

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. 46 March 2016 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)

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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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Winter 2015 Camp Meeting Report

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."

Ephesians 1:3

"And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

Ephesians 2:6

SPIRITUAL REFRESHING

Once again, the saints of God came together to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. The Winter Camp Meeting might have been short; however, the Lord was not slack in giving us a real time of spiritual refreshing. Our hearts were made to rejoice as the Lord manifested Himself over and over. The fellowship of the saints was rich and sweet. The Psalmist penned it correctly when he said, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Psalm 133:1).

The preaching throughout the meeting was on target as God's ministers faithfully sounded forth the oracles of God. Each message brought conviction and instruction to those who were lost. In addition to the needy receiving help, the messages also brought a challenge and encouragement to the saints of God. It is through the sound preaching of the Gospel that hearts are cleansed from sin. It is also by the teaching of the Scriptures that greater understanding of the Truth is revealed to honest hearted individuals.

This beautiful time of refreshing began Sunday morning, December 27, 2015, as Pastor Roger Decker greeted and welcomed everyone into the service at God's Acres. God wonderfully blessed us with warmer weather, for which we are most grateful. Pastor Roger Decker brought the first message of the meeting entitled "We All Are Dependent on God." He took his Scripture text from Jeremiah, Chapter 18. His thoughts were on yielding to His

molding and forming of our lives into more beautiful vessels.

Brother Richard Talbot was the evening evangelist for the meeting. Brother Talbot's unique way of delivery challenged our hearts with the subjects: "A Despised Birthright," from Genesis, Chapter 27; then, "Bless the Lord," from Psalm 103; followed by, "The Amazing Power of Your Thoughts," from Philippians, Chapter 4; and finally, "Trust Him," from Matthew, Chapter 4. These sermons were soul-stirring messages designed to help us to live and to walk in the paths of God in a greater way.

Monday morning Brother Paul Prinkey delivered a message dealing with "Being a Witness to the Lost." Tuesday morning Brother Kevin Roche brought a message dealing with "Holiness and Morality" in the Old and New Testaments.

Brother David Stegmeier taught a series of lessons each afternoon entitled "Practical Teachings." His first lesson dealt with the thought of "Obedience," then he taught on "A Spiritual Mind Versus a Carnal Mind." His third lesson covered "Giving and Accepting Reproof," and his final lesson was about "The Rewards of Faithfulness."

Time or space would not permit us to elaborate on the wealth of these messages brought to our hearts. We certainly would not want to overlook the children's Bible School program that convened each afternoon. Sister Karen Wilks and all the helpers

[continued on page 6]

The Cardinal Teachings of the Church

The Holiness of the Church



Brother Roger L. Decker

God's Standard of Holiness

We want to look at the thought of holiness. Some churches that used to be a part of the holiness movement have since lowered their standards, both internally and externally. They have backed away to the place where God is not in their lives as He once was. It is still a Bible requirement that one who is a follower of Jesus Christ must live a holy life. First Peter 1:15-16 reads: "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation [in the Bible that word not only deals with conversing but also conduct]; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."

God's standard of holiness is not

another brother or sister or church, but rather the standard of holiness is Jesus Christ. He is our example. Some people look around at others and say, "If this individual who is in good standing with the Lord can do that and get by, I can do the same thing." Friend, nobody gets by the Word of God. You need to get your eyes off people and keep your eyes on Jesus Christ. He will not lead you astray. You can easily get caught up in division.

God has called us, but He has not called us to uncleanness. First Thessalonians 4:7 says, "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." You may ask, "Does that mean a person can never commit sin?" No, it does not. You

still have a will, you still have desires, you will still have temptations, and you still have a flesh that needs to be kept under. I believe that one of the main reasons that some people have laid aside the teaching of holiness is that they do not understand what it takes to commit sin. You cannot arbitrarily sin every day and not know what you have done.

You can read in the account of Creation that God created man holy and put him in a body made of dust, yet people do not think there is anything strange about that. They feel that God can do anything. Why is it so strange that we preach that one can be recreated and made holy again by virtue of a born-again

experience? Since God created man in the beginning, why can He not recreate man right now?

Since we are to be holy, as God is holy, holiness, or being holy, must exclude sin. In Hebrews 4:14-15 the Word of God says this: "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

Someone may ask, "Do you believe that Jesus Christ could have committed sin?" Yes, He could have, but He did not. It may be hard for you to grasp that He could have. However, if He could not have committed sin, then why was He tempted? The Bible says He was tempted in all points just as you and I are, yet without sin.

Everyone receives the same call from God, and that is to be holy. We read in 1 Thessalonians 4:7 that God has not called us to uncleanness but to holiness. First Thessalonians 2:10 says, "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe."

Paul said that he lived holy before the people. What people was he talking about? He was speaking of those who believed. Is it possible to live holy every day? We must believe the Scriptures. Luke 1:74-75 reads: "That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life."

Lifting Up Christ

You may inquire, "What is the purpose of justification?" After you are saved, you are free of committed sin, free of the guilt of sin, and free of the penalty of sin. God justifies you so that you can go to Heaven, but that is not all there is to it. What is the purpose of your life after you

are saved and you are waiting to go to Heaven? When you get saved, you should not sit around and wait to die so that you can go to Heaven. What is it that God wants you to do? He wants others to see God in you.

Hebrews 12:12-15 reads: "Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord [the writer was not talking about the final Judgment, because at the final Judgment everybody will see the Lord]: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled."

We have a world that is lost, and a lot of people are talking about religion, yet it is not working in their lives. It is one thing to talk about it, but it is another thing to live as the Bible says to live. People need to see it lived in the lives of those who profess to be saved.

First Timothy 2:4 says, "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." There are some people whom you could not get to church to hear the Gospel, but they can see the Bible lived in the Christian's life. They can see Christ in you, which is the hope of glory.

John 12:32 tells us, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." Who lifts Him up? The Christian lifts Him up through his life. Philippians 1:20 says, "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death."

Psalms 29:2 reads, "Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness." There is real beauty in holiness. Behavior and actions as they become holiness are necessary even though salvation takes place in

the soul. It comes right on out through the body.

Being a Witness

Again, in 1 Thessalonians 2:10 Paul said, "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe." Then in 2 Thessalonians 3:7 he wrote, "For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you." Your conduct should compliment holiness.

In Matthew 5:14 Jesus said, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid." In verse 16 he said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Men can see your good works. If you are ever to fulfill your mission here on earth as a professing Christian, then you have to live in such a way in the physical body to attract others to Christ.

How are people won to Christ? According to statistics, the highest number of people are won to Christ through personal evangelism, by actually seeing Christ in the life of another Christian. That was how I was won. I saw someone who did not act like all the other religious people in the factory where I worked. He acted differently, and that initiated a desire within me, because he had something that I wanted to have in my life. Through his godly living and inviting me to church, I went to church, heard the Truth, and got saved.

If you are a young person in school, you do not have to give in to the peer pressure and become like others. You do not have to lower your dress standard to match what other students wear. You need to be bold and stand up for Jesus. He will not let you down. Always remember that if you have Jesus on your side, you are in the majority. If there are thirty students in your class and you are the only one living for Jesus, you

are in the majority. Do not cower down, and do not give in. Your conduct and your life could attract some other young person. Someone might see something in your life that stirs a desire within him or her to get saved.

Brother, on the job your conduct and your actions should be different from the people of the world. If you will stay with Jesus Christ, He will perfect you. People need to see Christ in your life. Sometimes you may witness to someone and not know whether or not your witnessing has had any effect on that person because you never hear anything. The point is, people are looking at your life, but you may not even know it.

God's people should be the best workers in the factories, in the schools, or wherever they work. You ought to live in a manner that attracts others to Christ. You may say, "Well, I think the heart is what is most important." You did not come to Christ because you saw someone's heart. You saw the manifestations of the heart. You saw how one lived on the outside. You do not communicate with the inside; you communicate with the outside.

"The Temple of God Is Holy"

First Corinthians 3:16-17 says: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." God moved out of the old temple in the Old Testament, and He now dwells where He always intended to dwell: in the hearts of men and women, those who have been cleansed by the blood of the Lamb.

Romans 12:1 says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Your body is to be presented holy. Your soul is saved, and the body is an instrument of the soul, and your body must be

holy also.

There is an old false teaching that says the soul is saved but the body still commits sin. It is a popular teaching because it allows people to indulge in appetites of the lusts and the pleasures of the flesh. I heard of one instance where a young person was in a department store with someone, and they were looking at certain items. When no one was looking, one of them tucked some items in his coat and walked out with them. The other person mentioned it to him, and he said, "That's all right; I'm still saved even if I commit sin." That idea comes from an old Baptist teaching of "once in grace, always in grace." You will not find anything in the Bible to back up that teaching.

People who believe this false teaching live very careless lives. They live in sin because with that teaching one is expected to sin. Once I asked an individual who adhered to that teaching about it. He said: "Well, there are some things that I do every day."

I asked, "What did you do today?"

He replied, "I don't know."

I said, "Then how could you have committed sin if you do not know?"

James 4:17 reads, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." There has to be a knowledge of sin before sin can be charged to your account. Some people feel they can get away with something that Adam and Eve could not even get away with. You have to crucify the flesh to live a holy life. You have a flesh that does not want to go to church, but you must bring the body under. Galatians 5:24 says, "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."

The Faithfulness of God

Someone may say: "I always give in when temptation comes." Jesus did not. Again, the Hebrew letter says in Hebrews 4:14-15: "Seeing then that we have a great

high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Temptation is not sin, but yielding to it is. The great news is, you do not have to yield to temptation.

