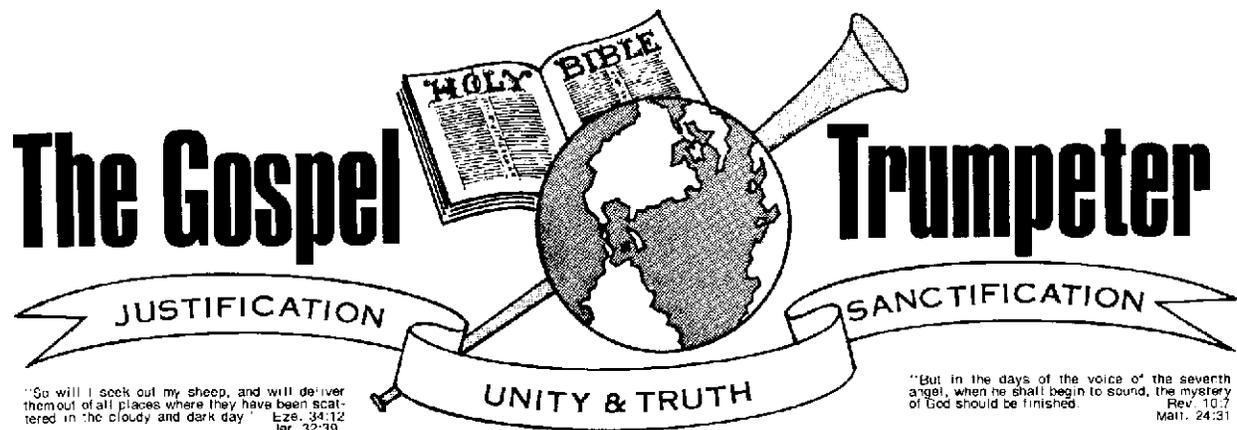


The Gospel Trumpeter



JUSTIFICATION

SANCTIFICATION

UNITY & TRUTH

"So will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. Eze. 34:12 Jer. 32:39"

"But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished. Rev. 10:7 Matt. 24:31"

SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

Vol. 44 March 2014 No. 3



Church of God Tabernacle in Newark, Ohio

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

Psalm 122:1

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

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

Brother Roger L. Decker Editor
Workers Too Numerous to Mention

THE CHURCH OF GOD BELIEVES IN:

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

**SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS
PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH**

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

*We reserve the right to edit and/or decline any material
for any reason. Not responsible for unsolicited articles or
items.

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Vol. 44 March 2014 No. 3

Winter 2013 Camp Meeting Report

"Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is
your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and
then vanisheth away."

James 4:14

Come and Gone So Quickly!

It is amazing how quickly time is moving on. It seems that just a few days ago, we began the New Year of 2013, and now it is gone. Likewise, another camp meeting season has come and gone so quickly and is now in the history books. This time world and our lives are rapidly heading toward a never-ending eternity. Seeing the deplorable conditions all around us, we often wonder how much longer the Lord will delay His coming. Then, too, the question arises about how many more opportunities will be afforded to get together with the saints to freely worship God. How much longer will the door of mercy be open to souls who have rejected God to gain salvation? It should awaken every lost soul to seriously consider making his peace with God while there is still time.

At seven o'clock on Thursday evening, December 26, 2013, Winter Camp Meeting began here at God's Acres. Pastor Roger L. Decker greeted everyone and welcomed them to the meeting. After a few comments, he then prayed, asking for God's blessing and guidance for the meeting. This year's meeting was only three and a half days long, but it was a great time of fellowship with the people of God. Although the time was short, the Lord accomplished a great work. The Holy Spirit knows what to do to meet every need. What a sorrowful time it is when these precious times come to an end! It is also regretful to

see souls leave who neglected to gain the help they needed.

The winter meeting was well attended, and the weather, which is always a concern, posed no problem for the saints traveling, for which we are grateful. Beginning each morning at 8:30, the saints met to pray for lost souls to be won to God and the Truth. They also sought God for guidance and to bring success in the meeting. Prayer is always the essential ingredient for salvation and maintaining a strong spiritual life. God's ears are always open to the cries of His saints, and He wonderfully blessed the services with His presence.

Several ministers from different locations attended the meeting with members of their congregations. What a blessing to see the brethren setting together in unity and supporting the one who delivered the message! Brother David Stegmeier was the evangelist for the evening services, and his messages were pointed to draw us all to a closer relationship with God. Other brethren who labored were Brothers Allen Polston, Calvin Foster, and Richard Talbot. Brother Earl Borders conducted the afternoon teaching services on faith. The messages were anointed and focused on bringing conviction to those in sin and stirring the saints.

Many wonderful things were accomplished during the meeting,

[continued on page 19]

The Dreaded Thought of Being Lost



Brother Roger L. Decker

What the Bible Says About Hell

Sound doctrine is wholesome, healthy doctrine. If you are ever going to see inside God's Heaven, that is what you have to obey. When I was younger and did not know any better, I used to make comments about being lost or going to hell that were foolish and uncouth. Since then, I have put away childish thoughts and expressions, just as the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 13:11. Paul wrote, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things."

You might have said such things as, "If I go to hell, I'll have lots of company with me." That is a foolish statement to make. For example, let us say you had terminal cancer, and you were in tremendous pain. If I were to ask you, "Would it help to

put you with other cancer patients in a ward so that you could comfort one another?" would that ease your suffering? I have heard it said, "Well, he's going to be shoveling coal to keep the fires of hell burning." The Bible lets us know that a person in hell will not be shoveling coal, but he will be in torments.

When I was younger, it was as though hell or being lost was just a big joke or something that would never come true. I thought ministers preached about it just to scare people into getting saved. Dear one, do not ever think that hell is a myth. I guarantee you that those who are there do not think it is a matter to joke about, and they would to God they would have gotten serious about living for God when they were in the body and able to do so.

Being lost is not something to joke about, laugh about, or boast about. Being lost is to be feared. It is

serious, and you need to realize that once you are in a lost eternity, you will not be able to have a second chance, you will not receive any mercy, no one there will be concerned about you, and no one there will have enough clout to get you out of there.

What does the Bible say about hell when speaking of the rich man who went to hell? Jesus said in Luke 16:26, "And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." I want you to read that same verse from a couple more translations. I study and preach from the King James Version of the Bible, but once in a while, I refer to another translation to bring out the meaning a little clearer on a verse. Another translation says this: "And besides there is a deep ditch

between us, and no one from either side can cross over." Another says, "Beside all that, there is a deep pit lying between us, so that those who want to cross over from here to you cannot do so, nor can anyone cross over to us from where you are."

I am sure that most of us have gotten lost at one time or another. I can remember wandering away from my mother and father when I was younger. I was at a county fair, and I was a young tyke, maybe eight or nine years of age. I felt panicky when I could not see my mother or my father anywhere. I stood and looked at the crowd, and then I ran here and there to try to find them. Oh, the panic that I felt because I was out of their sight! I looked everywhere I thought they would be, and I am sure they were looking for me. Oh, the thrill in my heart when I finally came in contact with them!

In hell, no one is going to be looking for you. No one will be searching for you, and one could not do so even if he wanted to, because of the gulf that is fixed. If you die lost, your soul will be in utter darkness forever. The world and false religion have practically done away with hell, but I guarantee you, it is just as real and just as much a part of the Bible as Heaven.

The Lost

What are people going to be doing in hell? The Bible tells us what everyone who goes to hell will be doing. They are not going to be smoking cigarettes. They are not going to be drinking beer or whiskey. They are not going to be partying all through eternity. The men are not going to be chasing women. They are not going to be laughing and joking and having a good time. The Bible tells us explicitly what everyone will be doing. Luke 16:23 reads, "And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." What is the rich man doing? He is not partying or enjoying his riches. He is not drinking or smok-

ing, but he is in torments.

The older I get, the more I think about eternity. In the past, I did not think about it that much. Oh, I knew it was real, but it was not on my mind as it is now. Why? Each day it seems that the older I get, the faster time goes. It is on my mind as I approach the hour. There is going to be a time when I am going to leave this world to go to another. The Bible tells us, and also our daily newspapers let us know the same, that we each have an appointment with God.

Hebrews 9:27 states, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." What does the word *appointed* mean? It means that it is "selected, fixed, pre-arranged, or allotted." I do not bring the message to scare you into being saved. If I could scare you into being saved, then the devil would scare you by telling you that you cannot live it and say that it is a big myth. Dear one, all I ask you to do is believe the Bible.

Have you ever lost something of great value? Have you ever lost your pocketbook or your billfold? What happened? If you have, you probably went into a panic mode, didn't you? You thought about your driver's license, your social security number, and your credit cards. You were probably not so worried about the money because in this day and age, we usually do not carry much money on us. However, you do have other vital information in your wallet or purse that you do not want to lose. No doubt, if you were to lose your wallet or your purse, you would be in a panic mode until you found it.

The Bible speaks of someone getting excited when something was lost. The Bible speaks of the lost coin. Luke 15:8-9 reads: "Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for

I have found the piece which I had lost."

The Bible also talks about a lost sheep. Verses 4-7 of the same chapter read: "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise [this is an allegory] joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance."

In each of these parables, a search was made, in one for a lost sheep, and in the other for a lost coin. When they were found, the rejoicing was great, but the sheep and the coin were still on this earth. No search will be made for a soul that is lost in eternity. The sheep and the coin were lost under the control of human hands, but a soul is lost because God has ordered it so because of the person's life here on this earth. Things that are lost here on this earth, whether they are coins or sheep or other tangible things, can still be found; but when a soul leaves the body and goes before God and hears Him say either "Enter in" or "Depart from Me," it will be final. I cannot make this message serious enough.

Being Ready for That Final Call

Some people are fooling around and playing church, and they are going to be faced with reality someday, maybe sooner, maybe later, but they will be dealing with it, and acceptance or rejection will be the final call. Now people on this side of eternity are still free to walk around. They may feel that they do not have to worry about being lost as long as they feel free and able to walk around. They might feel well physi-

cally, and they might not have any aches or pains, so they may think, "Why worry about eternity?" However, one of these days, life is going to change. There was a time when I felt good and robust. When I was younger, I used to jog a lot, and I loved to work a lot, but all of that has changed as I have gotten older. I did not want it to change. I would rather work. I would rather be able to do the things that I once did, but I cannot do them anymore, unless God would move on me. Things can change sooner than you think.

This is not a subject that I especially like to preach on or desire to preach on, but it is something that needs to be preached once in a while. If there was ever a time when we needed to get serious about the hereafter, it is now. Evil is becoming more evil daily. Hideous crimes are being committed as sin increases in the hearts of unbelievers. There was a time when you did not have to worry about somebody walking into a workplace and gunning down people. That is a hideous crime. Second Timothy 3:13 states, "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." Remember, the thought of the message is, the dreaded thought of being lost.

No doubt, many people who are unsaved have every intention of getting saved someday. In their minds, they think someday they would like to get saved. I am sure there are ones in a lost eternity who had the thought; however, they put it off, not knowing when the hour of their death would come. Then they found death closer to them than they could have imagined.

