Should I stay in the place of prayer or should I go somewhere else?" Those who are led by the Spirit of God are the people of God.

In Revelation, Chapter 3, we have a very descriptive passage of Scripture that tells us we are living in a day such as the days of Sodom and Gomorrah, a day of carnal security. Lot was given the opportunity to choose first. Undoubtedly he was prompted by the spirit of greed. He put material things above spiritual things. Spiritual things should always come before material things. Too many people go after the world while neglecting their souls. We are living in a day and age when we need to be spiritual. Your spiritual perception is contingent upon your relationship with God. Your spiritual insight is dependent upon how closely you walk with Him.

Lot's choice seemed to have been a wise one according to a carnal mind. However, it proved fatal to his wife. I tell my congregation at home: If you really love your children, then you will be very careful to obey God and the man of God. Do not worry so much about leaving them a large bank account or a fine car or a home or providing them with a high education. The important thing is that you obey and that you do not give the pastor a hard time. I am getting the children and grandchildren now of people whom I started to pastor. If parents gave me a rough time, you see it in their children, and it goes on down.

Are You Truly Sold Out to God?

One of the shortest Scriptures in the Bible is Luke 17:32, which reads,

"Remember Lot's wife." There are so many lessons that we can learn when we read the Bible. I read it very slowly. Every year I follow a chronological list and try to read it through in a year, but that is just part of what I like to do every day. I study my Sunday school lessons and my message subjects. I believe there are very valuable lessons from the Sunday school stories. They are very relevant to our day.

Lot's wife had a divided mind. We need to be sold out to what we are doing. I believe the Church of God is the greatest institution in this entire world. I am proud of a real Church of God congregation. There is no better cause to which you can give your full support than the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As Lot, his wife, and two of their daughters were leaving, his wife's steps became slower and slower. I have seen that as a pastor.

I think being a Church of God pastor is the most difficult task in all the world; it is the most noble, but the most difficult, especially in this day of rebellion, independence, and unbelief. Lot's wife lagged behind because her affections were still in Sodom. The Bible says she looked back and became a pillar of salt. She was very close to being saved, but she was lost. When I was a child, we sang a song that says that you are a million miles from God when you are one little step from Him.

Have you heard the story of the ancient Roman city of Pompeii? Archeologists uncovered that ash and frozen lava, and they found a woman in a bent position over some jewels. Undoubtedly, she was fleeing when the volcano was erupting, but she saw the jewels that someone had left behind. Because of greed and selfishness, she bent over to pick up those jewels, and that is where the lava got her.

There is nothing in the world that I want, absolutely nothing. My house becomes of lesser value to me all the time. What really means something to me is to be sure that I am clear with God. Friend, you are not clear with God unless you are clear with every man, woman, boy, and girl on the face of this earth. We ought to live as though we are going to be ushered to

the eternal Judgment the next moment.

If you are not clear with someone, it will bar you from Heaven. If you have a restitution to make, you should not linger. You should get it done immediately. The Bible still teaches restitution. I do not believe in this kind of restitution: "If I have said something about you, I am sorry." You know whether or not you have. If you have said something about someone else, you had better go to that person and trot around to everyone you talked to about that person and make it right. We need to do a thorough work. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 7:11, "For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter."

As a minister, I work with a prisoner who sees this Truth concerning restitution. He has an impeccable vision of the Church of God and the Truth. I tell him, "It is because you did not cut corners." When he got saved and made restitutions, he confessed to three murders that had never been discovered. He brought that up on his own when he got saved. He went to the authorities and told them. Now he is spending time in prison for those murders. Prisoners have said to him, "You are a fool." I said, "No, you are not a fool. Those are the principles of God." Too many want to take a shortcut and take the easy way. There is a thorough, Bible way to do something.

To be nearly saved means to be wholly lost. Had Lot's wife fully believed and obeyed, she would have been saved. When the westward movement came in the 1800's, many people journeyed thousands of miles in covered wagons. I like to listen to recordings of the music they wrote. They wrote songs about the things they left behind: a cradle, a bookcase, some dishes, Grandpa's mirror, Mother's bed, and loved ones. When you get saved and you follow Christ, you must leave behind all worldly possessions, and even loved ones. God has to come first.

Lot's wife was not totally convinced of the warning, just as the fifty-seven people who died when they lingered behind on Mount Saint Helens before it erupted. Many people make a start, but not many go through. Lot's wife made a start. She was heading in the right direction, but she did not continue. She was halfhearted in her escape. I am not halfhearted in what I am doing for God. My stand for God is with everything I have within me. She was halfhearted in her escape. Her body was outside the city, but her interests were inside the walls of Sodom.