You may say, "My temptation is so strong." It can get strong, especially if you keep giving in to it. It can get stronger and stronger and practically possess your mind. However, the Scripture says in 1 Corinthians 10:12-13: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." You are in a very dangerous area when you feel that you can stand in your own strength.

First Corinthians 6:19-20 reads: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

There are some old arguments that sometimes people use that are prevalent today. Some people say, "God knows my heart, and you have no right to judge me." You need to read the following Scripture verses right. Matthew 7:1-5 reads: "Judge not, that ye be not judged [and they stop reading there]. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

"And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite [that is who Jesus was talking

to]. . . ."

If you are not able to judge, how are you to decide some things? God does not want you to go around and judge everybody if things in your own life are wrong. Jesus was talking to the hypocrite, but if one has had the beam taken out of his eye, he is not in hypocrisy. Who is not supposed to judge? Verse 5 lets us know that it is the hypocrite. Not everyone is a hypocrite. Some people have hidden behind that Scripture for so long that it is no wonder they do not get any help.

As long as you are living a clean life and you are not in hypocrisy, you have a right to judge some things. Where is the gift of discernment? If you are not allowed to judge, does discernment not give you judgment? How can you tell a saint from a sinner? We read in Matthew 5:16, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." You can tell a saint from a sinner by his or her works. A saint of God does not commit sin. Is it possible for that person to sin? Yes.

The Fruit of a Holy Life

First John 3:7-10 says: "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he [Christ] is righteous. He that committeth sin is

of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning [or missed the mark from the beginning; he was not an angel in Heaven, but he was created by God] For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil [sin].

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin [as long as he follows that seed], because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest [or made known], and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God [look at what he went on to say], neither he that loveth not his brother."

First, Second, and Third John were written after John got off the Isle of Patmos. What was going on? There was an apostasy. Why did John mention loving your brother so many times? It is written throughout all his epistles. Why did John stay with that topic? He did so because the first earmark of apostasy is when love for one another begins to dwindle.

The fruit of your life changes when you get saved. Romans 6:20-22 reads: "For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free

from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

Holiness is the message, church. If you ever want to see the inside of Heaven, you must live holy. When you are in a discussion with someone who may not believe in some doctrinal teachings, you should not engage in an argument over doctrine. You need to live the life in front of them. While they say you cannot live holy, you can prove them wrong by the life you live. A holy life is a good life. The Christian does not boast in his own strength or flaunt his abilities. No, if he is anything at all, it is by the grace of God, not his own strength. All the glory and the praise belongs to God.

First Corinthians 15:10 states, "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." The Christian does not go around and trumpet his own righteousness. Holiness is a cardinal teaching of the church. When you talk about holiness, you need to make sure you live a life that backs up the message.

(Compact Disc TR-1450)

[Guest Editorial—contin. from p. 2]
worked very effectively with the young, tender hearts of the children. More than ninety children attended the Bible School program.

We urge our readers to order a copy of the messages preached during the camp meeting, as well as the songs sung by the choir and the special singers. To obtain your copy,

please write to The Gospel Trumpeter, CD Ministry, 675 N. Cedar St., Newark, OH 43055, or you may call 740-345-1312.

**IT IS RIGHT TO BE CONTENTED WITH WHAT YOU HAVE,
BUT NEVER WITH WHAT YOU ARE.**

2 Timothy 4:1 I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove,

rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine.

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

God's Approval



Brother David Watson

Seek the Approval of God

When I read this and began to think of what the Lord would want me to say, my mind went back to my childhood days when I was around my grandfather's blacksmith shop, where he used to make wheels for wagons. The band that went around the wheel was metal, and he would heat it up so that it was hot and sharpen the edge where it came together. While it was still really hot, he would pour borax in a container of water and then put the hot metal in

the cold water. Next, he would bring it back to the anvil and hit it really hard to see if it was going to stay together before putting it over the wheel. He did this to prove it, to see if it was as strong as it needed to be to stand the rugged roads that it would have to travel in the future.

I do not know of anything any better than to have God prove us and to have His approval upon what we do. We ought to seek to know if God is approving of our ministry. All of us, in a sense, are ministers, ministering to souls around us in our daily

activities and in the work we do for Him. Paul instructed Timothy to preach the Word and to be instant in season and out of season. There are two seasons in which we need to know definitely that God is approving of what we are doing.

A factory owner was asked these questions: "In what times do you give the most thought to, in times of goodness or in times of hardship? In which time are you the most relaxed?"

This was his answer: "In good times it is hard to relax because I

know not what is coming and must prepare for bad times. When things are running well, I must take heed as to how I am going to face what is before me." You see, God has seasons.

I listened to a song that says, "*God, whatever Your season is, remember me; do not forget me in Your season.*" There are good seasons when God seems to be very near, and there are seasons when it seems that God is far away. Sometimes it may seem that your prayers are not going anywhere or that your preaching is unprofitable. It may seem that everywhere you turn, you are a failure. If so, you must seek the approval of God and check to see whether or not you are in God's will in all your activities.

My grandson asked me about how to instruct people. He said, "I want to know the Scriptures and what their context is and what Scriptures will fit the circumstances that they are having, because only God can put approval on what they are doing or going through." In every situation of life, God is always higher than mankind. He always understands when we do not understand. We may not understand every situation that we face in life and what our battle means, but God knows all about it. We must seek His approval on what we are doing.

The word *reproof* means "to reprove, or to correct." We are to instruct others when we reprove. There are times for rebuking. There were times when the Apostle Paul and the prophets rebuked the people. Every prophet, every Apostle, and even Jesus needed to rebuke. You must remember that they always called the people to God's attention and to His will and purpose in rebuking. That way the people could find themselves under the will of God. It is not the man or the woman who stands before us that rebukes. It is God who does the chastising because He loves us and desires the very best for us. He wants to see the church do its best, and in order to do so, we must seek the approval of God. Paul

not only said to rebuke but also to exhort with all doctrine and long-suffering.

Love the Truth and Live It

Many doctrines that we face are contrary to the Word of God. We may hear people speak against the doctrines of the Lord. The Apostle Paul stated in Ephesians 4:14, "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." Christ spoke of different doctrines in Matthew, Chapters 16 and 24. In Chapter 16 He spoke of them as leaven that was put into bread. In His rebuttal He reminded people to beware. How do we suffer with wrong doctrine? We must seek the approval of God and warn others concerning false doctrines. False doctrines will seduce people and draw them to a strong delusion, turning them from the Truth of God. You cannot win people who are under strong delusions. When people turn away from the Truth and turn to false doctrines, another spirit takes hold of them and brings strong delusions.

In 2 Thessalonians, Chapter 2, the Apostle Paul was talking to the people about a man of sin and his situation. In verses 10-11 he said: "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." Verse 12 lets us know they would be damned. God said that He would send a strong delusion. You might have dealt with people who seemed to mean well, but when you bring forth the truth, they begin to make excuses for themselves. Then you realize they have received another spirit. Unfortunately, you cannot win them, and you will waste your time trying to win them.

Look at the Pharisees and the Sadducees and the spirit that they

were under. Consider the false christs mentioned in Matthew, Chapter 24. John, in 2 John 1:10, said if someone comes to your house with another doctrine, do not bid him God's speed. Why? He is under a strong delusion; in other words, he has become deceived. He would not receive Truth because he did not have a love for the Truth. God only puts His approval on the heart of a person who truly loves Truth. Truth is the identity of God. Pilate asked Christ, "What is truth?" Before Jesus could answer him, he went out. Pilate did not know it, but he was under a strong delusion. When that spirit takes hold of people, they cannot comprehend or understand.

Second Timothy 2:15 states, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." In order for God to put His approval on anyone in His work, one must learn from God and go beyond his own will and his own way of thinking. He must submit to the way of God. He must fully surrender to God and get past himself and get past his own customs and traditions. He must live the Truth of God.

Seek God's Way

Isaiah asked these questions in Isaiah 28:9-10: "Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little." One must reach over to the old and bring a line to the new, reach over to the old and bring a precept to the new precept, rightly divide it, and place it where it should be. Some people never read the Bible. Many people attend services merely for entertainment.

God wants to get you to the place where He can approve of you and place you where Truth is. You have to be acquainted with Him and

know Him. Isaiah put it this way in Isaiah 55:8-9: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Again, one has to go beyond himself, his customs, and his traditions.

You may think that Truth will not cost you much, but it will cost you everything. You must wake up every morning and say yes to the perfect will of God, turn your back on the whole world, and say: "Yes, Jesus, I am Yours and You are mine. Put Your approval on me, Lord. I will do Your will." God will bless you if you will let Him.

In Genesis, Chapter 42, you can read that Joseph was sold into slavery in Egypt because of jealousy and because God had put His approval on him. His brothers misunderstood and were deceived as to their brother's dreams. In Egypt Joseph suffered while being put in prison, yet he was approved of God.

We read in Genesis 42:14-15: "And Joseph said unto them, That is it that I spake unto you, saying, Ye are spies: Hereby ye shall be proved: By the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither."

In this situation Joseph had a dream of seven years of planting and seven years of famine. His brothers had to come to him to get necessities to sustain their lives. While they were there, Joseph recognized them, but he withheld it from them. God had a reason for Joseph withholding the truth from them. You may not understand altogether why something happens the way it does, but if God's approval is on it, it will always come out right. Joseph might not have understood why he had to turn his back and cry when he saw his brothers, but God approved of the move that was being made.