You may inquire: "What about the thief on the cross? He got saved at the last hour." Certainly, he did. That shows the mercy of God at the last hour, but do you believe the thief had plenty of chances to get saved and waited until the last moment? Do you think he understood the plan of God and had turned down Jesus several times or do you think this was probably the first

time he had a chance and the first time he ever met Jesus? Jesus had not died on the Cross yet, so that put that man under the old covenant. Rejection of Jesus Christ is dangerous, especially not knowing when your last rejection will take place. Rejection places you in the spotlight of judgment.

Have you ever been lost when driving a car? I have been lost driving a car many times, and getting lost can be frustrating, especially if you get downtown in a city. To be lost forever is a dreaded thought. At least when you are lost in a car, you know that you are going to get it straightened out eventually, because all you have to do is stop and ask somebody for directions, and that person will tell you how to get out of there. However, no one can tell you how to get out of hell. There will not be anyone to talk to.

Everlasting Torments

Now, according to the Bible, we can know a few things about being lost. First, it is forever. Second Thessalonians 1:7-9 reads: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

What does the word *everlasting* mean? It means "ceaseless, endless, eternal, and unending." I read about a man who gave a good description of what he thought a day in eternity would be like. This is what he wrote: "High up in the land called Svithjod there stands a rock, and the rock is a hundred miles high and a hundred miles wide. Once every thousand years, a little bird comes to this rock to sharpen its beak. When the rock has thus been worn away, then a single day of eternity will have gone by."

We know there are no days in

eternity, but that was his thought concerning eternity. You may think that somewhere along the line, God will say that people have had enough in hell and will let them out to enjoy Heaven for a while. That is not going to happen, not when you have everlasting judgments.

We also know that in hell a person is not going to enjoy any company. I know what some people think. I used to say it myself. Sometimes people say to their friends, "If I go to hell, you're going to be there with me, and we'll talk things over forever throughout eternity." Let us see what the Bible says. Luke 16:23 tells us, "And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom."

Does the Bible say what kinds of torments? Yes, the Bible even tells us what kinds of torments are going to be in hell. God makes it very plain. Verse 24 reveals, "And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." What is the tormenter? It is the flame, but it is not a flame that **b u r n s s o m e t h i n g** up and then extinguishes, as a piece of paper would burn and then the flame would die out. It is a flame that torments the soul, and it is everlasting.

Someone may say, "I don't believe that hell is all that it is said to be." I do. Perhaps some time you could do an experiment. Strike a match and hold it under your hand and see how long you can stand that. It will be just a second or so before you pull your hand away; that is not an eternal flame. Now, the match does not burn up the hand, but it torments it, so you pull it away; but there is no pulling away in hell.

You may say, "I thought the man in hell would be burned up." No, if he were burned up, he would not be wanting water, but the Scripture says the rich man in hell wanted

water. He did not ask for a gallon of water, a quart of water, or even a glass of water; he asked for a drop of water. He did not have a glass of ice water setting there to give him relief. In essence, he said, "Give me just a drop so that I may cool my tongue." Now, that is hot! Do you know what torments are? They are agony, torture, distress, pain, suffering, and anguish.

I am talking about being lost, and I close the message with this story. The story is about D. L. Moody. One Sunday night, D. L. Moody preached in a big circus tent near the Columbian Acquisition in

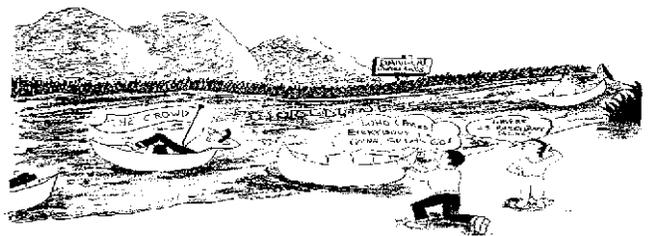
Chicago, and he preached, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost." After he had finished, a little boy was brought to the platform by an officer who had found the boy wandering around in the crowd lost. Mr. Moody picked him up in his arms and asked the crowd to look on the lost child, and he said: "The father's more anxious to find the boy than the boy is to be found. So is it with our Heavenly Father. For long years, the Lord has been following after you. Sinner, He is still following after you yet." At that moment, a man with an anxious face elbowed his way to the plat-

form. The boy saw him and ran to him and threw himself into his father's outstretched arms. The multitude that witnessed the scene broke out into a mighty cheer. Thus cried out Mr. Moody, "God will receive you the same way, if you will come back to Him."

I end the message trusting that you will do just that. The message was about the dreaded thought of being lost, and it is especially dreaded when it is so unnecessary.

(Compact Disc TR-1230M)

Spending Time Wisely



When I was a boy, I well remember a little place in our community where there was a store, a grist mill, a post office, and a few dwelling houses. Through the winter months or on rainy days in the spring and summer, men would gather and play checkers, cards, tell jokes, talk about their farming, trade pocket knives, buy a little merchandise, or sit around on counters, chairs, and benches to kill time. Someone named the village "Loafer's Glory." Only God knows the valuable hours, weeks, months, and years that were spent on the part of those men that were simply wasted.

The same was true, no doubt, with people in thousands of other communities, towns, and cities. It is largely the same today, but television, the theater, and amusements of various kinds and gatherings among worldly people has displaced largely the old scenes at "Loafer's Glory" over the nation. It is astonishing how millions of people spend much of their precious time reading a low class of literature, drinking beer or liquor, smoking cigarettes, or seeking pleasure that is worthless.

Multitudes of people will never amount to anything good or worthwhile in life because they spend so very much of their time in idleness or at something that is a curse instead of a blessing. Many people do not know what an honest day's work is, nor what it is to use their time profitably, wisely, or in a way that pleases God. Perhaps millions of our youth today put a very low value upon their precious time. Multitudes of older people, likewise, are idlers. Some of them think they

have worked their time out, and in the years of retirement just settle down to do nothing constructive for themselves and their fellow men.

Time is precious. It is not simply to be idled away. There is so much good that could be accomplished by wisely using the time that is wasted. Part of this time could be well spent in reading and studying the precious old Bible, praying, visiting the sick and suffering, reading good books and a clean wholesome class of papers and literature, or singing Gospel songs, or speaking to people about their soul's salvation, or helping needy people morally and spiritually, or giving to the poor who may be suffering for food or clothing.

Many people could use some of their spare time writing letters to encourage someone or writing something that might be very beneficial, or testifying to the saving grace of God and praise Him for their many blessings. God has plenty for all of us to do that is blessed, honorable, and glorious rather than let the devil have our time that only brings defeat for time and eternity.

Think of this Scripture: "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time" (Colossians 4:5). One commentator wrote: "Perhaps the Apostle Paul meant, in general, embrace every opportunity to glorify God, save your soul, and do good to men." That is wonderful living and time wisely spent.

Selected

Does Christ Feel at Home in Your Heart?

The Apostle Paul prayed for His fellow Christians at Ephesus on his knees, saying to them: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith . . ." (Ephesians 3:14, 17).

There is a great difference between visiting a place and living there. To have a snapshot memory of a beautiful experience is quite different from enjoying it perpetually. The Lord does not desire an occasional entry into our hearts or a weekend visit from Saturday night to Monday morning. He wants to live in our hearts every day and night—continuously; yet how many people simply entertain Him over Sunday, and when Monday morning comes and they must be about their usual work, they go on their way without Him! They no longer have room for Him. They do not arrange for Him to settle down and live with them permanently. What a pity!

Some people often treat Jesus as a virtual stranger. Their conversation with Him is very limited. It is so much like the language of speaking to someone in the hallway. It does not breathe the loving atmosphere of living together in the whole house.

In years gone by, the Lord raised prophets and apostles for a special task. Today He uses His called ministers of the Gospel, pastors, teachers, and others in the church with their gifts and talents. What better inspiration can there be for such grateful service than to experience Christ living in your heart, making His dwelling and home within you by faith. May you always let Him feel at home in your heart, thoughts, attitudes, disposition, conversation, play, and leisure. Then your

service for Him will be real, joyous, and fruitful.

The Psalmist said in Psalm 143:5-6: I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands. I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land. Selah." Today one wonders if a far deeper and more blessed connection with Heaven in the form of prayer were visible, how many hands of communication we would see reaching up to Heaven? How many persons would bow their knees before God's throne? God sees. He knows if your life is marked by the up reach of prayer.

In the hectic hurry and rush of our present time, many people have lost much of that leisurely communion with God that marked the like of our spiritual ancestors. In the beautiful language of the psalm, we have a glimpse of the indwelling of Christ in us. David said: "I remember . . . I meditate . . . I muse on the works of thy hands . . . I stretch forth my hands unto thee."

Today so much of people's time is spent relaxing. The sweet hours of prayer that used to call people from a world of care have shrunk to minutes and even seconds. Short sermons, short meditations, short prayers are preferred and demanded. There is not much time left for God and His program.

Sadly, there is no room in the inn for the Christ, but there is room for everything else under the sun. How spiritually impoverished are many people's homes and hearts!

The greatest need to Christendom today is the need of a dynamic, magnetic power of the Holy Spirit to cleanse and purify and strengthen people and to draw them closer to Him so that they may have the faith and the power and the wisdom to defy Satan and overcome sin.

Selected

The Great Deliverer

There is no sickness but there is a balm;
There is no storm but soon must come a calm;
There is no broken heart but can be healed;
No harsh earth noise but can in peace be stilled;
No deep bereavement but shall find relief
Deeper and greater than was ere the grief;
No bitter wail but shall give way to song;
No sufferer whose sufferings may not cease;
No prisoner who may not find release;
No earthly sorrow but hath its reward—
If only we will wait and trust in the Lord.

Matthew 25:14 For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

16 Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents.

17 And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.

18 But he that had received one

went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

19 After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

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 Blessing and the Curse of Time



Brother Richard Talbot

The Measure of Your Days

Under normal circumstances, there are two events in life that you have no control over: they are your birth and your death. What I am concerned about is the period of time that exists between your birth and your death. It is called by one

person, "the dash," or that mark between the birth and the death dates on tombstones.

Psalm 39:4-5 reads: "LORD, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am. Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every

man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah."

Psalm 90:9-12: "For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly

away. Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

We are living in such a serious, uncertain age that it would do all of us well to really take to heart the warnings of these Scripture verses so that we may learn how to apply our hearts to wisdom. Knowing how frail we are in this human body is one reason that the Apostle Paul said a man should not think more highly of himself than he ought to think. No matter how strong or how healthy you may be, you are living in a frail body that can be taken down in a moment of time. There is no assurance to any one of us that we will ever see the sun rise again. There is no assurance to any one of us that can guarantee that we will be alive when another service time starts. Life is very frail.

You need to realize there could be things working in your body right now that God sees, and in just a few hours is going to take you out into eternity. You may be in the best of health and feel great, but you can be taken down in a moment of time. Therefore, God teaches that you must number your days and apply your heart to wisdom. You need to stop and consider what really is important in this life.

Matthew 25:19 in our Scripture text says, "After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them." Many times it is that long period of time that gets some people into trouble. If the Lord would have come back quickly, no doubt most of them would have been okay, but after a long time, many people grow weary and tired and get careless in their lives. They allow things to creep in and take away the zeal of serving God, and they begin to wander in their minds, and their hearts become estranged from the Lord. In that period, from salvation until the Lord comes back for us, if He were to return quickly, many people would be saved. Oh, how you need to real-

ize that to every thing there is a season, and God gives time to every purpose under heaven. God is concerned about your time, and you need to be concerned about your time.

