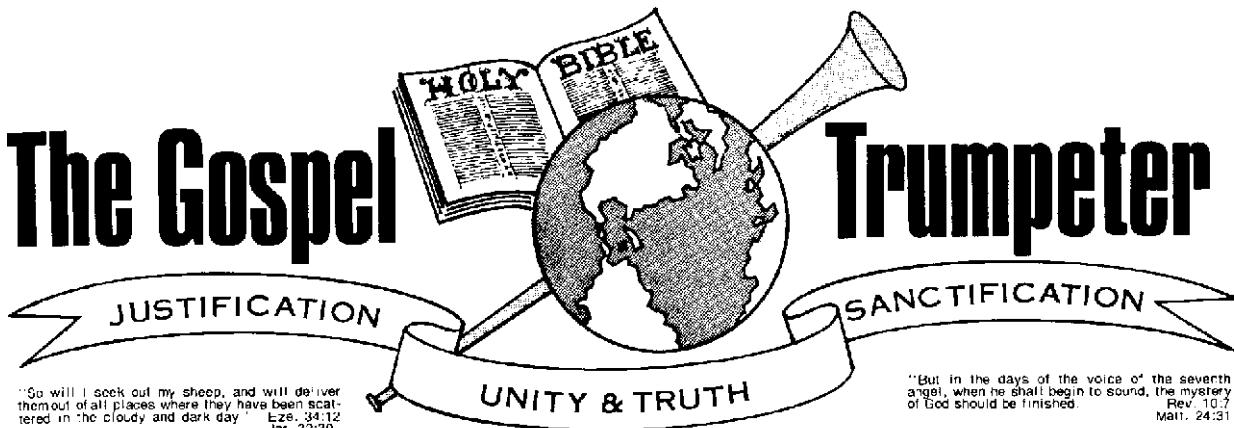


# The Gospel Trumpeter



"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

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SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

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Vol. 46 September 2016 No. 9



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?"

## THE GOSPEL TRUMPETER USPS #871620

Periodicals postage paid at the post office in Newark, Ohio 43055.

POSTMAN, send form 3579 to the printer:

THE GOSPEL TRUMPETER  
675 N. Cedar Street  
Newark, Ohio 43055

This periodical carries no subscription price; however, it is partially maintained through the gifts and offerings of its readers, with the balance of the expenses being paid by the local congregation.

PRAYER: If you need prayer, please phone or write:

Roger Decker, Pastor  
83 Decrow Ave.  
Newark, OH 43055

Email: [pastor@godsacres.us](mailto:pastor@godsacres.us)  
Phone: 740-344-2543  
Fax: 740-344-4737  
Print Shop Phone: 740-345-1312

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

Brother Roger L. Decker ..... Editor  
Workers Too Numerous to Mention

### THE CHURCH OF GOD BELIEVES IN:

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

### SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH

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

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

### CONTENTS

Our Dependence Upon God.....	6
Soul Winning.....	11
The Name Christian.....	16
Youth Corner.....	21
"Stand Still, and See the Salvation of the Lord.....	22
Announcements.....	27

Vol. 46 September 2016 No. 9



## 100-Year Celebration His Truth Is Marching On!

### Humble Beginnings

As we look back over the years, we can see how the hand of God has led this work forward. Many things have been accomplished since the purchase of the first church building on Sixth Street. It would be rather difficult to cover every event that has taken place within this congregation since it first began. We would, however, like to touch a few of the highlights.

Early in the nineteenth century, Evangelist Brother Andy Byers preached in the Newark area, and a congregation was established in the Rocky Fork community. Soon a group of saints began to gather in private homes, in the basement of the Licking County Courthouse, and sometime later they began to worship in a storefront located on South William and Grant Streets.

In 1916 the saints acquired a small brick building on Sixth Street in Newark, Ohio. Brother Emmet E. Caldwell became the pastor of the Church of God here in Newark in 1919. At that time, the congregation consisted of twenty-two people. However, in 1925 the local congregation of the Church of God was without a pastor, and God's people began to pray. God heard the prayers of His people and called William Alan Wilson, a tiller of the soil, to be the next pastor. Brother Wilson was awakened from sleep by the sound of a train whistle echoing through the hills. God spoke to him and told him

to go to Newark and become the pastor of the congregation located on Sixth Street.

