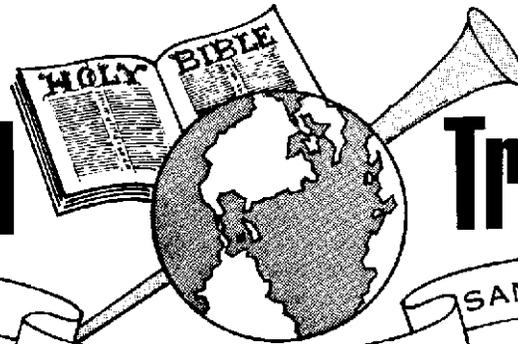


The Gospel



Trumpeter

JUSTIFICATION

SANCTIFICATION

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. 32:39

"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. 38 August 2008 No. 8



Church of God Tabernacle in Newark, Ohio

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

Psalms 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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Spring 2008 Camp Meeting Report

An Outstanding Meeting

Once again the saints of God experienced great joy and blessings as they gathered together on the old campground during the spring camp meeting. It was an enjoyable eight days of sitting in a godly atmosphere and feasting on the heavenly manna that comes down from above. Our souls were fully satisfied as we fed on the Word and the Spirit of God. We say "fully satisfied" with the exception of not seeing more lost souls find their way to the Lord. We express praise to God for saving several new young converts. There is nothing that can compare with dwelling in His holy presence. Even though the meeting was short, it was outstanding and was uplifting to the soul.

It is always difficult to describe that which our hearts felt and our eyes witnessed during this sweet time of refreshing. We can sum it up by saying it was an outstanding meeting. Surely God is pleased when His people gather together for fellowship and receive instruction in walking in the good old paths. These are times when the saints escape from the world of trials and burdens for a short period of time. It is a blessed time when our spirits are renewed and our hearts receive new encouragement. Our minds need to be stirred and our souls challenged so that we might be drawn closer to Him in these closing days of time. It is very necessary for each one to continue to press the battle onward and upward toward the goal that awaits the faithful and true. Satan is always diligently working to discourage and destroy the souls of mankind, but the Lord brings victory to the true and faithful.

Time after time the blessings poured out and our cups were made to overflow as the Lord moved in the services in miraculous ways. Many times as the adult choir and other singers sang

praises, the Spirit of God used the messages of the songs to bring help, strength, and encouragement. The youth choir also sang and brought wonderful blessings over the hearts of the congregation. This year Brother Decker instituted an afternoon service of teaching that was greatly beneficial. Oh, the inspiration that fills the heart as our dear Lord so graciously moves around and through our midst!

Another camp meeting is past, yet the precious times spent together will linger on and be remembered over and over. Whenever the Spirit of God moves in it is as the blowing wind. He cannot be seen with the natural eye, but ones can certainly witness and feel the effects of His mighty power.

The Lord once again prepared a bountiful table for His people to enjoy. The table that He arranges always provides abundantly for the needs of the people. His storehouse adequately supplies nourishment to all according to their need. It is amazing how God provides for the needs of those who trust Him. He gives milk to the babe in Christ so that he may grow and become strong. He offers honey for sweet encouragement to those who are going through bitter situations of persecutions and trials. He sends strong meat to satisfy the hungry soul of the mature Christian. God sends conviction to the lost souls who are groping in sin, seeking for a better way to live. He does all this in one setting.

In 1 Corinthians 1:21 Paul tells us that it "pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." God has chosen a way to supply the spiritual needs of man, and that is brought about through the preaching the Gospel. When the Word of God is sounded forth with power, clarity and with

[continued on page 15]

Proverbs 28:13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

Psalm 32:1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

2 Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

3 When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.

4 For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.

5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the

iniquity of my sin. Selah.

6 For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.

7 Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah.

Some Things About Salvation That You Need to Know



Brother Roger L. Decker

Beware of Cheap Substitutes

I want to speak to you for a while on some things about salvation that you definitely need to know. You need to know what salvation is, why you need it, and how to obtain it. Today it seems as though nearly everyone claims to be saved, but that is not true. As time draws closer and closer to eternity, you need to take a close look at salvation and note some things

about it. Many can talk the talk, but very few really walk as one who has salvation should walk.

Peter wrote in 2 Peter 1:12-15: "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord

Jesus Christ hath showed me. Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance."

Peter repeated his admonition in 2 Peter 3:1-2 when he said: "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the

commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour." Peter believed in the value of repetition. Sometimes it is necessary. Today our minds get so caught up in things that we tend to forget. We may fail to remember what the Apostles in the Word of God have written. Therefore, I want to stir up your mind by way of remembrance. I want to talk to you about old-fashioned salvation and the necessity of having it.

When Paul was writing to the Philippians, he said in Philippians 3:1 that to repeat the same thing again was not a weariness to him, and for them it was the only safe way: "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe."

Many substitutes have been offered to people to replace real salvation. Church joining, card signing, ascribing to a creed, joining a congregation, and donating money to a radio or television evangelist are cheap substitutes for salvation. Those things make the conscience feel good, and people think they have done something special and respectful. Others go to an altar of prayer because it makes them feel good. However, salvation goes beyond feeling good. Oh, there is feeling with salvation, but you must take hold of salvation by faith and live for God by faith. Feelings come and go, but faith will hold you steady and steadfast in the things of God. None of those cheap substitutes can do for you what real salvation can do.

What Is Salvation?

In Exodus, Chapter 14, you can read that Israel had come out of Egypt with the Egyptians in hot pursuit and had come to the Red Sea. The people were stirred, and verses 13-14 read: "And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will show to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye

have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."

The word *salvation*, as it is used in this particular verse, comes from two Hebrew words, which are brought together to make one word, and it means "to be free; to be safe; deliverance; victory; prosperity." That is exactly what happened to the Israelites at the Red Sea. They were set free when they were delivered from the enemy. When they crossed the Red Sea, they were safe and had victory over the enemy.

Salvation has its beginning with the Lord. That is where salvation comes from. Psalm 3:8 says, "Salvation belongeth unto the LORD: thy blessing is upon thy people." Psalm 18:2 states, "The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower." The psalmist wrote in Psalm 27:1, "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"

The Apostle Paul, writing to the Romans, said in Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." Salvation in its most basic sense is the saving of a life from death or harm. Particularly in the New Testament, salvation includes deliverance from the penalty and the power of sin. You cannot receive that in church joining, but you can in salvation. Salvation is the saving of a life from death. Those of us who are saved were once spiritually dead. We were not alive unto God; we were separated from Him.

We read in Isaiah 59:1-2: "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." When we

were living in sin, we were spiritually dead. There was a barrier between us and God, and that barrier was sin. God can hear, but as long as people continue to live in sin, God will not hear them. You have to become sick of the way you are living to lay sin down and obtain salvation.

Sin works death to the soul. James 1:14-15 says this: "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust [or strong desire], and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." We read in Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Why Do We Need Salvation?

Some people look as though they are getting along just fine, so why would they need salvation? Without it man is lost. Everyone who does not have salvation is lost—the wealthy man or woman, the do-gooder, the churchgoer, the hypocrite, the lukewarm professor—all are lost. Anyone who is living in sin needs salvation. Luke 19:10 lets us know that Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost.

Everyone has lost something. For example, most men have probably laid down a tool and could not find it and searched until they found it. Men have lost their wallets, women have lost their purses, and children have gotten lost; but friend, those times are nothing compared to losing your soul and facing an angry God at the Judgment. I think people actually think that God is going to be lenient with them at the Judgment, even if they are unsaved. God is not going to extend His hand and say, "I'm sorry that you did not make it. I know that you really tried and put forth effort, so I am not angry with you, because I know all about the trials that you have had."

Someone may ask, "Do you think people really think that way?" Yes, they do. Many years ago we

invited some people to our home that we met at a church service. They did not have a place to stay, so we asked them to come to our house to stay, and they did. There was a man and his wife, and they had their children with them. They attended a Missionary Alliance Church. After dinner, we went into the living room and talked for a while. We talked about the things of God, and then we discussed holiness. As we talked about holiness, I spoke about everyone needing to be free from sin and needing to be born again. One of them made the statement, "Well, if God wants to take somebody into Heaven who has not been born again, that is His business." This false notion came from false religion. My wife spoke up and said, "Oh, no. What He requires of me, He requires of everybody." God is not going to let people into Heaven who are not born again. To see the inside of Heaven, you must be born again.

Without salvation you are lost. Dear one, your soul is worth more than earthly substances, your bank account, your new home, or your job. It is worth more than your wife or your husband, your boyfriend or your girlfriend, or your family. As great as family love is, your family did not die for you. Your husband did not die for you; your children did not die for you. Family love is a tremendous love, but only One was willing to die for you, and that is Jesus Christ.

The Benefits of Salvation

Another reason that we need salvation is that it is right. We are what we are because of the choices we make in life. Sometimes people marry the wrong person, some make wrong choices, others take a wrong job or move to the wrong area. Friend, if you make a wrong move concerning your soul, that can be devastating and disastrous. We each have a course set before us that leads either to Heaven or to hell,

and we each are responsible for the choice that we make. Living for God is the right way to live. Christ can make you a better husband or a better wife. He can make you a better young person or a better child growing up in the home. He can make you a better family man or a better student in school or a better worker on the job. God's people are not lazy on the job. God's people do not have to hide behind the labor unions to keep their jobs.

You will not be lazy in school if you have salvation. You will work hard in school and try to get good grades. Salvation will make you a better citizen, and it will make you a good person to be around. Salvation is reasonable in its demands and in its standards. Paul, when writing to the Romans, said in Romans 12:1 that it is your reasonable service.

Why else do we need salvation? Its benefits and its worth far surpass everything man has ever known. It has tremendous benefits. People are always looking for good benefits. Well, salvation has plenty of wonderful benefits! It is the only profitable life to live. Its benefits are temporal, physical, moral, and eternal. Wherever Christians live, it makes a better community in which to live, and it cuts way down on the crime rate. Salvation satisfies perfectly and fully.

What is another reason that we need salvation? Someday we must meet the Author of it. Salvation makes us ready to face God. Whether or not you choose salvation will determine where you spend eternity.

How Do We Obtain Salvation?

You have to be saved the Bible way. Many churches have different ways that you can obtain what they call being saved, or what they call being ready to go. Some use water baptism, some use the Lord's Supper, and others use speaking in an unknown tongue, or an unknown language. Many have their own

ways, but those ways are not the Bible way. Some say you must join their church, but you must be saved the Bible way. If you are not saved the Bible way, then you can be talked out of what you have. God has a way that you can be saved. It is mentioned right in the Word of God. You have to obey what the Word of God says.