Time Brings Opportunity

What is time? The dictionary says *time* is "an indefinite continuous duration regarded in which events follow one another." Time has many things in its favor. Time gives you opportunity, it gives you a window of hope, and it gives you time to change some things. If you have time, you can make some things right that have been wrong in your life. If you have time, you can get things straightened out with God. In time, you can do many things that are good and noble and needful for your soul.

Every day time offers you a new time frame that, if you will grasp it faithfully, you can use to your greatest advantage. Every morning when you wake up, you are looking at a day that is unmarred, a day wherein no sin has been committed. Possibly you get out of bed revived, refreshed, vibrant, relaxed, and full of zeal. You can get out of bed and say, "Good morning, Lord!" When the alarm goes off at five o'clock in the morning, I am not happy to hear it, but after I get up and get moving, I am thankful that God has given me another day. It is up to me what I do with each day. We are born as infants, but soon we become toddlers, and next we enter childhood, the teen years, young adulthood, and then finally adulthood. During those years, we gain an education, employment, go courting, and perhaps get married and have children. Then we become middle aged and have grandchildren. Soon we enter retirement and have great-grandchildren; then death takes us out of it all. We are born to die.

God has given each of us this period of time to prepare for long eternity. This process is played repeatedly throughout the cycle of life.

Once it was my grandparents who were laying in the casket at the funeral home. My father's mother was sixty-three years of age when she was taken out of this life after being hit by a car as she was crossing a street. At one time, she had been a bitter person and fought against God and the church for many, many years. Thank the Lord, she got saved three years before she passed away, and she had a wonderful experience of salvation.

The only thing I really remember about her was that she always gave us grandchildren dimes. In the cycle of her life, having just gotten saved at the age of sixty, it was really a miracle that she came to the Lord at that time. Three years after being saved, she was snatched out into eternity by a man who drove through a traffic light. She did not have much time to do what she needed to do, but she got in. Many people do not make it in a whole lifetime.

After my grandparents passed away, it was my parents turn, and soon it will be my turn. One of these days, if things go according to nature, my children will be laying me in the grave. It is a part of life. It is something that none of us can escape. We do not like to think about it, but it is a reality. Next, my children will be moving right up into the frame of time that I stand in now, and they will be looking at their children who will be moving on up as well. There is no end to the cycle of life. It pushes every one of us in a relentless force on and on toward eternity.

In this cycle of life, nothing ever remains the same. Everything in life is subject to change. Who can stop the clock of time? I remember when my children were little, all at home in their innocence of childhood. I told my wife many times, "I wish I could take the hands of the clock and just hold them right there." Everybody was happy and the children had no real problems to deal with. They had no drastic things happening in their lives; everyone

was doing well. I would have liked to have locked time down and held it right there, but no one can stop time.

Be Conscious of Eternity

As time goes on, things are going to happen. Trouble is bound to come. Hardships, difficulties, problems, ruined lives, and blessed lives are all based on the decisions that people make, many times on the spur of the moment. Oh, how important life's decisions are! How important it is to stop and consider this process of time! One of the disadvantages of time is that time will always cause you to feel that another day is coming. Many people think: "If I have today, surely I'm going to have tomorrow. I'm making plans for tomorrow morning and for next week."

Some people have reservations made at certain places for a year in advance. Plans are always in the works. We are always making plans because we cannot comprehend the reality that time may not be here tomorrow. I do not believe I am going to die today. Do you believe that you are going to die today? I do not believe you do. I cannot comprehend the fact that I could die today. I do not feel that way, but I very well could die today, and that is what I have to keep in mind. Death could come for me today. That is reality, and I need to be aware of that.

Every day we live, we need to be conscious of eternity; it is just a heartbeat away, and it is out ahead of every one of us. You do not have to be old to die. You do not have to be sick to die. You do not have to be an invalid to die. You can die if you are in perfect health. All God has to do is call your name; He has it already arranged. He knows the day of your death as well as the day of your birth. God has it all on His record. He holds the breath of your life in the palm of His hand, and at any moment, He can end it.

While time lasts, it allows room

for everything in your life to change. Things in your life will never remain the same. Again, Matthew 25:19 reads, "After a long time. . . ." In Luke 12:35-37 Jesus said: "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them."

Jesus was teaching that we ought to be conscious of the time of our lives. He was teaching that we should be like men who know the Lord is returning. I thought about the ten virgins, which you can read about in Matthew, Chapter 25. Five of them were foolish, but they were not labeled foolish until after the fact. They had no idea that they were being foolish before the bridegroom came. The Bible says they all slumbered and slept; they all felt confident. They all would have been okay had the bridegroom come when He was expected to come, but He did not come when they were expecting Him.

The fact is, five of them foolishly prepared their lives. How essential it is to be the absolute best you can be while you have your right mind, while you are in good health, and while you are able to do what you can for God. You need to prepare yourself for long eternity. When the death angel comes for you and you are called out of this world, nothing you can do will ever change eternity. As you are when you breathe your last breath, so you will stand in eternity.

The Wearing Process of Time

Psalms 73:23-28 states: "Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy

counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee. But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works."

Your duty is to make sure that you have things anchored in God. You must put your trust in the Lord. The flesh and the heart can fail, but when God comes, He brings strength to the soul. Your human body can get weak. Your mind can get frail in its thoughts and its ability to comprehend things, but the Spirit of God will come in and revive, strengthen, and restore your soul.

In the process of time, you should never forget that Satan is a master of patience. The devil never gets tired, he never gets worn out, and he does not get rushed. He has all the time he wants, and he uses time to his advantage. He knows how and when to discourage. He knows that through the process of time he can wear a good person down. Your battle today is not martyrdom. You are not facing a jail term in this country, at least not yet. We are not facing physical persecution of any great scale, but what we are facing is sometimes far worse.

I often try to imagine persecution, torture, being stretched apart on racks, or being burned at the stake. Those are gruesome, horrible ways to die, and yet when you read the accounts of many of those people who suffered such terrible persecution, you find God's glory and presence was with them to the end. If someone would point a pistol at your head and say: "Recant and give up Christ. Speak against Christ or I'll shoot!" I believe most of us would conscientiously say, "Shoot!" I cannot picture in my mind ever agreeing to denounce Christ, but we

are not facing that at this time. Today we are facing the long time of monotonous, wearing existence. Day after day, that is the process.

If Christ should come back shortly, it might be altogether different. Many people start out well for God. They seem to have a solid experience for the Lord, but in time they lose out with God. They lose the fire. We have accounts in the Scriptures of people leaving their first love and of those going astray and being shipwrecked in their faith. What happened? The wearing process of time, of trouble, of disappointment, and of heartaches take their toll on the mind, and the flesh weakens.

Battling the Flesh

I have thought many times, "Oh, how wonderful it would be if we did not have to battle this flesh!" You know, God has made a way out for that. When you get to Heaven, you will never have to battle the flesh again. The flesh is not going to Heaven. However, as long as you are alive in this world, you will have to battle the flesh. No matter how sanctified you are, you are still going to have the flesh to battle. It is a part of your life. It would be wonderful if the preacher could come up with some Scriptures that would give you a formula for dealing with the flesh and getting the flesh out of the way, but I have not found any yet.

Someone may say: "You can get victory over those temptations. You can get the root jerked out." Well, the difficulty is, many problems are rooted in the flesh. You have to learn how to deal with the flesh, learn how to conquer it, and learn how to live victoriously. You must keep the flesh in subjection to the Holy Spirit. Paul said it is going to be a warfare. The flesh wars against the spirit, and in the process of time, the devil works.

Paul wrote in Galatians 5:7, "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?"

Sometimes people seem to be doing so well for God. It seems as if God might have His hand on them for some particular work in the kingdom. They run well, but over the years, the devil works through troubles, pressures, heartaches, and disappointments, and their expectations are not met. When the years go by, nobody seems to notice their talent, and the devil works on that. You do not have to blow your own horn. When God has something for you to do, He will make a way and make it noticeable for others to recognize it. God will make an opening for you if He really has His hand on you for some particular work. When you stand up and start blowing your own horn, it sickens everybody.

Waiting is a very hard thing to do. A brother said in preaching one time, "God is the slowest person, but He has never been known to be late." God may move slow, but He is never late. He has a time and a purpose, but sometimes people do not control the feelings of the flesh as they should. Jeremiah said not to count on great things. If they come, God will bless you and help you. Do not build your hopes on something that you have no control over.

Be Not Weary in Well Doing

The devil knows how to exploit your weaknesses. It does not matter to Satan if it takes him years. He has a plan for your downfall. He has a plan laid out for every soul, and he knows how he can get to you. He knows where you are most vulnerable. He knows how to work things to his advantage. He has a scheme planned against you. He is working a plan to bring about your failure as a Christian. You can be sure of that!

Satan has a plan, but our Heavenly Father has a plan too. I am trusting in His plan to keep me out of Satan's plan. I believe God has a way of taking us all through this life and removing every hindrance and every snare and guiding us around every pitfall. Psalm 37:23 tells us, "The steps of a good man are

ordered by the LORD."

In your weakness, in weariness of the mind, you can become lax and get too comfortable in the flesh. You can become too relaxed in your mind, and then you will ease up in your prayer life, and your alertness will no longer be as sharp and as keen as you used to keep it. Satan is right there. He sniffs those things out immediately. He knows this one is starting to wear down. This soul is starting to cave in a little. He knows if the walls of a person's fortification are starting to crumble, and he will be right there with his plan.

Many homes would have been better had the parents made better decisions and held the line as they should have, stood against sin, and stood against the world. When time has taken its toll, you cannot go back and redo those things. Sometimes children are lost and grandchildren are lost because of poor decisions Mom and Dad made in the flesh. They turned away from God, left their congregation, and thought they could do a better job with their children. Now their children and grandchildren are growing up, and none of them know the Lord. Dear one, you need to make sure that you are using your time wisely. Do not allow time to use you.

No one on his deathbed ever said, "I wish I would have spent more time at the office." Nobody on his deathbed has ever said, "I wish I had been out in my vacation home a lot more." Do you know what some people say on their deathbeds? "Oh, the God I spurned! I'm facing Him now. I wish I would have been in church. I wish I'd given my heart to God. I wish I would have gotten saved." The thoughts of money, work, prosperity, and all their earthly belongings are not a consideration on the deathbed. Many a rich person has died saying, "I'd give all my wealth for a few more minutes of time." Wealth means nothing on the deathbed.

Some people talk about how things used to be, but God has some things that are up to date, if you will

apply them to your life. Time changes many things and affects all of us. Galatians 6:9 reads, "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." There is a danger of becoming weary in well doing. When you are doing well, do not get tired of doing well.

I remember that as a child, I was made to do that which was good, and I was ruled over in my childhood. My parents instructed my siblings and me to be good and to behave ourselves. I got tired of being good, because I did not want to be good. To me, it was no fun being good. In the Bible you are told very plainly, when you are doing well, do not let it wear on you. If you are doing what is right, you need to keep doing it. Do not stop doing good. What if no one notices? You need to get that out of your mind. You are to be good as a Christian for God's approval, to please the Lord. If nobody ever recognizes it, that does not matter. You should want to please God.