When you do not understand what God's plan is, you must do as Moses did in Exodus, Chapter 14. Moses stood still to see the salvation

of God work. You can be still and know that God is still God.

Eventually Joseph sent his brothers back home, but he imprisoned one brother. Those brothers were reminded of Joseph's dreams and their actions. God has a law of sowing and reaping. Galatians 6:7 says, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Your reaping may come back as a memory when you face a hardship in life or when a test is set before you. The only thing you can do with such a situation is to seek God's approval for what you are doing now. If you will seek God's way, you will come out on the right side. Joseph let his brothers know that they would have to be proved. Joseph wanted to do this because in Egypt they were not known to Pharaoh and this could have caused Joseph trouble. So he wanted to be approved by the king.

Ecclesiastes 4:9 teaches that two are better than one. Then in verse 12 we find that a threefold cord is not quickly broken. A single cord does not have much strength, but if you wrap two or three cords together, they become stronger.

Verse 10 says, "Woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up." When Jesus sent His disciples out, He sent them by two's. It is much better to have the approval and the help of God in what you do. Some people want to be independent, but we should not have an independent spirit. One should always feel the other fellow is better than he is. We should seek the approval of God and want Him to have His way. If God has His way, we will be all right. Joseph's life came out well because of God's approval upon his life.

Standing for God

Daniel was a man who sought to have God's approval on his life. He knew where he had to stand and what he needed to be sufficient for what he had to do. I believe you need to feel secure in what you are doing.

I do not think you need to tremble and wonder if you are right. You need to know that God and you are all right. In Daniel 1:12 Daniel said, "Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink." Since Daniel was in Babylon, they wanted him to eat a portion of the king's food, but Daniel did not want to defile himself.

You must know where you stand, and you must stand for God. There is a time to draw the line in standing and not cross it. I listened to a brother who spent thirty-seven years in the military and retired. He was a colonel, and someone wanted him to join a club. As he was climbing a stairway, he saw a sign that read: "Thursday Night Topless Dancing." He turned back and refused to join the club, and he stood his ground. There will be times when pressure will be put on you. Some people may push you, but you must seek the approval of God. You must realize that if God is going to approve of your life, you have to stay with Him.

Isaiah 50:10 says, "Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God." No matter how a situation may look, you must stay with God. The devil may say there are four walls around you and there is no way out. Do not forget that God is bigger than the walls.

Consider the city of Jericho in the Old Testament. It seemed that the wall would be a block to every move that could be made. Joshua told the people how to march and when to blow their trumpets. When it looks like you cannot do anything else, march for God. On the seventh day, they marched around the city seven times, and on the seventh time, they were to shout and blow their trumpets, and the walls came down. I want you to know that when God puts His approval on something, it will work.

Daniel said, in so many words,

"Captain, tell your king to give me just ten days and prove me." You need to be sure of where you stand, that your feet are on the Rock, and be firm in your stand for Jesus. You should know to whom you belong so you can say to the world: "Try me, prove me, and see if I am with God." If you live the way you ought to, you can do that with confidence. A dear brother told me, "I live my life every day so that I would not care if my pastor was with me every day." Well, he had one closer than a pastor; he had Jesus.

When Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold and commanded all the people to bow down at the sound of all kinds of music, certain Chaldeans looked over that crowd and saw the three Hebrew boys standing. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow down to that idol. Nebuchadnezzar was in a rage and said to heat the furnace seven times hotter. They heated the furnace, bound the three boys, and threw them into the furnace; however, the only ones who suffered were the men who threw them in. The king, sitting in his high seat, rose to his feet and said, "Did we not throw three men in there?"

They said, "Yes, O King."

He said, "Well, I see four men in that furnace, and they are loose and walking around." God's approval was on the Hebrew boys. He approved of their lives in the time of their trial as they looked death in the face. When it seemed that they were looking at the worst kind of torture, they stood. They knew their God, and they were not going to bow down to some other god.

For the first time in the Scriptures, a man said, "I see a fourth man, and He looks like the Son of God." When they came out of the furnace, the king put his approval on them. Some people will take notice when you take a stand. It is not when you are on a flowery bed of ease, so to speak, that people see you really living for God. It is when troubles prevail and you are standing your ground for God that others take

notice that you have something worth standing for.

Live Right in All Situations

When God put His approval on Ezekiel, He told him to speak to a rebellious people. They were like briars and thorns, but God was putting His approval on Ezekiel. What was God going to do? Ezekiel 3:9 reads, "As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead." Did you know that God's people have some fire in their bones? God said to Ezekiel in verse 1, "Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel." If you want God's approval, you must eat the Word, and stand on the Word; then God will be with you in the briar patch.

Daniel suffered a great conflict. He went through the storm, and the king put his approval on him. You can read in 2 Corinthians, Chapter 6, about Paul, who was able to bring up the fruits of His approval. Job said that a multitude a day speaks, and a number of years teaches wisdom. Sometimes it may take awhile for you to prove who you are. When afflictions and troubles come and the storm is really raging, many times a whole congregation is darkened by a storm of confusion, but if you will stand still long enough, you will see the fruits of those upon whom God has His approval.

The Apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 6:4, "But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions [troubles], in necessities, in distresses." Paul had experienced all those things. The Jews were accusing him of turning the city upside down. When there was confusion, the devil was raging. Paul was the man of God who had fruit. He stood; he was the man upon whom God put His approval. Verse 5 reads, "In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings." He did not stop being what he was supposed to be when trouble came.

In all situations you must not

forget who you are and what you are supposed to be. You must live right in all situations. They tell men in the military: "When you are in a hot battle of doubt, take the situation in control and march for victory. Do not quit or retreat, but go forth." The church cannot retreat. We must not look behind us. We have to look ahead of us and march like soldiers in the time of trouble. Paul told Timothy to be a good soldier and to endure hardness. If you want God to put His approval on you, you must do that.

Second Corinthians 6:7 reads, "By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left." Whatever you do in your situation, you must know that it came from God. I have been in storms. I was in a situation so bad once that I believe that if a man had not hired me as a salesman to occupy part of my mind, I would have probably died from a heart attack. It was such a strong storm in my path and such fierce spirits manifested themselves against me, but I stood in the situation. I sought the righteousness of God, I sought the armor of God, and I sought that which God approved of.

God Will Bring You Through

Dear one, do not forget your armor and your righteousness. This is how you get God's approval. Whatever you do, you need to make sure that you are doing it with the righteousness of God and you will come out right. If you want the blessings of God, you must seek those things that belong to Him in all situations of life, and God will bring you through. Sometimes it may be hard, especially when people are speaking against you. In my situation I had to keep going, keep doing right, and do my best to smile over top of the storm.

God never said everything would be easy and that you would win people with a smile. Jeremiah said in Jeremiah 9:1-2: "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a foun-

tain of tears, that I might weep day and night . . . Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place." We do not win all people with smiles. Sometimes you have to shed some tears in your burdens and seek the direction of God. He will help you to understand His directions. You need to take His knowledge and His wisdom, and go with Him.

Paul said, in so many words, "These are my fruits; this is how I win others; this is how I live." Second Corinthians 6:9-10 says: "As unknown, and yet well known; [Who are you known by? You are known by God. There are people who know you and know where you stand.] as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

What I give up in this life belongs to this world, but just look at what I have coming! When men tried to boil John in oil, God took the heat out, and they cast him on the Isle of Patmos. There he had a vision of a great multitude. One of the elders asked, "Where did these come from?" In Revelation 7:14 we read, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

You may ask, "Why does God let such things happen?" It is for our good. When Joseph spoke to his brothers, in essence, he said, "You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good; it saved lives." Others are watching you, and when they see that you really live as the Bible says you ought to live, they will say, "I want what he has."

My former pastor used to work on the railroad, and one time someone stole his shovel. He said he had to work for three days without it, and he worked harder than ever. On the third day, the person brought it back. He just picked it up and went to shoveling and said, "Good morning." That fellow said, "He has it."

What does trouble do? It takes away the chaff, it purifies you, and it brings you closer to God. It causes you to bear fruit that is pure, clean, and enticing. Most people want good fruit. Persecutions will come, but God's approval will be on you if you will stand still and do what is right. He will make a way in all situations and bring you through when nothing else will. He is a good God.

(Compact Disc TR-1321M)

"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

(Ephesians 4: 30-32)

Matthew 27:19 When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.

20 But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.

21 The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain

will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas.

22 Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified.

23 And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.

24 When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rath-

er a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.

25 Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.

26 Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.



A God of Mercy

Brother Joe Brewer

Christ's Sufferings Brought Blessings

We find that as the hour was swiftly approaching for Jesus to be crucified, He was standing before Pilate. Pilate knew that Jesus had been delivered to him because of the envy of the religious leaders of his day. Pilate's wife warned him not to do this evil, yet he carried it out to

please men. Today many times the reason evil is carried out is to please men or to satisfy some creed or false doctrine. Jesus was innocent, but He was led to His death. Barabbas, who was guilty of sins that were worthy of death, was set free.

The Roman soldiers took Jesus, stripped Him, placed a scarlet robe upon Him, mocked Him, and spat upon him. He endured a long night

of the most cruel, horrendous, and inhumane treatment ever pronounced upon man. He was beaten until he was practically unrecognizable. After the beating, He was taken to a place called Golgotha to be crucified. At the time of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, the Roman soldiers drove three nails into His quivering body. It was a merciless act.

