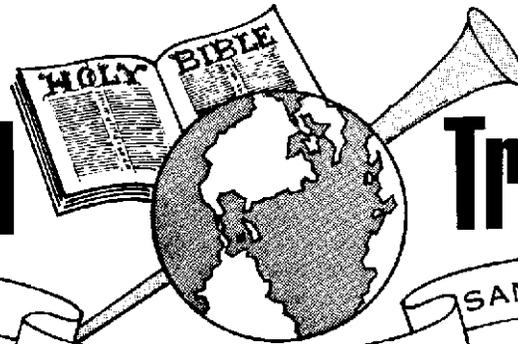


The Gospel



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. 32:38

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

SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

Vol. 38 October 2008 No. 10



Church of God Tabernacle in Newark, Ohio

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

Psalm 122:1

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

Fall 2008 Camp Meeting Report

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

Brother Roger L. Decker Editor
Workers Too Numerous to Mention

THE CHURCH OF GOD BELIEVES IN:

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

SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS

PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH

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

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items.

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Vol. 38 October 2008 No. 10

Magnificent Meeting

It was certainly a blessed time to gather with the saints during the Fall Camp Meeting, to fellowship with the precious people who came from far and near. Assembling for eight days of feasting on the good things of God was pure joy.

It always saddens the heart to see such a beautiful time of worship and fellowship come to a close. Although the meeting has ended, we can yet reminisce of the blessed times we enjoyed while together. There was a very sweet spirit flowing from heart to heart that was felt from the pulpit to the kitchen. God desires His people to dwell in unity.

The camp meeting began Sunday morning, August 3, 2008, at 10:00 a.m. as Brother Roger L. Decker greeted the audience and welcomed everyone to God's Acres. He encouraged each one to enter into worship, stating that the meeting would be over before we realized it. These are the times to gain help and strength for the soul and to become better equipped to fight the good fight of faith. As situations become more turbulent in the world, the people of God need their anchors more securely fixed in Christ.

It is always difficult to try to relay to others all that our eyes have beheld and our hearts have felt. Trying to express in words all the good things that took place is beyond our vocabulary. We can say that it was magnificent and remarkable, but that does not really describe it adequately. We can say that the atmosphere was sweet. Each service proved to be profitable and spiritually uplifting to all who were looking for help.

Time after time, our hearts were blessed and our cups overflowed as the Lord opened the windows of Heaven. He showered Himself upon us in such a magnificent way. It was truly a time of refreshing for all who were in attendance. Being in these spiritual services creates a desire to remain and never have to leave. However, we must again realize there is a world that needs what we have freely received from the Lord.

The congregational singing of songs written by divinely inspired Christians brought joy to the hearts of God's people. The anointed voices of the choir set the tenor for the services and prepared the hearts for worship. Then there were solos, trios, and quartets that sang specials that truly lifted our spirit, blessed our hearts, and brought forth shouts of praise in the camp.

The main purpose of any revival, camp meeting, or fellowship meeting is to hear the Word of God expounded by men who are anointed of God. It is still through the preaching of the Gospel that the lost are made aware of their sins. Through the certain sounding of the trumpet, men and women are awakened to their need of the Savior. There was certainly no lack of the Truth going forth during this camp meeting. Each minister who stood behind the sacred desk was empowered by God's Spirit to deliver the message that the Lord wanted them to deliver. The altars were not barren but found penitent souls seeking their way to the throne of God. It was a great joy to see precious souls pleading for God's forgiveness and being filled with His

[continued on page 20]

Ezekiel 37:1 The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones,

2 And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry.

3 And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest.

4 Again he said unto me, Prophecy [or preach] upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.

5 Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live:

6 And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and

cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

7 So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone.

8 And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them.

9 Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.

10 So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon

their feet, an exceeding great army.

11 Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts.

12 Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.

13 And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves,

14 And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD.

A Hopeless Condition With Hope



Brother Roger L. Decker

Ezekiel's Vision

The Scripture text describes a condition that looked quite hopeless. Verse 1 says that Ezekiel was set down in the midst of a valley that had many bones, and they were very dry. No doubt, most of the Israelites doubted God's promises of restoration. Israel was in dire need

of having God restore them to the covenant that they had wandered away from. Their restoration was going to depend on God Himself, not on circumstances.

God took the worst possible scenario to show the Prophet Ezekiel that He alone has the power to restore life where death reigns. Child of God, if you ever amount to

anything at all in this life, it is going to be because of the Lord. He is the only One who can lift you up out of a hopeless condition. As far as man was concerned, Ezekiel was in the midst of a hopeless condition, a condition to be pitied. You would have thought they had gone too far to be salvaged.

Those bones in the midst of the

valley had been subjected to the elements of nature. They were without protection and bleached out from the sun. The Scripture says there were very many, and they were very dry. Jesus used the word *many* when He said in Matthew 7:13, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat."

Jesus used the same word in Matthew 7:22 when He said, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works?" The Apostle Paul spoke of *many* when he said in 1 Corinthians 10:5, "But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness." The many dry bones that Ezekiel saw in the vision is a perfect example of what God sees today in our world, and even in the church world today. Many, many souls who are without spiritual life are in a condition that only God can restore. Some people are in situations that only God can turn around. He is the only One who can be their hope.

The world has its dry bones, but false religion also has them. Physical and spiritual life comes from God, and the majority of religions do not even teach the need of being born again. Dear one, no one is going to see the inside of Heaven unless he or she has been born again. You might have joined many churches, and you might have visited many churches, but you will never get in the Kingdom of God unless you are born again.

Jesus did not instruct people to try to be born again. He said, "Ye must be born again." People cannot see the Kingdom of God unless they are born again. You may read all kinds of books written on millenniums, the Revelation, and the Dark Ages, but most of them literalize the symbolic language throughout the Revelation. The reason they do is that the authors have not been born

again. Some are great scholars and great theologians. They have spent many years in seminaries, but without being born again they cannot see the Kingdom of God.

A Power Stronger Than Sin

The picture that is portrayed in Ezekiel is a type of the spiritual condition in our land today. Our country is in bad shape. When people can murder babies and not even bat an eye and gutless politicians stand up and praise that, our nation has gone in a sad direction. If abortion had been legalized in earlier days, many of those people who advocate it probably would not be living.

This thing of same-sex marriage is sickening. Some states are caving in to that now, one by one. There was a time when the majority of the people in the United States never would have accepted that, and it probably still is a majority. Our nation is turning into a modern-day Sodom and Gomorrah, if it is not already beyond that.

People cannot simply change their minds and start doing better any more than the leopard can change its spots. The Bible lets us know in Jeremiah 13:23, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." You cannot change your mind and start doing good when you are accustomed to doing evil. That change cannot take place without the power of God. The power of God must change you. There has to be a power stronger than sin, stronger than the flesh, and stronger than the devil, and that Someone is Jesus Christ.

In Luke 11:21-22 Jesus said: "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils." The strong man is the devil, and the stronger than the strong

man is Jesus Christ. When the devil dwells within a man, his goods are at peace, but the power of Christ destroys the works of the devil.

First John 3:8 says, "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." In this verse of Scripture we can see an overthrow of Satan's domain. Satan is defeated by the power of Jesus Christ. He binds the strong man, and then the one that the strong man possesses can go free.

Thank God, there is freedom in Jesus Christ! You can go free. You no longer have to be bound in the prison house of sin. It takes the power of God to breathe life into a spiritually dead soul. Jesus said in the latter part of John 10:10, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

False religion has no power to resurrect those who are dead in trespasses and sin. It cannot resurrect dry bones without the Word and the Spirit. If you were to ask many of those in false religion if a man or a woman can live a holy life free from sin, their answer would be no. In verse 3 of our Scripture text, when Ezekiel was asked whether or not those bones could live, he, being honest, said, "O Lord GOD, thou knowest." In other words, he was saying, "I do not have any idea, but You know, Lord." At least he was honest. In false religion they will tell you: "No, a man cannot live free from sin. A man cannot live holy. He has to sin every day."

If we had to sin every day, we might as well have stayed under the old covenant and bring in a sacrifice once a year to the High Priest as an atonement for sin. Thank God, we are under the new covenant. We have a Savior. The Messiah has come! Jesus has come. The great I AM is here. We *can* live holy lives, free from sin, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, and 366 in leap year. The real question is, Do people want to live

that way? The power is there.

There are people walking around dead, spiritually speaking. They are dead in sin, just as those dry bones were stretched out in the valley. Oh, today the people are alive physically, but they are as Paul told Timothy about a widow. Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 5:5-6: "Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day. But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." There are people who are walking around, even carrying Bibles under their arms, but inwardly they need their hearts changed because they are dead while they live.

The Change That the Grace of God Brings

Ezekiel 37:2 says, "And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry." Many people need to be wet down with the dew of Heaven. God has not blessed them in a long time. They have gotten in the same condition that Ezekiel's dry bones were in: they are *very* dry.

The Prophet Ezekiel saw very many, and they were very dry. It was not a good condition for the Prophet to view, but oh, what a lesson it was! The Prophet was able to view the situation from every side, and from every side the condition looked hopeless. No matter what way he went to look round them, the condition was the same. The Prophet was asked the question in verse 3, "Son of man, can these bones live?" He answered, "O Lord GOD, thou knowest." It was beyond his thinking, or beyond what his mind could take in. God was the only One who knew the answer to that question.

How many times has this question been asked about individuals that people view as being in a hopeless condition? Do you know of anyone, maybe a family member, that you feel is in a hopeless condi-

tion? Do you think that person has gone too far? No doubt, that has been said of many whom God has delivered. I know it was asked about me: "Is there any hope for him? Has he gone too far?" It looked as though I had. Brother Wilson said, "Hold on a little longer." Shortly after that, I got saved. As far as outward appearances looked, my condition seemed hopeless. It did not even look as if there was a prayer of a chance of my coming out of sin. I had a hardened heart, a bad attitude, and a nasty spirit. To others, I seemed to have gone too far.

Ezekiel saw very many, very dry bones. They had been there for a while. Israel had turned against the covenant of God and had gone astray. God was showing Ezekiel the condition that Israel was in. They were very dry, and the condition had attached itself to very many.

Paul told the Ephesian brethren, speaking to Gentiles, there was a time when they were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. He stated in Ephesians 2:12, "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." This describes our pedigree. We were alienated "from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." It is a terrible state to be without hope and without God in the world. However, in Luke 18:27 Jesus said, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."

Can those who are spiritually dead be restored to life? Can those who have capsized into the life of sin be restored to life again? Can those who have gone into the depths of ungodliness ever be made alive spiritually again? Paul, writing to Titus, said in Titus 2:11-12: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and

worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." Paul said that the grace of God has appeared to all men: the self-righteous, the ungodly, the vile, the churchgoer, and the hypocrite. God has enough grace to restore each and every one who wants to be restored.