You are not serving God for public recognition. You are not in this in a competitive spirit. You should not try to outdo this one or that one. You should strive for God's approval on you. My job is to keep doing well. Why did Paul say not to be weary in well doing? Because there is always a danger of becoming weary or tired.

The Mystery of Iniquity

We read in Hebrews 12:3, "For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest [or for fear of] ye be wearied and faint in your minds." There were only approximately eighteen years of time when the Day of Pentecost came and the power of the church was inaugurated and souls were saved by the thousands. The church got a great start and became a visible working body, and God began to add to the church daily such as should be saved, but a few years down the road, things began

to change.

Second Thessalonians 2:1-3 states: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." Verse 7 reads, "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work." The mystery of iniquity was already working less than approximately twenty years from Pentecost. The church was already suffering disaster. Souls were being worn down. Apostasy was beginning to get its foothold. If it could happen then, it can happen now.

Every movement has had its course. Every great moving revival was soon exhausted. Most congregations seemingly reached a certain plateau and went no higher. Over the years, many congregations fall out of existence. I want you to think of that! Time can destroy, but time also has a way of healing, and that is wonderful. Sometimes after the death of a loved one, it is said: "Time will help you. You will get better over time." I have never been in that exact place. I have not had to lose my companion yet. I lost my mom and dad, and people told me: "Time will help you. It'll get better." I did not want to hear that. I did not want it to get better right then. I wanted to feel my sorrow.

When my dad died, it was one of the hardest things for me to deal with. He died at an early age, fifty-nine, when I thought surely God was going to heal him. I wrestled with that for three days after he passed away. The only thing that came to me in prayer was, the Lord said: "Trust Me! Don't fight against Me!" That was a real struggle, but I finally settled it: "Lord, I'll trust you. I love you. I don't understand it, but I'll trust you."

I still miss my dad today. I would love to call him on the phone and ask him for some guidance. However, the last time I asked him for guidance, he said: "Son, I can't tell you. That's something you're going to have to decide before God."

I said, "But Dad, you've always told me what to do before." I liked for him to do that because then if it was wrong, I could say, "Dad, you told me." So he would not tell me. He said: "You've got to make that decision on your own. You have to pray through about it; seek the mind of God."

One thing my dad did tell me was, "Keep your hands out of your pockets." Sometimes we would be working around the house and he would try to show me something, but I would stand there slouched with my hands in my pockets, disinterested in it. I would have rather been outside playing baseball, but he had me working around the house. He would turn around and see me like that, and he would say: "Richard, get your hands out of your pockets. You can't do anything with your hands in your pockets." I never could see what was so bad about having my hands in my pockets, but he did. He did not like it. To him, having my hands in my pockets was a sign of laziness, a sign of my being disinterested in what he was showing me. It was a sign that I could care less what was going on.

Many people have their hands in their pockets spiritually. They just do not really seem caught up in the things of God. They do not really act as though spiritual things matter to them. The morning church went along well for a while, but they fell into a great apostasy within four generations. Truth can almost be lost sight of. How we need one another!

Woven Together in Christ

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 says: "Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is

alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken." I like to picture that threefold cord as me, you, and God interwoven together, and it is not quickly broken. It does not say it cannot be broken, but it is not quickly or easily broken.

Now, when it was just God and me, we got along very well. God and I did not have too much trouble because I knew I had to submit to Him. I knew there was no argument there. I just had to bring my flesh in line. After a while, God and I got things settled down quite a bit, and we got along well, but others came into the picture. That is where trouble can come in. You say you are getting along well with God, but why can you not get along well with others? Every heart, soul, mind, and spirit should be woven together in Christ. John let us know that fellowship is with the Father from Heaven, and if we have fellowship together down here on earth, it has to involve God. He is the focal point of all fellowship. If we are woven together in Christ, that is a strong cord, and it is not easily broken.

When you look at the word *time*, what do you see in time? T-I-M-E. What is in the middle of that word? I-M. I like to say you are, but that would not spell it right. I-M is in the middle of time. When I look at the word *time*, I always think I am in that time. Time can be a plus or it can be a minus. It can be an advantage to you or it can be a disadvantage. It all depends on how you handle your existence in time.

Saints can become discouraged because over time their prayers do not seem to be answered. Sometimes loved ones have not gotten saved or healed. Time wears them down in their prayer life, and they get tired in their minds. The devil is right there to say to them: "You see, prayer doesn't work. All your efforts are

to no avail." Pastors can become tired and suffer from timeless indifference in their congregations. That is one reason they need some time to get away from it all, to get refreshed and revived in their souls. A pastor spends time laboring for your soul, to keep you revived and encouraged, and the same things affect him that affect you. He is just one person, but it is his responsibility to encourage all the people in the congregation. He has to put his troubles behind him and step behind the pulpit with a message of inspiration and encouragement. He has to say, "Press on," yet in his own mind, he says, "Lord, help me!" I know because I have been there.

Consider the End

Every person who claims salvation is responsible to bring into the worship services a spirit of praise and worship and to honor our Lord in worship. The devil is always there to talk to you. The whole thing of living for God must be settled to seek Him first and His righteousness and to do the will of God at all times. As I close the message, I ask you to stop and consider the end of your deeds. You need to look at what the end results might be, if at all possible. Often it is the fruit of one's own doings that gets him in trouble. An arsonist is not in trouble because he lights a match, but he is responsible for what that match does. There is no crime in lighting a match, but when he applies that match to a pile of rags soaked with gasoline and burns a building down, then he becomes responsible.

Little did Saul know what his first disobedience was going to cost

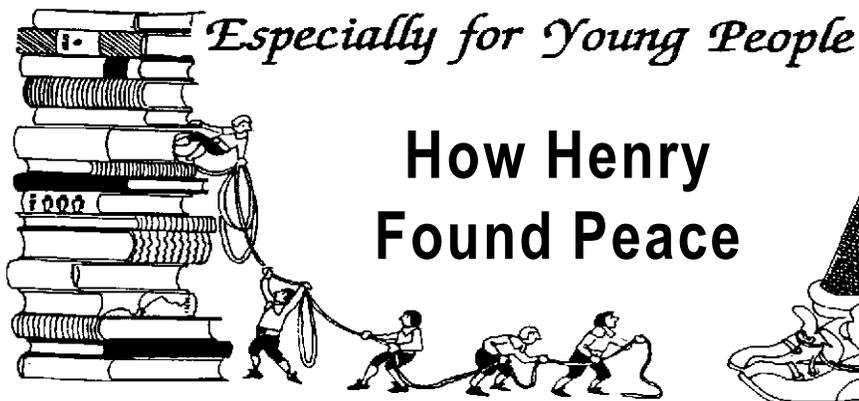
him. If Saul would have taken the time to see the end result, would he have changed anything? Little did David know what the end result would be from gazing upon Bathsheba as she was bathing. It was going to cost him Uriah's death, the death of the child, Ammon's affair with his sister, Ammon getting killed by Absalom, and Absalom getting killed by Joab. The end of a deed is far worse than the beginning. David found that the sword would never leave his house. In a moment of time, he made a wrong decision.

You have the right to choose, but you cannot control the results of that choice. What are you doing with your time? How have you been living for God? Has time been taking its toll on your life? Has time been affecting your spiritual existence? Are you ready for eternity? Are you ready to step off the stage of life right at this moment or do you need more time?

You cannot afford to play with time. Time can catch you unawares. If you have things that need to be made right in your soul, you need to do it while you have time. You have no guarantee of another year, another month, or another week. You need to take care of your soul. If you owe someone an apology, you need to make it. It is up to that person what he does with your apology. I want to know that I am clear with God. Do not let time become a curse to you. You need to make time a blessing by using it wisely. Won't you let God have His way?

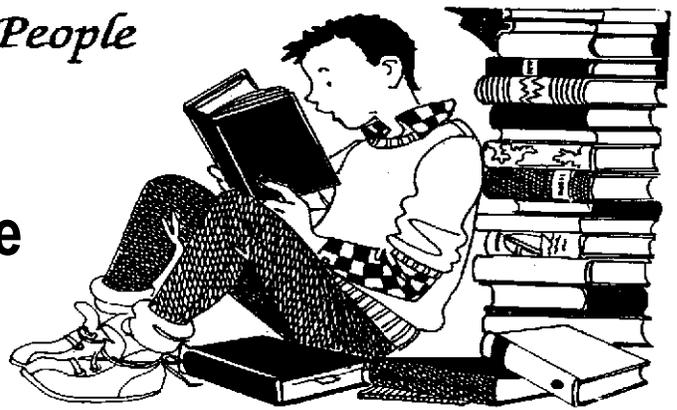
(Compact Disc TR-1179M)

SILENCE when your words would hurt.
PATIENCE when your neighbor's curt.
DEAFNESS when the scandal flows.
THOUGHTFULNESS for other's woes.
PROMPTNESS when duty calls.
COURAGE when misfortune falls.



Especially for Young People

How Henry Found Peace



Henry belonged to a family whose father and mother and nine brothers and sisters were infidels.

A camp meeting was in progress in the community in which he lived, and he attended for the purpose of having some fun. As he was listening to the preacher, the Holy Spirit used the message, and he became deeply convicted of his need of a Savior. After the man of God had finished his sermon, sinners were invited to come forward to accept Christ as their Savior. Henry found his way to an altar, and there with other penitents, he was begging for mercy and forgiveness.

After the meeting was dismissed, the people left the tent, but Henry refused to leave. He told the Christians who were praying for him that he did not know until an hour ago that there was a God in Heaven. He said he would not leave the spot until he had found peace and forgiveness and could walk out a child of God.

If we are determined to be saved, the Lord will meet us. Zacchaeus sought to see Jesus, and he was saved (Luke 19:1-9). The blind man cried, saying, "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me" (Luke 18:38), and he received his sight. "He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6).

After Henry had resolved to find the Lord at any cost, it suddenly dawned upon him that his father would despise him, his mother would laugh at him, and his brothers and sisters would drive him away from home, but he purposed in his heart that he would stick to God, and if everybody on earth would forsake

him, he was going to stand firm.

Just before he got home, he turned into the woods and knelt down and prayed that God would help him to be faithful, for he realized that he was going into a den of lions. The God who delivered Daniel out of the lions' den heard and answered Henry's prayer.

After arriving home, he sat with them around the supper table; no one spoke a word to him, nor did he say anything, but he was happy in the Lord.

About a week had passed, his brother Tom helped him split rails, and as they were sitting on a log resting, Henry asked him whether he knew that he had been saved down at the camp meeting? Tom looked at him and with tears running down his face, he said, "We have all noticed the change in you. Mother says you look and talk just like an angel. You don't swear, you don't drink, and you don't do anything wrong."

When we accept Christ as our Savior, a real change comes into our lives. The Bible says, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Tom wanted this same experience, for he knew that he was a sinner and that he must be saved in order to get to Heaven. So he and Henry went to the meeting, and God met Tom, and he was gloriously saved. Now both of these new converts had a deep concern for the salvation of their loved ones.

This is one of the marks of a real

Christian. As soon as we are saved, we want others to know Christ also. Together, they decided to put their candles into the candlestick and light up that godless, infidel home.

One evening, just before bedtime, Henry asked his mother whether she would mind if they would read a chapter from the Bible and have prayer. The mother's lips began to quiver, and she told him that he could do anything he wanted to do. By this time, she was sobbing, and over in the corner, one of the sisters was also sobbing. Both of them were under deep conviction, and before Tom arose from his knees, the mother, sisters and another brother had found the Lord. What a wonderful transformation!