In our Scripture reading, we read in verse 13 that the wise man said, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." What was Solomon talking about? Many sinners are prospering materially in this world. What did he mean by that statement? Millionaires and billionaires do not have to worry about where their next meal is coming from or whether or not they will receive a paycheck. They are prospering well financially. Many sinners are prospering. Solomon was speaking of prospering with God, not about prospering in the world. How do we know that he was talking about prospering with God? He said whoever confesses and forsakes his sins will find mercy. When you cover your sins rather than letting the blood of Jesus Christ cover them, you will never prosper with God. What must you do? You must confess your sins to Jesus Christ.

The Bible lets you know that Christ is a mediator. First Timothy 2:1-6 states: "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."

A *mediator* is "a go-between, a reconciler, or an intercessor." A

mediator is not the preacher, the priest, or the pope; Jesus Christ is the Mediator between you and God. To get to God, you have to go through Jesus Christ. Also, you must be sorry for your sins.

Worldly Sorrow Versus Godly Sorrow

The Word of God speaks of two types of sorrow: worldly sorrow and godly sorrow. Only godly sorrow works repentance. An example of worldly sorrow is when a person gets caught and has to pay the consequences, so he is sorrowful because of that. Had he not gotten caught, he would have kept on doing the same thing. A specific example of worldly sorrow is this: Suppose you are driving down the highway about ninety miles an hour, and a highway patrolman pulls you over and writes you a ticket. You would be sorrowful that you got caught speeding. You would have continued to drive at that rate of speed had you not been caught. That is an example of worldly sorrow.

Godly sorrow is sorrow that God pours out on you. You become sorrowful that you ever committed sin against God. You would to God you had never sinned against Him. You are so sorrowful that if He will forgive you for it, you will quit the sin business. When you commit sin, you hurt your Lord and Savior. You see, God has feelings that can be hurt, just as we have feelings that can be hurt from time to time.

Some people use His name in vain. They use the name Jesus Christ in the wrong way. Actors and actresses use His name in vain in ungodly movies. The saints have no business looking at or listening to such trash. How can you, as a child of God, listen to such expressions and not feel sorrowful? Hollywood filmmakers could care less about Jesus Christ or God. They are steeped in immorality to the place that to use God's name and Jesus' name in vain; it is commonplace

with them.

Godly sorrow works repentance; it makes you truly sorrowful. You do not repent just to gain an advantage, such as to bring your home back together, to get a boyfriend or a girlfriend, or even because the church expects it. You repent because of godly sorrow, because you have sinned against God. You feel bad because you have hurt God. When you go on living in sin without repentance, you are hurting God, and He is angry with you every day, wondering why you will not be saved, wondering why you want to continue to hurt Jesus Christ and hurt Him every single day.

If you have godly sorrow, you will want to tell God that you are sorry, and you *will* be sorry. Whether you get caught or not, you will be willing to confess and forsake all sin; then just as the wise man said, you will receive the promise, and God will have mercy. That is the Bible way. You must confess and forsake your sins to receive mercy. Many people go to an altar of prayer and confess their sins, but they do not receive mercy because God sees that they will not forsake them. False religion is full of people who get down by their bedsides every night and confess their sins, but they are not willing to forsake them. When they confess and forsake, then God will have mercy.

Hearken Diligently to the Voice of God

God has put salvation before you, and you have to make the choice. God's desire is that you will choose Him over the world. Isaiah 1:16-20 says this: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as

wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it." God wants you to eat the good of the land.

Deuteronomy 28:1-2 states: "And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God." God has something for those who want to serve Him. They can eat the good of the land. The blessings of God will come on you and overtake you if you will hearken to the voice of the Lord your God.

One of the saddest chapters in the Word of God speaks about those who set God's council aside and refused Him when they were called. Proverbs 1:24-33 reads: "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.

"Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil."

In these verses, the wise man

mentioned refusing the Lord, setting at nought His counsel, and having no regard when He stretches out His hand. Friend, if you do this, it is going to cost you something. It will cause God to laugh at your calamity, to mock when your fear comes, and when you call Him, He will not answer. You will not be able to find Him. It would be terrible not to find God. What does this proverb teach? It teaches that the time will come when the words that you do not want to hear will burn in your conscience. What are those words? "You are too late!" You can take God too far. You can reject God's long suffering and patience to the degree that God will turn a deaf ear to your cries.

Serving God Is Serious

Some people use God only when their fear comes. They only want to seek Him when they experience calamity or at a time of crisis. God called them and stretched out His hand before them. However, before things got rough in their lives, God reached out to them, but they set at nought His counsel and wanted none of His reproof. Then they came to a crisis in life and reached out to God, but they did not find Him. Instead, God laughed and mocked them. Dear one, God is not like a windup toy that you wind up when you need Him.

This proverb ought to put the fear of God in your daily life, if it is not already there. God will call and stretch out His hand toward you, to invite you. Like a gentleman, He will stand at the door and knock.

You can refuse His counsel and lay it aside, but the time will come when you will experience calamity. There will come a time when your fear will come, and God will laugh at your calamity and mock at your fear. He said when distress and anguish come upon you, you will call upon Him, but He will not answer. It would be terrible if God would not answer you in a time of crisis.

You can cross the line with God's patience. He is more patient and more long suffering than people are. His long suffering waited in the days of Noah and in the days of Lot, but the people took Him too far.

In every one of our lives, a crisis of some type will happen. Something will occur that you will not be able to handle by yourself, and then you will regret it if you do not have the grace of God in your life. It could be death, sickness, financial ruin, or many other things. That is the reason movie stars and millionaires who do not even have to worry about where their next meal is coming from commit suicide.

There are things that will come down the highway of life that you will not be able to handle on your own, and then you are going to want God to help you. It would be terrible to have God hide Himself from you. Would that not be terrible to get down before God and cry, "O God, please help me," but your prayer would not go any higher than your own ears? That is right in His Word. Many people think that God will come on the scene any time they call for Him. Surely He is a present help in the time of trouble,

but when God reaches forth His hand repeatedly to people and they refuse His counsel, sneer at the things of God, and make fun of the children of God, what did God say would happen? He said in Proverbs 1:28, "They shall seek me early, but they shall not find me." Why is that? He said in verse 29, "For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD."

I trust that this will never happen to you. I saw that happen one time. At an altar of prayer, all a man wanted was for God to talk to him. He cried out to God, and several ministers prayed with him. He cried out, "O God, talk to me. Help me! Save me!" but it was to no avail. Those ministers stayed and prayed with him for a long time, and they would have prayed with him all day if they could have gotten God to speak to him, but he had turned away from God too many times. You can take God too far.

Serving God is serious. Salvation is a way of life; it is a whole new life. I trust that Proverbs 1:24-33 never happens to you. Those things are written down for our admonition. You can play church, or play religion, all you want to, but there is going to come a time in your life when something will occur that you will not be able to handle. If you do not have God in your life and you keep turning Him down, do not be shocked when you cannot find Him. We read in Mark 16:16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

(Compact Disc TR-223M)

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. "

Revelation 22:17

1 *Chronicles 13:1* And David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, and with every leader.

2 And David said unto all the congregation of Israel, If it seem good unto you, and that it be of the LORD our God, let us send abroad unto our brethren every where, that are left in all the land of Israel, and with them also to the priests and Levites which are in their cities and suburbs, that they may gather themselves unto us:

3 And let us bring again the ark of our God to us: for we inquired not at it in the days of Saul.

4 And all the congregation said that they would do so: for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people.

5 So David gathered all Israel together, from Shihor of Egypt even

unto the entering of Hemath, to bring the ark of God from Kirjathjearim.

6 And David went up, and all Israel, to Baalah, that is, to Kirjathjearim, which belonged to Judah, to bring up thence the ark of God the LORD, that dwelleth between the cherubims, whose name is called on it.

7 And they carried the ark of God in a new cart out of the house of Abinadab: and Uzza and Ahio drove the cart.

8 And David and all Israel played before God with all their might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets.

9 And when they came unto the threshingfloor of Chidon, Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark; for the oxen stumbled.

10 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzza, and he smote him, because he put his hand to the ark: and there he died before God.

11 And David was displeased, because the LORD had made a breach upon Uzza: wherefore that place is called Perezussa to this day.

12 And David was afraid of God that day, saying, How shall I bring the ark of God home to me?

13 So David brought not the ark home to himself to the city of David, but carried it aside into the house of Obededom the Gittite.

14 And the ark of God remained with the family of Obededom in his house three months. And the LORD blessed the house of Obededom, and all that he had.

DOING RIGHT THE WRONG WAY



Brother Allen Polston

The Importance of Taking the Right Course of Action

Although a person's motive is right, that does not mean the person's actions are acceptable to God. I spoke with a friend sometime back and discussed a certain situation along that line, and he said, "We had the right motive." Friend, you can have the right motive but take the wrong action. God is aware of how

you are living and of the condition of your heart. Proverbs 15:3 states, "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." God is aware of the intentions of your heart, and He understands your motives. Nevertheless, He also wants you to take the right course of action in whatever you do. Sometimes people say, "God knows my heart." That is a true statement; however, it does not mean that the

Lord will excuse you if you do something the wrong way.

The religious world tends to assert that God ignores what is taking place outwardly and only views the heart to see if it contains good. Many of the doctrines taught in denominational religion conform to that line of thinking. They teach that God is not really interested in what is taking place outwardly, but that He is looking beyond those things

and looking only into the heart. However, that is not altogether true. Though God does look at the heart as He examines it, He is also looking at one's actions on the outside.

When a person does things the wrong way, there will be a price to pay. In the work that I do, there are specifications that must be followed. When you begin to build a building, you cannot dig down eight inches and pour a foundation. If you dig just below the surface, in the winter that foundation will freeze, raise up, and then sink down; then the building inside will begin to crack and fall apart. The drywall will have cracks all through it, the doors will not open and shut properly, and other things will become faulty.

I have gone to job sites and looked at remodeling projects where that kind of faulty construction has caused problems. Sometimes builders cut corners to cut costs or to save time, but in the end it proves to be very detrimental. Sometimes the floor joists go up and down, the floors squeak, and there are other problems throughout the building. As we were working in one subdivision, a couple called from that area and said they wanted us to come and look at their house. The homeowners told of numerous problems they were having.