This change that the grace of God brings is almost more than the human mind can fathom. I am sure that when I walked into my former place of employment as a changed man, the people there were shocked. I had been one of the biggest troublemakers in the whole plant, but I had become converted. I had more than religion. Many people there had religion, but a definite change takes place when God resurrects the bones that are dry. It goes beyond nature itself; it is a divine work when God raises someone from the depths of vile sin and turns him around completely. He changes that person inwardly and outwardly. The clothes that individual wears change from immodest to modest.

In the Bible you can read about a man who was a lunatic. After the devil was cast out of him, he was found sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. When Jesus cleanses an individual, a definite change takes place, like the individual has never known in his life. This change is not brought about by joining a church, signing a card, or speaking in some unknown tongue. No! Old things pass away, and behold, all things become new.

How Can a Person Be Restored?

An individual is restored through the preaching of God's Word. Our Scripture text states in verse 4, "Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD." First Corinthians 1:21 says, "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching [not by foolish preaching] to save them

that believe." Romans 10:17 reads, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." You must have faith in the Word that is preached or it will profit you nothing.

Hebrews 4:2 says, "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." If you will take faith in the Word of God, it will change you. That is how you know the Word of God is true—it changes those who believe it. You see, you can believe a *Reader's Digest* story, but simply reading that story will not change you.

Humanly speaking, there was no hope for those dry bones. Perhaps when people looked on you before conversion, they just shook their heads, saying: "I don't know how he [or she] could do that. I don't know how he [or she] could go that far." That is where human thoughts enter the mind instead of God's thoughts. Isaiah 55:8-9 reads: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

In our Scripture lesson, God, speaking through the Prophet, said, "O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD." Whatever your condition might be, if you are separated from God, you need to hear the Word of the Lord.

Nothing is any better for dryness of the soul than the Word of God. If you profess to be a Christian, and you are going through really dry circumstances, there is nothing better for you to do than to read the Word of God. You may say, "Well, I don't understand what I read." If you will put forth effort, the Lord will help you. You should not give up and just shut the Bible. You may not understand everything in other books that you read, but you keep reading them. You need to read the Word of God. There is nothing bett-

er for spiritual dryness.

If you are in trespasses and sin, you need to hear the voice of the Son of God. John 5:25 says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." If there is to be a resurrection of your soul, it must come by the voice of the Son of God. Whether it is a spiritual resurrection or the general resurrection, it is going to come by the voice of the Lord. There will be no resurrection without the voice of Jesus Christ.

"Them That Believe"

When you believe the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, you can be saved. Again, 1 Corinthians 1:21 says, "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." The power of God is in the Gospel. In Romans 1:16 Paul wrote, "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."

Israel was in a very hopeless condition. They were beyond the reach of man. There is not a more deplorable condition or a more deplorable picture of Israel than what God showed Ezekiel. The Bible lets you know that you must build on a firm foundation to stand against the wind and the rain. Today some are tossed about by every wind of doctrine. The bones in the valley were bleached out by the elements of nature. They were in a hopeless condition, and they were helpless, but God had a way to restore them, and that was to have a man of God preach, or prophesy, to them. The preaching of the Word will have an effect on you if you will believe His Word.

It is sad that today there are many churchgoers, but not many believers. If you get saved, you must be saved the Bible way. You must

believe the Word of God, confess and forsake sin, and then the Lord will have mercy. Today some people are confessing every night, but they are not saved. First John 1:9 states, "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Our Scripture lesson describes a seemingly hopeless condition, and had you looked upon it, you would have shaken your head and not spent much time there. You probably would have walked away. You would not have gone down and preached to them. However, God told Ezekiel to preach to them. That valley of dry bones represented the house of Israel. They had disobeyed the covenant.

I want to repeat, the preaching of the Word will have an effect on you if you believe His Word. Three things took place immediately after Ezekiel preached to them. First, there was some noise. I am sure there was not much noise before, with old dried-out bones. It was a very quiet place, but suddenly when the preaching went forth, there was some noise. Next, there was some shaking going on, and then there was some coming together. Remember, Ephesians 2:6 says He "hath raised us up together." What was happening? The preaching of the Word of God brought the fear of the Lord upon them.

The patriarch Job said in Job 4:14, "Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake." Speaking of the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2:6, we read, "Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language." All the movement of those dry bones meant there was hope. Signs of life began to appear, and they were beginning to take shape. Dear one, there needs to be some old-fashioned trembling at God's Word. You should not take God's Word lightly, turning it on and shutting it off according to whatever your discretion might be.

God's Word is going to judge you!

Hope for the Hopeless

When you go to the Judgment, you are not going to be judged by the fact that you took groceries to the neighbor, by how you took your mother in, or by how you did this or that to help others in some way. Those things are good, but you are going to stand at the Judgment bar of Jesus Christ and be judged by "Thus saith the Lord." It is what God thinks about a matter that is of vast importance.

Acts 24:25 tells us that as Paul "reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." In other words, Felix was saying, "After I have done all the things that I want to do and I am ready to settle down, I will call for you."

Let me tell you this: the convenient time is when God calls, when God is dealing with you. That is exactly what Brother Emerson Wilson told me when he placed his hand upon my shoulder. He said, "Is God dealing with your soul?"

I said, "Yes, but I'm not ready."

His reply to me was, "You will never be ready; you need to move when God is ready."

Friend, that is the time you need to get help from God, whether it is for healing for your body or salvation for your soul. You need to move when God speaks to your heart; that is God wanting to do something for you. If you are living in sin, God wants to save you. When God troubles your heart, He wants to help you. Christ came into this world to save sinners. The Word will bring you back to your senses. Salvation will give you some good attributes and restore your character. It will bring you back to right standing in the sight of God.

Ezekiel 37:10 tells us that when life came, they "stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army."

What does this army represent? It portrays the Church of the Living God. Israel was in a hopeless condition, just as many people feel they are today. If you feel that your condition is hopeless, if you will allow the Word of God to bring you out of that condition and put the broken pieces together, hope will come, and your condition will change. God has hope for the hopeless condition.

I know what it is to be in a hopeless condition. Sometimes Christians even go through situations that seem hopeless. Sometimes they think some things are never going to turn around or change. Often the sinner, bound with the habits of life or inward strife, thinks there is no hope, but there is hope for the hopeless condition.

You could not view a worse scenario than what Ezekiel saw when he looked upon that valley of dry bones. There were very many, and they were very dry. I repeat, God took the Prophet Ezekiel around the valley of dry bones, and as he went around them, from every angle that he looked, it looked the same. What were God's orders? He told Ezekiel to preach to them, and when the Word of God went forth, noise began to take place, they started shaking, and they began to come together; then they stood upon their feet an exceeding great army, the Church of the Living God.

Our Scripture lesson illustrates hope for the hopeless condition. God can and will do the same for anyone.

He is no respecter of persons. It makes no difference where you are from or what your culture is, whether you are rich or poor or in-between. It makes no difference what you look like, God will do the same for you. He will save you, if you want to be saved. If you feel that your condition is hopeless, there is hope. One song in the *Evening Light* hymnal reads, "*We have a hope within our souls, Brighter than the perfect day: God has given us His Spirit, And we want the world to hear it, All the doubts are passed away.*"

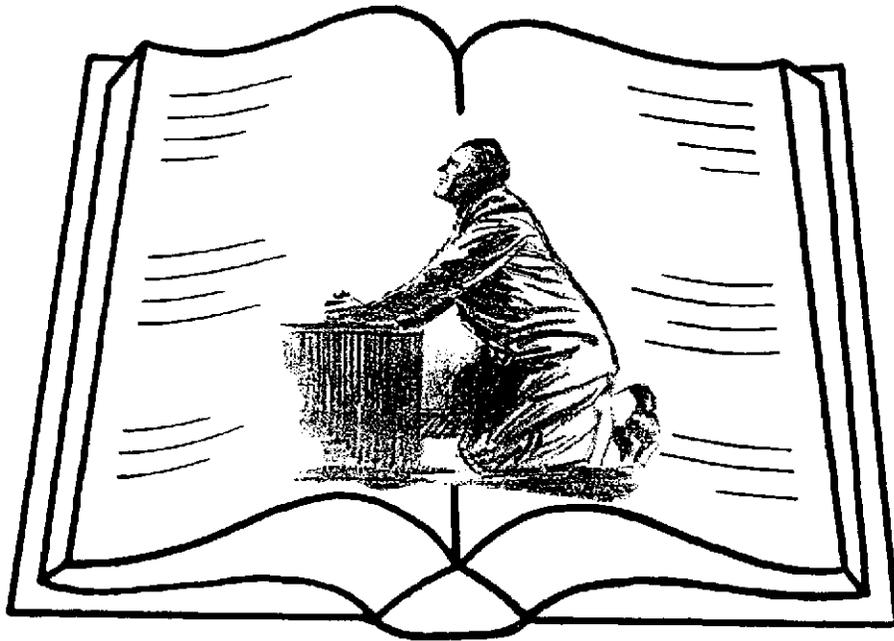
Sometimes the devil will harass the child of God. He will try to accuse you and tell you, "You are not saved." He will try to tell you that you are this and that, but dear one, if you are obeying the Word of God, you are saved.

If you feel that you do not have any hope, whether it is physical or spiritual, there *is* hope. Look at Ezekiel's dry bones. "O Lord GOD, thou knowest" the Prophet said. God knows if there can be life in your situation. If you will turn it over to Him, there is hope. God knows your condition altogether. You may feel that you have gone too far, but if God is talking to you, He is letting you know there is hope for you. God will help you if you will let Him. If there is something in your life that should not be, there is hope. Won't you obey the Lord?

(Compact Disc TR-291M)

You and Christ together
Down the long, long trail,
Makes no difference whether
Road be hill or dale;
Fair or cloudy weather,
He will never fail;
You and Christ . . . TOGETHER
Down the long, long trail.

Can You Know the Will of God for Your Life?



Brother E. David Stegmeier

God's Way Is Best

You need to know the will of God for your life. Many people are wandering about aimlessly, and many are in confusion. First Corinthians 14:33 says that God is not the author of confusion. You do not have to be confused if you are following the leading of God's Holy Spirit. During the many years that I have pastored, I have seen some very sad situations. I have seen people make very poor choices and then suffer unnecessary heartaches and sadnesses along life's pathway, not only in their own lives but also in

the lives of their children and their grandchildren. You can know the will of God. I want to know God's will for my life. Life is too serious, and it is full of many complexities.