Enduring to the End

Lot's wife was not saved, even though she was traveling with a good man. I have a large family, and I tell them, "You must be saved yourself." I have a very good wife. My wife will tell you that there are times when I have come up with a stand. I say, "Honey, we are going to stand this way." Maybe at first she did not quite see it that way, but I am responsible. You are not saved on the family plan. I do not look to any other minister when it comes to standing where I stand. I believe we need to go directly to God. That is an old-fashioned principle, but that is the way I was brought up, and God forbid that I should ever leave it.

Lot's wife might have longed for her friends, her relatives, or her belongings. She lost her life because of one little sin. People have asked, "Can I be lost with one little sin?" I said, "Yes!" Lot's wife lost her soul; she merely looked back. Jesus said in Matthew 10:22, "He that endureth to the end shall be saved."

What Lot thought would be gain turned out to be an eternal disaster. You should not make your decisions about what you are doing according to what is financially profitable or a worldly advantage. You should make your decisions according to what is right. Sodom was a place that should have been avoided. Genesis 13:10 says, "And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where." You need to be careful of where your eyes are fastened.

First John 2:15-17 lets you know that you need to be careful of casting your eyes upon the world. What Lot saw was too enticing for him. He was worldly in his thinking. It was easier for him to choose the easy way with its terrible consequences that eventually led to death and destruction. Slowly, Lot succumbed to evil. The Bible says that he, first of all, pitched his tent toward Sodom; then he moved inside the city. The Scripture says he was found at the gate, which leads us to believe that he had part in what was going on in the city.

What happened to Sodom can happen to us and our society. Society has advanced tremendously in technology, but it has digressed morally. Our nation has digressed morally. May God help us. When Lot finally decided to leave, his sons refused to listen to him. Lot had hung around Sodom too long. May God help you not to linger too long! God is urgent about your leaving a condition that is sinful, that He has condemned. You need to make your exodus, and do it quickly!

Have a Clear Experience With God

I want you to read the words of a song found in the *Evening Light Songs* hymnal, entitled "Lost Forever." Next to the Bible, the hymnal should be our next best friend. God help us to be worthy to sing the hymns written by great men and women of God. It reads:

*Where is thy hope, poor sinner?
What are you going to do?
Hope is a God-given anchor,
Lavished so freely on you;
If it is fixed in the Savior,
On that bright shore you will land,
But if in sin you still linger,
Sad your end.*

*Where is thy refuge, sinner?
Look where your pathway will end;
Repent, or you'll perish forever;
Awful destruction's at hand;
Heaven, or hell you are choosing,
Fixing and sealing your fate,
God and his mercy refusing,
Lost! Too late!*

*What can you plead, poor sinner?
In the great judgment day?
Heaven now offers you favor,
Oh, do not cast it away;
Slighted the warnings repeated,
Leave you in Satan's control;
And with all heaven rejected,
Lost, your soul.*

*Where will you go, poor sinner?
How will your soul escape?
Think of thy lot, when, forever,
Cast in the dark, burning lake;
If, then you're lost and forgotten,
Writhing in flames of despair,
You will remember you've chosen
To be there.*

When I sit in church, I take the messages personally. I never go to sleep. That would be like a pilot going to sleep when he is flying an airplane or a physician going to sleep when operating on someone who is about to die. You should be alert! You may ask, "Have you ever battled tiredness?" Oh, yes, but I do not want to miss anything. God warns each of us through the man who stands behind the pulpit. God has sent this message as a warning to you.

I have a very, very dear wife, but I tell her, "Honey, you must pray, read the Bible, and stay close to God," and she realizes that is what she must do. She is not saved because of my experience, and I am not saved because of her experience. Each of us must have a clear experience with God. We each can have a witness. People have said to me, "All we want you to do is tell us that we are God's children too, that we are clear with God." Someone who says that has an experience that is amiss. You know whether or not you are clear with God. I repeat, you are only clear with God when you are clear with every man, woman, boy, and girl in this world. There is not one person in all this world that I would hesitate having in an assembly where I am preaching the Gospel, not one.

My mother told us of a particular situation that happened when I was very young, before we came to the Church of God. This pastor would ask certain members of his congregation to

be absent when he preached because he was doing things with them that he knew he should not be doing, and they hindered his preaching. That is being an absolute hypocrite!

From the time I was a child, the one thing that I wanted to do was to serve God, and I did not want to be a hypocrite. I wanted to live what I preached and preach what I lived. The Bible says not to grieve the Holy Spirit. Once I read a story of a man who was coaxing two doves to his window to feed them. After many, many attempts, he coaxed those doves to come and eat from his hand. One day when they came, he closed his hand and they fluttered away. It took him days to get them back. When they came the second time, again, he closed his hand, and they never returned. He never saw them again. As a boy I was taught that God will not always strive with us. He speaks in very gentle tones—very sweetly, very quietly, and very tenderly. You ought to train your conscience to be very keen and very tender. I want to have favor with Heaven, don't you? I want God to look down with a smile of approval upon my life.