Henry, who had been an infidel, became a preacher of the Gospel. The old, godless home was changed into a Christian home.

The Lord will work this miracle of His grace for all who will come to Him, whether they are infidels, skeptics, drunkards, or gamblers—whether they have climbed the ladder of mortality and religion or have fallen into the gutter of vice and shame—all who come to Him with a penitent, broken, and contrite heart will find forgiveness, pardon, peace, and deliverance through the blood of Jesus, which was shed on Calvary. He is no respecter of persons, for He says, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

Selected

Philippians 3:10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.

Colossians 1:24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions [sufferings] of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church.

The Fellowship of His Sufferings



Part 1 of 2

Brother Emerson A. Wilson

Behind in Suffering for Christ

The desire of every Christian is to know Christ more and more. We must be made conformable to His death to know the power of His resurrection. That does not mean that we will have to be taken out and put on a cross and die a physical crucifixion, but it does mean that we have to live a crucified life through the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the center part of Philippians 3:10 intrigues me — *the fellowship of His sufferings*.

I want to use Colossians 1:24 as my main Scripture text, which reads, "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions

[sufferings] of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church." In other words, the Apostle Paul actually felt that he was behind in his sufferings for Christ.

I well know that in this modern day and time in which we are living that suffering is almost out of the question. In fact, on physical lines, it is thought almost inhuman to let anyone suffer if something could be done to relieve that suffering. Furthermore, the devil has so twisted the thinking of men that if someone goes through a really hard place, people actually think that he must be evil or must have done something wrong to have to suffer. In other words, if Job had lived in this day, he could not have joined any

church, because people would have thought that he had to have been a rascal to have suffered what he suffered. That is the spirit of the age. Even when God's children begin to suffer, the first thing they ask the pastor is, "What have I done to bring this on?"

We are living too loosely and too lightly. We do not have a burden. We do not have a vision. Therefore, we are not taking a stand, and because we are not taking a stand, we are not suffering. We are behind in our suffering.

When God dropped this Scripture text on my heart, that Paul said he was behind in his sufferings, it put me right on my knees. I said, "Lord, if Paul was behind in his

sufferings, where am I?" God began to pour in Scripture after Scripture about the sufferings that Paul had gone through just days before he wrote those words. Yet, he said, "I am behind in my sufferings. I need to fill up the lack of the sufferings for Christ in my experience."

Christian friend, if we were ever serious about anything, let us be serious today. Not only are our own souls at stake but also hundreds, maybe thousands observing us, and the difference between their being in Heaven or hell is whether we take some things a little more seriously than we are taking them.

In the religious sphere, Christianity, in general, is all some big hullabaloo of rejoicing and blessing; but when you call for a people to get down under a burden and really suffer, not very many people can be found. The reason for it, in many cases, is that they have been sold on the thought that, since Jesus suffered, why should we? Well, we are going to find that it is because we are the body of Christ, and we are in the same kind of world that killed Him.

Suffering is in God's plan. It is one of the great means of reaching men and women who cannot be reached in any other way. Just let a saint demonstrate real godly suffering when he has been misused, lied about, had to work against spirits, or had to work when the pressure was on but stayed true, and such a demonstration will stir more souls than many things that we call miracles.

Christ's Atonement Was Complete

I want you to notice my main Scripture text again: "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions [sufferings] of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church." I want to clarify something before we go further. In no way was Paul saying that Christ's suffering in the atonement was imperfect or incomplete. The suffering

that Christ did in the atonement was perfect and complete. That sacrifice needs no supplement and can receive no supplement. It stands: one sacrifice for sin forever. All the suffering that man has done cannot atone for any one sin. All the blood that fell from the millions of martyrs could not atone for one sin. It is the blood of Jesus Christ that remits sin and translates us. There is power in the blood of Christ to save from sin and make you a new creature.

Even though Christ's suffering was complete, it is so ordained that the body of Christ (the church) suffer, that through our suffering, we cause men and women to be awakened to the real passion of Jesus Christ in the garden and on the Cross. In the bundle of the suffering of our Savior, every needful pang was born that would deliver you and me from sin, sickness, heartache, misery, or whatever we need to be delivered from. His suffering was complete.

The Bible says that in His suffering, He bore our sins. It is said so lightly in enlightened America. We hear it on the radio, read it in tracts, and hear it from the pulpits: He bore our sins. However, I wonder if we really stop to consider the suffering. When He bore our sins, He bore the guilt, the stain, and the punishment. Today people are so far from God and so far from Truth that in many religious bodies, there is not enough of God's presence in the midst to even bring conviction.

The Punishment for Sin Is Greater Than Man Can Bear

When God's presence moves on the sinner, his punishment is greater than he can bear. Sin is not a light thing. Some people say: "So what? If I go to hell, I'll have lots of company." However, if they come in where Holy Ghost preaching is going on, they will sweat. They will either obey the Gospel or get out of there. Why? Their punishment becomes greater than they can bear.

Adam and Eve committed the

first sin, which was against God. Then one of their children committed the next sin, which was against man. Cain killed his brother, and when God came down and the presence of God shone upon him, what did Cain say? "My punishment is greater than I can bear." Committing one sin caused Cain to say this.

A sinner cannot be ushered in where the presence of God is really moving and take sin lightly and feel, "I am a sinner; so what?" No, the punishment of sin becomes greater than man can bear. A person may drink a glass of poison, shoot himself, or jump off a bridge because his punishment is greater than he can bear.

It is said so lightly that Christ bore our sins. The punishment for one sin is more than man can bear, yet the sins of the whole world were laid on Him. He bore our sins, and He bore the guilt of sin. In the completeness of His suffering, He bore our sickness, our grief, and our pain, and He bore them all at once.

While I was meditating on these thoughts, I was called to a home where a man was crying with so much pain. There was no way he could get relief. He said: "This is killing me, Brother Wilson. I can't take it much longer."

I said: "Listen, I want you to get hold of your mind for a moment. You are just bearing one case of kidney stones. What do you think Jesus bore when He bore every pain all at once? You have suffered your pains one at a time. How would you like for them to hit you all at once? You could not take that! Jesus bore the sicknesses of the whole world, and any pain that any man would feel was laid on His physical body all at once. It is no wonder that He cried out and God had to send an angel to strengthen Him. The suffering of it was too great for a man to take. He was all God, and He was all man. It was necessary for Him to suffer in the flesh. Paul said in Hebrews 5:7 that 'with strong crying and tears' He suffered it."

The brother said: "I never

thought of that. Here I can hardly suffer this pain. What it must have been for Jesus when all our sicknesses were laid on Him!"

Herald His Sufferings

Some religious people say, "So what?" Friend, that is the spirit that I am preaching against. That is the reason they are not reaching anyone for Christ. They need to be reached themselves. Many people sitting around the church need to be born again, again! They have lost their contact with God, and through it they have lost their real appreciation for what Christ has done for them. When people lose their appreciation for Christ, they lose their appreciation for the church, for the ministry, and for the Truth. It all goes down the drain, so to speak.

Right while we cherish the thoughts that we do not drink, smoke, gamble, or go to the movies, we do not suffer either. Even though Paul knew well that Christ's work was complete, yet he said, "I fill up that which is behind in the sufferings of Christ." Someone may ask, "What do you mean when you say, 'fill up that which is behind in the sufferings of Christ?'" The sufferings of Christ are complete, and those sufferings need to be heralded. You may tell how Christ suffered, but that is not the way to herald it. The only way to show the joy, or to herald the joy, is not to tell about it, but to have it, to experience it, and to show it off. The only way that you can herald Christ's sufferings is to suffer. There is no other way to herald the sufferings of Christ. You cannot tell people about it, for they will not believe it. However, you can suffer as He suffered, and then you will herald the sufferings of Christ.

The Gospel needs evangelists, and I am not talking about preachers in the pulpit. The job is too big, and it will not get done by the preachers in the pulpit. I am talking about everyone who sits in the pews. A finished case needs and

demands efficient presentation. The work of Calvary can only proclaim itself in sacrificial saints. All the ministry for the Master must be possessed by the sacrificial spirit of the Master.

Paul realized that if he were going to be a minister of the light, he must die daily to self. I know that theologians say that means that he just got older every day and physical death was working on him, that he got closer to physical death every day. Let us examine the Scriptures and see if that is true. In 1 Corinthians 15:31 Paul stated, "I die daily." He went on in the next verse to tell how he fought with "beasts" at Ephesus. The beasts were not tigers and lions, but they were false preachers who warred against the Truth.

Second Corinthians 4:7-10 presents a clear picture of what dying daily is: "But we have this treasure [speaking of salvation] in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." What kind of dying did Jesus do? He died a crucifixion. We have to die daily to our own human convictions and selfish ways. They are there, church, and *unless we die daily, we cannot live daily*. We need to suffer these things in such a manner that even though we suffer the death of Christ, the life of Christ through the Spirit of God is manifested in our mortal flesh.

Sacrificial Succession

Sacrificial succession is to be maintained, according to Paul, through the ages. The Spirit of Calvary is to be reincarnated in Ephesus, in Rome, in Colosse, and in your town. When the sacrificial Spirit of Christ is reincarnated in the Church of God, the body of Christ,

in your town, the passion of Christ begins to take on a new meaning to the surrounding area, and eyes are lifted up. Some may think that we do not need to suffer, but it is necessary, and we can be joyful in it.

There is an association between Christ's sufferings and Paul's sufferings. When the Prophet Isaiah spoke of Christ's coming in His First Advent, he wrote, "In all their affliction he was afflicted. . ." (Isaiah 63:9). He let us know in Isaiah 53:4 how He bore our griefs and our sorrows. Isn't that wonderful? How wonderful this is: never a pain hits my body, never a suffering comes my way, but in all my afflictions He was afflicted. He bore them when He went to Calvary's Cross, died, rose again, and ascended back to Heaven; then he sent the Third Person of the Godhead, the divine Holy Spirit, into our hearts and lives so that we could prove to the world that Christ's passion is true. How? We suffer just as He suffered.

Second Corinthians 11:23-29 reads: "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. [Do you see how his sufferings were like Christ's? Isaiah wrote that in all their affliction, He was afflicted. How? I want you to notice Paul's testimony.] Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?"

Paul had covered all of Asia, and all the congregations that he had been in were looking to him. In other words, he was saying, "There is not a one of them, when I get word they are weak, but that I am weak. There is not a one of them who has a burden or a problem but what I burn." Was not there an association between Paul's sufferings and Christ's sufferings? That kinship in succession is vital.

What made Paul suffer? At one time, he had a "no care" spirit, just as the world has. He was working to wipe out budding Christianity. He persecuted and wasted the Church of God. Killing saints did not mean a thing to him, but a radical change took place in his life. You talk about the lion lying down with the lamb! It happened to Paul, and when Jesus got done, that fellow who was bold, hard, and had no feelings for anyone (he could see women killed in the streets as easy as men, and it did not bother him) said, "I can't hear of a burden anywhere but what I am burdened."

Friend, there are not enough feelings of compassion, and that is the reason we are not seeing needs supplied. Oh, you may go visit sick people and pray a nominal prayer, but nothing happens. They die. You can pray about the lost because it is your duty, but with no real burden and no strong crying with tears, they continue to be lost.