As we who are saved know,

Jesus turns evil things into good and wonderful things for His people. He turned that merciless act around and brought us the mercy of God. I want you to think for a few moments of what He went through for each of us. He was hung on the Cross with no mercy and no justice. Our Savior loved us so much that He was willing to give His life for us. We should love Him in return for it. After His death, burial, and resurrection, He turned that around so that we could be saved. I am so thankful for what Jesus has done.

If you will call upon the name of the Lord, you will be saved. God has made it so wonderfully plain. It is due to the mercy of God that salvation is offered to you. Jesus suffered, but He knew that He was going to see an abundance of blessings coming from His sufferings. If you are suffering, you need to look to God, and you will find an abundance of blessings right around the corner. No matter what you are suffering, God has an abundance of blessings for you.

You should not give up or dwell upon the thought of defeat. You need to have the motto, "Never give up." Why? The mercy and the grace of God can carry you through the trials you are facing, regardless of whether they are financial problems, family problems, or any other kind of problem. God has an abundance of mercy for you. He can help you through the trials and help you come out with great deliverance.

When I thought about the mercy of God, my mind went to Psalm 23. When you accept the mercy of God, one thing that it provides you with is a wonderful Shepherd. David said in Psalm 23:1, "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want." Psalm 37:4 reads, "Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart."

The devil wants to camouflage the good things that God wants to give you. He will get you to dwell on your troubles and tell you that the world is falling apart. He will get you to look at family problems, fi-

nancial conditions, or anything else but to look through the trial and see that there is a God of great mercy with a hand extended toward you, saying, "Come on, child; just around the corner there is a blessing waiting for you."

The Loving Shepherd

God is encouraging you to press the battle on. God has victory for the church. He is the Shepherd of the church and you "shall not want." This Shepherd will provide you with green pastures. David said in Psalm 23:2, "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters." He will not force you, but He compels you with love and compassion. The Shepherd provides you with lush, green pastures, those good, godly desires. If you desire a good wife, somewhere God has a good wife for you. If you desire help in your body, God has a pasture for you to lie in until that help comes. God has it all in store, but you have to look to Him in a greater way.

I love my Savior, because the pasture that I was in at one time was dry and barren; it was a desert land. I was defiled by sin, and I was ashamed for people even to look upon me because of the things that I had done. When God saved me, I came over into another pasture and began to tell others that this pasture is lush and green and well-attended. Friend, come on in. We cannot eat it all. There is plenty. We have a Shepherd who provides us with plenty of green pastures and still, clean waters. We do not have to drink from the world's vile cesspool of water.

Jesus said salvation is like a well of water springing up. He said in John 7:38, "He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." I thank God for that clear, clean, living water! Jesus has living water for the soul. We do not have to fear evil. David said in Psalm 23:3-4: "He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk

through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Isn't that wonderful?

We have a Shepherd when we are walking through the valley of the shadow of death. Just keep pressing, because God will never run out of blessings for His people. When we pass through the valley of the shadow of death, we have a Shepherd whose rod and staff (His Word and His Spirit) comfort us.

When the hour is dark and it seems there is no light in sight, you can go to the Word. God has it fixed so that you can open His Word and the Holy Spirit of God can enlighten you concerning His promises. Thank God, it is not long until you will find strength for your soul; then you can rise up and go out and face another day for the glory of God.

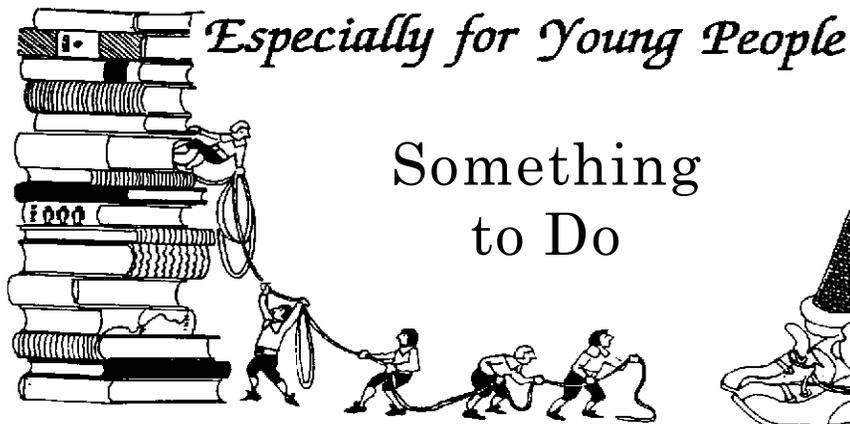
Walking through the valley of the shadow of death with comfort in your soul is wonderful. When the enemy comes in like a flood, your Great Shepherd of tender mercy will prepare a table for you right in the presence of your enemy. He will anoint your head with oil, and your cup will run over. The Great Shepherd is worthy of our praise!

The Goodness of God

Salvation is not just a word; it is a miracle. Too many people claim to be saved, but somewhere along the line, they either lost the miracle of it or they never got the true goods. Maybe they let the enemy deceive them, so the miracle is gone. The miracle is still working well for those who continue to press on. Child of God, it will take you all the way through life. David said in Psalm 37:25, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."

Our Shepherd showers us with goodness and mercy all the days of our lives. This is more than mercy; this is mercy mixed with the goodness of God. That makes it all the more desirable for the soul.

[continued on page 24]



In this busy life, there is something for every child of God to do. The command is, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." Think about these words. Does not your heart feel that they imply great earnestness in life? They mean a life of labor—a life of service. To do something with your might implies putting your whole heart into your work.

Young person, God has a work for you. Will this world be made better by your having come into it or will it be made worse? No one can do the work of another, since everyone is given all he can do. It is true we ought to bear one another's burdens. I am to help you bear your burdens; that is a part of my work. You are to help me. We need the help of each other. However, I cannot do what you ought to do. What you neglect to do will have to go undone. If someone stops to do what you ought to do, just as large a rent is made in his life's work as would have been made in yours, but the reflection is on you.

A father who had five sons left them a certain work to do. He gave to each his portion according to his ability. Upon his return, he found that four of them had done their part and done it well, but one had only partially done his. Consequently, there was a neglected spot, a dropped stitch, which constantly showed itself. If you fail to do the work that God in His wisdom has assigned you, there will be in the Father's great plan a neglected part

that will show through for all eternity. Is your life going to be the dropped stitch in the great web of human life? Down in your heart, is there a no for an answer?

Let not the precious moments of your life flee away unimproved. Jesus is your example. He went about doing good. Everywhere He went, He left evidences that He had passed that way. Young person, on life's journey what are you leaving along the way that you have passed along to others?

It matters not how small the work the Father has assigned you, you should do it with all the earnestness of your heart. It is your part, and you should do it with as much earnestness and interest as those who are engaged in greater works. If your part is not done well, there will not be completeness in the divine plan. A single stitch dropped shows a blemish in the garment. In the sight of God the most menial task is as sacred as that of the highest order, and when well done, it greatly meets His approval.

God wants not only your service but your best service. You are under obligation to do your best. If you let a day pass by without doing what you could and in the best way you could, your work is not done perfectly.

Remember these words: "Freely ye have received, freely give." Seek to be blessed of God so that you may pass the blessing on to others. Leave some footprints upon the sands of time so that they may guide

someone to a better way. When you reach the end of life, you can experience no greater consolation than to know you have done what you could. Improve the moments of time while you have them. They are passing swiftly. They will not wait for you. Some people intend to do something for God, but the opportunity passes before they are ready. Opportunities do not wait. Do good while you can. Perhaps you intended to speak kind words yesterday but thought you would defer until another day; however, the life went out and your intended kind words were too late.

Today is the day to save the lost. Tomorrow may be too late. How sad that a soul through all eternity might be crying out, "You were going to help me, but you were too late!" May God help you to be up and doing while it is called today.

Young person, there is too much to do to idle away the time. A full and well-spent life is one that is spent in doing good out of pure love to God and man. When you have come down to the end of life's journey, how sweet it will be to know that you have done all you could to help others make their journey in safety! There is a reward for every generous act. God is faithful and will repay. What you do here will find an eternity of reward. Let not one day pass you by without your doing something purposely for God.

Selected



Luke 6:35 But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.

36 Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

37 Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.

Matthew 5:7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

James 2:13 For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

Blessed Are the Merciful

Brother Larry Dishman

A God of Mercy and Grace

If you act in mercy, kindness, and compassion, you will receive the same. This quality cannot be kept inside. To possess this quality, you must give it away to others. Those who are immature in faith cannot express this quality, because they focus on themselves, like an immature baby.

Some have trouble separating grace from mercy. They are often found together, such as in the greetings of the Apostle Paul's letters. Grace carries the idea of undeserved and unmerited favor. Grace is God's provision when a person does not deserve it. Grace is God's blessing to those who cannot earn it. Grace is giving something positive when there is no reason to expect it.

Mercy, however, carries a somewhat different idea. It does not result in the positive blessing of God. However, it is the negative view of God's actions toward us. An act of mercy is when God does not give a person what he deserves. Mercy is God withholding what an individual has earned. Every one of us deserves to be in hell. Most of us rejected God for a time, so we

deserve to be lost. If you are without Christ, you deserve eternity in hell, but God offers you mercy.

When the agnostic Robert G. Ingersoll was delivering his lectures against Christ and the Bible, he had a good ability to speak, and his speaking ability usually assured him of a large crowd. One night after a speech, in which he severely attacked man's faith in the Savior, he dramatically took off his watch and said: "I will give God a chance to prove that He exists and that He is Almighty. I challenge God to strike me dead within five minutes." First, there was silence, then some people became uneasy, and others left the hall, unable to take the nervous strain of the occasion. One woman fainted. At the end of the five minutes, the man exclaimed: "You see, there is no God; I am still very much alive."