As I walked through their home, I could see that it was a relatively new house, but almost immediately I began to suspect what was wrong. Sure enough, the builder had cut corners, and the damage was very noticeable. Unfortunately, the homeowners had to pay the price. Of course, they could not get the builder to come back. On the outside that house looked like a very nice place. Others living in an older house might have thought they would really like to have it. However, if they knew the problems with it, they would not want it.

When you do something wrong, even if your motive is right, there will be a price to pay. Also, the Lord will expect you to back up and correct it. Even if you had a good

motive, thinking it was right at the time, and you really did not intend to bring harm, if it turns out wrong, then God will expect you to take care of it. I had to make some restitutions when God saved me. I had taken some things from my employer when I lived in sin, and I had to make that right. You need to back up and take care of things when you have done wrong.

Yield Yourself as an Instrument of Righteousness

Just as a vehicle has a reverse, the Christian needs to have a reverse. My wife babysits for a man who works with me, and the baby's grandmother brings the little girl to our house. The van that she drives does not have a reverse, and we live on a dead-end street. Since there is not really a place to turn around, the grandmother has to pull over in the ditch and carry the baby to our house. On a nice day it is a brisk little walk, but when it is snowy or icy or rainy, it is not a very pleasant walk. She really needs a reverse in that van.

Just as not having a reverse in a vehicle creates problems, if you lack a reverse, spiritually speaking, it will bring your Christian walk to a complete halt, and you will not go any further with God until you get it straightened out. When a person in a vehicle does not have a reverse, it really creates a hardship, because wherever that person drives, he has to drive around until he can find a place to park where he can pull straight through and hope that he does not get blocked in. Similarly, there will be times in your life as a Christian that you must do some backing up. Sometimes you may move or speak too hastily. Your motive and your thoughts may be good, but good intentions in the wrong manner still require a reverse.

I repeat, the religious world tends to believe that God merely looks on the heart and cares nothing about the outside. That is the reason

they say that they sin more or less every day and cannot help it. Some people want to believe that as long as they have some love in their hearts and some good will, that is all that matters. Friend, that is not true. Luke 8:15 says, "But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience." This fruit spoken of here is a fruit that people can see. It is the fruit of righteousness, holiness, and doing the right thing.

The Roman writer said in Romans 6:13, "But yield yourselves . . . as instruments of righteousness unto God." This means yielding your hands, your feet, and your mouth to do the right thing. Sometimes people realize that they need to do a little backing up, but they get stuck on something. Pride is something that we all must guard against. Becoming too proud to do what God wants people to do is the reason that many do not follow through and walk with the Lord. When pride enters into a person's life, he or she cannot go forward with God. Pride is thinking too highly of one's self. Some think too highly of themselves to obey the Spirit of God, but God is faithful. He talks to people to open a vision to their minds so they can see the good way. It may be the old path, but it is the good way.

I am glad that I am living the good way; it is the best way to live. God has laid out a way, and if you will obey it, He will give you a good life. That does not mean everything will be picture perfect in every situation, but God will make life good for you if you will obey Him. He will work in your behalf and help you. Do not let pride keep you from doing what you know you should do. As some people realize they need to back up and get things straightened out, pride enters their hearts and they cannot go any further. They know what they need to do, but they get stuck, and that is unfortunate.

An Idea Based on Good Intentions

I would like to call your attention to a few things about that situation in our Scripture lesson. First, it was an idea that was based on good intentions. David was concerned about and interested in having the presence of God restored in the midst of Israel. There had been a lengthy period of time in which God's presence had not been there as in the past. Perhaps you know the story of Saul being a king of Israel. He was a great man at one time. He was so humble that he hid himself when the people looked for him to make him a king. However, Saul got out of the order of God and disobeyed God. The Prophet Samuel had instructed Saul to destroy the enemy and all the enemy's goods.

Church, we can make it without the enemy's goods. God will provide and care for us. God will give us joy and happiness, and He will thrill our hearts without the goods of the enemy. The devil tries to make his goods seem so attractive that you think you cannot live without them, but he has an ulterior motive. He has something up his sleeve that he is not telling you. The devil has a trap set for you. He wants to get you into a bad condition so that you will drift further and further away from God. God can give you what you need.

Saul did a great work, but it was not complete. No doubt, Saul was feeling really good about himself, but the man of God came along and asked Saul if he had done what God told him to do. Saul told Samuel that he had, but his disobedience became known when Samuel heard the oxen and the sheep. Saul tried to get out of it by blaming his disobedience on the people, but Saul was the one who was responsible. Friend, you cannot disobey God and get by. You cannot do things that God has shown you not to do if you want to serve Him and go to Heaven. Serving God is serious. This is a serious way to live, but it is the best way to live.

Saul's final demise was when he lost out with God. He looked to other sources for direction. He even went down to a witch's house. God took Saul out and replaced him with David.

David had a good desire. He wanted to bring back the ark of God because he wanted the presence of God to be in their midst. The presence of God is wonderful! The Spirit of God makes a place pleasant. It is a sweet place where the Spirit of God is dwelling in a people. It is a wonderful place because there is no competition going on. Everyone has one desire and one thing in mind: to lift up Jesus and exalt Him.

Where the Spirit of God is, people have the same attitude that John had when he said in John 3:30, "He [Christ] must increase, but I must decrease." It is a blessing when people of one accord get together. They are not concerned about exalting themselves. They want to help others and lift up Jesus. In many circles of this old world, there is so much competition. Some people seem to want to see who can dress the skimpiest, or who can turn the most heads. Others want to see who can get the most pats on the back or the most praise. Some people are cut throats who step on people and do everything they can to get what they want. That is the reason people out in the world are good friends one day and then turn on one another. It is all about self.

Proceeding With Plans Without God's Approval

I am glad for a place where the Spirit of God dwells. We need to cling to Truth because God's presence is going to be where His Truth is preached and the people are living holy lives. His presence is going to be where the standard is upheld, not where just anything goes. We must stand firmly upon the Word of God, because we do not want to cause God to depart. Someone may say, "Don't you know that you will run some people off?" If the people

of God do not stand firmly, God will not remain in the midst. We want the presence of God in our midst, in our homes, and in our lives.

David had a good desire in wanting the presence of God, but in his attempt to get things back in order, he was out of order. We read in verses 1-2 of our Scripture text: "And David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, and with every leader [when you read something like that, you would think that David, having taken that course of action, would not have been wrong]. And David said unto all the congregation of Israel, If it seem good unto you, and that it be of the LORD our God, let us send abroad unto our brethren every where, that are left in all the land of Israel, and with them also to the priests and Levites which are in their cities and suburbs, that they may gather themselves unto us." One thing I noticed about this Scripture was that God was mentioned. David said what he said to the leaders and all the congregation.

In verse 3 David said, "And let us bring again the ark of our God to us: for we inquired not at it in the days of Saul." You cannot say that he meant harm by what he said there. David was not plotting the destruction of anyone in Israel in that. His desire was to take the ark of God back home to Israel.

We read in verse 4, "And all the congregation said that they would do so: for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people." I repeat, David had a good desire and was trying to move forward, but he was doing it in the wrong way. He was doing it in a manner that was pleasing to the people, but God was left out of the thing. Oh, He was mentioned. Maybe a prayer was offered, but if it was, it was not heartfelt because things got worse.

We read in our Scripture lesson in verses 5-7: "So David gathered all Israel together, from Shihor of Egypt even unto the entering of Hemath, to bring the ark of God from Kirjathjearim. And David went

up, and all Israel, to Baalah, that is, to Kirjathjearim, which belonged to Judah, to bring up thence the ark of God the LORD, that dwelleth between the cherubims, whose name is called on it. And they carried the ark of God in a new cart out of the house of Abinadab: and Uzza and Ahio drave the cart." Little did they know, things were getting worse as time went on. We find that as they proceeded with their plans, they were doing things that *seemed* appropriate, but they were not.

Getting Out of the Will of God

There was a procedure that God had laid out in the past for the ark of God to be moved. Today God has a way that we can tap into His wisdom and guidance for our lives. The principles in the Bible can guide us through everything we face in this life. We need to let God be our guide. It does not matter if all the leaders and the captains give their okay. What matters is what God has said. It is good to have people who support you and the work you are doing. There is nothing wrong with counseling with others. In fact, God gives good pastors to counsel with you and to help you to find the will of God in situations. He may help you to find Scriptures that address your need and advise you. What we find in our Scripture lesson was that David was not getting the mind of God in the matter. Although the cart was brand new, it was not supposed to be used to carry the ark of God.

One may think: "That cart had never been used; it was unique and sanctified. It was separated for the ark of God." It seemed to be a good notion to get a new cart. Nevertheless, God had already directed the means by which the ark was to be transported.

David's desire was good, but because the way the ark was being moved was wrong, there was a price to pay. That is the reason preachers caution people from the pulpit to be careful and to be sober.

That is one reason you should stay away from intoxicating agents. Using these agents will cause you to be unable to reason and think things through as you should. You cannot really visualize things and understand things in a proper manner when you are under the influence of an intoxicating agent.

As saints of God, we should be a careful people, carefully evaluating the way we live, the things we embrace, the places we go, and the things we get involved in. Romans 8:14 tells us, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." We must let God's Spirit influence and lead us. The Word and the Spirit witness to our hearts, give us understanding, and give us directions.

Verse 8 of our Scripture text says, "And David and all Israel played before God with all their might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets." You would not have thought there was anything wrong. They were rejoicing and celebrating. They had all kinds of instruments, and they were playing them and having a time, but they were out of the will of God.

Noise can definitely be heard at times when God is around, but there is also noise when another spirit is around. You read in Exodus, Chapter 32, that as Moses came down from the mountain, he could hear a commotion going on. Joshua thought it was the sound of war, but Moses said in verse 18, "It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: but the noise of them that sing do I hear." It was the sound of idolatry taking place. This was the cause of the noise and rejoicing, but it was not of God.

The Price of Going the Wrong Way

Verses 9-10 of our Scripture text continue: "And when they came

unto the threshingfloor of Chidon, Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark; for the oxen stumbled. And the anger of the Lord [He was already angry] was kindled against Uzza, and he smote him, because he put his hand to the ark: and there he died before God." There was a price to pay because things had gotten out of divine order. In this particular case, it was physical death, but today people are dying spiritually because they are going the wrong way, and pride will not let them use their reverse. I say again, if you come to a place in your life when you realize that something behind you needs to be corrected, you need to go back and correct it; then you can go forward for God again. If you do not, your walk with God will come to a halt.