Having the Passion of Christ

The Apostle Paul was a vital man in the hand of God, and because of it, there was work everywhere for him. He could be in one place preaching and get a vision at night of a man in another place saying, "Come over here and help us." He would leave where he was and head for that place. The call was so great because he had feelings for the people. He took their burdens to his heart. The ministry was not a profession to him. He did not just put in his time.

Paul wrote to the Romans that

he was in great heaviness and continual sorrow for his brethren that were lost. He would to God that he had been lost instead of them. Did you ever pray that way? "My neighbor is lost. Lord, do not take him to hell. Take me." Oh, no one wants to pray that way. Do you know what the attitude is? "They can be saved as well as I can."

The church can work hard for some people, and after much prayer, much preaching, and much agonizing, they are brought into an experience. Occasionally, the same individuals, in just a little while, take an arrogant attitude: "I got saved; and if they want to be saved, they can get saved like I did."

Someone has to feel the burden. The kinship in succession is vital. In all our affliction, Jesus was afflicted, and Paul said that he was weak when they were weak and offended when they were offended. The Gospel of a broken heart demands a ministry of bleeding hearts. I am not just talking about the preachers who stand in the pulpits. We are all ministers. He has given every member of the Church of God the ministry of reconciliation to reconcile a world to Christ.

Do you know why people do not take more stake in the passion of Christ? There is not enough blood from the heart and not enough tears from the eyes. These principles exist. You can preach, pray, testify, sing, and/or play a piano and yet be as backslidden as you can be. However, there is one thing that you cannot do in a backslidden condition, and that is suffer under a real sweat in travail for souls. It takes the real vitality of God's Holy Spirit in your life to produce a soul burden.

The principle is that the gospel of a broken heart demands a ministry of bleeding hearts, and if that succession is broken, we lose our fellowship with God. As soon as we cease to bleed, we cease to bless. I use the expression *bleed* as a biblical expression, meaning that the heart is rent, broken, punctured, and wounded. When our sympathy has

lost its pang, we can no longer be servants of Jesus' passion. We no longer fill up the sufferings of Christ. Furthermore, not to fill up the sufferings of Christ is to paralyze His passion and make the Cross of none effect, as Paul said to the Galatians.

If we are not careful, we will let the spirit of the age, which is getting hold of many religious bodies, get hold of us. We will turn to fundraising and crowd-raising programs just as Babylon does. It is all right to get together and go knocking on doors, but it will not do one ounce of good and will not gain a soul unless you start with a real heartfelt burden, feeling the wound, feeling the suffering, and feeling the terrible lostness that men and women are in while living in sin. Old-fashioned broken, bleeding hearts is still God's way of reaching the world.

Paul's sympathy, if you will notice in the Scripture text, was a perpetuation of the passion of Christ, and I am amazed at its intensity and scope. He traveled many miles and met many thousands of people, but he did not meet a person with a burden but what he took it to heart and dealt with it to the best of his ability.

Suffering As Jesus Suffered

I want you to notice again the sufferings of Paul related in 2 Corinthians 11:23-27. You might have heard the remark, "You don't know what I have suffered." However, compare what you have suffered with what Paul suffered, and if you do not feel humbled, you are past feeling. There are too many "pity me" spirits around. A "pity me" spirit cannot take any suffering. It is hurt at the least little thing. For example, if someone misses shaking your hand, if someone forgets to add your name to a list, or if someone forgets to invite you out to supper when the others went. You may feel, "No one appreciates what I do."

If you expect the Lord to say, "Thou good and faithful servant,"

you had better do some praying. Why? Because Paul is going to be standing there when you walk to the judgment bar. Silas is going to be standing there. Barnabas is going to be standing there. Peter is going to be standing there. The reformers who preached their hearts out and signed their testimonies with their blood as they were thrown to the animals are going to be standing there. You had better think!

Paul said in verse 28 that besides both those things that are without, in the outside world, he had daily care of all the churches. When anyone anywhere hears about a person who will really get under a burden for his problems, he is going to hunt for that person.

This thing of living for Jesus means more than people are getting hold of. Paul said in verse 29, "Who is weak, and I am not weak? who offended, and I burn not?" Whenever there was a pang, it tore the strings of Paul's sensitive heart. He was continually aroused by the sighs and the cries of his fellow men. It was difficult for him to keep his heart in conducting a revival in one place. You can read it in Acts, Chapter 16, as well as other places throughout the Book. When he went

to bed at night, instead of sleeping, he would be carried away in a vision and see another country where the Gospel had never reached or see a man lost and dying on his way to a lost eternity.

This thing of serving God is more of a full-time business than we sometimes realize. It is not something that you turn on Wednesday night and twice on Sunday. It is something that you live with daily. The Bible says that the morning-time church ate their meat "with gladness and singleness of heart" (Acts 2:46). They intended to use the strength they received from the meat for the furtherance of God's cause. They had one thing in mind, and that was to propagate the Gospel. The church is the body of Christ. It is the only Jesus that lost people are going to run into.

We are going to have to suffer as Jesus suffered. You do not have to ask for suffering. You are missing the point of my message if you think you should pray for suffering. When you get where God wants you to be, the suffering will be there.

Paul was continually aroused by the sighs and the cries of his fellow men. In other words, he was exhausted with the exhaustion of other

folks. His life was truly given for God's cause to the world. He had fellowship with the sufferings of our Lord, and he could say it in his writings and not be afraid to say it. It was true, and everyone that he was writing to knew it was.

Are you also in the succession? You need to answer this question within your own heart: Does the cry of the world's needs really reach my heart and ring through the fabric of my dreams? I read one time of a missionary who was once returned from a mission field because of a disease that he had contracted. He called the ministers together and said: "Brethren, send me back! I haven't much strength left, but I must spend what strength I have."

They said: "You can't go back. You are too sick."

He insisted: "I can't stay here. I hear the sighs and the cries of those people every night."

Someone may say that he felt that way because he was a missionary. However, the callings of God are all the same. Whether you serve in Africa or the United States, the serving is just the same. The Spirit works just the same.

(to be concluded in the next issue)

[Camp Meeting Report—contin. from p. 2] and we thank the Lord for His goodness. There were saints who came here for the first time as well as others that had not been at God's Acres for many years. God is reaching out to honest hearts in many ways to bring them into contact with the Truth. These dear saints were hungry for the old paths that are declared in the Scriptures and to find a people that still believe in

and practice holiness.

Time after time, our hearts were made to rejoice as the singing and the preaching went forth. The visitation of God's Spirit always brings fulfillment to hungry, seeking hearts. Many saints stood to their feet to give glory and honor to God for the sound teachings of His Word. Our hearts were overjoyed as we drank in the blessings that only our Heavenly Father can bestow.

It will not be long until it will be time for camp meeting again here at God's Acres. We hope that you will begin making preparation to attend the meetings to be held this June and August, if the Lord tarries. We highly recommend that you order an audio copy of the messages that were preached and the beautiful songs that were sung during the meeting.

You can learn a lot from the Bible;
you can learn still more by practicing it.

The Bondage of Man-Made Creeds



Brother E. David Stegmeier

Keeping God's Word

The Psalmist wrote in Psalm 119:97-100: "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me [wisdom and understanding come from the Word of God]. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. [Young person, if your science teacher brings up the theory of evolution, you have more understanding than he does because you believe the testimonies of all these writers in the Word of God. Remember, evolution is only a theory; it is not true.] I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts."

Too many older individuals have not kept the precepts of God. If you as a younger individual have

walked according to the principles of the Word of God, your understanding of the things of God will be greater because you know God. Older people are not always wise; they should be, but it takes God.

Psalm 119:101-104 reads: "I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word [you have to be a disciplined person in keeping God's Word, and the discipline starts in the mind]. I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me [we each should want to strive to have that testimony]. How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth [the Word of God ought to be more precious and sweeter to you than anything else in this world]! Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way."

Keeping God's Word gives great understanding. You should have a

strong aversion to anything that is wrong. Psalm 119 has often been called the Golden Alphabet of the Word of God. It has been divided into twenty-two sections, one section for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It has eight verses in every section, and each of those verses starts with the corresponding letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Almost every verse in this long psalm contains some type of description of God's Eternal Word. Here are some words used to express God's Word: God's law, His testimonies, His ways, His precepts, His statutes, His commandments, His ordinances, His Word and words, His promises, His judgments, and His commands. The essence of Psalm 119 is this: you and I should have a supreme love for God's Eternal Word.

I want to focus on Psalm 119:97, which reads, "O how love I thy law!" and verse 104, which states,

"Through thy precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way." Man-made creeds are false ways. Wisdom comes from the Word of God. Light and understanding also come from God's Word, thus enabling you to be careful and to walk safely.

Walk in the Way of Truth

There are three other Scriptures in this long psalm to which I would like to draw your attention. Verse 130 says, "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." God's Word gives light and understanding. Verses 30 and 142 go together so well. They read: "I have chosen the way of truth. . . thy law is the truth." I believe the Word of God from cover to cover. I believe it is inerrant and applicable to our day.

When you choose to live by the Word of God, you are choosing to walk in the way of Truth. In short, a creed is what one believes to be true. In many cases, however, the word *creed* has come to be the official statement of the beliefs or dogmas of certain religious groups. Often it is the authoritative doctrine to which a person must subscribe in order to become a member of a certain religious organization. To have fellowship and to be accepted in certain groups of religious people, you have to believe exactly what they believe.

When you start talking with others, it will not be long until they will get around to the points on which they think you differ. Brother E. A. Wilson used to say, "You should talk about things that you agree upon, and only if God so leads, discuss things upon which you disagree." According to the *Miriam-Webster Dictionary*, a *creed* is "a brief authoritative doctrinal formula, beginning with such words as *credo*, which means 'I believe.'" A creed is intended to define what is held by a Christian congregation, a synagogue, or a church to be true and essential and exclude what is held to be a false belief. The Bible is

the Church of God creed, from cover to cover.

Many times man-made creeds are held and made equal with the Word of God. In Mark 7:6 Jesus said, "Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me." As you worship God in Spirit and in Truth, you should get involved in the words of the songs and the prayers that are spoken. You should listen and say amen. When the choir sings and during special singing, you should listen to the songs and raise your hand when it applies to you. God has something for everyone. Worship is getting involved with your heart.

"Thou Shalt Not Add Thereto, Nor Diminish From It"

Jesus said in Mark 7:6-9: "Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men [again, sometimes they even make man-made credences and doctrines of greater value than the Word of God]. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition."

Regarding this Scripture, the Bible commentator Matthew Henry said, "They were enforcing the canons [rules or tenants] of their church, and judged of people's being Jews or no, according as they did or did not conform to them, without any consideration had, whether they lived in obedience to God's laws or no [that is the important thing]. It is the mischief of impositions, that too often they who are zealous for them, have little zeal for the essentials of the principles of the Word of God."

When I was five years of age,

my family found the Church of God. Many of these man-made creeds add to the Word of God, but the Word of God condemns the practice of adding to or taking away from its contents. Deuteronomy 4:2 says, "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you." We read in Deuteronomy 12:32, "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it." As a Church of God pastor, I believe that I need to preach everything in the Book. D. S. Warner said that everything He has written is essential to our lives.