In Genesis, Chapter 24, the Patriarch Abraham was well advanced in age, and God had blessed him richly. In his advanced age, he called upon his faithful servant to get a wife for his son Isaac from the daughters of his father's house, among whom they once lived. Abraham was confident that God would make his way prosperous.

I believe God is concerned that we prosper spiritually and finan-

cially. We may go through some hard places, but all things work together for good. The servant went to the land of Mesopotamia to the city of Nahor. The servant made his camels kneel and drink by the well of water outside the city. Genesis 24:12 says he prayed, "O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham."

In seeking the will of God for your life, you need to pray *feroently*, not just offer up a few words now and then. You must get down to business before God and seek Him

with all your heart. Through prayer you can yield your will to the will of God. Sometimes your will may be in opposition to God's will. You need to get down and pray until your will acquiesces, or gives in to, God's will. God knows best. In our hymnal we have a song entitled "God's Way Is Best." Victory can be gained through prayer. In the garden of Gethsemane Jesus prayed earnestly until He could say, "Not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). Did He wrestle a little? Yes, He did! The greatest battle ever waged was won in the garden of Gethsemane when Jesus said, "Not my will, but thine, be done." That is the place where every one of us has to come: "not *my* will, but Thine be done."

I remember a cute little story that my former pastor told years ago. He said a certain man was seeking a wife, and he went out under an oak tree in the darkness of the night. There he prayed, "O Lord, please send me a wife." Up in that tree was a wise old owl. The wise old owl looked down and said, "Who?" The man said, "Lord, just anyone." Worse than being unmarried is being married to the wrong person. You need to know the will of God. I earnestly seek God daily that His will might be done in my life.

The Choosing of a Wife for Isaac

Abraham's servant prayed for a sign that whatever young lady would be willing to give him a drink and offer to draw water for his camels would be the one for Isaac. He had just finished speaking to God when a beautiful young lady came and did exactly as he had petitioned God that she should do. She gave him a drink, and then drew water for his camels. Rebekah quickly ran home and told her family about the servant. Laban, Rebekah's brother, came out and invited the servant into the house. He wholeheartedly and excitedly agreed to go to Rebekah's home.

Genesis 24:32-49 reads: "And the

man [the servant] came into the house: and he ungirded his camels, and gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the men's feet that were with him. And there was set meat before him to eat: but he said, I will not eat, until I have told mine errand. And he said, Speak on. And he said, I am Abraham's servant. And the LORD hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses.

"And Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was old: and unto him hath he given all that he hath. And my master made me swear, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife to my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell: But thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son. And I said unto my master, Peradventure the woman will not follow me. And he said unto me, The LORD, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way; and thou shalt take a wife for my son of my kindred, and of my father's house: Then shalt thou be clear from this my oath, when thou comest to my kindred; and if they give not thee one, thou shalt be clear from my oath.

"And I came this day unto the well, and said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, if now thou do prosper my way which I go: Behold, I stand by the well of water; and it shall come to pass, that when the virgin cometh forth to draw water, and I say to her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water of thy pitcher to drink; And she say to me, Both drink thou, and I will also draw for thy camels: let the same be the woman whom the LORD hath appointed out for my master's son. And before I had done speaking in mine heart, behold, Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down unto the well, and drew water: and I said

unto her, Let me drink, I pray thee.

"And she made haste, and let down her pitcher from her shoulder, and said, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: so I drank, and she made the camels drink also. And I asked her, and said, Whose daughter art thou? And she said, The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bare unto him: and I put the earring upon her face, and the bracelets upon her hands. And I bowed down my head, and worshipped the LORD and blessed the LORD God of my master Abraham, which had led me in the right way to take my master's brother's daughter unto his son. And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me: and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left."

Being Sensitive to the Holy Spirit

I want you to look at verse 48 again, which reads, "And I bowed down my head, and worshipped the LORD, and blessed the LORD God of my master Abraham, which had led me in the right way to take my master's brother's daughter unto his son." Can you expect God to lead you in all the details of your life? Yes, if you will listen to Him and be sensitive to the prompting of the Spirit of God, He will lead you. Do as this servant and bow your head and worship the Lord.

What can we learn from this biblical account? It teaches us that we should very religiously, conscientiously, and diligently study the entire Word of God. Some people do not use the Old Testament. However, it contains many valuable lessons from which we can profit. Divine principles are carried throughout the Word of God as a thread. When finding the will of God, we need to exercise patience. The Apostle Paul said in Romans 15:4, " whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." There is hope for you in the

Word of God and in the will of God.

You ought to be inspired to have hope that you, too, can find help for the needs of your life. If you need a wife or a husband, God knows that. Peter said in Acts 10:34, "God is no respecter of persons." What God did for Isaac, He will do for you. If you really seek God's will, He has a particular person who is tailor-made just for you. If He numbers the hairs of your head, do you not think that He is concerned about your having the right wife or the right husband?

Genesis 24:27 says, "And he [the servant] said, Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth. [God's mercy and Truth will follow you for the rest of your life if you are in His will. I love the Truth, and I stand in defense of the Truth. The Church of God has the ultimate Truth.] I being in the way the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren." I am impressed with these words. Child of God, do not get out of the path of duty. You should be where you ought to be every moment of your life. King David got in trouble because he stayed home when he should have been out on the battlefield.

Keeping a Clear Conscience

Solomon said in Proverbs 27:8, "As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place." I am a school teacher, and when school is out for the day, I go home. I do not wander around, go play golf, or go somewhere to drink coffee. A man who wanders from where he should be is like a bird that wanders from its nest. Someone who deserts his or her post of duty is like a bird that wanders from its nest.

When it is time for church, you should be in church. My wife and I had seven children, and we never had consultations when it was church time to question whether or not we should go to church. If you do, you are asking for trouble. I am

talking about the will of God. You can know the will of God for your life in every detail. If God continually knows the changing count of the hairs on your head, do you not think He is concerned about other things in your life?

Young person, when it is time for the young people's service, you should be there. When youth activities are scheduled, you should be there unless you have a justifiable reason. Also, you are accountable to your parents. My mother used to say that every minute that a person is out after twelve o'clock (midnight) is the devil's time. You need to be where you ought to be. You should always let your parents know where you are. Be accountable. The husband and the wife need to be accountable to each other. You must stay in the way of holiness, godliness, and righteousness; then you will be safe and prosperous.

To find the will of God, you must keep a clear conscience. Do not compromise your godly principles. Sometimes a young person may make wrong choices, and then afterward ask God to bless it. That is getting the cart before the horse, so to speak. Acts 24:16 states, "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men." Only holy, godly people are subject to God's will. Paul said in Romans 8:7, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." *The International Children's Bible* words that verse this way: "If a person's thinking is controlled by his sinful self, then he is against God." In other words, he refuses to obey God's law.

If you have not read *Pilgrim's Progress*, you need to read it; it is worthy of your time. It is a classic. Next to the Bible, it has sold more copies than any other book in the world. In the story Pilgrim came to a place where his traveling became a little rocky, and he looked over and saw a place that looked a little easier. So he went into Bypath

Meadow. Sometimes people get off course and wander into Bypath Meadow, but in the end it leads to destruction. You need to consider the consequences of your choices. Weigh the situation. God's way is best!

Inquire of God What You Ought to Do

Psalms 37:34 says, "Wait on the LORD, and keep his way." I am holding to that thought. God will satisfy your needs if you stay in the strait and narrow way. Sometimes people think they know better than God does, but they are wrong.

Verse 48 of our Scripture reading says, "The LORD God . . . led me in the right way." God will never lead you in a wrong way. Man might do that, but God never will. I do not follow someone because that person is my friend. I have a wonderful wife, but many times I have had to get alone with God for divine direction. At times I have heard from many voices, but I have had to shut them all out and get down before God. Life is too serious to be misguided by others. The man of God who stands behind the sacred pulpit has the most serious responsibility of any man in the world, and he ought to take it very seriously or get out of the pulpit.

The Psalmist David said in Psalm 23:3, "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake." For the sake of the name of God and the Church of God, you need to go in the right direction. You do not want to be misled, or to mislead others. *The Children's International Bible* states in this same verse, "For the good of his name, he leads me on paths that are right." God will lead you by His Spirit and only according to the principles of His eternal Word. If God is leading you, you will be a blessing to others. God said to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-2: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: And I will make of thee a

great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing." This works two ways.

You must not look to the crowds for your direction. You should be wary of crowds. Often the largest churches cater to the flesh. Moses wrote in Exodus 23:2, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil." *The Children's International Bible* says, "You must not do wrong just because everyone else is doing it." Matthew Henry's commentary says, "We must inquire what we ought to do." We must inquire of God what we ought to do, not inquire what the majority is doing, because we will be judged by our Master, not by our fellow servants. It is too great a compromise to be willing to go to hell for the sake of friendship. Do not be swayed by numbers. There are millions in false religion, but in comparison few really seek the Truth. Do not worry about the numbers. You must get close to God. Noah was the only preacher of righteousness in his day. His only encouragement was from God and his family.

Let God Control Your Life

If God is leading you, you will be an asset to the Kingdom of God, not a hindrance. You will enhance, improve, develop, and increase the spirituality of others as well as yourself if you are in the will of God. If you are out of the will of God, you surely will make a mess of things. God is concerned about His church and everything in the universe. It staggers our human, mortal minds to ever conceive how God works. God knows what He is doing.

In Psalm 31:3 David said, "For thy name's sake lead me, and guide me." This should be your prayer. Romans 2:24 says, "For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you."

As a Christian, you ought to be a credit to God's name and the church. If you truly want to know God's will for your life more than

anything else, God will reveal it. The Truth that we enjoy and appreciate and hold so tenaciously is precious. Are you willing to walk in the Truth? God hears what you say, and He knows whether or not you mean it. Many people come to a certain point in their Christian experiences and choose to turn back because the cost is too great.

Many times in my life I have been at a crossroad and wondered what I should do. In my life I have seen many who used to come to church, but they came to a crossroad and chose to go another way. I want to go God's way. Many people have chosen the wrong way. Consequently, some have broken marriages and have had other heart-breaking things occur in their families.

It is told of a woman who once was traveling around and wanting to know which direction to go. As she was going through life's pathway, whenever she came to a crossroad, she would throw a stick, and whichever direction the stick pointed, she would travel in that direction. One day she threw the stick and it pointed in a direction that she did not want to go, so she kept throwing the stick until it pointed in the direction she wanted to go. That is what many people seem to do. They will go to someone who will tell them what they *want* to hear. Dear one, you need to let God control your life.