On August 17, 1925, Brother W. A. Wilson was ordained and took over the leadership of the congregation of approximately fifty members. God blessed Brother W. A. Wilson's ministry, and many converts were added to the church. More room was required for Sunday school and was obtained by excavating a basement under the old building. This seemingly impossible feat was accomplished by prayer and the free-hearted labors of the pastor and his relatively small congregation.

During the years of Brother W. A. Wilson's ministry, he not only pastored the local work but was active in evangelistic work as well. He was invaluable in establishing and promoting the work of God in southeastern Ohio. Salvation from sin and divine healing were realized by a host of people through his ministry.

The congregation quickly outgrew the old church building. In 1940, a building fund was started, and soon God opened the way for the purchase of the adjoining property. In July of 1949, a house on this site was torn down by the congregation. The ground was broken for the new building the first week in October of the same year. After nearly two years of continued efforts by the pastor, the builder, and the congregation, this building was dedicated to the Lord for the furtherance of His cause on September 2, 1951.

## **Brother W. A. Wilson's Vision**

For several years, God had laid a vision of a campground on the heart of Brother W. A. Wilson. In this vision, he saw men and women of different colors, races, and nationalities coming together to hear the Gospel preached. After much time in prayer, his vision began to become a reality in September of 1954 when God provided for the purchase of the tract of land known today as "God's Acres." (Since that time, there have been other adjacent parcels of land purchased.)

Although Brother Wilson was instrumental in the purchase of this land, which originally amounted to seventeen acres, he made the statement as he and his son, Brother Emerson A. Wilson, stood viewing the newly purchased ground that he would not live to see the first service. Brother Wilson spoke the truth, for on Saturday evening, October 2, 1954, his life's work came to a close, and he departed for the portals of glory. Amid broken and sorrowful hearts, God inspired His people to continue on and finish the plans that had been outlined for God's Acres.

### **A Call to Repentance and to the Ministry**

Brother Emerson Wilson found God in real salvation in 1948. After praying through, he began building a Christian life and influence. Brother Wilson began singing in a quartet that traveled around to various revivals. Soon he began to feel a call to preach the Gospel. For a period of time, there was some reluctance on his part, but he soon abandoned his fears of the ministry, yielded his desires, his plans, his ambitions, and his entire life to the will of God. He was ordained into the ministry during the 1953 Springfield camp meeting.

When Brother Wilson began his ministry, his first revival was held at Brother Runyon's in Mechanicsburg, Ohio. When Brother Runyon first heard this young man expound the Word of God, he made the statement,

"You can tell when God calls a man to preach, because He gives him the ability to do the job." As the days and months passed, God was little by little grooming this man for a major undertaking that, no doubt, at the time, he did not realize was going to take place.

After the death of Brother W. A. Wilson, God then laid His hand on his son, Brother Emerson A. Wilson, to become the next shepherd of the flock. Two or three weeks after his father's death, God laid a message on Brother Wilson's heart to deliver to the people. His text was taken from Joshua 1:1-9. As Brother Wilson began to preach on those verses of Scripture, he told of how the mantle fell from Moses and onto Joshua after Moses died. About that time, Brother Louis Stargell stood up in the congregation and said, "Brothers and sisters of this congregation, God is placing His hand upon Brother Emerson Wilson to be our pastor."

In the early days of his ministry, Brother Wilson often preached out of the "Old Gospel Wagon" he helped build to be used in spreading the Gospel. There was an upright piano in one end, and the rest of the wagon was loaded with a tent, a pulpit, an altar, folding chairs, and a sound system. He traveled locally, often to Buckeye Lake, as well as across the country.