Uzza lost his life, and by this, God was sending a signal to David and the people: "You need to stop and think this over seriously," and thank God it worked in David's case. If you start down the wrong path, God in His goodness can reveal it to you and show you the way to straighten it out. Child of God, just because you have taken the wrong path does not mean that you have to go out into sin. Thank God, you can get it straightened out. You can back up a little, make it right, and go on living for God. That is what you need to do. When you realize something is not right, you need to get it straightened out, and then you can go on with joy in your heart. The devil will take his position on your shoulder and say, "You don't want to do that. What will people think? Just go on as you are and you will be all right."

When Uzza lost his life, it changed David's attitude quickly. David was displeased. One moment they were rejoicing and having a good time, but the atmosphere suddenly changed and David was troubled. Thank God, He troubles people. Today we are living in a dangerous time. The devil is after you, friend, and he is doing his best to get you. He wants to cause you to

go astray, so you must be careful and keep up your guard. If God shows you something in your life, you need to take care of it. You need to have a keen ear and listen to what the Spirit of God is saying. Your never-dying soul is at stake. There is not one thing in this life that is going to hold any value in eternity. There is no wealth, position, power, pride, passion, or pleasure that is going to hold any value when you cross over into eternity.

You must be right with God and obey Him, regardless of who stands with you. We want others to come along, but if they refuse, we must go on. We sing a song that says this:

*I mean to go right on, until the
crown is won;
I mean to fight the fight of faith
till life on earth is done.
I'll never more turn back, defeat
I shall not know,
For God will give me victory
if onward I shall go.*

*Should opposition come, should
foes obstruct my way,
Should persecution's fires be lit,
as in the ancient day –
With Jesus by my side, His
peace within my soul,
No matter if the battle's hot, I
mean to win the goal.*

*I'm going on, I'm going on,
Unto the final triumph, I'm
going on;
I'm going on, I'm going on,
Unto the final triumph, I'm
going on.*

I am going on, by the grace of God. There is no place to turn around. We must go forward.

Seek the Lord First for Guidance

Verse 12 of our Scripture text says, "And David was afraid of God that day." You need to reverence God and have the fear of God upon your heart. It will be a guide to you. Before you jump into something,

you need to consider how it might be viewed and how it would affect God. Having the fear of God is not something that causes you to walk around shaking in your boots. To have the fear of God is a reverential fear that causes you to take God into consideration before you do anything.

Also, you should consider your companion and your family. One time a person came to me and said he was quitting his job because of a problem there. He had not even discussed it with his wife. I said: "That is not right. You should not quit your job without talking to her about it first. You are in this together, and you ought to regard her feelings and consider how you are going to move forward financially from here." The husband ought to regard the wife before he makes important decisions. He should consider her feelings and her position. According to the Bible, the husband ought to be the head of the home and the wife ought to be submissive. That may seem old-fashioned to you, but it is still the Bible way. Husband, you can still be the head of the home and yet regard your wife in your decisions. You need to consider how things will affect her.

When you have the fear of God, you will consider how things will affect God, His church, and your testimony. You may not be able to say that some things are sinful, but how will these things affect your influence? There are some places where you could probably go, and it might not be sinful to go there, but what if people whom you were trying to win to the Lord were to see you there? You need to consider this as you regard God.

In our Scripture lesson David was brought to the place where he began to fear God, and then he made some right decisions. He said in verse 12, "How shall I bring the ark of God home to me?" That should have been his inquiry at the very beginning, and then he could have told the captains and the leaders, "This is how we are going to do

it, because this is what God said." He had a coalition together, but he failed to seek the Lord in the matter.

David was brought to the place where he began to see his error, and his attitude was that of, "God, You see my heart. I want the best for Israel, and I want Your presence. I want to do this according to Your plan, and I want to do my part for You." We all are important in the Church of God. There are no big I's and little you's. Every person who is saved is in God's church and is vitally important to the welfare of the Kingdom of God. There is a place for each and every one.

Be Careful of Making Hasty Decisions

In verses 13-14 of our Scripture text we read: "So David brought not the ark home to himself to the city of David, but carried it aside into the house of Obbededom the Gittite. And the ark of God remained with the family of Obbededom in his house three months. And the Lord blessed the house of Obbededom, and all that he had." Wherever the presence of God is, it is a blessing. Saints of God have a life that is blessed because the presence of God goes with them into their homes, their work places, their vehicles, and all the trials and the situations they face.

David was brought to his knees through that situation, and it brought him to a halt. He said, "We are not going any farther until God tells me how I can bring the ark of God home. I jumped ahead and got in too big a hurry, and I regret that." The Bible does not say exactly what took place, but for the next three months, no doubt the people fasted and prayed and sought God for direction. David got serious about that situation and started seeking the Lord. I am so glad that I know what Jesus meant in Matthew 7:7 when He said, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." This is still a promise for you today. God will respond and help

you to get things as they need to be so that you can serve Him successfully.

I have always contended that we should be careful and give things time. You should not get in too big a hurry, but sometimes people will pressure you to make hasty decisions. Sometimes salesmen will try to get you to be in a big hurry to buy something. For example, one time a vacuum cleaner salesman came to our home and tried to sell us a \$1,500.00 vacuum cleaner. I was not going to pay that much money for a vacuum cleaner, but he really pressed us and wanted us to make a commitment to buy that vacuum cleaner right then. Even so, we did not buy it, and I am glad that we did not buy it. God helped us not to do it. Sometimes I get ideas and think, "Oh, we will do this at church," but I have to be careful and take the time to get in touch with God. He is faithful, and He will help us get things in order.

David took three months to inquire of God. He started making some preparations that he had not done yet. If you read in Chapters 14 and 15, you will find that David started approaching the matter in the right way, which was to carry it

upon the shoulders of the Levites. The Levites were the Lord's chosen to carry the ark, and as they began to proceed properly, God brought back the rejoicing to Israel. He brought back the celebrating and the good times, and this time it was done in order.

Dear one, you have to be careful. Your motives may seem good, and you might have a good desire, but you need to check with the Lord and get His direction for the things you do. As I was studying, I thought about the desire to become a minister. First Timothy 3:1 reads, "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." However, you need to read beyond that. There are some requirements that go along with that office. Paul went on to mention to Timothy in the following verses that a bishop must be sober, maintain control in the home, be of good behavior, be patient, and so on. This is a good thing, but God has an order for it.

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 14:26, "How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue . . . Let all things be done unto edifying." Singing, testify-

ing, preaching, and laboring for God are good, but there is an order. There is a procedure, and it is beautiful. When God works it out and it is all in order, it is wonderful.

There are things that we need to consider and be careful that we do the right way. Many times people get ideas and notions, but if they are not careful, they will jump into things the wrong way, go too hurriedly, and get out on a limb; then it will be hard to get back. I am afraid that some have done that very thing. They moved too hastily and pride would not let them come back. Pride would not let them back up. If you see a need in your life, an area where you need to make some changes or corrections, the best thing to do is to humble yourself and say, "Lord, You see what has occurred, and I need You to help me to get my life in order." A few years ago I had to do that very thing. You do not want to continue with things out of order, because it will not get any better, and there will be a price to pay.

(Cassette C-5329M)

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain."

James 1:19-26



"Be seeing you soon, God willing."

That was all the message had said. The mailman never did move so slowly as in the days that followed. Mrs. Ross would meet him at the foot of the steps, "Any more word from Bill?" she would ask.

"No, I'll wave from the corner when it comes, Mrs. Ross," the mailman smiled. He delighted in bringing good news and felt almost as disappointed as the mothers when word did not come from the boys. They were "his boys" too, in a sense, for they had tagged at his heels, eating apples, asking questions, chattering on roller skates along the route. Now, they were grown men. It was hard to realize they had seen so much of life, and of death,—"his boys."

The war was over and everywhere people were gathering their own into their households again and casting off their thoughts of war like an old garment.

Others were going on, steeling themselves against this day when boys would be coming home all around them, but not their own.

"*Be seeing you soon, God willing.*" The message puzzled the Rosses. How did he come to put it that way?

Bill had gone away, a happy-go-lucky young lad, confident in himself.

"Certainly, Bill, you wouldn't think of going away without accept-

ing Christ as your Savior?" his father had said.

"Don't worry about me, Father. I'll take care of myself."

That had been the tone of his letters. There was the note that slipped the censors soon after he went across, "I'll come through, don't worry. We were fired on today, but it didn't have my name on it."

"O God, doesn't the boy know his parents' prayers kept him?" Mrs. Ross had wept when she read it. "He isn't ready to go yet."

Mrs. Ross had looked at the date of the letter again. That long, black night of March 27—that was the night they had been fired on—she knew for a certainty. She had not slept that whole night but was drawn on her knees by a powerful, unseen force—to pray for Bill's safety.

Now he was coming home, and the message read, "God willing." Those two words thrilled them with expectancy as much as the thought of his coming. Was he saved, or had he added those two words to please them? Eagerly the family watched the calendar and the mailman. Every ear was alert when the phone rang.

Then the word came: "Arriving 2:20 p.m. Wednesday. Love, Bill."

Wednesday came, and the clock crawled to twelve. The house was fragrant with apple pies and chocolate cake, Bill's favorites. The chick-

en was ready to fry.

"Won't Bill like that?" little brother leaned his head to one side and eyed his handiwork. The sugar bowl was tipping in his hand. He was helping to arrange the table for the homecoming.

"Watch what you're doing. You'll spill that sugar," one of the girls scolded, her voice high-pitched.

"Haven't you picked those flowers yet?" one of them called to the kitchen.

"No, I want them to be fresh. I'll pick them now while you get dressed."

Father stayed home from the office after lunch. Deep down inside, he was as excited as the rest of the family. Would 2:10 never come?

When all was ready, the Rosses, big and little, scrambled into the car and drove to the station.

They waited. The train was ten minutes late. Why today, of all times? At last, they saw its smoke-far up the track—and then the train pulled up to the station, breathing their own impatience.

Passengers poured off. A group of girls, a family with a baby, a fat man, two sailors, and there was Bill!

Tears and laughter and kisses. "Bill, Bill, Bill," from every throat. Thank God! Bill was home.

That night was one never to be forgotten. The whole happy family was gathered around the table.

"What was the most thrilling

experience you had?" Bill's oldest sister asked.

"It was when we were about to start on our last mission before the war ended. Jim Wilson was in command. He had often urged me to become a Christian, but I was too stubborn to listen. Before we started on any mission, Jim had us in a huddle for prayer. He did that night, but the flak got us before long that night, and the wings began to burn. He ordered us to bail out, and one by one, the fellows did. I was last and ready to jump when I found my chute had caught fire, and I stood back.

"Jim gave a quick glance and saw what had happened.