If you honestly and sincerely desire to know the will of God, then you can expect Him to reveal it to you. However, you must be honest and willing to go God's way. Only those whose lives are completely surrendered to Him will He guide. Someday you might look back and see what God's plan was for you, but because you balked and exerted your own self-will, you went the wrong way. He had a beautiful plan for you, but you came short of it and realized it too late.

Some people take the wrong way, spiritually speaking, because of money, numbers, popularity, and

so on. There are many ways that lead to Bypath Meadow. Often you need to get alone with God and shut out all other voices. We sing a beautiful song in our hymnals that reads: "*Alone with God, the world forbidden. Alone with God, O blest retreat. Alone with God, and in Him hidden, to hold with Him communion sweet.*" Many times my heart has been extremely heavy because I wanted to know the will of God.

Are You a Person Whom God Can Lead?

Sometimes God's providence will reveal His will. He may open some doors and close others, but you must wait and not jump too hurriedly. You need to be sensitive to His promptings. The impressions of the Spirit will always be in line with the tenor of His Word. In the New Testament you can read about how Stephen had to suffer, but through his suffering, the Lord spoke to Saul. Saul witnessed Stephen's death, and later he was saved and became the great Apostle Paul. Sometimes you may suffer, but it is all in the will of God. As Romans 8:28 says, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose."

Your life will not blossom into what God intends for you until you completely yield to Him and accept His will for your life. God has great things in mind for you, but it will only come to fruition if you yield yourself to Him completely. In John 10:10 Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly [the center reference in my Bible says 'in fullest measure']." God's will for you is for your greatest good. You are in the best and safest place when you are in the will of God. One great man said, "Man should do the will of God in order to unite the two greatest powers known to man: the will of God and the will of man." When those two powers are united, great things can be done. I want to

see great things done for God.

When I was a child, my family decided to move to Seattle, Washington, because of economic conditions in North Dakota. We were heading for Seattle because that was where the ship building and the airplane factories were. On our journey to Seattle, we stopped in Montana, and my father decided to stay there, but he did not know why. There was a Church of God congregation there. Brother and Sister R. L. Mullen were pastoring there, and they were awesome godly examples. My father did not like it, but my mother loved it. After the first service, she said, "This is where I am going to go to church." For twenty years my mother stayed true while suffering horrible verbal and physical abuse.

We moved to Newark, Ohio, in 1967, and then my father was gloriously saved. In 1963 I saw a beautiful young lady playing the piano, and I was mesmerized by her piano playing. I had my eyes on her, and I was hoping that she had her eyes on me. God worked it out eventually. We saw alike spiritually. Although we grew up 2500 miles apart, we had like interests. We both wanted to serve the Lord wholeheartedly, we both loved music, and we both loved people. I know God's hand was in my life. Can you feel God's leading in your life?

"Ready My Place to Fill"

The Apostle Paul talked to young Timothy. (Parent, you need to lay a godly foundation for your children.) Paul credited Timothy's faith to his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice. My grandfather and grandmother came to the Church of God in Montana when I was a little boy, and they said, "These people have something that we don't have." They were godly people, but they had not come to the knowledge of the Truth. Church of God, God works through a godly pastor to help you. He is not there to hurt or to harass you. He will help

you to give your best to God. God has a plan for your life, dear one.

I like the verse of a song that says, "*I can see far down the mountain, Where I wandered weary years, Often hindered in my journey By the ghosts of doubts and fears: Broken vows and disappointments Thickly sprinkled all the way, but the Spirit led, unerring, to the land I hold today.*" God's Spirit does not make mistakes.

You need to look to God for full understanding of the consequences of your choices. You must be humble, be teachable, and be pliable. In seeking the will of God, you need to be open minded. I remember a song in my growing up years entitled "Ready." It reads:

*Ready to suffer grief or pain,
Ready to stand the test;
Ready to stay at home and send
Others, if He sees best.
Ready to go, ready to bear,
Ready to watch and pray;
Ready to stand aside and give,
Till He shall clear the way.*

*Ready to speak, ready to think,
Ready with heart and brain;
Ready to stand where He sees fit,
Ready to stand the strain.
Ready to speak, ready to warn,
Ready o'er souls to yearn;
Ready in life, ready in death,
Ready for His return.*

*Ready to go, ready to stay,
Ready my place to fill;
Ready for service, lowly or great,
Ready to do His will.*

God is not going to show you His will if your mind is already made up. When I was a boy, I remember being told that a certain minister was offered a larger congregation with a bigger salary. One day a little boy in the congregation went to this pastor's son and said, "Well, what did your daddy decide to do?"

The son replied, "I am not really sure. He is upstairs in his study praying, but mom is in the kitchen packing the dishes."

Seek to Do God's Will

You should be neutral until you know the will of God. We have gone through some hard places in our ministry, but we are where God wants us to be. You can know where God wants you to be. We sing a song that says:

*Let the Spirit do the planning,
Point the way thy feet shall go;
Greater than thine own His
wisdom,
He the will of God doth know;
Better, wiser than thy choosing
Is the way that He will show;
He wants His way in thee.*

*Yield unto the Holy Spirit,
Let Him have His way with thee;
Be thou ready to obey Him,
He leads to victory.*

You should want to bring glory to God. Revelation 4:11 reads, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." That is the reason there is a devil. God gets pleasure and joy when you say: "No, old devil. I am not going to go your way. I hate you. I am going to go God's way." This brings pleasure to God. You must seek to do God's will and bring pleasure to Him. Of Jesus it is written in Hebrews 10:9, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." Jesus fully resigned to do the will of God even though it meant suffering a cruel death on the Cross. He did not choose the path of least resistance, as some people do.

God's will for your life will be different from someone else's. Peter struggled a little when Jesus asked him if he loved Him, and then He told Peter to feed His sheep. Next, Peter asked what John was to do. Jesus gave him a gentle rebuke, and, in essence, He said: "What is that to you? Follow Me." Jesus did not ask them to do the same thing. Sometimes His will for you is different from His will for others, but remember, it will not be destructive. It will

not work havoc in the church, and it will not work destruction in your life.

Isaiah stated in Isaiah 30:21, "And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left." Jeremiah said in Jeremiah 10:23, "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his

steps." You need God's help. I pray daily: "God, I need You today as I go to teach school. I need You as I go about in the community, when I visit in the hospital, and when I go to the prisons to conduct my prison ministries. I need Your help." You need God for direction in your life. Can you know the will of God for your life in this day? Yes, if you sincerely desire to know and if you are wholly yielded to God. You can

know the will of God, and you can have absolute confidence in Him. Proverbs 3:5-6 reads: "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways [even in the little details] acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

(Compact Disc TR-007M)

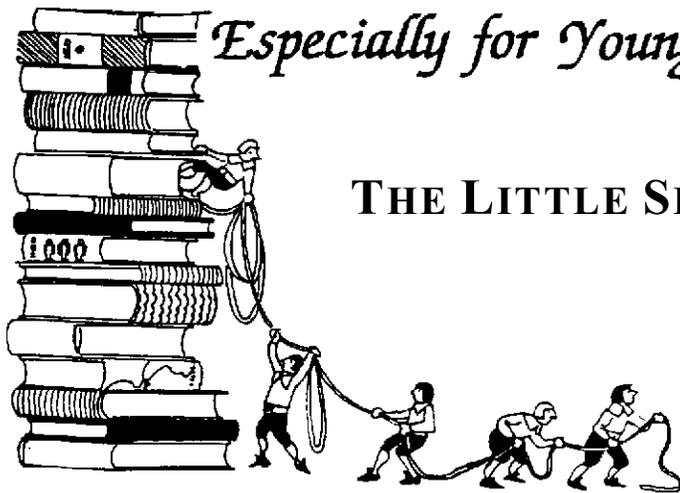


2009 Camp Meeting Dates

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We Welcome Everyone!

Especially for Young People



THE LITTLE SISTERS



"You were not here yesterday," said the gentle teacher of the little village school, as she placed her hand kindly on the curly head of one of her pupils. It was recess time, but the little girl had not gone to frolic away the ten minutes. She had not even left her seat, but sat absorbed in a seemingly vain attempt to make herself mistress of an example in long division.

Her face and neck crimsoned at the remark of her teacher, but looking up, she seemed somewhat reassured by the kind glance that met her, and answered: "No, ma'am. I was not, but my sister Nelly was."

"I remember there was a little girl who called herself Nelly Gray, who came in yesterday, but I did not know she was your sister. Why did you not come? You seem to love to study very much."

"It was not because I didn't want to" was the earnest answer, and then she paused and the deep flush again tinged her fair brow; "but," she continued after a moment of painful embarrassment, "mother cannot spare both of us conveniently, and so we are going to take turns. I'm going to school one day, and sister the next, and tonight I'm to teach Nelly all that I have learned today, and tomorrow night she will teach me all that she learns while here. It's the only way we can think of getting along, and we want to study very much, so that sometime we will be

able to teach school ourselves and take care of mother, because she has to work very hard to take care of us."

The teacher asked no more questions, but sat down beside her, and in a moment explained the rule over which she was puzzling her young brain, so that the hard example was easily finished. "You would better go out and take the air a few moments; you have studied very hard today," said the teacher, as the little girl put aside the slate.

"I would rather not. I might tear my dress. I will stand by the window and watch the rest."

The dress was nothing but a cheap calico, but it was neatly made and had never been washed. While looking at it, she remembered that during the whole previous fortnight, she had never seen her wear but that one dress. "She is a thoughtful little girl," said she to herself, "and does not want to make her mother any trouble. I wish I had more such scholars."

The next morning Mary was absent, but her sister occupied her seat. There was something so interesting in the two little sisters, the one eleven, and the other eighteen months younger, agreeing to attend school by turns, that the teacher noticed them very closely.

They were pretty faced children, of delicate forms, the elder with dark eyes and chestnut curls, the

other with eyes like the sky of June, her white neck covered by a wealth of golden ringlets. The teacher noticed in both the same close attention to their studies, and as Mary stayed indoors during recess, so did Nelly. Upon speaking to her as she had to her sister, she received the same answer, "I might tear my dress."

The reply caused the teacher, Miss Miller, to notice the dress of her sister. She saw at once that it was of the same piece as Mary's, in fact, she became certain that it was the same dress. It did not fit quite so nicely on Nelly and was too long for her, and she was evidently ill at ease when she noticed her teacher looking at the bright pink flowers that were so thickly set on the white ground.

The discovery was one that could not but interest the teacher. Though short of means herself, that same night she purchased a dress of the same material for little Nelly and made arrangements with the merchant to send it to her in such a way that the donor need never be known.