In Revelation 22:18-19 John wrote: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

Often man-made religious creeds and statements contradict one another. Some of them are not biblically correct; therefore, you must have an open mind. You need to do what God said in Jeremiah, Chapter 18. You need to go down to the potter's house and let the Spirit of God and the Word of God work on you. The Word and the Spirit will continue to do that work until you leave this world. You need to be willing. To be stubborn and to refuse to listen is a terrible thing.

Man-Made Creeds Bring Confusion

Man-made creeds keep people in bondage, and they create a lot of confusion. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 14:33, "For God is not the author of confusion." The Bible is not a confusing Book. It is only when man

gets involved and adds his own ideas that it becomes confusing. You need to step out and let the Holy Spirit direct you. There is a mixture of Truth and error in many man-made creeds of false religions. They have confusing doctrines and many inconsistent practices. You had better check them with the Word of God. Just because a certain minister taught something or a movement propagates a certain doctrine does not make it the truth. People need to get back to the light and understanding of His Word.

Often man-made creeds and beliefs generate division and disunity. I am talking about the bondage of man-made creeds. These church dogmas and tenants can also become dead and lifeless while Truth is dynamic, active, energetic, and alive. Truth is marching on, and by the grace of God, I am going to march with it. We can use this verse in applying to the nominal Christian world. Jesus said in Matthew 12:25, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand."

Much in Christian dogmas brings division. We want to be united. Down through the annals of church history, religious conferences, councils, conventions, and groups of men have produced many church creeds, confessions, and statements of religious faith. I looked up the Apostles' Creed, the Creed of Nicaea, the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, the Chalcedonian Creed, and the Athanasian Creed. Down through history, the Presbyterian Church has embraced creed after creed.

Man-made creeds are devilish. They have destroyed millions and millions of souls. As the Church of God, we have God's will written down in His Book. This is not man's idea of God's will, but this is God's will. We owe a lot to the sixth-seal brethren, but God will lead us into more and greater truth. If we were to hold to only the sixth-seal teachings, we would be like any other

denomination and become lifeless and dead. The sixth-seal Church of God brethren admonished all Christians to lay aside ridiculous confessions and man-made dogmas.

"Beware Lest Any Man Spoil You"

We sing an old song that says, "*Back to the blessed old Bible, Back to the city of God, Back to the oneness of heaven, Back where the faithful have trod.*" The early morning church lived it, and they were once clothed in this, but something happened then that we are still suffering somewhat under today—an apostasy. Some man-made creeds are like barnacles on a ship: they hinder one's progress. You need to get rid of all barnacles.

A song in the *Evening Light Songs* entitled "Prophetic Truth," reads: "*'Twas sung by the poets, foreseen in the Spirit, A time of refreshing is near; When creeds and divisions would fall to demerit, And saints in sweet union appear.*" Another song entitled "The Church Triumphant" reads, "*'Tis not in the church of Jesus That people yet live in sin; But in the dark creeds they're joining, And vainly are trusting in.*" A verse in another song says, "*Back to the one foundation, From sects and creeds made free, Come saints of ev'ry nation To blessed unity.*"

A song entitled "The Church's Jubilee" declares: "*The day of sects and creeds for us for evermore is past, Our brotherhood are all the saints upon the world so vast; We reach our hands in fellowship to every blood-washed one, While love entwines about each heart in which God's will is done. The Bible is our rule of faith and Christ alone is Lord, All we are equal in his sight when we obey his word; No earthly master do we know, to man-rule will not bow, But to each other and to God eternal trueness vow.*"

Sometimes man-made creeds can trouble us. We need to be wary, observant, and wise. Down through the annals of Christian history, God has used men who would not be held to the bondage of religious creeds. Many of these creeds are

holding good people in spiritual oppression. We should have freedom wherever we go to preach the Truth, otherwise something is wrong.

Some creeds and practices are based on traditions. We read in Matthew 15:1-3: "Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" In other words, Jesus was saying, "You made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition." We each have had a part of some traditions, such as Christmas and Easter. I had a very godly mother. When I was a little boy, on Easter Sunday morning, we were all excited about that basket with all the candy. We thought the "Easter Bunny" brought it.

Colossians 2:8 says, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." Titus 1:13-14 states: "This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth."

The Key to Understanding More Truth

How else can man-made creeds be dangerous to us? A formulated creed or set of dogmas can imply that all Truth has already been received from God. Many people's minds have been closed to any further understanding. They are not open to any clearer and greater understanding. Some people become hemmed in and held in bondage, and they are not free to receive greater understanding. Jesus said in John 16:13, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not

speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."

Revelation 12:1 speaks of the morning church as a woman clothed with the sun. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 3:2-3: "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart." However, something happened; it was an apostasy, but thank God we came out of it. Let us not go back into it. We should be growing continually in our understanding of Truth. One Church of God minister said, "Truth is not something that we arrive at, but it is the road that we travel on." I believe God has blessed us with the greatest amount of Truth of any people in the world.

Truth is revealed progressively by the Spirit of God. Jesus said to Peter in Matthew 16:17, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." The key to understanding more truth is your willingness to walk in it. John 7:17 tells us, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." If you have the desire, "Lord, show me," because you want to do it, He will show you, but if you do not want to walk in it, He will not show you. Truth is spiritually discerned.

Truth does not grow, but you can grow in your understanding of the Truth. Truth remains the same. A teacher has to list the objectives of the lesson plan. It is my objective to cause you to be thankful and appreciative and to realize your responsibility. As a Christian, you have a responsibility to spread Truth wherever you go. You do not have to sound your trumpet, but just live holy.

Sometimes you may hear someone speak of "new truth," but there is no such thing. It may be new to you, but it is actually old. The

Holy Scriptures are reliable and dependable to the very utmost.

Many movements specifically state their dogmas and creeds, only to find that they must be changed, again and again. Let us take the Word of God. It is my desire to take it all. Today I see a little clearer on many of the things that I was taught. I think of what Robert Louis Stevenson wrote. Robert Louis Stevenson went out on a clear noon day and sat beneath a big, old oak tree in his backyard. He thought, "Well, I am going to see how big that tree is, so I will just look at the shadow, take some rope and pegs, and I will just go around the tree and mark out the silhouette. He had not gone very far around the tree and the shadow moved, so he had to start again, and it moved again. That is like some of these false religious movements; they are about that successful. They keep changing, but God's Truth never changes. We sing a song entitled, "More About Jesus." One verse says, "*Spirit of God, my teacher be, Showing the things of Christ to me.*" I read once that to really know Truth not only means having a good teacher but also being a receptive pupil.

In an attempt to further the cause of Truth, you must not be narrowminded, bigoted, or intolerant, yet you must never compromise Truth or apologize for it. Ephesians 4:15 says to speak the Truth in love.

Our Responsibility

Church of God, it is our responsibility to pass on the torch of Truth to our posterity. We need to be good stewards of the Truth. If there is anything that we should be stewards of, it ought to be the Truth. The American poet James Russell Lowell said, "Once to every man and nation, Comes the moment to decide, In the strife of truth with falsehood, For the good or evil side." I think that is very profound. God ordains all things. God is in control. Truth is dearer to me than anything else in my life. I do not look to see where people are. I want to know where

Truth is.

As God reveals more truth to you, you become more responsible. In Pilate's judgment hall, Pilate stood before Jesus, but he chose the evil side. He had the opportunity, so he said, "Oh, I will just take my time," "Once to every man and nation, Comes the moment to decide." That is very serious. You had better be careful of what you do with the seed of truth that has been planted.

Luke 12:48b speaks about responsibility: "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." Do you remember the exchange between Jesus and Pilate? Pilate was responsible, but Jesus said the individual that brought Jesus to Pilate had the greater sin (John 19:11). Pilate refused to wait for the answer. He wanted the praise of men rather than the approbation of God.

Proverbs 23:23 says, "Buy the truth [sometimes it takes much grief and heartache to buy the truth], and sell it not." In other words, Truth is of inestimable value; its value cannot be placed high enough. You cannot place a value on Truth. It is the greatest thing. If there is anything we value, it should be God's Truth. Let us value it greatly and never part with it, Church of God.

Daniel 9:13 says, "As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth." All sin must be gone. You must live up to the truth that you know now to advance into greater truth. You may say, "All we need is to be sincere." It takes more than sincerity.

Joshua said in Joshua 24:14, "Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth." We are responsible, Church of God, for this marvelous Truth.

(Compact Disc TR-1064)

My Personal Testimony

"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."

Proverbs 4:23

I would like you to think about the day that you gave your heart to the Lord and the things that you promised God. If you are unsaved, I want you to think about the things that you know you need to give God. We each have things that we have to give God in order to be the type of Christian that God wants us to be.

I was eighteen years of age when I first came to know the Lord. I was not raised in a Christian home. As a child, I loved to go to Sunday school. My parents told me if I wanted to go to Sunday school, that was okay, but I would have to get myself up, get myself dressed, and figure out a way to get there. I can remember one time I was in the third grade and I walked to church and no one was there. I thought, "Well, this is Sunday. I don't understand why no one has come to church today." It really bothered me. Well, I sat there for a while on the doorstep. Right next door was the school playground, so I went over and I was swinging and having a wonderful time, and soon people began to show up. It was daylight saving time so I was really early.

As I was growing up, my parents did not require much of me, but I became very rebellious. I remember that my hair had grown really long, and I told my mother that I was going to cut my hair. She said: "No, you are not. I like your long hair. You are not going to cut it."

I said, "When I turn eighteen, I am cutting my hair." So on my eigh-

teenth birthday, the very first thing I did that morning was go out and cut my hair as short as a man's haircut. I went home, and much to my surprise, my mother liked my hair. That spoiled everything that I had wanted to do. I wanted to get even with her, to be mean to her, and it did not work. I was really unhappy. They had moved me away from my school during my junior year, and things really changed in my life. One night, I had just been eighteen years of age for a month, and I was walking by a little church. I heard a voice say to me, "Sue, why don't you go to church tonight?"

I looked at that little church and thought, "No, I don't know anybody who attends there." (I had gone to churches since I was a little girl, not knowing anyone in those places either.) I went home, and when I arrived there, my parents were gone. Normally it would not bother me, but I said that they did not care about me. Then I heard a voice say, "I care about you." I decided I was going to go to a little restaurant close by and have dinner.

As I walked by the church to go to the restaurant, a voice said to me again, "Sue, why don't you go to church?" Again, I said that I did not know those people, and I went on. As I ate, I kept thinking, "Why is this voice telling me to go to church?" I went past that church, and again the voice said, "Sue, why don't you go to church tonight?" I went home, changed my clothes, and went to church. I listened to the testimonies of people telling how God had

changed their lives and how they found peace and joy. I knew right then that I needed what they had. I wanted what they had more than anything else. I listened to the message, and at the end of the message, the pastor asked a man to close in prayer. Of course, I bowed my head, and as he said, "Amen," I turned to leave and the minister was standing in front of me. He said, "You're Sue, aren't you?"

I said, "Yes."

He asked, "Are you a Christian?"

"No," I answered. I did not even know what one was, but I was sure that I was not one. He invited me to pray, and I did. I gave my heart to the Lord.

A couple of weeks later, the minister told me that the first night while he was preaching, the Lord kept saying, "Don't let Sue leave this building without talking to her." I do not know where my life was headed, but it could not have been good if God was so determined that I be in church that night and give my heart to Him. The minister said that as he preached, he kept hearing God speak to him.