"What do you suppose he did?" Bill leaned forward. Tears welled in his eyes. "He ripped off his chute

and yelled, 'Here, put this on!'

"I froze at the thought of leaving him alone in that burning inferno.

"The fire was licking its way deeper into the plane. Hoarse with smoke, he yelled, 'Jump!' Mechanically, I obeyed. I think that trip to the ground was the longest I ever took. I was disgusted with myself to think I had left Jim to die in that plane. I wished with all my heart I had stayed.

"Then I thought of how he had begged me to take his Christ, your Christ, Father and Mother, as my Savior. In a flash it came to me that God had spared me that I might be saved. Before I reached the ground, I was born again. I know I was, for that was the greatest thrill I've ever known or ever hope to know until I see my Savior face to face!"

"Thank God!" Mr. Ross whispered. Mrs. Ross was speechless with joy.

"And what about your pal?" Sister asked, hesitantly.

"He was reported missing. The plane went up like a burning cinder when she struck the ground. However, Jim escaped as he landed, and he told me later that he never could have made it through the door with his parachute on. Every fellow was safe."

Spontaneously, the song burst from Mrs. Ross and the whole family. With hands joined around the dinner table, they sang, "Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow."

Selected

[Camp Meeting Report—contin. from p. 2] anointing, it will produce a good work in the heart of each one who believes and obeys. The pure Word can save the soul and cleanse the inner man from all filthiness of the flesh. As faithful men of God boldly proclaimed the wonderful Words of

Life, all in attendance were taught how to live a more perfect and pleasing way before the Lord.

The spring camp meeting is past and is now history. It is time to prepare for the fall meeting, which will be held August 3-10. That time will be here in just a few days. I realize

that the gasoline prices have soared, but if it is at all possible for you to make this meeting, surely the Lord will amply repay your efforts. God graciously rewards every effort and sacrifice that men and women make to be drawn closer to Him.

THE EASY ROAD CROWDED

**The easy roads are crowded, and the level roads are jammed;
The pleasant little rivers with the drifting folks are crammed,
But off yonder where it's rocky, where you get a better view,
You will find the ranks are thinning, and the travelers are few.
Where the going's smooth and pleasant, you will always find the throng,
For the many, more's the pity, seem to like to drift along.
But the steps that call for courage, and the task that's hard to do,
In the end results in glory for the never-wavering few.**

Revelation 3:14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

17 Because thou sayest, I am rich,

and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

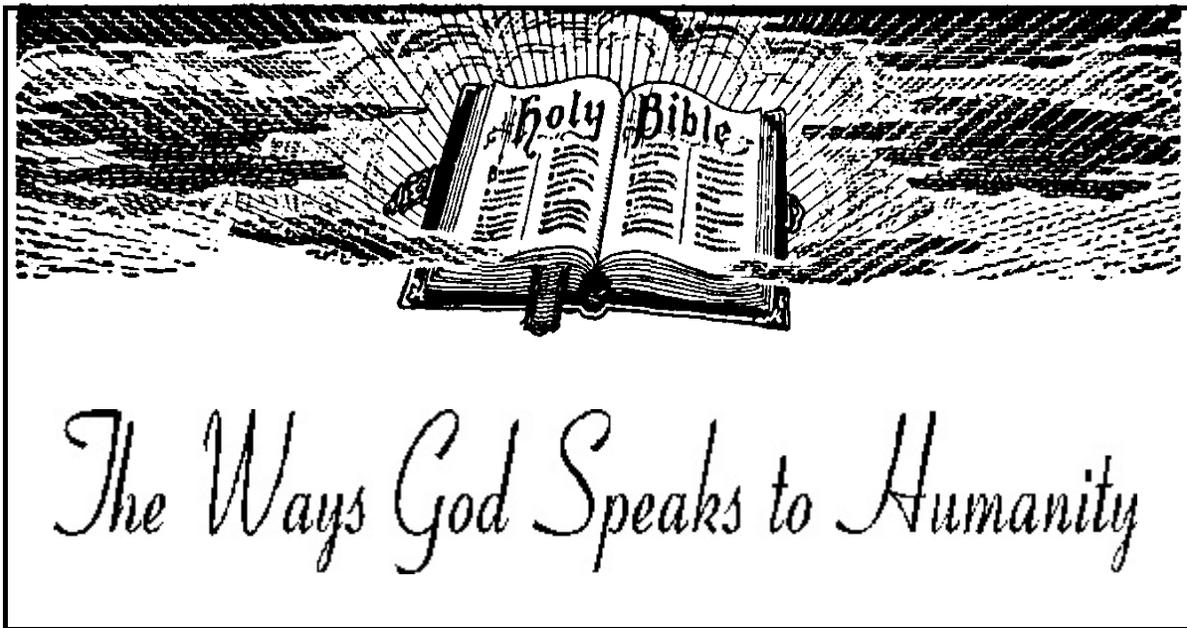
19 As many as I love, I rebuke and

chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.



Brother E. David Stegmeier

Hearing and Receiving God's Sayings

The wise man wrote in Proverbs 14:12, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." People need to get beyond what *seems* right and get to what *is* right! I thank God that we can know the right way. There is a positiveness about serving God.

Proverbs 4:10-11 says: "Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many [young person, you ought to listen to your pastor, your Sunday school teachers, and your parents]. I have

taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths." You should be glad for the right way. It is wonderful! Verses 26-27 read: "Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil."

We read in John 14:6, "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Jesus said in John 10:10, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

Our Scripture text states in verse 14, "... unto the angel [the pastor] of the church of the Laodiceans write;

These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." Seven letters were written to the seven churches of Asia. Those congregations were in seven specific cities throughout the Roman providence, and those cities were important trade and communication centers. Christ commended some of those churches, but not many of them. Most of them had some very serious spiritual needs.

At that time, John was exiled on the Isle of Patmos in the Aegean Sea. He was condemned for preaching the Gospel. I might add, we are going to suffer as God's people, and

sometimes we will suffer tremendously. It was at that time when John received this revelation from God.

Christ said in verse 15 of our Scripture text, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot." I want the things that should be cold to be cold. For example, I like a cold drink of water, but I like a hot cup of coffee, and I like my soup hot. God wants us all to be hot or cold spiritually. However, I would say that 90 percent of the religious world and professing Church of God people are lukewarm. They are in an indifferent, careless, complacent, lethargic condition.

Church of God, we have something to be excited about! It is thrilling to serve the Lord! As I look back at past activities and see all that has transpired, I say, "God, You have such beautiful things planned." When I get up each morning, I have no idea what will happen. It is awesome! God plans our days. That is the reason we should be open to what the Lord would have for us. We should say, "Lord, what do You want me to do today?" If we have plans, we should say, "If the Lord wills . . ."

"As Many as I Love, I Rebuke and Chasten"

Verses 16-17 of our Scripture text read: "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. [If you are hot for God, you can be useful in the Kingdom of God, and there is no greater privilege and honor than to be used in His kingdom. On the other hand, if you are cold, God can get to you. The difficulty lies in being lukewarm, having no cares and having a 'no need' attitude.] Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." In essence, God was saying: "Listen to what you are saying; that

is not how you are. In reality, you are not hot for Me. What you say and what you really are amount to two different things. You have little or no spirituality in your life. You are poor in the important things. You are increased in the least important things, but you are blind spiritually to the needs around you and to the work that could be done for Me."

I live the way I preach. I say, "God, I don't want to have any hypocrisy in my life whatsoever." God hates hypocrisy. You should either be all out for God or take your stand with the enemy, one or the other. If you are not hot for God, in essence, you are with the enemy.

The religious world is blessed financially with greater assets than they have ever been, but as far as Truth is concerned, they are more destitute than they have ever been. Today most churches do not have Wednesday night prayer services anymore, and few churches have Sunday night services. Revival services are almost unheard of! Quite a while back a Methodist minister and I were talking about the ordinances, and he asked, "Do you still practice feet washing? Isn't that an antiquated practice?"

I said: "Yes, we do practice it. It is still in the Word, and God's people still observe it." Feet washing is not antiquated.

I tell God every day, "I need Your divine direction. I need to know Your will for this day, and I need Your grace." I do not know what I will meet when I get up in the morning, so I pray and ask God for divine direction. I am in earnest about this! Life is very complex. We are living in a day when people do not see their spiritual needs. They do not know what to do, yet there is so much work to be done. God wants us to take hold of the Word and live it. We must let it be active in our daily lives.

Verses 19-21 of our text of Scripture states: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: [If you cannot be chastened or disciplined, you are

really not a saved individual. Some people refuse to be disciplined, yet they have a very high profession of Christianity. I hesitate to use the word that the Bible uses, but they are illegitimate children, spiritually speaking.] be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

"He That Hath an Ear, Let Him Hear"

God wants you to be an overcomer. I can remember when I was a child that I wanted to be a true Christian. I did not want to be up and down in my Christian experience. I wanted to be an overcomer, and God saw the desire of my heart. When I was very young, I remember quite well that I said, "God, I want to be a very strong Christian. I want to be strong in the Lord." Dear one, you can overcome! God wants overcomers.

Our Scripture text finishes in verse 22 with these words: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." When you are in the service of God, you should be open to how God speaks to you. You should listen with sensitive ears, because God might use a testimony, a prayer, or the pastor's admonition as a means of speaking to you.

This letter to the church in Laodicea was the final letter in a series of seven, and I believe the contents of this letter apply to our age more than any other. We are in an age of deception, of self-deception, and of apostasy. Nevertheless, Christ will have the final word. He is the faithful and true witness. The Laodicean church had a high profession but little or no possession. They were poor in things that really mattered, but they

were increased in the things that were not really important.

Verse 20 of the Scripture text is where I want you to focus your attention. It states, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." As I was meditating and praying, I thought to myself: "Many people in the world do not recognize the voice of God. They do not recognize how God speaks." I believe beyond a shadow of doubt that what happened on September 11, 2001, was the voice of God. As a nation, we may think that we are high and mighty and invincible, and we may think that our nation can never go down, but God will have the final word. God would say, "America, America, My grace has been shed on you. Where is your love? Where is your respect? You very seldom even refer to Me."

I do not know about you, but when I hear the Marine band play or the Air Force choir sing the songs of America, something within me is set aflame. I am thankful and proud of what God has done for this country, and I attribute it to God, not our forefathers. Yes, they were good men, but it was God! God has blessed this nation. September 11, 2001, was a wake up call to our country. We ought to consider God in our decisions. In so many places, people are forgetting all about God.