Very bright and happy looked Mary Gray on Friday morning as she entered the school at an early hour. She waiting only to place her books in neat order in her desk, ere she approached the teacher, and whispering in a voice that laughed in spite of her efforts to make it low

and deferential.

"After this week my sister Nelly is coming to school every day, and oh, I am so glad!"

"That is very good news," replied the teacher kindly. "Nelly is fond of her books, I see, and I am happy to know that she can have an opportunity to study them every day."

Then she continued, a little good-natured mischief in her eyes, "But can your mother spare you both conveniently?"

"Oh, yes, ma'am, yes, ma'am, she can now. Something happened that she didn't expect, and she is as glad to have us come as we are to do so. She hesitated a moment, but her young heart was filled to the brim with joy, and when a child is happy, it is as natural to tell the cause as it is for a bird to warble when the sun shines. So out of the fullness of her heart, she spoke and told her teacher this little story:

She and her sister were the only children of a poor widow, whose health was so delicate that it was almost impossible to support herself and her daughters. She was obliged to keep them out of school all

winter, as they had no suitable clothes to wear, but she told them that if they could earn enough to buy each of them a new dress, by doing odd chores for the neighbors, they might go in the spring.

Very earnestly had the little girls improved their stray chances, and very carefully hoarded the copper coins which usually repaid them. They had nearly saved enough to buy a dress when Nelly was taken sick, and as the mother had no money beforehand, poor Nelly's money had to be used for medicine.

"Oh, I did feel so bad when school opened and Nelly could not go because she had no dress," said Mary. "I told mother I wouldn't go either, but she said I would better, for I could teach sister some, and it would be better than no schooling.

"I stood it for a fortnight, but Nelly's little face seemed all the time looking at me on the way to school, and I couldn't be happy a bit, so I finally thought of a way by which we could both go. I told mother I would come one day, and the next I would lend Nelly my dress and she might come; that's the way we have done this week. But last night, don't

you think, somebody sent sister a dress just like mine, and now she can come too!

"Oh, if I only knew who it was, I would get down on my knees and thank them, and so would Nelly. But we don't know, and so we've done all we could for them—we've prayed for them, and oh, Miss Miller, we are all so glad now. Aren't you too?"

"Indeed I am," was the emphatic answer.

The following Monday, little Nelly, in the new pink dress, entered the schoolroom with her sister. Her face was as radiant as a rose in sunshine, and approaching the teacher's table, she exclaimed: "I am coming to school every day, and oh, I am so glad!"

The teacher felt as she had never done before, that it is "more blessed to give than to receive." No millionaire, when he saw his name in public prints, lauded for his thousand dollar charities, was ever so happy as the poor school teacher who wore her gloves half a summer longer than she ought, and thereby saved enough to buy that little fatherless girl a calico dress.

*In this dark world of sin and pain
We only meet to part again;
But when we reach the heavenly shore,
We there shall meet to part no more;
The joy that we shall see that day
Shall chase our present griefs away.*

2 Kings 5:1 Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper.

2 And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife.

3 And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy.

4 And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel.

5 And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment.

6 And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this

letter is come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy.

7 And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me.

8 And it was so, when Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.

9 So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha.

10 And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be

clean.

11 But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.

12 Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.

13 And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?

14 Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

James 4:10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.



Humbling Yourself

Brother Allen Polston

Rendered Unclean

In the Scripture text in 2 Kings, Chapter 5, we read about an individual named Naaman who had the terrible disease of leprosy. This disease would not go away with time, but would continue to get worse. Leprosy presented many

more problems to those who were plagued by it. The individual who suffered this condition had to endure not only the physical suffering but also isolation from others. He could not enjoy his family and friends.

Leprosy was not desirable by any means. Studying this Scripture

is not just to inform you of a historical event in the Scriptures. The Bible lets us know that these things were written for our examples so that they might bring us help for our souls. The devil still has people bound in many ways. Also, he is still working to come against every child of God by whatever means he

can. These lessons are in the Bible so that you and I might learn from what God has to say.

The Bible tells us that Naaman was captain of the host of the king of Syria. He had some positive things that could be credited to him. Verse 1 tells us that he was a great and honorable man, and he was a mighty man of valor. Several things were commendable about Naaman. Naaman definitely had some notable accomplishments in his life. Verse 1 also tells us that "by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria." He was certainly a brave man, and he was willing to help others. He often put his life on the line and offered himself in battle.

There is another part to this story. Verse 1 says that Naaman was a leper. The values of all the positive attributes in his life faded at the mention of his having leprosy. All of Naaman's wonderful accomplishments seemed to decrease in value because he was a leper.

Today there are people living in this world who are not children of God, yet they have many commendable attributes and accomplishments. There are things in which they pride themselves. Many people work hard and support their families. They are patriotic and helpful in their communities, but oh, how sin is much like the leprosy that Naaman had!

In the Book of Leviticus we find that leprosy was a type of sin. Leviticus 13:1-3 reads: "And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, saying, When a man shall have in the skin of his flesh a rising, a scab, or bright spot, and it be in the skin of his flesh like the plague of leprosy; then he shall be brought unto Aaron the priest, or unto one of his sons the priests: And the priest shall look on the plague in the skin of the flesh: and when the hair in the plague is turned white, and the plague in sight be deeper than the skin of his flesh, it is a plague of leprosy: and the priest shall look on him, and pronounce him unclean."

Leprosy kept one from being in

touch with God in those days. You may say, "Well, I just don't agree with what God did." Friend, it does not make any difference whether or not you agree with what God did. God has designed this thing, and He is still in control today. God's way is perfect.

God wants you to see that leprosy rendered a person unclean and, therefore, unable to commune with the clean and holy God. Lepers were separated and unable to enjoy the blessings of togetherness. Sin causes a person to be kept at a distance from God. If you have sin in your life, it will cause you to be somewhere other than where God is. You may be around other people who have God working in their lives, but if you allow sin in your life, God will not be present in your life. Many Scriptures affirm what I am preaching. Friend, the Bible lets you know that you cannot enjoy fellowship and the rich blessings of the Lord's presence if you have sin in your life.

Light and Darkness Cannot Coexist

The Prophet Isaiah said in Isaiah 57:21, "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." To have sin in your life is to be categorized with the wicked. Where there is sin, God is not present, and you cannot have peace without God. There is a little saying that reads: "No God, no peace. Know God, know peace." When you get to know God, you will start having peace in your soul. Friend, there is no peace to the wicked. There is no peace to those who are living in ungodliness and in violation of the very reason that they were put here, which is to do God's will. When you get the blood of Jesus Christ applied to your heart and life and get straightened out with God, you will know peace. You will understand what it means to have peace when that comes to pass in your own life.

First Peter 3:12 reads, "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righ-

teous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." Many people are interested in seeking God merely to get a need supplied. First John 1:5 reads, "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."

James 1:14-15 says: "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." Sin separates you from God and causes you to be unclean, and there is no way for the unclean to dwell with a clean, holy God. Paul wrote to the Romans in Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death." Sin puts you at a distance from God. James was speaking of being cut off from the Lord.

These verses cause us to realize that sin separates an individual from abundant life, happiness, joy, and blessings. Just as leprosy made a person unclean and separated him from the Lord, so does sin. Naaman's condition was devastating, though he was a mighty man of valor and the chief one in delivering Syria's army from the enemy. With all those accomplishments to his credit, leprosy still put him in a terrible condition.

Sin is a terrible thing. There are people who are very talented who could have God's blessings bestowed upon them. Oh, how things could change for the better for them. Jesus is so wonderful! He changes darkness into light and makes life worth living. He will give you a reason to live when there does not seem to be a reason. God will give you a wonderful life in this time world. Oh, how unfortunate that men and women allow sin to keep them from enjoying this wonderful life. Because of the pleasures, the lies and deceptions of the enemy, many people linger in sin. What a sad condition!

God is faithful to each of us.

First Corinthians 1:21 tells us that it pleased God "by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." God has made a way to reach souls. God made a way for Naaman. Second Kings 5:2 says that the "Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife." God arranged for a little maid to reveal the means for Naaman to get help for his leprous condition. God was preparing to do a work, just as He is yet today.

The will of God is that you should not be lost. God does not want you to die in wickedness. He gets no pleasure from the death of the wicked. His will is that all be saved and come to a knowledge of the Truth. He is still filled with the love that caused Him to send His Son Jesus Christ.

God is setting the stage so that every individual might have an opportunity to attend to the matters of the soul. That is not just for the salvation of the sinner, but for the Christian as well if he or she should become a little careless in his or her Christian experience. It is also so that God can send His search light to shine upon people's lives.

Friend, if God did not care about you, He would not go to such effort to prove that He loves you very, very much. He does not want you to go astray and end up being lost. He does not want you to drift away from Him. If you are beginning to drift from the Lord, He has arranged this message to help you.

Gaining the Victory

I have thought much about that little maid. She had been taken captive and carried away to Syria. If you live for God for very long, God will allow some difficulties to come upon you that you cannot do anything about. You have to walk through them and check your spirit to make sure that you are doing all that God has shown you to do. We have all been there, and if you have

not, you will be shortly. God permits us to go through hard places for the refining of our own character and because He wants to use us to help other people, those who are living in sin and those who are not where they ought to be with God. They need someone to bring light, help, and encouragement to them. You can do it! The Lord has help, strength, and grace for you.

The little maid who had been taken captive from her native land had a couple of options before her, just as you and I have some options when we go through trials or hard places. God does not force us to behave in a certain way. We may not be able to escape the trial, but we are at liberty to choose how we will behave while we are in the trial.

This maid could have taken a bitter attitude after she was placed in the home of Naaman to serve his wife. She could have begun to think: "Why am I here? Why me, Lord? Why did You let me get carried away captive?" She could have gotten ugly and mean-spirited, turning into someone who was not pleasant to be around, but she did not. I am not saying that we are not tempted to feel discouraged. Sometimes trials will work on you, and you have to call on God. You do not want to get an old "pity me" spirit; therefore, you have to cry out to God for help.

I believe that somewhere along the way the little maid got the victory. Friend, it is wonderful when you can get the victory. Trials will not be so difficult when you get over the hump, so to speak, and get the victory. Oh, you will still be in the trial, but within your soul you can rejoice because you have gotten the victory. You will be lifted up when you get closer to God.

Unfortunately, not everyone chooses to behave in that way. Some people become bitter rather than getting better. The little maid was not discouraged. She was not going to let her captivity ruin her life. She was going right on, and that is what you need to do. You cannot allow things that come along to destroy

you. That is what the devil would like to do. He would like to take even the smallest things and turn them around and cause them to work against you when God intends to work something good from those things. You might be in manifold temptations for a season, but God sees that you need to be there.