### **God's Acres**

On June 26, 1955, the land known as God's Acres was set apart and dedicated for the Lord's service. Since that day, the grounds have been used each year since for old-fashioned camp meetings where people from all over the United States and around the world have come in to worship the Lord and hear the Gospel preached. The original meeting was a three-day weekend meeting. Today, there are three camp meetings held each year.

When God's Acres was in its infancy, the old barn and surrounding area needed to be renovated before services could be held. The sheep pen was made into the secretary's office. The cow stalls were converted to make

a recording room for taping the services. The old granary was torn down, and a well house was put in its place. There was an old log house that was used for the girl's dorm and also for Bible School. Down over the hill, tents used for sleeping quarters were set up for those who came to camp meeting. A corn crib was made over into a lunch stand. The old dining hall was located where the bookstore is now. The food was prepared downstairs and then carried upstairs to be served. After the renovations were completed, Sunday evening services during the summer months were held in the barn. A little later an addition was added to the back of the barn for additional seating.

As the years progressed, the church building at Sixth and Locust Streets became inadequate for the seating for the worship service. The saints would often sit in the basement during the worship service to make room for new people. Again, after much prayer and consideration before God, Brother Wilson saw the necessity for a new and larger tabernacle to be erected where souls could come and hear the truth. God gave Brother Wilson a message, and his text was taken from Haggai, Chapter 1. His thoughts centered around building a house for God.

In the fall of 1967, construction began on the new tabernacle in which we now worship. God gave the design of the new edifice to Brother Merle Wells at about three o'clock one morning. The Lord showed him that the tabernacle was to be a round building, it would seat some twenty-two hundred people, and no person seated in the sanctuary would be more than one hundred feet from the speaker.

Just as God called the builder, He also placed engineers in the congregation who could lay out the plans. He called bricklayers, carpenters, electricians, cement finishers, and others. God moved on the individual hearts of His people to labor in the construction of the new building, and 65 percent of the labor was completed free-heartedly

by the people of the congregation.

The first service was held in the new tabernacle during the Winter Camp Meeting of 1968. On June 29, 1969, during the Spring Camp Meeting, the building was dedicated to God and set apart for the furtherance of the Kingdom of God. Brother Harold Barber of Tampa, Florida, and Brother V. H. Lightfoot of Sapulpa, Oklahoma, were the guest speakers for the dedication service.

### Old-fashioned Camp Meetings

The first camp meeting at God's Acres was held in 1955. It was a three-day weekend meeting with seven services. In June 1959, camp meetings were changed to a 10-day meeting, starting on a Friday evening and running through the second Sunday. A few years later it was felt that the facilities should be put to greater use, so two meetings per year were scheduled—a spring meeting in late June/early July, and a fall meeting in late August/early September (the fall meeting was later changed to the middle of August). In 1968, a third camp meeting was added—a winter meeting in December, between Christmas and New Year's Day. Today, the congregation continues to host all three of these camp meetings each year. The June and August meetings are currently eight days long, and the December meeting typically lasts four to five days.

In years past, there were small cabins over the hill (behind the men's shower house) that were used for lodging. These cabins were small and a bit rickety, with only two sets of double bunk beds, so they were often used as a last resort. Many changes have been made through the years, including the addition of several dormitories. Today, camping facilities, dormitories, a playground, dining hall, bookstore, laundry facilities, and a snack bar are currently located on God's Acres. Around 2006, 30 full hookup camping spots were added behind the dorms.

Each day begins with a morning

prayer service during the camp meetings. (These prayer services were originally held in the old barn, but are now held in the tabernacle.) In addition to the morning prayer services, it has been common for people to gather in small groups throughout the day to pause for a moment of prayer and thanks to God. Many wonderful miracles have taken place and souls have been saved, due to these prayer services!

A children's service is held during camp meetings. In the early years, stories were told in front of the "Old Gospel Wagon" by Sister Beatrice McKnight (Brother Emerson Wilson's sister). The children's service was moved to the barn once the new tabernacle was built. For many years, these children's services were held in the afternoon at 2:30, but to avoid the heat during the summer months, they are currently held at 10:00 a.m.