God Wants Your Attention

The first word of verse 20 is "Behold." In my abridged dictionary the word *behold* is used as an imperative word to get one's attention, or to inspire attention. In other words, Christ was saying, "I have something *extremely* important to tell you" when He said, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock." I believe that some people do not really understand how God speaks to them. God wants our attention.

Christ is a gentleman. He will not force Himself into your life, even though He is the Creator. He inhab-

its the Heavens and the earth, but He wants to get really close to you. He wants to get right down into your heart. God is not a great distance away; He is very near.

Psalms 145:18 states, "The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth." God is calling, and He will give you audience if you are truthful concerning your needs. In Acts 17:27 Paul wrote, "That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us."

Through the Word of God, I want you to consider the ways in which God speaks to humanity. *First, God speaks through His creation;* His creative work speaks to us. I have always enjoyed the autumn days. The leaves on the trees turn such beautiful colors. It is God's handiwork. The sunrises and the sunsets are beautiful.

Many times I have expressed to God how much I enjoy the scenery that He paints. When I get up to go to school, it is about the time the sun comes over Mount Hood, and right before it comes over, you can see the silhouette of Mount Hood in the Cascade Mountains, and it is beautiful! I say, "God, what an artist You are!" At night when the sun goes down, it is beautiful!

In Psalm 19:1-6 David wrote: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament [the hills, the mountains, the streams, the deserts, the oceans] showeth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof." God is speaking to everyone in the world. He is wit-

nessing to the whole world that He is a God of love and of power.

Second, God speaks to us is through His Word. In this same chapter, verses 7-8 say: "The law of the LORD is perfect, [We do not need to add to it or take away from it. We ought to leave it just as it is. The Church of God teaches it all.] converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes." That is so true. Sometimes you will go through very difficult places, and you will find a portion of Scripture that speaks directly to you. Oh, how it rejoices your heart! Many times that has happened to me.

One year my wife and I were carrying a very heavy burden, and in a meeting in Honduras, as Brother Brooks got up to speak, he quoted a Scripture. Through that Scripture God said, "That's it!" and my burden lifted. Over and over that has happened.

Psalms 19:9-11 reads: "The fear of the LORD [people would not say the things they say or make the moves they make if they had more of the fear of the Lord] is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward." Isn't that good? That is the reason we need to read the Word of God every day.

"Incline Your Ear and Come to Me"

Third, God speaks to us through men of God. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 1:21 that "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." At a minister's meeting quite a few years ago, some who professed to be men of God talked about the need of just having

"congregation discussion times" and dispensing with the preaching of the Gospel. That is ludicrous and against the Word of God! God has ordained preachers. Again, Paul said that "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

Fourth, God speaks to us through the conscience. Everyone has a conscience. Some people have inquired, "Well, what about the people who have never heard the Gospel?" God still speaks to them. Romans 2:14-16 tells us: "For when the Gentiles [the unbelievers, those in dark Africa or Asia], which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel."

A teacher came to my classroom one time and said, "I know this student is guilty because I saw the guilt in his face." Often guilt can be seen on a person's face. There is an inner law — a voice, and God has put that secret voice within every man, woman, boy, and girl.

How else does God speak? *Fifth, God speaks to us by the power of the Holy Spirit, especially in the worship services.* This has happened many times. One youth said to me, "I'm not sure what you call it exactly, but when I come to church, I feel uncomfortable, and I struggle." He was feeling what is called conviction. Another person said to me, "I have decided that this church is different from all the other churches. I can tell that you people are committed to what you believe." One man who sometimes attends our services said: "I like to come to church except when you preach or when your wife plays the piano for the altar service. Her eyes bring conviction on me. When I look at your wife, in her eyes I see conviction."

The Holy Spirit works with people. He speaks with that uncomfortable feeling. If you have an uncomfortable feeling when you go to church, it could be that the Holy Spirit is knocking on the door of your heart. Sometimes He knocks very gently and very quietly. It probably is not the temperature of the building or the uncomfortableness of the benches; it is probably the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit makes people feel uncomfortable when He is convicting them. John 16:8 says, "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin [maybe He is reproving you], and of righteousness, and of judgment."

Sixth, God speaks to us through the church, a brother or a sister. The bride is the church. One young man testified, "When I was backslidden, the saints would send me cards or call me. Once a sister in the church dropped by and left a dozen cookies at my doorstep. Those things really got hold of my heart." You see, the church speaks to souls. If a brother or a sister talks to you, no doubt, God is impressing them to speak to you, and you ought to listen carefully. Revelation 22:17 says, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

The Prophet Isaiah wrote in Isaiah 55:3, "Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you." We need to be very, very perceptive. God speaks in beautiful ways.

I once read a story about a painting, and the artist was a man named Holman Hunt. He titled his painting, "The Light of the World." That painting portrays Jesus knocking at an ivy clad door. The hinges on that door are corroded and rusty because they had not been used for a long time. Jesus is standing there holding a lantern in one hand. The inscription under that painting says, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock."

When Mr. Hunt had finished the painting, he invited his friends to gather into his studio and inquired, "What do you think of my new painting?" One friend said, "It is absolutely a masterpiece." Others gave their opinions, and after a while, one friend finally said, "Mr. Hunt, haven't you forgotten something?"

"What?" inquired the painter.

"You forgot the handle on the door."

Mr. Hunt said, "No, I haven't forgotten the handle. I omitted it on purpose, for this is the door of the human heart, and it can only be opened from within." I am glad that I opened my heart to Jesus. I have never regretted it.

As I was studying for this message, I thought of the song that says, "Though men may strive to go beyond the reef of space, To crawl beyond the distant shining stars; The world's a room so small within my Master's house, The open sky's but a portion of his yard. How big is God, how big and wide its vast domain To try to tell these lips can only start. He's big enough to rule this mighty universe, Yet small enough to live within my heart."

Is God dwelling in your heart? God speaks in many ways. Often-times He speaks through circumstances, and that is the reason we need to have a very keen ear for His voice.

How Responsive Are You?

When I was a boy, we used to have church plays, and we put on a play about the Master's coming to an individual's home. In the play a woman prayed in the morning: "God, I really would like to talk to You today. I would like to visit with You and have fellowship. You said that You would come in and sup with me and that we would have wonderful fellowship. Will You please come?" So she got up, read the Bible for a while, and then she started the activities of her day and became very involved.

She was doing this and doing that, making out her grocery list, and going from one thing to another. About nine o'clock that morning, there was a knock on the door. The neighbor man came over and said, "Sister Smith, my wife is extremely ill. Can you come over and help today with some chores and cook a little something for her?"

She said, "Oh, do you know what? I just felt really impressed this morning, so I prayed that the Lord would come and visit me today. I'll tell you what, I'll try to do it tomorrow. Would that be okay? Could you take care of her today? I'll come over tomorrow."

He said, "All right, I'll try." So he turned around and sadly left and closed the door.

About twelve o'clock, she was sitting down to eat a sandwich and reading a little from the newspaper, and then someone else knocked on the door. She went to the door, and there stood an emaciated body with messed up hair and clothes that were dirty and torn. The tramp said, "You know, I haven't eaten in a couple of days. Would it be possible for you to fix me a sandwich?"

She replied, "Oh, I would, but I am just about finished with my lunch, and I'm expecting a royal Visitor today. A really important Person may be coming."

About six o'clock, as she was having her evening meal, the telephone rang, and someone in the congregation asked if she would be willing to come to a special prayer meeting. She said, "I would, but I'm expecting a Visitor, so I think I had better stay close to home." About ten o'clock, she knelt beside her bed and began to pray. She said: "Lord, I'm so disappointed. I felt impressed this morning that You were going to come and sup with me, and I thought we would have a wonderful time together. Where were You? I'm so disappointed. You let me down."

God said: "No, I was there three times, and every time you turned Me away. I came this morning at nine o'clock, but you did not respond. I gave you another opportunity at noon. I came by and wanted something to eat, but you refused Me. I gave you a final opportunity when I called you about six o'clock to see if you would come and pray for some very serious needs in the congregation, but you refused Me one final time. I came three times, but each time you ignored Me."

We need to be very aware of God in all circumstances. Is He knocking at your heart's door now? How responsive are you? I want to be very responsive, don't you? One old song entitled "Let Jesus

Come Into Your Heart" reads:

*If you are tired of your of sin,
Let Jesus come into your heart;
If you desire a new life to begin,
Let Jesus come into your heart.*

*If it's for purity now that you
sigh,
Let Jesus come into your heart;
Fountains for cleansing are
flowing nearby,
Let Jesus come into your heart.*

*If there's a tempest your voice
cannot still,
Let Jesus come into your heart;
If there's a void this world never
can fill,
Let Jesus come into your heart.*

*If you would join the glad songs
of the blessed,
Let Jesus come into your heart;
If you would enter the mansions
of rest,
Let Jesus come into your heart.*

*Just now, your doubtings give
o'er;
Just now, reject Him no more.
Just now, throw open the door:
Let Jesus come into your heart.*

(Cassette C-4932E)

Got any rivers you think are uncrossable?

Got any mountains you can't tunnel through?

God specializes in things thought impossible.

And He can do for you what no other can do!

"Woe to them that are at ease in Zion."

—Amos 6:1



Brother Larry Dishman

A State of Ease

This Scripture text reveals one of God's woes, and it is directed to God's own people. To be at ease in Zion when there is urgent work to be done for the Lord is wrong, and it is a great danger that faces each one who claims to be a Christian. The ease referred to here is an unscriptural, fleshly ease. The true Christian's life is not one of ease. Laboring in the Kingdom of God is a necessary part of this life. The church has a mission to fulfill, and no one can drift into Heaven. You cannot enter God's Heaven by being at ease.

The state of ease is defined as "spiritual inactivity, carelessness,

indifference, laziness, lethargy, or having a lack of interest." To the world a normal New Testament Christian experience often appears to be an abnormal way of life. The Day of Pentecost meant pain, yet most people will do anything to enjoy pleasure. The Day of Pentecost meant burdens, yet most people love ease. The moon of revival has not yet risen on this hell-bound, Christ-rejecting, speeding-to-judgment generation, yet many people today sit at ease in Zion. Many people have gone past the point of being at ease, and they are asleep. Pillars in the church have given place to pillows. The devil has seemingly vaccinated many Christians with the needle of apathy.