Have you ever heard of Brother S. O. Susag? He was a pioneer preacher in the Church of God. He came to our congregation years ago from Minnesota. Some congregations he preached to would get unhappy with him and would not take him home, so he would sleep in the church. Sometimes they would not pay him. One time he went to leave a certain place, and he had no money. God said, "Go ahead," so he went to the train depot and walked up to the clerk. Just then a man came running up to him from behind and slipped some money into his pocket. It was the exact amount of money that he needed for his train fare. Brother Susag was a man of faith.

I grew up hearing and knowing and having been preached to by great men of God. I love the old-fashioned Truth, and I love the old-fashioned Church of God. If you ignore the voice of God, you are choosing to be lost forever.

(Cassette C-4472M)

Announcements

Summersville, WV
December 14-16

REVIVAL: The Church of God, 74 Armstrong Road, Summersville, WV 26651
Evangelist: Brother Irwin Seshier, Heath, Ohio
Service times: Friday 7:00 p.m.; Saturday & Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.
For further information contact: Pastor Earl R. Borders. Telephone: 304-872-4047
Visit our website at: www.ChurchofGodSummersvilleWV.com

Newark, OH
December 26-30

WINTER CAMP MEETING: The Church of God, 675 N. Cedar Street, Newark, OH 43055
Service times: Wednesday 7:00 p.m.; Thursday - Sunday 10:00 a.m. & 7:00 p.m. Morning prayer services Thursday - Sunday. Heated dormitories. Three meals served daily in dining hall, plus the snack stand is open in the dining hall after the evening services.
Bedding is supplied; please bring your own towels.
For lodging reservations contact Brother Dave or Sister Ruby Bush, 725 N. Cedar Street, Newark, OH 43055, or call 740-345-1213. Please make reservations in advance, if possible.
For further information contact: Pastor Roger L. Decker, 87 Decrow Ave. Newark, Ohio
Telephone: 740-344-2543

Phoenix, AZ
December 26-30

REVIVAL: The Church of God, 3450 West Grover Street, Phoenix, AZ
Evangelist: Brother Earl R. Borders. Messages from the Book of Revelation each night.
Service times: Wednesday-Saturday 7:00 p.m.; Sunday 10:15 a.m. & 5:00 p.m.
For further information contact: Pastor C. H. Ferguson, 19237 N. 21st Drive, Phoenix, AZ 85027
Telephone: 623-516-0836 (Home) or 623-640-7679 (Cell)

[Guest Editorial— continued from p. 2]

this life. The choice you make and the direction you take will determine where you spend eternity. Choosing to continue living your own sinful, selfish and rebellious way against God is to make a great mistake. The choice to walk contrary to God's plan and to refuse His pardoning love will render you to spend eternity in the regions of the lost. This sad, deplorable end need not be. Your choice is the determining factor.

One must understand that he or she cannot become a Christian or depart from sin just anytime he or she feels like it. If salvation is ever gained, it will be when God is ready or when He gives the invitation. John 6:44 tells us, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." The time to be saved from sin is when God calls when He is speaking to your heart. God speaks through His

Spirit or through the preaching of the Gospel and brings conviction to your heart and mind. Conviction makes you aware of your lost condition and brings knowledge that your way of living is grieving the heart of God. Just as the prodigal son, when he realized his despicable condition, he arose and went back to his father, so must every lost soul do likewise. They must forsake their way and return to the Lord. There is mercy and pardon waiting there for all who will come to Him.

A mistake that too many people make is trying to get saved on their own terms. Men and women seem to have the idea that they can bargain with God. They think they can dictate the terms and the conditions that must be met before they get saved. "I'll get right if You do this or that" or "I'll get right if You allow me to do this or that." Friend, this will never work! Isaiah 55:7-8

informs us: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD." Surrender to God must be unconditional.

Dear one, it is to your advantage to seek God while He may be found and while you have the opportunity. God loves you, but He is angry with sin and rebellion. In Deuteronomy 30:19 these words are penned, "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." It is your choice. You need not be lost now or eternally.

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Winter Camp Meeting

December 26-30, 2007

*Make your reservations now to come and worship
the Lord with us in an old-fashioned
camp meeting at God's Acres, Newark, Ohio.*

The first service begins Wednesday at 7:00 p.m.

**Send your reservations to:
David L. Bush**

**725 N. Cedar Street Newark, OH 43055
or call (740) 345-1213**