After the lecture, a young fellow went to a Christian lady and said, "Well, Mr. Ingersoll really proved something tonight."

Her reply was: "Yes, he did. He demonstrated that even the most defiant sinner cannot exhaust the patience of God in just five minutes."

Another man added: "I was coming downtown and a little boy came running out of an alley, daring me to hit him. Do you suppose that I actually struck him just because he challenged me? In the same way, our Lord will not strike everyone dead who defies Him. We should be thankful that we are still living in a day of grace and mercy." Now, I want you to think about that. Verse 36 of our Scripture text says, "Be ye therefore merciful, as your father also is merciful." God is merciful. The Bible lets us know that we are supposed to be merciful, as our Father in Heaven is merciful.

Our Model of Mercy

Let us look at some Scriptures that prove how merciful God is. If you have access to *Strong's Concordance*, I invite you to look at how

many times the words *mercy*, *merciful*, *long-suffering*, and *compassion* occur in the Bible. There are hundreds of references to these words. These Scriptures teach of how merciful God is toward us.

Psalm 103:8 reads, "The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy." Psalm 116:5 tells us, "Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful." Jeremiah 3:12 says, "Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the LORD, and I will not keep anger for ever."

Hebrews 2:17 reads, "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." Hebrews 8:12 tells us, "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

Regarding the word mercy, the Psalmist said in Psalm 23:6, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever." The Bible states in Psalm 86:5, "For thou, LORD, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee." Verse 13 says, "For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell." Verse 15 reads, "But thou, O LORD, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth."

The Bible tells us in Ephesians 2:4, "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us." I thank God for the very mercy of God. These are just a few of the hundreds of Scriptures that explain how merciful God is, how much He cares about us, and how long-suffering and compassionate He is.

We can see mercy in action in

the life of Christ as we follow Him through the Gospels. John, Chapter 8, illustrates this very clearly. A woman was caught in the act of adultery, and her accusers came to Jesus. Verses 4-5 read: "They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?" That put Christ in a terrible situation, because that law was still enforced. Therefore, He stooped down and wrote on the ground. Then He stood up and said in verse 7, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." Jesus knew how to get around it. He knew the sin in their lives.

In verse 11 Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." What was Jesus doing? He was showing mercy. I am glad God had mercy on me and did not give me what I had coming. He has had mercy on me since I have been saved. He is a merciful God. Do you show others the mercy that you have received? God is your model of mercy, and you are to reflect His mercy in your actions toward your fellow man. He has given each of us an abundant demonstration of His mercy.

A Balance of Judgment and Mercy

Should a person always show mercy? Can a Christian consistently be merciful and yet be a parent? Can he spank his child for disobedience or should he say, "No, I'm going to have mercy on my child?" What if every time you were to exceed the speed limit, a policeman would come to your door and say, "You were going fifteen miles over the speed limit, but I am going to have mercy on you." Everybody would speed. There has to be some judgment, and so it is with children. If you spare the rod, you will spoil the child. If you never correct your children, then your children will not respect you. However, the Bible

says that you should show mercy even when you do correct them.

An employer may pay his employees well and treat them well, but that does not mean he could not fire someone if he is late continuously or does not show up for work.

God's judgment always contains a perfect balance of judgment and mercy. I pray that it will sink deep into your heart that God does not show mercy toward someone unless that person shows mercy to others. The Bible talks about weightier matters in the Word of God. Matthew 23:23 says, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

Most people know the account in the Bible of Sodom and Gomorrah. Two angels came and appeared as men in Sodom. Lot invited them into his home as overnight guests; yet before the angels could retire for the night, a noisy mob of Sodomites was outside the door. We read in Genesis 19:5 that the Sodomites were saying: "Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them." What an unbelievable, ugly scene! Those men were intent on gang raping those visitors. Lot was so desperate that he did something inconceivable. He offered his two daughters to this mob of Sodomites. In verse 8 he told them, "Behold now, I have two daughters . . . let me . . . bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing." As a father of four daughters, I cannot comprehend Lot's actions. It absolutely strains my mind to think of why he would make such an offer. Even after God struck those Sodomites with blindness, they still tried to find the door to Lot's house. They were under the judgment of God.

The angels took Lot aside and,

in essence, told him: "In the morning we are going to destroy this place. The cry of them has grown so loud in the Lord's ears that God is finished with Sodom and Gomorrah. In the morning, go and warn your sons-in-law to leave the city." The next morning Lot went to see his sons-in-law, but he was as one who mocked. When they awoke, Lot gave them the warning, but they laughed at him.

In the light of all of this, what did Lot do? He lingered. He knew what the angels said, but he just could not bring himself to leave. Finally, the angels had to take Lot by the hand, take his wife by the hand, and take his two daughters by their hands and almost drag them out of the city. Why did God send those angels to rescue Lot and his family? Genesis 19:16 tells us, "The LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city." This was God's mercy, even though Lot did not deserve it. Lot was lingering because he had chosen to go there.

If you are saved, how long did you resist the Lord? How long did you say no to God, yet God was merciful? Time and time again, God dealt with my heart. I felt the convicting power of God, and God was merciful. Today we can see the sins of our society mounting to Heaven. Sensuality, immorality, and evil are growing bolder and bolder in our nation. How is it that we are not swallowed up in all of this ungodliness?

Friend, you can talk about the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah, but have you read a newspaper lately? Have you listened to the news? We are in trouble as a nation. The only reason that we can go to the house of God freely is due to the everlasting mercy of God. Mercy has literally pulled us out of the judgment that separates us from this wicked world in which we live. God has pulled some people out of alcoholism, prostitution, drug addiction, and adultery. Why did He do it? The Lord was being merciful. Where

would we be without the mercy of God?

Showing Mercy Toward Others

If you are a professing Christian, it is due to the mercy of God. Some of our friends and families are either in the depths of sin or in false religion. If you are now married and have a family, where are all the young men and young ladies with whom you went to Sunday school? Some are missing from the services, and possibly they are in the depths of sin. Some of their lives are broken by sin. Sin has taken them further than they wanted to go and kept them longer than they wanted to stay. Why are you not out there? It is due to God's mercy, because of His grace. God has been merciful to you.

Do you show mercy to others? Are you merciful as your Father in Heaven is merciful? I thank God for the grace and the mercy of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. You cannot read the history of God's dealings with Israel without being amazed by how God was so merciful to those people. They sinned repeatedly, but God just kept having mercy on them.

The Bible says in Deuteronomy 4:29-31: "But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul. When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice; (For the LORD thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them."

What an amazing picture of the mercy of God! God stayed with Israel even though they provoked Him to anger. He fed and clothed them, and He walked with them through the wilderness all those years because of His absolute mercy. Have you ever failed the Lord? Did God give you what you deserved? How many times have you said

something hurtful to someone or grieved the Holy Spirit? How many times has your disobedience brought down all kinds of sorrow and suffering? None of us deserved the mercy of God because of our personal goodness. God just had mercy on our never-dying souls. Do you acknowledge that God has been merciful and kind to you? Has He been slow to anger when you failed Him? Are you, in turn, merciful and kind to others?

The number one issue is that you need to abstain from evil, to come out from the world, and to remain clean. Some think that as long as they do not smoke, drink, commit fornication, or commit adultery, they are pure. It is good to abstain from all these things, but the Bible says in James 3:17, "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy. . . ."

How much mercy do you show toward others? You may say that you have a pure heart, and your life may appear to be spotless, but you could be mean, unkind, and without graciousness. It is a terrible shame upon the body of Christ that some people on the streets may be more gentle and kind than people who claim to be Christians.

I heard about a Christian lady who said to her professing Christian husband: "Honey, I am not asking much of you. I just desire that you treat me as kindly as you do your friends. Please, darling, talk to me the way you talk to your friends. Treat me like you do those you associate with outside our home." How sad that a wife would have to say something like this to her supposed Christian husband, or it could be the other way around. Are you kind to your wife or your husband?

Are You Judgmental Toward Others?

Some of the most quarrelsome, argumentative, mean-spirited people are those who claim to be Holy Spirit filled believers. There is no gentle-

ness or graciousness about them. They would rather destroy you with gossip and slander than to extend a little mercy. I believe there is a reason that many professing Christians do not show mercy. Christians who show no mercy are judgmental, and they act and speak unkindly. They have never understood or appreciated God's mercy to them.

You will never be merciful as you should be until you understand how merciful God has been to you. Some who profess Christianity are harsh and unforgiving. They have never really understood how close they came to being lost eternally. They have not considered the exceeding sinfulness of their own sin. They took lightly their debt of sin along with the merciful grace of God extended to them. They did not understand how truly filthy and ugly their sins were and how much grace and mercy they needed.

Jesus told a parable of a servant who had been forgiven a great debt. This man found grace and mercy in the eyes of his master, but he took that grace and mercy for granted. Immediately after he was forgiven, he went out and found a man who owed him a very insignificant amount and began to choke him, demanding; "Pay me what you owe me!" When the debtor asked for mercy, he refused and had the debtor jailed. Why was this man so judgmental? Why did he lack mercy? The reason was that he did not consider his own unworthiness; he did not understand how hopeless and how exceedingly sinful his own sins were before God. He did not appreciate the danger that he had been in and how close he had been to death. He had been shown mercy, but he was ungrateful.

Have you forgotten what God did for you? Have you been saved so long that you have forgotten the incredible mercy that God showed to you? How many times has He lifted you out of something that could have destroyed you? Beloved, you have to look at the pit that you dug for your own life, the pit you would

still be in without God's mercy, before you can offer mercy to someone else.