To bring out the force of these words found in our Scripture text, I want to compare them to the words found in Isaiah 66:8, which says, "As soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." If you place these two statements side by side, you will notice the force of the contrast between them. The Prophet Amos wrote, "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion." The Prophet Isaiah penned, "As soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." Notice that both of these statements are addressed to Zion. In the Scriptures Zion is symbolic of the Church of God. Therefore, this solemn message is directed to God's people, and it speaks of two possible conditions: being at ease or travailing, a condi-

tion of sadness or gladness, failure or fullness, cold or hot, displeasure or pleasure, lethargy or energy, slackness or wholeheartedness.

The burden of Amos' message is, however, not of certain people being in Zion, but of being at ease in Zion. The church takes the same position in the family of God that the natural mother takes in the natural family. Sinners will never be born until Zion travails. God never intended His church to be a refrigerator in which to preserve perishable piety. He intends His church to be an incubator to hatch new converts for the Lord.

The tragedy of our day is that which Hezekiah spoke about when he said, "This is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and blasphemy, for the children are come to birth, and there is not strength to bring forth" (2 Kings 19:3). I believe that the biggest single factor contributing to the delay of a Holy Ghost revival is the omission of travailing, because the Scripture says that "as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth children."

Do you realize that it is a great privilege to dwell in Zion? It is a great privilege to be a part of the Church of the Living God. What a wonderful thing it is to be a part of God's family! As the song says, "I'm so glad I'm a part of the family of God." If it were not for the grace of God, we would still be living in sin or in Babylon, but I thank God that He saved us by His grace and brought us into His family.

The Problem in Zion

In our Scripture text I want you to notice there is a problem in Zion: "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion." The problem does not lie with God. After almost two thousand years of access to Christianity, so many people are still outside the city of Zion. They are lost and traveling the broad road that leads to destruction. Friend, the problem that God has is with those who are at ease in Zion. The Prophet Amos

did not say, "Woe to the atheist, the agnostic, the backslider, or the infidel." Eight times in Matthew, Chapter 23, Christ said, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" but in our Scripture text God, through the Prophet Amos, said, "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion."

The problem is not with the unsaved, but the problem is with people who have been saved but have become slack in their Christian experience and have become indifferent and careless. One of the greatest temptations that we face as the people of God is becoming careless and lethargic, just going through the motions without really being on fire for God. The tragedy of this condition is, while the church is at ease, or asleep, every agency of the devil is wide awake.

Think about it, friend. The bartenders are not lax in promoting what they have to sell. The drug pushers throughout the world are not at ease in promoting their illegal drugs. Those in the pornography business are not at ease in pushing their pornographic materials. The same is true of those in false religion and in cults. They are not at ease in their efforts. My friend, you ought to wake up and do something for God while there is still time and opportunity. The rulers of darkness in this world are still wide awake. Spiritual wickedness in high places is ever increasing.

It behooves every Christian to wake up and get on fire for God. The world is going to hell. What do your actions say about that? Do your actions say that you care? Friend, whether you want to admit it or not, if you are at ease in Zion, your actions are saying, "I really don't care that much."

How true it is that many are content with drops of mercy when God is waiting to pour out showers of mercy from Heaven. Businessmen, sportsmen, and those who devote their time and energies to politics are not satisfied with half-measures, yet many Christians are

satisfied with a cooled-down experience with Christ and do not want to be disturbed too much. I ask you this question: Have you become satisfied with a cooled-down experience? Friend, you should be alarmed if you do not hunger and thirst for a deeper experience with Christ.

The Love of Many Is Waxing Cold

What does it mean to be "at ease in Zion?" It means to be satisfied with things as they are. In Amos 6:1-6 notice how the thought of self-satisfaction and complacency is indicated. In Revelation 3:15-16 Jesus said: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." Those people felt that they had need of nothing. They were satisfied and felt that they had enough of everything. They sat in contentment and indifference. Oh, the sin of self-satisfaction! Half-hearted Christianity is an abomination to God. Jesus wants everyone to be either hot or cold. You are neither hot nor cold if you are at ease in Zion, and He will spew you out of His mouth.

Matthew 24:12 says, "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." Friend, where there is no vision, the people perish. Likewise, when Zion is at ease, the people perish. The thought in this verse is of being content with one's own salvation and not really having the concern that one should have for a lost and dying world. The tragedy of the situation is brought before us in Psalm 142:4 where the Psalmist said, "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul." Do people feel that way about you? Are you carrying a burden for the lost? He said that no man cared for his soul.

The Scripture tells of a man who was robbed and beaten and left to

die. Luke 10:31-32 says: "And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side." I wonder, are you like the priest and the Levite who had no concern to help that poor, desperate individual? Do you pass by the unsaved day after day feeling indifferent to their deep spiritual needs? Friend, people whom God puts in your pathway have deep spiritual needs.

You may say, "But I'm not a preacher, and I'm not even a teacher." Friend, the commission is for all saints to go out into the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. You may not be able to go to other parts of the world, but what about your neighborhood, the place where you work, and the other people with whom you come in contact? If each of us will go where God has sent us, with a heart of compassion, we will find people who have deep spiritual needs. Proverbs 11:30 says, "He that winneth souls is wise." God can give you the wisdom to know how to win souls.

Evidences of Being at Ease in Zion

In the parable of the ten virgins that Jesus told in Matthew, Chapter 25, the problem with the five foolish virgins was that they were at ease. In verses 6-8 Jesus said: "And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out." While they all slumbered and slept, the call came that the Bridegroom was coming. This is a great danger that faces God's people today.

What are the evidences of being at ease in Zion? One sign is that little or no interest is shown in getting the Truth to others. Yes, my

friend, losing that keen edge from your witnessing is a sign of being at ease in Zion. Have you lost that? I truly believe that people can lose that keen edge.

I heard about a brother who often got up and testified in church, and his testimony set the house on fire. When he testified, people could feel the Spirit of God, and everyone loved to go to prayer meeting night to hear this dear brother testify of what God had done in his life. After church one night, someone said to him, "You know, I would give the world to have a testimony like yours."

He replied, "That's what it cost me." Friend, that is exactly what it will cost you. First John 2:15 states, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

To be at ease in Zion will cause you to be too weak spiritually to witness for Jesus. Your vision must be much greater than just going to church. Too many people have no greater vision than going to church on Sunday and Wednesday evenings. You need to be in church every time the doors are open, if at all possible. However, the local church needs to be your launching pad for reaching the world for Jesus Christ.

Further evidence of being at ease in Zion is taking little or no active part in the services. Many just simply fill a seat. Friend, the weapon that is used stays bright, and that which has become rusty will become bright again when it is used. In many cases people are too lifeless to worship God freely and deeply in the Spirit.

Lack of earnest soul wrestling in prayer is another evidence of being at ease in Zion. James 5:17 says, "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months." Being at ease in Zion will cause you to fail to earnestly wrestle in prayer

for souls.

Luke 22:44 says, "And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." The devil would rather have you do anything but pray effectively. In Genesis, Chapter 32, you can read that the desire of Jacob was so strong that he held on in desperation, and in verse 26b he said, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." Hebrews 5:7 reads, "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared."

Fervent and Persistent Prayer Will Restore Life

Did you know there is only a tiny remnant that claims to have a definite commitment to a meaningful prayer ministry? Dead churches must be quickened and made alive through prayer. Persistent prayer will restore life to a dead church.

If you are unfaithful to the house of God, you are at ease in Zion. You ought to have an eager longing for God's Word, just as a baby has for milk. You need to cultivate a hunger for the Word. The Psalmist said in Psalm 122:1, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD." If absence makes the heart grow fonder, a lot of people ought to be really fond of the church, because they are absent so often.

Friend, if you attend a Bible-believing church, you owe that local assembly your prayers, your presence, and your participation. Christians are like automobiles in the sense that they start missing before they quit. Too many times people are too dead spiritually to hunger and thirst after righteousness.

The evil effects of being at ease in Zion have a bad effect on others in the church. Also, when people are at ease in Zion, it has a bad effect on a lost and dying world. You may

feel that you are as close to God as another individual, but 2 Corinthians 10:12 says, "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." An inactive, sleeping Christian is not attractive to the sinner. New converts often take on the mind-set of the congregation where they attend services. If converts come into a congregation that is at ease in Zion, those new converts will think it is natural to go the same way everyone else is.

If you will get on fire for God, be what God wants you to be, and be revived in your spirit, the same will happen to others. Then new converts will see what it means to be on fire for God. May God help us not to be at ease in Zion, but to be travelling.

Being at ease in Zion displeases God, and He pronounces a woe upon those who are. It is detrimental to your own soul. One person penned these words: *"Must I be carried to the skies On flowery beds of ease, While others fought to win the prize, And sailed through bloody seas?"* The devil has vaccinated many Christians with the needle of apathy. In many cases the souls of those who claim to be Christians are barren. Tears are absent from the eyes, and new converts are absent from the altars. Oh, the reproach of barren altars! In many congregations the spiritual crib is empty. The death-like stillness of the sanctuary could be shattered by the blessed cries of newborn babes.

The Price of Revival

At God's storehouse there are no sale days. The price of revival is ever the same. Do you know what the price of revival is? It is travelling in prayer. The Bible is a Book of Life. In the very first Book of the Bible you can read about the tree of life and a river of water, which is a river

of life. The entire Bible, from the Book of Genesis to the Book of Revelation, is a Book of Life: it reveals the life of God to the dead souls of men.

Are others around you spiritually dead because you, as a believer, are at ease in Zion? The degree of life in the church determines the degree of death in the world. You may say that you are a part of the Church of God, but have you become careless, half-hearted, undisciplined, indolent, indifferent, and dry, spiritually speaking? Are you joyless, lifeless, empty, and cold?

Do any of these adjectives describe your present condition? Are you travelling in Zion or do you fit more into the category of being at ease in Zion? You may think that you are neither of those, but that you are somewhere in between. If so, you are lukewarm, and lukewarmness is something that God hates. God does not want you to be lukewarm. He wants you to travail in Zion.

Have you hit a snag in your spiritual progress? Has there been a leveling off or a feeling of stagnation? Has something happened to the former mood of spiritual overflow that once thrilled your soul? Has your Christian life become methodical and powerless? The good news is, the flame that has almost gone out can be rekindled. Life tends to go stale without an occasional overflow of the Spirit of God, and no change will come in your life unless you crave the change. You cannot drift into God's Heaven. In our text of Scripture the Prophet Amos said, "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion."