Keep Your Faith in God

There was a need for the little maid to be in the house of Naaman. There is a need for you, friend, to be in your particular trial, whether you are having to work through financial difficulties, physical difficulties, or some other difficulty. Whatever you go through, you do not have to become bitter. You need to keep in mind that God knows all about it. You need to consider who God might be trying to influence. God wants to use you in your circumstances. He wants you to witness to someone and invite that person to church.

God allows things to happen for reasons. He permits each of us to go through trials, just as He did the little maid. She was doing her duties and heard about Naaman's disease, and then the time came for her to witness to them about what God could do. There will come a time for you to witness to people about what God can do and to tell what He has done for you. That is the reason you need to live close to God and pray. You need to live right and show a good attitude, because the time will come when God will call on you for a testimony.

You need to remember that there is not one problem that you are facing or that you are going to face that God cannot work out. God can turn things around quickly. God can turn around physical illness and disease in an instant. He can do whatever He pleases. He is God! He still has all power in Heaven and in earth. What you need to remember is that God is working in these situations. He is bringing people around to the proper thinking, and then He

will turn to you for a testimony. That is the reason it is of utmost importance to live close to God and to live consistently for Him. God does not want you to live close to Him one day and the next day drift a little. He wants you to live a good, consistent, holy life so that when it comes time for you to give a testimony, people will have confidence in what you say.

Verse 3 of our Scripture lesson reads, "And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy." The power of God was working through the Prophet Elijah. The little maid's faith was strong. Friend, you need to keep your faith in God. Remember, He knows the trials you are in. The devil will tell you, "God is not helping you or you would be out of this by now." Again, the little maid said in verse 3 of our Scripture text, ". . . for he would recover him of his leprosy." She did not say, "The man of God might be able to help a little. Saints, if we can get people in touch with the God that we know, He will save them from a life of sin, heal their bodies, and help them. He is still God; He has not changed.

Our liberal world has not changed God. Our compromising, religious world has not changed God. He is still God, and He is almighty and all powerful. He has all power in Heaven and in earth. He is just the same today, thank God! He is still on the throne, and He is still in control. Principalities, powers, and all manner of things are subject to God. You may be battling things in your life, but God can help you to have the victory and to overcome them. If you can get in contact with Him, He can give you what you need.

Press On and Keep the Faith

Friend, sometimes you need to linger in prayer. When you go to God for help, you need to pray longer than twenty seconds. At times you need to pour out your heart to

Him and say: "Lord, I want to do some soul searching. Show me where I can move up. I need You, and I need help." You need to pray through, and to do that you must stay on the altar until the fire comes down. Let Him search your life—your home, your work, your activities, your attitudes, your desires, and your affections. He might show you something that you need to give up, change, or improve upon.

The little maid's faith was intact. She was one of God's own. Though she was a captive, she apparently kept the right spirit. Sometimes we wonder why God permits certain things to occur in our lives, but we must press on and keep the right spirit and the right attitude. The Bible says in Luke 16:10, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much." God wants to see if you will be faithful when you do not have much joy and when not as many blessings are coming your way. He knows that if you will be faithful then, you will be faithful when He is blessing you. When God sees that you have developed a pattern of faithfulness and a heart of faithfulness, He will say, "It is time to pour out the blessings. I have withheld them long enough."

God will bless you in time. Paul wrote to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:8, "Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead. . . ." You need to remember that. Why? Sometimes your trials may look as though they have gone too far, and there can be no recovery. Sometimes you will get discouraged. Remember, Jesus Christ was raised from the dead.

Second Timothy 2:9 says, "Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound." You may be in bonds (I am not talking about the bonds of sin, or ungodliness). In other words, you may be in a situation that you cannot change. Sometimes a situation may come upon you, and even though you try this and that, you cannot change it. You may be in bonds, but the Word of

God is not bound, even when it may seem that God's blessings have been put on hold. Do you still tell people that there is joy in living for God, even when it seems that He has put your joy on hold? Friend, you need to be faithful in that which is least. When you prove faithful to God in that situation, He knows you will be faithful in that which is much.

The little maid in our Scripture lesson was the means by which Naaman received the message that he could be healed. God works through those who will commit themselves to Him. God does not call the qualified; He qualifies the called. God can qualify those who give their hearts to Him. He will use those who consecrate their lives to Him. Second Chronicles 29:5 states, "Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the LORD?" You do not have to be wealthy, well educated, or have a nice physique. You just need to have a willingness to serve God with all your heart and live a consecrated life before Him.

The little maid did not use big, fancy words. She just pointed Naaman to the man of God in a simple way, and Naaman decided to follow her advice. Be encouraged, saint. Some people will follow your advice when you point them to the Lord. Others will be influenced by your life. It may seem as though you are not really accomplishing much, but some people will be influenced if you stay close to God. God can use you if you will stay consecrated and keep your heart committed to Him.

Doing Things God's Way

Naaman took the little maid's advice and traveled to see the Prophet. Upon Naaman's arrival, the Prophet Elisha sent his servant out with a simple message for Naaman. He did not tell him to do anything difficult, but it was hard on the flesh. The flesh is holding back many people from obeying God and doing what He bids them

to do and really getting on fire for Him.

The flesh will resist, rise up, and rebel. It is causing many people in this world not to know real joy, peace, happiness. Oh, what a blessing it is to know that your heart is right with God! What could be better than to know that you are ready, whether God leaves you here or calls you out of this time world? Oh, what a blessing it is to know that you are right with God, that you have everything clear, and that nothing is working that should not be. That is a wonderful thing! This is what God wants for you. God wants you to be in good standing with Him, with nothing between your soul and the Savior.

Naaman went to Samaria, and the Prophet's message from God was very simple. Elisha sent his servant out to Naaman and told him, in essence, "Go and dip seven times in the river Jordan, and you will be healed." We are not past the days of God completely healing and delivering people from situations. God is still the same as He was in Naaman's day. Friend, if you will be obedient to God as Naaman finally was, God can give you deliverance just as quickly as He did Naaman. He has not changed. Do not let the devil fool you and say, "You have tried and failed, and if you try again, you will be unsuccessful again." Do not let the devil lie to you. You need to rebuke the devil and come to God. He can still deliver you. God's power is still the same.

When Naaman heard the message, his flesh rose up, and he got upset. He thought things would happen differently. He did not think it would be the way it was, so he became angry. Friend, you have to do things God's way. That is the whole idea behind giving your life to God. You must forsake your way and do things God's way. You have to start right in the beginning.

What if God had said: "All right, Naaman. Just calm down, and we will talk about this. I'll let you go

down and wash in the river Pharpar. We'll compromise on this matter." Do you know what probably would have happened next had God said that? It would not have been long before Naaman would have said, "Wait, God, I don't want to do it this way either." His old stubborn will would have risen up, demanding to have it his way. God will not put up with that.

Being Clothed With Humility

God gave Naaman the message, and Naaman resisted, but then his servants said in verse 13 of our Scripture text, "My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?" Reasoning came through the voice of his servant. In Isaiah 1:18 the Prophet said, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD." Thank God for those who, when the flesh begins to rise up, will reason with God a little and see that they need to obey God.

Naaman became convinced, and he humbled himself. He went to the river Jordan. It was probably even more humbling because he resisted at first. Naaman became clothed with humility. When he did what God told him to do, he was not sorry. He went away from there a changed man. He was healed, and that was one joyful chariot ride home. Friend, if you have a need in your life, if you will truly humble yourself and obey God, you will be much better.

One songwriter penned these words: "*Humble thyself and the Lord will draw near thee, Humble thyself and his presence shall cheer thee: He will not walk with the proud or the scornful. Humble thyself to walk with God.*" What a blessing it is to walk with God! James said that He gives grace to the humble. God will give you grace and power and blessings from Heaven, but you have to humble yourself in His sight.

We each have a flesh that does

not like the thought of being humble, but if we will humble ourselves before God, the Lord will draw near us and walk with us. If you have a need, something that you have been delaying to address, something that God has put His finger on, you should humble yourself and let God help you to be an overcomer. Friend, the Lord has promised great things to those who overcome. Will you seek Him if you have a need in your heart and life? If God has spoken to you, you need to pour out your heart to Him. You need to really get down to business with Him. The Lord will walk with you if you truly humble yourself with Him.

(Cassette C-4988E)



[Fall Camp Meeting Report—
continued from page 2]

Holy Spirit. It is still a glorious sight to see souls who are loaded down with sin translated from the power of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

The close of the camp meeting always brings sadness to our hearts. First, because we are parting with saints that we love. Much time and many miles will separate us until we can once again be united together for worship. Then there is the sadness that comes in knowing some will leave the meeting without having their spiritual needs met. One never knows when their last opportunity to find the Lord will be. It is so important to surrender to God when He is ready and working with your heart.

If you were unable to be in the camp meeting, we would encourage you to order the CD's of each service. We are sure that you will be satisfied thoroughly when you hear all the good things that were brought to us.

Ecclesiastes 3:1 To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

2 A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;

3 A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to

build up;

4 A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

5 A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

6 A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

7 A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

8 A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

THE FOUR SEASONS



Brother Leamon Whitehead

Lost Opportunities

The writer of Ecclesiastes said in verse 1 of our Scripture text, "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven." In Jeremiah 8:20 the Prophet Jeremiah said, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." To me that is one of the saddest passages of Scripture that I have ever read. The harvest has to do with a season, and so does the summer. I see a parallel in this with life.

You know there are four

seasons—spring, summer, fall, and winter—in a year's time. In our lives we, too, have seasons that can apply to us. It really seemed to grip my heart to read, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." Jeremiah spoke of a sad time. If you have read the Book of Jeremiah and the Book of the Lamentations, you will find that the Prophet Jeremiah was known as the weeping prophet. It was such a sad time that he lived in, a time of great decline in Israel and the eventual captivity of the people.

The Bible lets you know that the

ideal time to get saved is in your youth. In Ecclesiastes 12:1 Solomon admonished, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh." I want you to read of some things that Jeremiah was dealing with so that you can understand what broke his heart. The condition of old Israel is what caused Jeremiah to lament and weep. Then he finally spoke those sad words to them: "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

Oh, the lost opportunities! By

the help of God, that is what I want to press upon your mind. You see, sometimes opportunities pass us by that never return so that we could make a decision on them. This is the reason we need to be serious about serving God. We are just passing through this world. My friend, you do not have any promise of the future. Jesus told the people in His day in John 7:6, "My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready." We each stand on the brink of death and could leave this world at any moment. That is the reason we need to be ready to go and ready to move to higher ground, so to speak. The enemy is working so that he gets people's minds on this and that and the first thing they know, time has passed them by.