Understanding the Mercy of God

Every time you show mercy, kindness, and graciousness to another believer, you are giving comfort. You cannot offer mercy if you are constantly thinking that God must be angry with you or if you are thinking, "I'm going to backslide; I don't think I'm going to make it." You cannot enjoy your salvation if you constantly think that you are one step from hell. God does not want you to go around all the time biting your fingernails and trembling: "Oh, I'm afraid that I'm going to lose out with God. I'm afraid God is going to cut me off." God is not that way; He is full of love, compassion, and mercy. You could possibly backslide, but you need to rest in the faithfulness of God.

You need to trust God for your soul's salvation. He is not looking for an excuse to cut you off. He is going to do everything He can to take you to Heaven, except go against your free will. God really cares about you, and He wants you to rest in Him.

The Bible teaches there is a rest in Christ. You are to rest in His love, in His grace, and in His mercy. That is the reason the songwriter could write the song entitled "Sweet Rest in Jesus." One verse reads, "*In Jesus I've found a sweet rest from sorrow, from toil, and from care; In him I am happy and blest, For He all my burdens doth bear.*"

You can be happy and blest. You can trust in the mercy of God because Philippians 1:6 states, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." The God of Heaven can keep you from falling. Second Timothy 1:12 says, "For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him

against that day."

If you see God as One who is terribly angry with you every time you fail or make a mistake and as One who is hunting for an excuse to cut you off, then you will have a hard time showing mercy to others. If you do not understand the mercy of God, how can you show mercy to others?

I am resting in Jesus. I am really not trusting in myself. As one songwriter penned:

*My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus blood and
righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.*

*On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.
All other ground is sinking sand.*

I thank God for Jesus. Has God been merciful to you, friend? Do you realize the awful wrath of God that you have avoided through the mercy of God? Can you see that without mercy there would be no way to stand before God?

Micah 6:8 says, "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Nothing moves one to forgive others like the amazing realization that he has been forgiven. Mercy in God's children begins by experiencing His forgiveness of them, and perhaps nothing proves more convincingly that one has been forgiven than his readiness to forgive others who might have sinned against him.

The Key to Becoming Merciful

Another example of the mercy of God is the Parable of the Good Samaritan, which you can read about in Luke, Chapter 10. Verses 30, 33-34, 36-37a reads: "And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped

him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. . . . But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. . . . Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him."

Who are you like in your everyday living? Are you like the priest or the Levite who went over on the other side of the road or are you like the Samaritan who showed mercy? Again, verse 36 of our Scripture text reads, "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." Jesus said in Luke 10:37, "Go, and do thou likewise."

There is a key to becoming a merciful person. The mercy that God blesses us with is itself the blessing of God. It grows like fruit in a broken heart and a meek spirit. Mercy comes from mercy. Our mercy to one another comes from God's mercy to us. The key to becoming a merciful person is to become a broken person. You get the power to show mercy from the real feeling in your heart that you owe everything you are to the divine mercy of God.

If you want to become a merciful person, it is imperative that you cultivate a view of God. This helps you to say with all your heart that every joy and virtue in your life you owe to the free and undeserving mercy of God. God calls you to have a tender heart toward brothers and sisters who have failed and who are struggling. A hard heart always makes a big deal of another's failures, but a tender heart and a merciful heart will have compassion. If you have mercy in your heart, you will speak to Christ about people and you will speak to people about Christ. You must learn to commit yourself to strive to be merciful as He is merciful. That is where you

have to begin.

I believe you ought to have Judgment Day honesty. Are you honest enough to admit in your heart that you want to be merciful, loving, kind, and gracious but that sometimes you are not the kindest Christian? Are you quick tempered and sharp with your tongue? Are you sometimes too quick to judge and not as gentle as you ought to be? God shall have judgment without mercy on those who show no mercy. That is fearful.

You might need mercy in the most desperate way within the next few days. Again, the Bible says the Lord shows mercy to whom He will show mercy. In the same way, if you do not forgive others, He will not forgive you. Whether you want to admit it or not, there are times when you, as a Christian, need the mercy of God. Hebrews 4:16 tells us, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Are you an individual who never shows mercy and has forgotten what it was like to be a young convert? Have you forgotten the struggles that you had when you first got saved, so you are always putting judgment on people? If so, you will not find mercy at the throne of grace. He that shows no mercy shall have judgment without mercy. I want to be a merciful individual.

If you are without the Lord, you need God's mercy. It may be that with what you are already involved in, you deserve the wrath of God. Only God's mercy can save you, but the door of mercy is going to be closed someday. The rich man in Luke, Chapter 16, cried for mercy but it was too late. Sinner friend, while the door of mercy is still open, won't you seek His mercy?

(Compact Disc TR-1402)

***If you claim to be a Christian,
remember that men
judge your Lord by you.***

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

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

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

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

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

6 And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent Naaman my

servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy.

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

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

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

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

11 But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to

me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.

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

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

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

15 And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant.

Influence



Brother Calvin Foster

The Power of Influence

Influence is a very powerful, compelling force, but many times

we do not realize how powerful it is. Someone said that if a person made a list of the most influential people, no doubt it would include political

leaders, business entrepreneurs, athletes, scientists, people in the arts, and people in entertainment. These are very influential people. On that

list you would not find cooks, maintenance workers, laundry workers, or house cleaners. Many of these people work for the athletes and the entertainers, yet those in lower positions often influence the people whom they serve.

According to the dictionary, the word *influence* means, "The power of persons or things to affect others seen only in its effects." Each of us has been influenced by someone or something. Parents influence their children. Your mother and father have had a great influence on you. I thank the Lord for godly influence.

I thank God for my godly heritage. My mother was a godly woman, and she influenced me to serve God. I am thankful for that. You should cherish the influence of your godly mother and father. You should never let anyone influence you to do evil. I love people who influence me to do that which is good. I want to be influenced to do what is right. I want to be a better man, a better husband, and a better preacher.

Preachers influence people. Preacher, you are going to be accountable to God for every person you influence. A preacher must be careful of his words and the way he acts around people. He is going to give an account for his influence.

A husband influences his wife. Husband, you are going to give an account for the influence that you are depicting toward your wife, and the same is true with her. A wife influences her husband. I thank God for my godly wife. She has never discouraged me when I wanted to do something for God. She has always encouraged me to do something for God. If you have someone like that in your life, you are blessed. You must always guard against bad influences.

God's Way Is Always Best

Naaman was a man of great courage and valor. He had a celebrated reputation of being a man of war with many military victories.

The king of Syria valued him very greatly, but he had the disease of leprosy. Spiritually speaking, leprosy is a type of sin. Some good people in the world do great things, but the problem is that they are living in sin, which is sad.

Elisha sent his servant out to tell Naaman to go and wash seven times in the Jordan River. Naaman became angry and offended when Elisha sent his servant out to tell him to wash in the muddy waters of the Jordan. Nevertheless, when you do things God's way, you will get good results.

If you listen to a man of God as he preaches the Word, you will get blessed, just as God's Word says you will. God cannot lie. Naaman thought the rivers of Damascus were better than the waters in Israel, but God did not say to use the waters in Damascus. God does not say to use your own opinion. God said to obey the Word of God. Jesus said in Matthew 4:4, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Oh, yes, you need the Word of God. Naaman did what the man of God told him to do, and then he was cured of leprosy.

No matter how deeply or how little a man is involved in sin, he cannot conquer sin in his own strength. Only through the blood of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ can it be done. Thank God for good people in the world, such as school teachers, doctors, and people who assist the homeless, but good works will not get them into Heaven. They need the saving blood of Jesus Christ in their lives. No matter how good a person is, he cannot cleanse himself from sin. Only Jesus can save a soul from sin. Friend, you cannot save yourself. Sin will bring you down and destroy you. Your life will go down if you continue to live in sin. In just a matter of time, you will reap what you sow.

The little maid in our Scripture text had an influence when she spoke up and said, "Would God my

lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy." That little maid had seen the power of God at work in her homeland. People can be right around the church and see God work, yet they ignore it. You should not ignore it when you see God working. When you see someone who was living in sin and full of the devil, and then God saves him, you had better not forget that.

Take Heed Lest You Fall

Sin will destroy you. It will destroy your home and your marriage. Preacher, sin will destroy your ministry. It does not matter how long you have been saved or how long you have been preaching, sin will drag you down. Many false teachers say you have to sin a little more or less every day. Man in his own power cannot get out of sin. Jesus said in Matthew 19:26, "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible." The purpose of Jesus Christ coming into the world was to save you from your sins.

You can look back in history to a man named Alexander the Great. He conquered nation after nation, but he died at an early age. Although he could conquer nations, he could not conquer himself because of sin.

You need God to help you control your flesh. You have everything you need to take you into sin, and it is the flesh. Alcohol and tobacco will destroy you. I wish I had a big picture showing people dipping snuff and chewing tobacco to show young people how cancer from tobacco ate out their gums. Sinner friend, this world of sin will destroy you. You might have girlfriends with whom you are sleeping, but that will destroy your soul. I have seen alcoholism destroy many people. It gets hold of young people and totally ruins their lives.

The billboards show people drinking beer and smoking cigarettes, looking young and healthy, but they do not show the pitiful

condition of their liver or their lungs. You may laugh and sneer at this, but sin will destroy you. I am trying my best as a preacher of the Gospel to help you. The Church of God cries out against sin. No matter how strong or how great you think you are, sin can conquer you. I thank God for the preachers who preached against sin to me.