Dear one, unless you get closer to God, you are going to drift away. The deadness in your soul will deepen, and you will become colder and colder. You are going to lose more and more of the life of Christ and show less and less of His likeness, His purity, and His character. God hates sleepiness, sluggishness, and selfishness. Many are in a state of spiritual apathy, suffering from a

severe case of spiritual malnutrition. They are in a spiritual stupor. Some are sinking into a coma of depression, despondency, despair, lethargy, and laziness. Lukewarmness has taken its toll on many professing Christians. They have all the paraphernalia, the machinery, and the organization of religion; but something is missing. What is it? That creative, dynamic force is missing in many people's lives. Dear one, it is time to shake yourself and shake off lethargy. You must awaken.

I was saved from a life of deep sin. When I first got saved, some of the habits of life were temptations to me for some time. Though I have been saved for more than thirty years now, I am not, in any way, saying that I could not be overtaken by sin. I am not tempted to get drunk, to go to a barroom, to smoke pot, or to smoke cigarettes. If you have been saved and are still tempted along those lines, that does not mean you have backslidden. Every man is tempted. Temptation, no matter what it is, is not sin if you do not yield to it. The dance floor is not appealing to me. The outward sins that many Christians have been saved from for many years are not the things that are bothering them. Those are not the things that I am really concerned about. Do you know what I am concerned about? The fact that if any of us end up in hell, it will probably not be because of going to a barroom or using tobacco, but because of lukewarmness. This is a great danger.

Folks feel like, "Well, as long as I am not drinking, using drugs, or smoking, everything is all right." No, friend, you need to be fearful of losing the fire out of your soul and becoming lukewarm. Lukewarmness will cause many people to be lost in the end. Where do you stand today? Can you say that you are travelling in Zion or are you at ease? Have you gotten cold in your experience? If you have, you need to seek the Lord before it is too late.

(Compact Disc TR-038E)

Things That Keep a Pastor Going



The pastor at times finds himself facing problems he must solve alone. Feeling it impossible to unburden his heart to any member of his congregation, he bears his burden alone. This is the case where Galatians 6:5 is experienced: "For every man shall bear his own burden."

There are times, however, when the congregation can share the pastor's burden, even though they may not be informed of the details of the case. This would be a fulfillment of Galatians 6:2, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

The story is told in the Book of Exodus of Moses, Aaron, and Hur watching a battle in which Israel's army was being defeated by the Amalekites. From their place of vantage on the hilltop, Moses, seeing defeat coming to his army, held up his hand to heaven. Exodus 17:11-14 states: "And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book. . . ."

This is a most interesting incident and also a most important one, for it bears a striking illustration of the manner in which the pastor's hands may be supported spiritually by the members of his congregation.

There are times when the pastor stands before his congregation on

Sunday pouring out his soul to them in a heartwarming message of encouragement and inspiration while his own heart is breaking within him because of personal trouble or because of the wrong attitudes and deeds of certain members of his flock.

The love that a true pastor has for such members and all others is tender and true, and he naturally longs for the same sympathetic consideration from those to whom he extends it. When this consideration is given him, he recognizes it as one of those things that keeps a pastor going. He can endure because he feels strong, unwavering support of loyal saints who are holding up his hands.

There are various ways in which members of a congregation may hold up their pastor's hands. They may hold an attitude of prayerful consideration toward him. If members of a congregation hold this attitude toward their pastor, they will naturally be considerate of his methods, his viewpoints, and his welfare as the leader of the people of God.

Expressions of appreciation also keep a pastor going. There is perhaps no other thing that so certainly brings out the best in a pastor as kindly expressions of appreciation from the members of the congregation for his labors among them. There are various ways in which such expressions may be manifested. One natural expression of appreciation is a gift. Even a thing of small expense such as a fitting greeting card may do more for a pastor to keep him going than the sender would suppose.

Cooperation that is proved real by the spirit in which it is rendered is another thing that keeps a pastor going. He well knows that his

success depends upon the cooperation of those among whom he labors and that the future welfare of the congregation itself depends upon their truehearted cooperation. Because a pastor is at times put to his wit's end in trying to secure such cooperation, actually passing through deepest soul burden over the matter, he is made extremely glad when he receives such cooperation.

Provoking to good works is not only the job of the pastor but is an essential on the part of the members (see Hebrews 10:24). This word *provoke* is rendered "stir up" in both the Revised Standard Version of the Bible and as a definition in Webster's Dictionary. Certainly the pastor has something to keep him going when he sees his members actively engaged in stirring up one another to good works!

Loyal church attendance means a great deal more to a pastor than the average layman can ever realize. One would almost have to stand in the place of the pastor in order to understand his emotions when, after careful sermon preparation, he sees his membership walking out of the church immediately following Sunday school instead of remaining with kindly appreciation and expectation for what the minister has on his heart to present.

Leaving the church after Sunday school has become too much of a habit with too many members of some congregations. The same habit of nonattendance is true in regard to the Sunday night service, for whereas members should be there with friends and relatives, too fre-

quently they are not in attendance themselves.

The midweek service has become so largely a thing of the past in some places that the habit of nonattendance has had a paralyzing effect upon the loyal ones who do attend church regularly. The earnest hearted pastor prays and labors to make the service as helpful as possible and is especially encouraged, therefore, when visitors are brought

to this service by active members.

Every true pastor's heart is burdened for the youth work of the church, and he is greatly inspired to see his young people inspired to see his young people regularly attending all church services, not just special youth meetings. Our youth are not only the church of tomorrow, but also are a vitally needed part of the church of today.

Hebrews 10:25 admonishes,

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." This should be emphasized to young and old as the voice of God for our present day. To see this admonition heeded is one of the great things that keeps the pastor going.

Selected

Meeting Announcements

NEWARK, OH

Aug. 3-10

CAMP MEETING: Church of God, 675 N. Cedar Street, Newark, OH 43055

The first service will begin Sunday morning at 10:00 a.m. Three services daily.

Service times: 10:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m. (this will be a teaching service), & 7:00 p.m.

Meals are reasonably priced. Meals for full-time evangelists and full-time pastors

(with spouses) are half-priced. Lodging is a free-will offering basis. Holy Ghost preaching, divine healing, inspirational singing, & children's services. We invite you to come and worship the Lord with us!

To make reservations, call Brother or Sister Bush @ 740-345-1213.

For further information contact: Pastor Roger L. Decker, 83 Decrow Avenue, Newark, OH 43055. Telephone: 740-344-2543 or 888-730-0461

Visit our website at: www.godsacres.org

CANBY, OR

Aug. 18-24

CAMP MEETING: Church of God, 522 NW 2nd Avenue, Canby, OR 97013

The first service will begin Monday evening at 7:00 p.m. Two services daily.

Service times: 10:00 a.m. & 7:00 p.m. Meals are reasonably priced.

We extend a cordial invitation for you to come and worship the Lord with us!

Please make reservations in advance, if possible.

For further information contact: Pastor E. David Stegmeier, 552 NW 2nd Avenue, Canby, OR 97013. Telephone: 503-266-9297

MEDINA, OH

Sept. 1

LABOR DAY MEETING: Medina Church of God, 6745 Wooster Pike, Medina, OH 44256

Service times: 10:00 a.m. & 2:00 p.m. Meal will be provided by the local congregation.

For further information contact: Pastor Daniel Webster, 92 W. Main Street, Seville, OH 44273. Telephone: 330-435-6490 or 330-725-5993 (church)

Visit our website at: www.ChurchofGodMedinaOH.com

COMSTOCK, MI

Sept. 2-7

REVIVAL: Comstock Church of God, 5578 Comstock Avenue, Comstock, MI 49048

Evangelist: Brother Earl R. Borders, Heath, OH.

Service times: Tuesday-Friday 7:00 p.m.; Saturday 10:00 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.;

Sunday 10:00 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.

For further information contact: Pastor Jerry Miller @ 269-998-3194 or Sis. Carol Miller @ 269-998-3197

Spring 2008 Camp Meeting Recordings

TAPE NO.	DATE	MESSAGE TITLE	MINISTER
TR-256M TR-257E	6-15-08	Father's Day A False Witness	Bro. Roger L. Decker Bro. Roger L. Decker
TR-258M TR-260E	6-16-08	She Has Done What She Could Pouring Ourselves Out for God	Bro. Daniel Webster Bro. Calvin Foster
TR-261M TR-263E	6-17-08	How Do You See It Now? Your Inner Man Must Be Strong	Bro. Aurelius Raines Bro. Calvin Foster
TR-264M TR-266E	6-18-08	The Four Seasons The Voice of One Crying in the Wilderness	Bro. Leamon Whitehead Bro. Calvin Foster
TR-267M TR-269E	6-19-08	We Need Revival Bless the Children	Bro. Tim Yoder Bro. Calvin Foster
TR-270M TR-272E	6-20-08	No Respector of Persons Two Things That Hinder Us	Bro. Garrett Haylock Bro. Calvin Foster
TR-273M TR-275E	6-21-08	Don't Let Sin Be Your Ruin I Surrender All	Bro. C. H. Ferguson Bro. Larry Dishman
TR-276M TR-278E	6-22-08	When the Game Is Over When the Chickens Come Home to Roost	Bro. Richard Talbot Bro. Larry Dishman
TR-259A	6-16-08	Prophesies of Daniel, Part 1	Bro. E. David Stegmeier
TR-262A	6-17-08	Prophesies of Daniel, Part 2	Bro. E. David Stegmeier
TR-265A	6-18-08	Prophesies of Daniel, Part 3	Bro. E. David Stegmeier
TR-268A	6-19-08	Prophesies of Daniel, Part 4	Bro. E. David Stegmeier
TR-271A	6-20-08	Prophesies of Daniel, Part 5	Bro. E. David Stegmeier
TR-274A	6-21-08	Prophesies of Daniel, Part 6	Bro. E. David Stegmeier
TR-277A	6-22-08	Prophesies of Daniel, Part 7	Bro. E. David Stegmeier
TM-095	2008	Spring Camp Meeting Songs #1	
TM-096	2008	Spring Camp Meeting Songs #2	
TM-097	2008	Spring Camp Meeting Songs #3	
TM-098	2008	Spring Camp Meeting Songs #4	
TM-099	2008	Spring Camp Meeting Songs #5	
TM-100	2008	Spring Camp Meeting Children's Program #6	
TM-101	2008	Spring Camp Meeting Songs #7	
TM-102	2008	Spring Camp Meeting Songs #8	
	2008	Spring Camp Meeting Choir Songs #1	
	2008	Spring Camp Meeting Choir Songs #2	
	2008	All Songs for the Spring Camp Meeting on MP3	
	2008	First Half of the Spring Camp Meeting Messages on MP3	
	2008	Second Half of the Spring Camp Meeting Messages on MP3	
	2008	Prophesies of Daniel (All Lessons) on MP3	

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