About four years after I was saved, I was not looking for a husband. I had no plans at that point in my life. I just wanted to serve God and be the best Christian I could be. I was working one day, and this man came in to visit the lady that I was working for. She told me later that he was really interested in me and wanted to marry me. He invited me to come to his parent's home for Easter dinner, and I told him no. The

Lord spoke to me and said, "Invite him to church."

So I said to him: "I go to church on Sunday and I sing in the choir, but if you would like to come to church with me, I can go home with you and have dinner with your family." He was really excited and he came. For the next couple of weeks, he came to church. Finally, he called me one day and said, "I'm not coming back to your church anymore."

I asked, "Why is that?"

He said, "Because you are too straight-laced for me."

I said, "Oh, okay, that's fine." I just left it in the Lord's hands. A few weeks later, the usher came to me and said, "Your boyfriend is smoking on the porch."

I said, "He's not my boyfriend." I had to go out, of course, to ask him to put out his cigarette. He came into the building and sat on the other side from where I was sitting. Through the service, the Lord spoke to him, and he gave his heart to the Lord. Later, he said that he had to come back one more time to see if what those people had was real, because he realized there was something missing in his life as well.

A year later, we married, and we served the Lord together for many years. Then we began to see this little holiness church that I had been saved in turn into a cult situation, and things were going really bad. We felt that we needed to leave, and we began to search for another church. We attended many churches and found nothing, so over a period of years, we got very discouraged and gave up. The devil worked on us and made us feel that what we had must not have been real if no one else out there had it.

Some years later, we sold our home. Our children were still in school, so we wanted to stay in Canby, Oregon, until they finished school. We bought a travel trailer and stayed in a recreational vehicle park. The owner of that park happened to be a man who attended the Church of God. He began to talk to

me. My husband had been out of town. When he came home, I said: "You need to talk to the man in the office. You are really going to like him." The man invited us to church. We went the next Sunday, and a quartet sang the song entitled "I've Never Been Sorry." That spoke to my heart.

I went to work the next day, and as I worked, I thought: "I know what I need. I need God like I had God when I was eighteen." I went home and said, "We need to have a family meeting." My husband was sure at that moment that I was going to ask for a divorce. I said: "We have to go back to church. The only way our family is going to stay together is if we go back to church." Wednesday night, we went back to the Church of God. As soon as the service was over, we both went to the altar and prayed.

God did a work on my heart. I had never seen anything like the Church of God, and I found it difficult for me at times to accept the way the church believes. I prayed and read the Word, but I just could not seem to understand it. I just could not see the church. Over a period of time, I began to really let down. I did not pray as much, and I did not read the Word as much. What I did do was talk to other people who were unhappy. Soon I was in such a place that I knew I was no good there. I was not doing myself good or the church, but I did not want to say I was sorry. I did not want to submit to the Bible way. I wanted to be a Christian my way, so I chose to leave the church. I was gone nearly eleven years from God, but my husband and children continued to go.

Thank God, several years ago my son Jeremy invited us to go to Tennessee. He said that the quartet he was singing in had been invited to Tennessee to sing. I said: "That would be fun, I would love to go and hear you sing." I thought I was going to a concert somewhere. I ended up in a week-long revival. That was the first time in years that

the Lord began to speak to my heart again. I realized that I really needed the Lord, but every time I wanted to be saved, the Lord would tell me that I needed to go back to Canby and apologize, and I needed to make things right. I said, "No, I cannot do that."

I am so thankful that three years ago, we had traveled around the United States and we ended up in Newark, Ohio, for the Fall Camp Meeting. We went for a wedding. Throughout that trip, my husband wanted to stop and visit all the Church of God congregations he could. I began to see that the Canby congregation was like other congregations. I began to see how God was faithful in all these places. These people that I had met years before had not changed; they were all exactly the same. I started to ask God to renew my spirit and to give me a right spirit. I claimed to be a Christian. I attended a church, but it was not the Church of God. However, at that moment I knew I needed God more than I needed anything else in the world, but I still would not submit.

I remember being in Newark at camp meeting that August, and different ones would sing and the Lord would speak to me. I would say: "Lord, I really want to be saved. I want my life to be different; I want to be blessed." The Lord would say to go to Canby, but I would say, "No, I cannot do it." Every time the Spirit would stop dealing with me.

During that trip, we met a child who became my little sweetheart. She loved me, and I loved her. She was so excited that she was going to Oregon for camp meeting, and she said, "I'll get to see you at camp meeting." I could not tell her that I would not be there, so I determined that I could make it. I could go for a week just so I could see her and not let her think badly of me. I went, but I shut everything out.

I remember on Friday night as I was sitting there, the air conditioning was on, and I was kind of cool, so I pulled a blanket up over me and

used the blanket as a wall against everybody. I am thankful though that it did not shut the Lord out. The Lord began to talk to my heart, and I would say, "I cannot, Lord, I cannot," and the Lord continued to talk to me. I just kept saying, "Lord, I cannot make the walk down to the altar; I cannot do it."

Finally, the Lord said, "Sue, what are you going to do?"

I said, "Okay, God!" As I got out of my seat and walked, some thought that I was walking out the door as I had done other times when I had been there. Even the devil spoke to me as I was walking toward the doors and said, "Keep going, keep going," but the Lord just turned my feet. I am thankful that after I repented, I was able to stand and tell the church that I was sorry, and I really was. I am so thankful for the change that God made in my life.

I want to end with a few Scriptures. Proverbs 4:23 says, "Keep thy heart with all diligence." My testimony is not a perfect one. I

failed God, but thankfully He brought me back. Unfortunately, I have learned the hard way. I can tell you how important it is to be diligent in your walk with the Lord. The definition of the word *diligence* is, "the attention and care legally expected or required of a person as a party to a contract; persevere, use speed, use haste in order for your life to be a perfect life with God." You want to persevere and to be diligent. You entered an agreement the day you gave your heart to the Lord. It is binding, and it is real. You cannot turn back from those things that you promised God. If you have started to put those things back in your life, you are breaking your promise to God. Hebrews 10:23 says, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering." It is up to you. Do not be the way I was. You need to hold on so that years from now, you can say that you got saved and held on to the Lord. Do not waver; be strong! First Corinthians 15:58 states, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast,

unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Colossians 3:2 says, "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." If you are not saved, there is only one place to set your affections, and that is on God. He is the ultimate gift to you. If you could only realize, it is not hard to surrender your life. I made it hard. It took me eleven years to come back. I did not need to do that. I never needed to leave.

In Luke 6:46 (this is a really serious question) Jesus asked, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" Remember, if you are saved, you have entered into a contract with God to serve Him, to love Him, and to live for Him. Why not do what He says? Why not follow in His footsteps? Again, Proverbs 4:23 says, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."

Sister Sue Boyd

Meeting Announcements

MOSS POINT, MS
March 23-30

FELLOWSHIP MEETING: Pine Grove Church of God, 11629 Highway 614, Moss Point, Mississippi 39562. (The church is located 18 miles west of I-65 Mobile, Alabama, on Airport Blvd., which turns into Highway 614). *Pilgrim's Progress* by Sis Karen Wilks. Inspirational singing & preaching. Service times: Sundays 10:00 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.; Monday-Wednesday 7:00 p.m.; Thursday-Saturday 10:30 a.m. & 7:00 p.m. We welcome everyone.

Lodging Closest to the Church (ask for Church of God Fellowship Meeting rates):

Rodeway Inn & Suites, 5635 Tillman's Corner Parkway, Mobile, AL 36619.

Phone: 251-660-9101. Free Continental Breakfast. Rm. Rates: \$56.99 nightly (incl. tax); 2 beds 7 nights, \$319.13 (incl. tax); 2 beds 5 nights \$227.95 (incl. tax). Ask for Lacinda or Peggy.

Hampton Inn & Suites, 525 Providence Park Dr. E., Mobile, Alabama 36695. Complimentary hot breakfast bar included. Phone 251-776-5866 (Airport Shuttle included) Room Rate: \$109.00.

For more information contact: Pastor Larry Dishman, 11629 Highway 614, Moss Point, MS 39562 Telephone: (Home) 228-588-6288; (Cell) 251-776-2100

MT. PLEASANT, PA
April 19

FELLOWSHIP MEETING: Church of God, 109 Salvation Lane, Mt. Pleasant, Pennsylvania 15666 Service time: 10:30 a.m. A meal will be served by the local congregation. Lodging: *Holiday Inn Express*, 724-547-2095 (This is on the same road as the church. Please mention that you are there for the church meeting for a discount.); *Super 8 Motel* in New Stanton, 724-925-8915, on I-70W, (10 miles north of the church); *Melody Motor Lodge*, 724-628-9600 on 119N in Connellsville).

For more information contact: Pastor Paul W. Prinkey, 109 Salvation Lane, Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666 Telephone: 724-547-2151

SUMMERSVILLE, WV
April 21-27

REVIVAL: Church of God, 74 Armstrong Rd., Summersville, WV 26651
Evangelist: Brother Calvin Foster, Kensett, Arkansas
Service times: Mon.-Fri. 7:00 p.m.; Sat. 6:00 p.m.; Sun. 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.
Visit our website @ www.ChurchofGodSummersvilleWV.com
For further information contact: Pastor Earl R. Borders at telephone: 304-872-4047

Winter 2013 Camp Meeting Recordings

CD NO.	DATE	MESSAGE TITLE	MINISTER
TR-1285	12-26-2013	The Watchword of the Church	Brother E. David Stegmeier
TR-1286	12-27-2013	Reasons Why Modesty Is Still Important	Brother Allen Polston
TR-1287		Understanding the Definition & Operation of Faith: Part 1—Faith, the Substance	Brother Earl R. Borders
TR-1288		Technology Versus Spirituality	Brother E. David Stegmeier
TR-1289	12-28-2013	Who's to Blame?	Brother Calvin Foster
TR-1290		Understanding the Definition & Operation of Faith: Part 2—Faith, the Evidence	Brother Earl R. Borders
TR-1291		The Value of Our Salvation	Brother E. David Stegmeier
TR-1292	12-29-2013	The Incomparable Worth of Our Salvation	Brother Richard Talbot
TR-1293		Understanding the Definition & Operation of Faith: Part 3—The Operation of Faith	Brother Earl R. Borders
TR-1294		The Essentials of True Worship	Brother E. David Stegmeier
TM-325	2013	Winter Camp Meeting Songs #1	
TM-326	2013	Winter Camp Meeting Songs #2	
TM-327	2013	Winter Camp Meeting Songs #3	
	2013	Winter Camp Meeting Choir Songs	
	2013	All Songs for the Winter Camp Meeting in MP3 format	
	2013	All Messages (includes afternoon teaching services) in MP3 format	

Recordings are available on CD's for a suggested donation of \$3.00 each & MP3's for a suggested donation of \$10.00 each. The postage is \$3.00 for one CD or MP3 and \$0.35 for each additional one. You may order by writing *The Gospel Trumpeter*, Tape Ministry, 675 N. Cedar St., Newark, Ohio 43055, or by calling Brother Sam or Sister Rachel Fowler. Call 740-345-1312, the Print Shop. Please make donations by check or money order in U.S. funds payable to *The Gospel Trumpeter*.

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