After youth, you reach middle age, and then you move right on down into the latter years of your life. Sin will blind you and make you think you have plenty of time. It will give you a sense of false security. It will cause you to feel that everything is all right and that you will be happy in what you are doing, yet your life is wasting away and the years are going by. One of these days you are going to stand before God and give an account for the deeds that you have done in your body.

The Faithfulness of God

I thank God for the day that God brought an awakening to me. Praise His holy name! When He got hold of me and helped me to see that I was on the broad way and going down toward destruction, I got saved! Praise God! I am glad that I did not go back to sleep and wander along. The pleasures of sin will cause you to drift and drift, and the years will swiftly pass you by. Getting saved was the best thing that ever happened to me. Oh, how wonderful God has been! Praise His holy name! How wonderful He is! How wonderful God will be to those who will trust their lives to Him and walk with Him!

In verse 1 of our Scripture lesson Solomon said, "To every thing there is a season." My friend, you are only here for a little while. Sometimes the days and the years may seem long, but when you really think about life, you soon realize that it passes by quickly. I have said many times that it does not seem as though it has been very long at all since I was playing in the yard with my brothers and sisters around my momma's knee.

The best time to get saved is when you are young, because you do not know anything about troubles and trials, and you do not have your life entangled. You do not have all the opposition. When people have lived a long time in sin, it is not impossible for God to save them. God can do all things. He can save you just as easily if you come with a load of sin as He can if you come to Him with just one sin, but what happens is this: Sin will work on you and destroy your confidence and your faith in yourself. You may bring your load of sin to God, but you might not be able to lay it down because of unbelief. On the other hand, a little child is not loaded down with that. He does not have all that baggage, so to speak. You ought to remember your Creator in your youth, when you do not have all that baggage to try to lay down. Also, sin hardens the heart and callouses the conscience, and it will try to kill what faith God has given you. In your youth you need to take advantage of the golden opportunities that God has given.

Second Chronicles 36:11-15 reads: "Zedekiah was one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned eleven years in Jerusalem [he was the last king that Israel had]. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD his God. And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God: but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the LORD God of Israel. Moreover all the chief of the priests, and the

people, transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen; and polluted the house of the LORD which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. And the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place."

Look at the faithfulness of God! My friend, God is faithful. When God spoke to Noah and told him to build a boat in those days, Noah labored approximately one hundred twenty years in building that boat. God could have spoken a boat into existence. He made the world. He could have said, "Noah, I want you to go over that rise, and you are going to find one of the most beautiful luxury liners that your eyes have ever beheld," but He did not do that. However, we can see the mercy, the long-suffering, and the faithfulness of God. Peter said in 1 Peter 3:20, ". . . when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing. . . ."

God is good and faithful, friend! We must put forth effort and be faithful. God has been faithful to each of us. If you get a little drowsy and drift from the way a little, it is God who lets you know that you are missing the way. It is the faithfulness of God. It is God who follows after a person when he is living in sin and says, "Don't you think it is about time to quit that foolishness and get saved?" Glory to God! I am glad that I said, "Yes, I believe it is. I am going to get saved." Praise His holy name! That is God's faithfulness to man.

Moving With Fear

While the people scoffed and mocked in the days of Noah, they probably thought, "We have never seen anyone so crazy, building a boat out here in the desert. It has never rained. He is not even down by the sea. He is out here in a dry place, building a boat and talking about a flood! Something has

happened to that old man's mind." Noah just kept on working.

When God spoke to Noah, Noah did not say, "Well, I'll get to it when I get time. I'm kind of busy now, but when I get other things done, I'll take care of that." Hebrews 11:7 tells us that Noah "moved with fear." Do you know how to move with fear? If a big bear is chasing you, you are going to move with fear. You are going to say, "Feet, let's go!"

Noah found grace in the eyes of God. He took God seriously, and he moved with fear. He started working on a boat. God knows everything. God knew when He called Noah to build a boat that he was a busy man. Also, God knew from the very beginning that only eight souls would enter the ark. It was not His will for it to be that way, but He knew that was the way it would happen. You see, people will never be able to say that God was unfair or unjust or that He did not treat them right. God was fair; He gave them ample time. Finally, one day He called the animals to enter the ark, and Noah and his family got on board, and then God shut the door.

Now the door is wide open into His kingdom, dear one. Jesus is standing with His arms outstretched and beckoning souls to come; but one of these days, the door of mercy will close. Oh, friend, if you love your soul and you do not want to lose it in the flames of hell for all eternity, you need to move now while you have time and opportunity. You need to move, not for someone else's benefit, but for your own benefit. You need to move before it is too late.

I do not want to miss Heaven. I want to go to Heaven. I have all my assets invested in the things of God, because it means more to me than anything in the world to make Heaven my home. Also, He gives us a whole lot of heaven here to go to Heaven in. We sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. There is nothing dull about this way of living. God is good, and He is faithful!

Many of the writers of the Books

of the Bible have spoken about God's goodness. In Psalm 68:19 David said He "daily loadeth us with benefits." You see, it was God who made you, and He feels responsible for you, to take care of you. How He loves for the precious soul to come and bow in His presence and say, "I own You as my Heavenly Father, and I surrender my life to You." He wants to care for you. He created you, and He is looking out for you.

Overriding the Mercy of God

My friend, it is not God's will that any should perish. I would to God that I could paint you a picture of Jeremiah. You know, sometimes we think that we are living in a hard time, but we have it easy. Jeremiah was called of God and sent out, but even before he went, God warned him of the outcome. He went out and preached, and all the people turned against him. The king turned against him and put him in prison, down in a dungeon. Today many people would have said: "Well, let them go on to hell. I don't care. I've done all that I am going to do." Jeremiah did not feel that way.

In the Book of Lamentations, the reading sounds much like a state funeral. Jeremiah lived in a troubled time, a time of fast decline. His love for the people was evident. Saints, we need to have a greater love for lost souls. Oh, how we need more compassion for the lost!

Josiah was the last good king that Israel had. He began to reign when he was about eight years of age and reigned thirty-one years. He was the last of the great kings. When you consider the kings and look at that kingdom, from Saul down to Zedekiah, it reminds you of a roller-coaster ride, going up and down, up and down. A good king would arise and lead people to God, and then an evil king would come along and do evil in the sight of the Lord and lead the people into sin. Some kings were worse than those before them.

God warned Israel of this when

He gave them Canaan. He instructed them to be careful when they got in that good land and not to forget about Him. He told them that the land would spew them out if they forgot Him. Now, I know that I am talking about something that happened a long time ago, but we have to be ever so careful today. You can sit right in a Church of God pew and drift off into a far country. Did you know that? You can lose your testimony, your song, and your shout, and then you will become one of those murmurers and complainers who say: "The pastor doesn't feed me anymore. I'm starving to death. I've got to go somewhere else." That condition starts when one begins to drift.

Israel's condition did not happen overnight. The people overrode the mercy of God. That is really what people do today when they eventually fall. They begin to quench the Spirit and will not listen to God or the man of God, and then they drift further and further away from where they once stood for God.

How wonderful it is to stay in that inner circle with the Lord, to stay sensitive to His Spirit, and to have a keen ear to hear His Word. When the Lord comes by, I always want to be able to recognize His presence in the midst, don't you? Oh, you talk about working on you when you sense His presence! It will cause you to want to be more humble when He is in the midst and to get the flesh down as low as you can get it.

Harden Not Your Heart

Jeremiah did not send out invitations to invite people to a big "pity me" party, but his heart had been broken. In Jeremiah 8:20 when he said, "The harvest is past, and the summer is ended," he did not say "and you are not saved"; he said, "and we are not saved." He had watched Israel all the way down from Josiah, and they continued to decline, down, down, down.

Second Chronicles 36:15-16

states: "And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place: But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy." What a sad condition! There was *no* remedy.

Dear one, the devil will try to make you feel that you have plenty of time. I believe that most people who have gone into eternity lost went with good intentions. In other words, they intended to get saved *sometime*. You see, it is dangerous when you put God off.

Today it is dangerous to put God off and say: "I'll wait until later. I'll wait until Sunday." Life is so fragile and so short. You do not have to be sick to die. The devil will deceive you and make you feel that you have plenty of time, but the Scripture lets you know that today is the day of salvation. What God's Word says is what you need to put your trust in. Hebrews 3:7-8 says: "To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts." Won't you turn to Him? This could be your day to get saved and turn your life over to God. It would be the greatest decision you could ever make. He will turn your life around and give you a new life.

Again, Jeremiah 8:20 states, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." Jeremiah was weeping because of the people's lost opportunity to get saved. We can read what brought that about. Josiah was the last good king they had. After Josiah died, his son, Jehoahaz, was twenty-three years old when he began to reign. He reigned three months, and the king of Egypt went up, took Jehoahaz into custody, and moved him out; then he put Jehoahaz's brother Jehoiakim in. He was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years. Things were coming down to

a close. Jehoahaz (Jehoiakim's son) took his place, and he was eighteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months.

I can remember when the late President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. I remember where I was and what I was doing. I was working in a body shop getting ready to spray paint an automobile when I heard the news that he had been shot, and then a few minutes later they said he was dead. That brought a feeling of insecurity over me concerning what might be happening. It was a terrible feeling, and I hope I never experience that again.

Jeremiah saw those kings and all that happened, how they did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord. Jeremiah watched this, and he watched them fall like dominos, right on down to the end. He spoke words from a broken heart. In essence, he said: "We have used up our time, Israel. We have caused the wrath of God to fall upon us, and our last opportunity has passed us by." Then he said, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved" (Jeremiah 8:20).

Jeremiah brought it down to something that we all can relate to when he spoke of the harvest, a time when you gather in after you have planted and cultivated and it grew and matured throughout the summer. You see, you have a span of time to gather it in or it will be too late. That was what Jeremiah was talking about when he said, "The harvest is past." He was not talking about their fields, but he was talking about their souls, their lives.

The Seasons of Our Lives

Now I want to share with you how I feel that this season relates to you and me as God's creation. Life is but a span. In the four seasons within a year, so many days make up the spring, so many days make up the summer, so many days make up the fall, and so many days make up the

winter; then the cycle begins again. Well, our lives are not counted that way.

I want to relate some things to you, and I believe it will give you something to think about. The seasons of our lives are in years. In Job 7:6 Job said, "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle." I never had the privilege to work around mills, but I have been told that the weaver's shuttle is very fast. Someone may say, "We have many years; man lives for years." That is how the devil can deceive you, because if you pass that ideal time to get saved, from there the percentage of those who get saved goes down. You can associate that a great deal with the entanglement that one encounters in just living. Can you see that?