First Corinthians 10:12-13 reads: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." All of us would be in a terrible condition without Jesus Christ. Without Jesus we would be in sin and unable to get out of it. I thank God for Jesus Christ.

My wife, speaking of how I was before I got saved, said, "You wouldn't have been my type." Do you know what some young ladies say these days? They say they are attracted to the bad boys. Well, remember, bad boys do bad things. So do not be surprised if he gets arrested. Do not be surprised if he has drugs in his car. Do not be surprised if he slaps you and cheats on you. Why? He is a bad boy, and that is what bad boys do.

Some young men may say they are attracted to the bad girls. Well, I am going to tell you from experience, bad girls will break your heart. When I was a young man, a bad girl broke my heart, and then I got in a fight. I should have known better because she was a bad girl.

When I got saved, I met a girl in church, and she was and still is a good girl. I have been with her for more than forty years. Is that not wonderful? God gave me a good girl! Young man, you should not even think about being attracted to a bad girl. Young lady, you should not be attracted to a bad boy. If you are, do not be surprised if he does you wrong. He is not saved. Jesus Christ

did not come to control sin; He came to deliver you from sin. You may be strong and have self-control over some things, but with sin in your heart you will keep right on sinning. You need Jesus to come into your heart.

Failing to Do the Will of God

In 1 Kings, Chapter 13, the story is told that the ungodly king, Jeroboam offered incense on the altar, and the Lord sent a man of God to rebuke him. The man of God cried against the king, and the king became angry. The king put his hand forth and told his soldiers to get the man of God. However, when he put his hand out, it dried up so that he could not pull it back to him. Therefore, he entreated the man of God to pray for him, that his hand would be restored. The man of God prayed for him, and his hand was healed.

After the king's hand was made whole, the king wanted to be nice to the man of God. We read in 1 Kings 13:7-18: "And the king said unto the man of God, Come home with me, and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward. And the man of God said unto the king, If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place: For so it was charged me by the word of the LORD, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest. So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Bethel.

"Now there dwelt an old prophet in Bethel; and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel: the words which he had spoken unto the king, them they told also to their father. And their father said unto them, What way went he? For his sons had seen what way the man of God went, which came from Judah. And he said unto his sons, Saddle me the ass. So they saddled him the ass: and he rode thereon, And went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak: and he said

unto him, Art thou the man of God that camest from Judah? And he said, I am. Then he said unto him, Come home with me, and eat bread.

"And he said, I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee: neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place: For it was said to me by the word of the LORD, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest. He said unto him, I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him."

As a saint of God, you must obey God and do exactly what God tells you to do. Do not allow anyone to talk you out of doing the will of God. Someone may say to you, "I am a man of God too." That person might be a man of God, but if God told you what to do, you are not supposed to allow someone else to influence you to go against God's Word. Do not let your family or anyone else influence you against what God tells you to do. God has given you a pastor to feed you with knowledge and understanding, and you should follow the leadership of your pastor. We are living in a time when people do not want to submit themselves to a godly pastor, and that is one reason they are not growing and God is not using them.

The false prophet in Israel lied to the man of God. Verses 19-26 continue: "So he went back with him, and did eat bread in his house, and drank water. And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, that the word of the LORD came unto the prophet that brought him back: And he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the LORD, and hast not kept the commandment which the LORD thy God commanded thee, But camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place, of the which the LORD did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink

no water; thy carcass shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers.

"And it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and after he had drunk, that he saddled for him the ass, to wit, for the prophet whom he had brought back. And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his carcass was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcass. . . . And when the prophet that brought him back from the way heard thereof, he said, It is the man of God, who was disobedient unto the word of the LORD."

Some people will influence you to do wrong, and then they will say, "You should have known better." Yet they were influencing you to do it. How many times have individuals influenced others to leave a true church and caused that person to backslide? It is wonderful to be in a local congregation with families and children and brothers and sisters, nourished by one another's strength and encouragement.

Remember What God Has Done

Saint, you should never forget where the Lord has brought you from. I do not want to forget where the Lord brought me from. God told Israel not to forget in Deuteronomy 8:1-2: "All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers. And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no."

Verses 10-18 continue: "When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the LORD thy God for the good land which he hath given thee. Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day: Lest when

thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; [God brought you out of the bondage of sin. Do not forget that. How many times do people come to God, but as soon as they are blessed, they leave God? God said not to forget Him.]

"Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end; And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. [God gave you your job and the strength to work; then you say, 'By my power, by my might, and by my intelligence, I did this.'] But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day."

Forgetfulness can be annoying. Sometimes I get myself ready to go to work and get to the door and say a prayer before I leave. As soon as I get in the car, I remember that I forgot my phone or something. That is being forgetful. However, a lack of memory toward God can be disastrous and can cause great harm to your soul. The Lord challenged the people, "Do not forget."

Ecclesiastes 12:1 reads, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." If you are saved, do not forget God. You need to stay with God. God is good. My friend, do not overlook the children. Influence is a powerful thing, and your children look up to you.

I love having friends, but I want

friends who will help me not to forget God. I want friends who will remind me where God has brought me from and what God has done for me. A true friend nowadays is very valuable. I like to have genuine friends who are free from hypocrisy and dishonesty. It is a wonderful thing to have genuine friends. You might have associates, but true friends are valuable. A true friend is a person whom you can trust, even with your money. He is not going to take it because he is a genuine friend.

Some people will be your friend just because they want something from you. They want to use you. I came from a poor family, and we did not have much in worldly goods. However, there was a boy in our neighborhood who had all the new toys and things, and I hung out with him. That is how some friends are. They are only around you because they want something that you have.

In John 15:12-15 Jesus said: "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."

The saints of God are my best friends. God hates division. If division occurs, it is because someone has let Satan talk to him or her. We should be like little children, who might have disagreements, but tomorrow they will be playing together again. Jesus let you know that you must become as a little child. God hates division. When division occurs, a different spirit has gotten into someone's heart. When someone will not repent, God hates it. Christ asked His disciples to show their friendship by keeping His commandments.

(Compact Disc TR-1397)

[A God of Mercy—contin. from p. 13]

Many preachers have quit preaching on the home altar, but I believe having a family altar in the home works quite well if you work it right. I thank God for His promises. He will never fail you, and He will not leave you or forsake you. Why? You are His sheep, and He is the Shepherd of the fold.

Zacharias prophesied concerning John the Baptist's mission in Luke 1:76-79. The prophesy of John the Baptist by his father, Zacharias, says: "And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the LORD to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins. Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us [it is by mercy that He reaches His hand out to you and me], To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

God let His Son suffer so that He could extend His hand to us with divine mercy. God is a God of great mercy, sinner friend, and He wants to save you. Thank God, John got hold of that mercy as a young man, and he was a firebrand for God. What happened to him? The mercy of God was working in his life. Verse 80 says, "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel."

James 5:11 reads, "Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." In the case of Job, our Lord proved to be pitiful and of tender mercy.

I cannot thank Him enough for His mercy to me. I could have died a lost man. I could have died in a barroom fight or in a car wreck as a sinner, but God's mercy delivered me. I had a father who prayed for his children.

Father, pray for your children.

Do not live haphazardly; that is the worst thing you can do. You must be sanctified under the Lord God Almighty, live for Him, and pray for your children. You may not think it is doing any good, but you can rest assured that God is working. My father was praying for me while I was down in Florida on the beach. One evening the One whose hand controls the ocean spoke to me. I was alone out on the beach, trying to get loaded on drugs and alcohol. That ocean tide kept rolling in and breaking upon the shore, and a voice spoke to me and said, "Son, do you see the ocean that you love so well?"

I thought, "Yes, but who is speaking to me?" There was no one around. I knew it was not my mother or my father. This was a different voice. It was God speaking to me.

He said, "Do you see how those waves are coming in and crashing on the shore and going back out to the sea?"

I thought to myself, "Yes, I see them."

He said: "Son, that is how My love has been to you, and you need to consider the end of your ways. My love has crashed on the shore of your soul, and you are letting it return to Me."

Parent, you must keep praying, and God will talk to your children. I had no intentions of getting saved. God can turn your children around, but you must get hold of God and keep praying.

The Riches of His Grace

Why is it important that you have the pitiful and tender mercy of God? It is important because without mercy you would not have access to the grace of God. Grace, which has been described by some as the unmerited favor of God, assures you of a successful Christian life.

You may say: "I tried to live the Christian life, but I can't live it." You cannot, but if you will get hold of the mercy of God and the grace of God, if you will sell out and make a

real commitment to God, the grace of God will assure that you will have a successful Christian journey.

Ephesians 1:1-7 reads: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ [grace brings peace and spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ]: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."

We have grace that is peaceful and rich. How much more can we ask for? Verses 4-5 let us know that before the foundation of the world, "grace" signed our adoption papers. I am thankful to God that I became accepted and beloved. Grace can mold us into holy vessels without blame before God in love. God's grace will cause us to give praise to God.

Sometimes I have gone before God and said, "Help me to live better, help me to live cleaner, and help me to live closer to You, Lord." God is not sitting up in Heaven ready to cast a lightning bolt down on you if you make a mistake. If you speak a word in haste, God is not ready to cast you aside, but He is ready to give you grace. What kind of grace? You might have to go back and tell your wife, "Honey, I'm sorry."

Verse 7 speaks of "the riches of his grace." We can experience redemption through the blood of Christ. Ephesians, Chapter 2, men-

tions being the child of disobedience. You were once corrupted by the world, by sin, by evil desires.