### Gospel Publication

For quite some time, Brother Wilson felt the great need for reaching the souls of men and women with the truth of God's Word through the means of the printed page. In March 1971, after much preparation and prayer, the first issue of *The Gospel Trumpeter* was mailed out. In order to accommodate the new work of printing *The Gospel Trumpeter*, an addition was built on the north end of the bookstore (presently the recording ministry office) in 1971. Printing was done upstairs, and collating was done in the basement.

The new Print Shop became extremely overcrowded due to the addition of more equipment. Also, the publication had grown in both size (24 pages and cover) and distribution (nearly 25,000 readers), so the number of helpers increased. Consequently, additional space and a cement floor was needed for workers in putting the paper together and preparing it for mailing. After much prayer and consideration, the congregation felt led to move the printing effort into the much larger quarters of the old church build-

ing in downtown Newark on the corner of Sixth and Locust Streets.

In April 1988, it was decided to move the printing back to God's Acres, due to the lack of parking for the print shop workers and the need for a more convenient location. The old dining hall was converted to the present-day print shop. A Gospel Trumpeter Office was set up in the room next to the bookstore (where the Print Shop had once been) and used to compose each issue.

*The Gospel Trumpeter* was, and still is today, published without a subscription fee. It is supported by donations, offerings, and the local congregation. The very first issue was sent to approximately 3,600 subscribers. As of November 2014, *The Gospel Trumpeter* has more than 10,000 subscribers (approximately 8,000 subscriptions in 48 states of the USA and approximately 2,000 subscriptions in 24 foreign countries). Each month's new issue is now available to read online as well as past issues (archived back to the year 2000) and certain collector's editions.

In addition to publishing *The Gospel Trumpeter*, the Print Shop at God's Acres currently prints books, booklets, tracts, Sunday school materials, flyers, tithe envelopes, prayer request pads, *Treasured Hymn* songbooks, and other items to proclaim the truth to the souls of mankind.

### The Passing of Brother E. A. Wilson

On the evening of Saturday, April 11, 1987, after serving faithfully as pastor of the congregation for thirty-three years, God called Brother Emerson A. Wilson home. On Wednesday, April 15, at 11:00 a.m. a funeral service was held at the Church of God at God's Acres. Brother Harold Kelly officiated the service and Brother Alvin Wilson spoke. It was estimated that hundreds of people were at the gravesite, and a spokesman for Wilson Cemetery said that it was one of the largest funerals ever in Licking County at that point in time.

Following Brother E. A. Wilson's death, the June 4th issue of *The Gospel Trumpeter* was printed in his memory. (This issue can be read online at [GospelTrumpeter.com](http://GospelTrumpeter.com).) This issue spoke of how his ministry stretched further than the local congregation. During the years of Brother Wilson's ministry, he made several missionary journeys to foreign lands. His efforts reached to the Philippines, Africa, West Indies, Haiti, and India. He had traveled to the Cayman Islands, Haiti, and the Philippines. His heart was always tender toward men and women of other lands who needed help, both physically and spiritually.

Brother Wilson authored many publications as well. Among the most notable are his message series on the *Parallel Lectures* (preached during a camp meeting in 1960) and *The Sounding of the Seven Trumpets*, which were made into two books and are currently available to read online or to purchase in the God's Acres bookstore.

### **Truth Marches On**

After Brother Wilson's death, Brother Roger L. Decker, who had worked alongside Brother Wilson for fifteen years, was named the interim pastor. On May 31, 1987, at the age of forty-seven, Brother Decker answered God's call to become the new pastor. An appreciation service was held on Sunday, June 14, 1987, for the saints to be together and thank God

for hearing their prayers for a pastor. Since that time, Brother and Sister Decker have faithfully served the Lord, being a great help and inspiration to the Newark congregation.

### **Outreaches**

**GODSACRES.ORG:** The popularity of the internet made way for the outreach of a church website. The original objective of the website was simple—to upload each month's entire issue of *The Gospel Trumpeter*, thereby increasing its outreach and decreasing production costs. The website quickly expanded to include online versions of the majority of the publications printed by the print shop. The goal was to make study materials (tracts, booklets, etc.) more easily accessible, while reducing the costs of printing and mailing. Later, audio messages, Sunday school materials, youth lessons, and some video recordings were added to the website.