The ideal time for children to learn is when they are young; then they are not worried about a spouse, a job, or paying the bills. They have a daddy who takes care of all of that. All they have to do is play, enjoy one another, and go to school to get an education. It would be hard to go to school with a crying baby on your hip. Youth is the ideal time to get saved, because then you are not bothered with those things, and the evil days have not come yet.

Sometimes when people get saved, it is almost as if they are trying to get out of a maze. Many times life gets complicated, not to God, but to us. It seems that the longer you live, the more entanglements and distractions there are. This is the reason that the ideal time to get saved and remember your Creator is in the days of your youth. The sooner you get saved and let Him direct you and guide you, the better off you will be.

People's lives can get in such bad shape that sometimes they cannot forgive themselves and believe God will forgive them. It is no trouble for God. All God needs to put the pieces back together is for them to bring the pieces to Him. He can put them back, but He has to have all the pieces.

Mr. Webster said that the season of spring is a period of beginning. I want to show you how these seasons relate to you and me. Our seasons are measured in years. For example, there are so many years in childhood. I said to one brother who was more than ninety years of age, "Brother, you are looking good."

He said, "Let me tell you a little story about looking good. You know, a person has three stages to his life. He has youth, middle age, and looking good."

You have a few years that make up the beginning and the childhood, or the spring. Have you ever heard anybody refer to a child as a sprout? Well, that is what comes up out of the ground when you plant a grain of corn, a sprout. Children are in the spring of life, that season of beginning. They have not reached the years of child bearing.

Webster said the season of summer is "a time of growth and fulfillment." Those years are the productive years. Can you see any resemblance? The fall, or the autumn, is a period of maturity, or the beginning of decline. The trees (unless they are evergreens), the shrubs, the flowers, and the weeds begin to decline. You see, there is something about spring and the warmth and the way God set it up. In the fall the sap begins to go down, and then next spring it begins to come back up and bring new life. In the springtime the leaves begin to grow, and if you do not watch the trees closely, they will be leafed out before you know it. Then the summer comes and the leaves mature, but when fall comes, the leaves begin to change. In Matthew 24:32 Jesus said, "Ye know that summer is nigh." You do not even need to have a calendar to know that summer is near when you see it at work. You can see plants maturing.

One day my little granddaughter ran inside to her mother and said, "Momma, Momma, it's springtime! It's springtime!" Her mother asked, "What are you talking about?" She replied, "The flow-

ers are coming up." She had heard them talk about springtime, so she said it was springtime when she saw the flowers begin to come up.

Next there comes a time of decline. I have been feeling some of that for a good number of years. You can eat well, take vitamins, exercise, and do your best, but you cannot keep this body around indefinitely; it is going to decline and leave you. In fact, it is leaving to a great degree while you are yet in it.

In the spring of your life, you were full of vigor and vim. During those years, you thought you were invincible and indestructible. Someone once said, "Had I known I would have lived this long, I would have taken better care of myself." You see, when you overtax your body, the damage has been done, and it is going to show up later down the line.

The Uncertainty of Life

If you are in the spring season of your life, you have only summer, fall, and winter left. If you are in the summer season of life, you have only fall and winter left. If you are in the fall of your life, you want to try to stretch that out as long as you can, because old man winter is next, and then the end will come.

Jesus, in talking about the destruction of Jerusalem, said, "But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day" (Matthew 24:20). On the Sabbath day they were not allowed to travel far, and in the winter it was hard to travel. Those camels did not have heaters on them.

Autumn is a period of maturity, or the beginning of decline. In other words, in that season you have topped the hill and you are heading down the other side. You can take all the vitamins you want, but this old body is going to give way. A familiar term is "over the hill." The more you can come to grips with these changes and not try to hide them and try to make people think that you are younger than you are,

the easier will be on you. If you do not have any hair on the roof, just accept it. There are much worse things that could happen to you. Many people cannot accept those natural changes, and they keep them covered. You need to try to come to grips with your life and your surroundings and accept what God has given you.

Mr. Webster said that *winter* is "any period regarded as a time of decline or distress." People do not have to be lost. The Bible speaks of the sluggard and the lazy. If you watch the little ants or the squirrels, you will see them laying up food for winter. It has not snowed, but they know it is coming, so they are getting ready. However, speaking in general, we humans think we have plenty of time, so we do not get excited or worked up. That is the reason so many people end up lost. They procrastinate, or put off what they know they ought to do today. You see, there is a time to plant and a time to harvest.

Dear one, it could be that your summer has just about ended. This is the seriousness of the saying. If Israel had gotten serious about serving God, the outcome would have been much different. I hope you will take the message seriously. In years past and in different places, people kept track of time in different ways. I think the Indians spoke in terms of so many winters. Since there is only one winter a year, they could refer to the winters to keep track of time.

The most important decision you have to make at this present time is to get your soul right with God. Then it will not be said of you that the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and you are not saved.

I beg of you to think seriously about your soul. Life is so uncertain, and death is sure. I have been around some where maybe the husband would be really sick and the wife seemed to be doing well, but do you know who died first? The wife did, and vice versa. Since life is so uncertain, you need to take

care of your salvation while you have your right mind, while there is time allotted to you. This is so serious. I cannot stress that enough.

It brings a sadness to my heart when I read that Scripture in Jeremiah 8:20, to think of that nation that went down into captivity for seventy years because of sin. God promised them blessings if they

would obey Him. He gave them a land that flowed with milk and honey. He said it was not like other lands. It was a good land. God let them know that He was the key to their staying in that land. He said if they forgot Him, the land would spew them out as it had done to those before them.

May God bless you. You need to

think about those things, because life is passing you by, friend. You may not live to be seventy or eighty years of age. You may not live too long, so do not count on that. You need to get right with God today.

(Compact Disc TR-264M)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

OVAPA, WV

October 4

FELLOWSHIP MEETING: Church of God, Ovapa, WV

Services times: 10:00 a.m., 2:00 p.m. & Sunday 10:00 a.m.

Meals will be served by the local congregation. **LODGING:** Sleep Inn, Exit 1 – I-79N (304-345-5111); Country Suites, Exit 9 – I-79N Elkview (304-965-9200); Elk Valley Inn, Exit 34 – Clay/W allback, approximately 12 miles from I-79N (304-587-7530)

For further information contact: Pastor Richard E. Talbot, 43 Ovapa Church Road, Prociuous, WV 25164

Telephone: 304-587-4693

SUMMERSVILLE, WV

October 6-12

REVIVAL: The Church of God, 74 Armstrong Road, Summersville, WV

Evangelist: Brother E. David Stegmeier, Canby Oregon

Service times: Monday-Friday 7:00 p.m.; Saturday 6:00 p.m.; Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.

For further information contact: Pastor Earl R. Borders at 304-872-4047

Visit our website: www.ChurchofGodSummersvilleWV.com

MEDINA, OH

October 27-November 2

REVIVAL: The Church of God, 6745 Wooster Pike, Medina, OH 44256

Evangelist: Brother Roger L. Decker, Newark, OH

Service times: Monday-Saturday 7:00 p.m. & Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.

For further information contact: Pastor Daniel Webster, 92 W. Main St., Seville, OH 44273

Telephone: (Home) 330-435-6490 or (Church) 330-725-5993

Visit our website: www.ChurchofGodMedinaOH.com

NEWARK, OH

December 28-31

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

Three services daily: 10:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m. The first service begins Sunday morning. The afternoon service will be a teaching service.

For lodging reservation, please call Brother & Sister Dave Bush at 740-345-1213

For more information contact: Pastor Roger Decker, 87 DeCrow Avenue, Newark, OH 43055

Telephone: 740-344-2543

*No matter how great our need,
the divine resources are never exhausted.*

Fall 2008 Camp Meeting Recordings

CD NO.	DATE	MESSAGE TITLE	MINISTER
TR-291M TR-292E	8-03-08	A Hopeless Condition With Hope The Lord's Expectation of Me	Brother Roger L. Decker Brother Irwin Seshier
TR-293M TR-295E	8-04-08	The Sin Which Doth So Easily Beset Us Jesus Saves	Brother Daniel Webster Brother Ron Hawkins
TR-296M TR-298E	8-05-08	Impossibilities Turned Into Victories Endure	Brother Leamon Whitehead Brother Ron Hawkins
TR-299M TR-301E	8-06-08	Tools to Escape Perilous Times The Suffering Christ Did for Us	Brother Aurelius Raines Brother Calvin Foster
TR-302M TR-304E	8-07-08	The Hope of the Remnant Worldliness	Brother Tim Yoder Brother Calvin Foster
TR-305M TR-307E	8-08-08	The Source of Unity Asking in Jesus' Name	Brother Adam Wolf Brother Allen Polston
TR-309E	8-09-08	The Incalculable Value of the Soul	Brother Larry Dishman
TR-310M TR-312E	8-10-08	The Final Reckoning—the Day of the Lord How Death Blasts the Hopes, Dreams, and Plans of the Sinner	Brother Richard Talbot Brother Larry Dishman
TR-294A	8-04-08	Tongues, Part 1	Brother Roger L. Decker
TR-297A	8-05-08	Tongues, Part 2	Brother Roger L. Decker
TR-300A	8-06-08	The Nation of Israel	Brother Roger L. Decker
THE FOUR APOCALYPTIC HORSES AND THEIR RIDERS			
TR-303A	8-07-08	Part 1, The White Horse	Brother Earl R. Borders
TR-306A	8-08-08	Part 2, The Red Horse	Brother Earl R. Borders
TR-308A	8-09-08	Part 3, The Black Horse	Brother Earl R. Borders
TR-311A	8-10-08	Part 4, The Pale Horse	Brother Earl R. Borders
KW-2008M	8-09-08	Pilgrim's Progress (Audio CD)	Sister Karen Wilks
DVD-001		Pilgrim's Progress w/Children's Program Songs (DVD)	Sister Karen Wilks
TM-107	2008	Fall Camp Meeting Songs #1	
TM-108	2008	Fall Camp Meeting Songs #2	
TM-109	2008	Fall Camp Meeting Songs #3	
TM-110	2008	Fall Camp Meeting Songs #4	
TM-111	2008	Fall Camp Meeting Songs #5	
TM-112	2008	Fall Camp Meeting Children's Program #6	
TM-113	2008	Fall Camp Meeting Songs #7	
TM-114	2008	Fall Camp Meeting Songs #8	
	2008	Fall Camp Meeting Choir Songs #1	
	2008	Fall Camp Meeting Choir Songs #2	
	2008	All Songs for the Fall Camp Meeting on MP3	
	2008	First Half of the Fall Camp Meeting Messages on MP3	
	2008	Second Half of the Fall Camp Meeting Messages on MP3	

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