When I was lost in the world, the enemy came along and got me to surrender to him and do evil things. Those things never brought joy, peace, or contentment. They brought sorrow and pain and soon captivated my heart and mind until I could not find a way out.

The Apostle Paul said in Ephesians 2:4-5: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)." Consider the attributes of grace, peace, love, and kindness. Attributes of God are incorporated in these virtues, and they can be yours, if you will receive salvation.

I thank God for the riches of His mercy. He raised us up from our dead state, and now we can sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. How is it possible? You cannot earn it or buy it. It is a divine attribute of an Almighty God, Who is holy and pure and just. He wants to give you the spirit of grace and mercy so that you can come through whatever it is you are going through, or if you are lost, so that you can be saved.

Building Up the Kingdom

Ephesians 2:8-10 states: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

To perform the good works of God, we need to understand that the good work is really building up the kingdom in any capacity you can. You need to do whatever you can in the work of God, no matter how small it may be, whether it is taking care of the lawn, cleaning the restrooms, playing the piano, mak-

ing a meal, or sending out a condolence card to someone. Whatever your gift is, it is a good work, and it helps to build up the Kingdom of God.

You will not build up the kingdom by lying on a bed of ease. God's kingdom was not built that way, and it will not prosper when people find themselves at ease in Zion. You should not have the attitude: "I will let somebody else do it. I cannot do as well as I once did." The Psalmist David said even in your old age you can bring forth fruit. What kind of fruit? If you cannot get out and go, you can advise someone who is able to go. You can help them to understand how to work with people. You can give them wise council that you inherited through the years of serving God and still build up the kingdom, but you cannot do it on a bed of ease.

To perform good works, you must have the grace of God because it is necessary. You have to pour out your life before the Lord, just as the woman did with the alabaster box containing precious ointment. You can read about this in Mark, Chapter 14. This woman was performing a good work. The task cost her financially, and it cost her the scorn of the people around her.

You can read in verses 4-5 that they said: "Why was this waste of the ointment made? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor? And they murmured against her." That was not her intent, so Jesus rebuked them. In verses 6-8 Jesus said: "Let her alone; why trouble ye her? . . . She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying." Jesus said this was done for His burial. She did it as a tribute to Him. Jesus shocked them all when He said wherever the Gospel is preached in the world, this would be remembered as a memorial of her.

Life is not a bed of ease. If we build up the Kingdom of God, it is going to cost us. If we perform the work of God, we might have

problems, but there is also a reward for our labors. God has not forgotten your labor, and God will not forget you.

The Apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 12:7-9a: "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh. . . . For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Paul realized that God's grace made him strong and perfect in his weakness. When you feel that you cannot go on, you need to realize that God's grace can make you perfect and strengthen you in your weakest area. He can give you a zeal to keep right on going for God. He can give you a determination to defeat the devil.

Fortify Yourself

The Apostle Paul stated in 1 Corinthians 3:10 that God's grace made him a wise master builder. He realized that he had been used of God to punctuate the fact that Christ is the foundation of salvation. There is no other foundation given. It is not Mohammad or Buddha or anyone else but Jesus Christ, the Son of God. You need to take heed how you build upon that foundation. Paul punctuated that fact. Later in that same chapter Paul let us know that as saints of God, we comprise the temple of God.

Since Christ is the foundation and born-again believers comprise the temple, we need something to bond us together. We read in John 14:6, "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Christ is the way, the Truth, and the life. He is the way to God. You can be forgiven of your sins, and then God will give you abundant spiritual life, but it is the Truth that binds us together. I love the Truth from God's Word.

The Apostle Paul taught in

Ephesians, Chapter 4, about the oneness of the body. He said there is one Lord, one Spirit, one faith, one God and Father of all. Then he explained that each member is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

In verse 11 Paul said, "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." Why? God wants you to come to the unity of the faith and not be tossed about with every wind of doctrine. Many winds of doctrine are floating around, so you have to be prayerful. The Truth will help you to fortify yourself against falseness.

The Apostle Paul tells us in Ephesians 4:15 what it takes to adjust our spiritual sails to avoid being shipwrecked by false doctrines and the cunning, crafty teachings of men. I came out of a Baptist Church because I found out there are false teachings in it. Some churches claim to be Church of God, but they are living in apostasy, thinking they are on their way to Heaven. It is Truth that builds the church. You might have the name right, but the doctrine

could be wrong, and you could still go to hell.

Paul said in Ephesians 4:15 to speak the Truth in love and to grow in Christ. God wants to help us. The Word may get strong and close, but thank God for saints who will take it. The Truth is not appreciated everywhere. Let the Truth hold us together. The words of Truth can strengthen us.

In 1 Timothy 3:15 Paul tells us that when the Truth is spoken in love, it will teach us how to behave ourselves in the Church of God. I had to correct lots of my characteristics when I heard Truth in the Church of God. I did it with gladness because I saw it was spoken in love. I realized that it was not spoken to hurt me.

I thank God that my heart said amen to the Truth when the Gospel came to me. I walked out of Babylon and got on the highway of holiness. Glory to God! I have been in the Church of God ever since. I have been through trials, just as others have, but I am determined to stay with the church until she takes her final flight.

We need to learn to behave ourselves in the house of God, which is the Church of the Living God, the ground and pillar of Truth. Truth produces godly conduct, and godly conduct opposes falsehood, lies, and deceit. Truth is what joins mercy and grace together.

Jesus instructed His disciples in John 16:13 that when the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide His followers into all Truth. We must keep growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord. Even in our old age, we still learn things. This is a learning process. The Spirit of Truth glorifies our loving Savior, and the Spirit of Truth sanctifies the saints from the world. The Spirit of Truth brings us into spiritual oneness with God. We are on this journey together. The Spirit of Truth brings us into oneness with the Father and Jesus His Son. We are firmly connected by the Holy Spirit who guides us in all Truth. May God bless you.

(Compact Disc TR-1356)

Victory Over Accusations

Paul said, "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (Romans 16:20a). The beloved John told us, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4). Such faith must have a solid foundation, and that foundation is the Word of God.

I decided to settle everything by the Bible, to stake my eternal salvation upon the written Word, the Word only. I carefully studied every condition for salvation and found that I had complied with each one of them. Then the "exceeding great and precious promises" were all mine. Upon these promises I planted my feet. I made a covenant with the Lord something like this: "If I never receive a blessing, a good feeling, a sensation of joy until my dying day, I will never doubt Thy Word. I will go to the Judgment resting my soul's salvation upon the Scriptures. Here once for all, I cast my helpless self upon Thy promises, and I rest secure in knowing that they cannot deny His Word; it was confirmed with the oath of the Almighty, and sealed and ratified by the blood of Jesus Christ."

That ended my troubles, and an everlasting victory was mine. For twenty-seven years I have never suffered an hour under accusations of the devil. Hallelujah! Satan often comes like a flood, but the Spirit of the Lord lifts up a standard against him. Faith wards off every dart. From that time until now, I have not lacked the rich blessing of the Lord upon my soul. Amidst the hardest trials, the greatest temptations, the most complex problems and difficult obstacles of life—and they are plentiful—faith reposes calmly upon the rock of eternal Truth, unshaken, unmoved. To the Triune God all praise and glory shall be given forever.

H. M. Riggle

Meeting Announcements

MT. PLEASANT, PA

April 16

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).

April 17-24

REVIVAL: Church of God, 109 Salvation Lane, Mt. Pleasant, Pennsylvania 15666
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Mobile, Alabama
Service times: Mon.-Sat. 7:00 p.m.; Sun. 10:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.
For more information contact: Pastor Paul W. Prinkey, 109 Salvation Lane, Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666
Telephone: 724-547-2151

SUMMERSVILLE, WV

April 25-May 1

REVIVAL: Church of God, 74 Armstrong Road, Summersville, WV
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Mobile, Alabama
Service times: Monday-Thursday 7:00 p.m.; Friday 10:30 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.;
Saturday & Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.
For further information contact: Pastor Earl R. Borders at 304-872-4047
Visit our website: www.ChurchofGodSummersvilleWV.com

Winter 2015 Camp Meeting Recordings

CD NO.	DATE	MESSAGE TITLE	MINISTER
TR-1643	12-27-2015	We All Are Dependent on God	Brother Roger L. Decker
TR-1644		Practical Teachings—Obedience	Brother E. David Stegmeier
TR-1645		A Despised Birthright	Brother Richard Talbot
TR-1646	12-28-2015	Being a Witness to the Lost	Brother Paul Prinkey
TR-1647		Practical Teachings—A Spiritual Mind Versus a Carnal Mind	Brother E. David Stegmeier
TR-1648		Bless the Lord	Brother Richard Talbot
TR-1649	12-29-2015	Holiness and Morality	Brother Kevin Roche
TR-1650		Practical Teachings—Giving and Accepting Reproof	Brother E. David Stegmeier
TR-1651		The Amazing Power of Your Thoughts	Brother Richard Talbot
TR-1652	12-30-2015	Soul Winning	Brother Leamon Whitehead
TR-1653		Practical Teachings—The Rewards of Faithfulness	Brother E. David Stegmeier
TR-1654		Trust Him	Brother Richard Talbot
TM-368	2015	Winter Camp Meeting Songs #1	
TM-369	2015	Winter Camp Meeting Songs #2	
TM-370	2015	Winter Camp Meeting Songs #3	
	2015	Winter Camp Meeting Choir Songs	
	2015	All Messages (includes morning worship services, afternoon teaching services, evening worship services) in MP3 format	
	2015	All Songs in MP3 format	

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