**RECORDING MINISTRY:** Another area of outreach that has been an encouragement to souls has been the recording ministry. Services were not recorded until the congregation began worshiping in the old barn at God's Acres. A recording booth was created on the ground level and later moved to the barn balcony. When the new tabernacle was built, a recording room was built in the balcony.

This ministry has evolved along with the technology age. Recordings previously were made on seven-inch

reel-to-reels and cassette tapes, but now they are available in various formats. Select messages are available on the church website as well. In addition to audio recordings, services are videotaped for shut-ins and ones who are not able to attend services.

### **His Truth Is Marching On**

God's Acres would not be where it is today if it were not for the willingness of the saints to work for God. Hundreds of saints have volunteered their time, money, and efforts over the past one hundred years. Even though every name cannot be mentioned here, their work has not gone unnoticed, and their dedication has been greatly appreciated!

Over the years many people have come and gone since the work in Newark, Ohio, began in the early 1900's. But one thing is certain—the Gospel is still being preached and lived in the hearts of men and women who have yielded their lives to His service. Souls are still being saved, and as in days past, people still come from around the world three times each year to worship the Lord at camp meeting—all to the glory of God!

This year the congregation will be celebrating 100 years of continued truth being preached and lived here in Newark, Ohio. Thank God, His truth is marching on!

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**We welcome you to join us for an All-Day Meeting on Saturday,  
October 15, 2016, to give praise and honor to God for a century of Truth!  
There will be a worship service in the tabernacle with special speakers, a  
presentation on the history of the congregation,  
memorabilia from the past 100 years, food, and fellowship!**

(See page 27 for additional details.)

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*Jeremiah 18:1 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,*

*2 Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words.*

*3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels.*

*4 And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter*

*to make it.*

*5 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying,*

*6 O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.*

*7 At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it;*

*8 If that nation, against whom I*

*have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.*

*9 And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it;*

*10 If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.*

# Our Dependence Upon God



*Brother Roger L. Decker*

## The Relationship Between the Potter and the Clay

God told the Prophet Jeremiah to go down to the potter's house, and there He would give him a message. Verse 3 says when the Prophet Jeremiah got there, he saw a work wrought on a wheel. He saw that the

vessel was marred in the hand of the potter, so he made another vessel as seemed good to him. The Prophet Jeremiah saw the potter, the marred vessel, and the remaking of it. Verse 5 says, "Then the word of the LORD came to me."

In this allegory God shows the absolute state of dependence upon

Him, and He has placed this upon all mankind. All mankind depends upon God. We are as clay in the hands of the potter. In reference to everything here, He can shape your destiny as He pleases. Even if you were to go astray and pervert yourself, you can be reclaimed and reshaped by Almighty God and

become a vessel that seems good for Him to make.

In our Scripture text in verses 6-10, we find an allegory between the clay and the potter, or Israel and God. Those verses read: "O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel. At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.

"And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them." As the potter shapes the clay, so God's Word changes and shapes you, if you will let it. It just depends on how much of God's Word you obey. It is God's Word that does the shaping and the rebuilding.

Jeremiah 1:4-10 reads: "Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child. But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD. Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth. See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant." What was going to root out, pull down, destroy, throw down, and build or plant?

Verse 9 says, "I have put my words in thy mouth."

Some lessons in this allegory are very helpful to us as the church today. The relationship of the potter to the clay is a clear picture of the relationship between God and the Christian. Just as the potter has full control over the clay, the Christian has the same dependence upon Almighty God. Although ones have thought living for God to be very strict; nevertheless, it points to the mercies of our Heavenly Father.

What is a potter? A potter is one who makes pottery. The practice of making pottery has been around for centuries. The practice was in Egypt, even before the entrance of the Hebrews. In ancient days the clay was first trodden down by the feet of the potter until it reached the right consistency, or texture. Next, it was put on a wheel and fashioned by the potter's hand into whatever shape the potter desired. Then the vessel was fired, or baked, in a kiln, or oven.

### The Absolute Power of God

I want you to consider some thoughts that the verses in our Scripture lesson reveal. The first thought is that men and women and all creation are under the absolute power of Almighty God, the power that the Prophet Jeremiah saw that was in the potter's hand. The potter could either leave the vessel untouched or make it a vessel of honor. It could also become a vessel of dishonor. The potter could make it a beautiful vessel or an ugly one, which would not be fit for anything. God has absolute power because He is Almighty.

In this lesson we find that we are powerless against God, just as the clay had no power against the potter. It was absolutely at the mercy of the potter's hands. Likewise, no one can resist the molding hands of God. No one has prospered in this life or in the life beyond without submitting to the will of God. We must depend upon God as a baby does its mother.

We depend upon God as the fish depends on the water. We depend upon God just as we depend on the very air that we breathe. We need God as we need gravity to hold us here on this earth.

The Psalmist David said in Psalm 18:2 (notice the various words that David used to describe the Lord), "The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower." Every one of these words has significant meaning. He said the Lord was his rock; in other words, he owed his safety entirely to God. The word *rock* here has reference to the fact that in times of danger, a lofty rock would be sought as a place of safety. Men would swiftly go to a rock to escape their enemies. The Psalmist said in Psalm 61:2, "From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I."

Going back to Psalm 18:2, David let us know that God was to him as a fortress. The word *fortress* means "a place of defense, a place of strength." An enemy cannot approach it. One is safe in a fortress. David asked the Lord to deliver him from his enemies. God was a Protector, a Helper, a Friend, Father, and a Savior to David. He said the Lord was his strength. God was a Refuge and a Protection for David, as a rock for one who is in danger. David found the Lord to be such a refuge that he could trust in Him.

David also said the Lord was his buckler, or shield, against fiery darts and the horn of his salvation. What is that horn? Well, to animals the horn is their means of defense. The word *horn*, as it is used here, represents protection in the midst of danger. It means that God was to the psalmist what the horn is to an animal. He is our means of defense.

Lastly, David said the Lord was his high tower. A high tower was erected on a mountain, on rocks, or in the walls of a city and was

regarded as a safe place, mainly because it was inaccessible. God has the authority and the power to form and fashion kingdoms and nations as He pleases.

### **Being Shaped Into a Vessel of Honor**

Our Scripture text reads in verses 6-7: "O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel. At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it." In other words, the Lord may dispose of anyone as He thinks fit. It would be absurd for someone to dispute Him. Oh, you may not like what God does, but you would be wasting your time to dispute Him. You can no more dispute with God than the clay could quarrel with the potter.

God always goes by fixed rules of justice and goodness. If God should come against you in judgment, you can be sure of one thing: it is for your sins. Sincere conversion from the evil of sin will prevent the evil of punishment to persons, families, and nations.

Again, verse 8 of our Scripture text says, "If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them." Is that not a wonderful thought? If you, as an individual (not just a nation), get tripped up in life or falter or fall, will turn from that, God will be right there to forgive you and to reinstate you in His kingdom. There is mercy with God.

This is a fact that you need to consider: you cannot shape your life to please God any more than the clay can shape itself without the power of the potter. Yet, is it not true that many people keep trying? Oh, they seem to do well for a while. They might have good jobs, good families, and good health; however, a time is coming when

they are going to need God. Something difficult is coming down the highway of life toward them, as it does for every one of us. Without God they will not be able to stand against it. What can change? Serious afflictions or financial hardships may come upon them. God allows these hardships to reshape their lives, to remodel them, to try to make them vessels of honor, and to bring them out of sin.

Again, Jeremiah 18:8 tells us, "If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them." The Lord said He would repent of the evil, or the punishment, that He thought to do to a nation if they turn from evil. Sometimes people try this and that for a while, always trying to maneuver through life, always trying to get around circumstances and trying to be successful at the same time, even to the place where they try it without God. Why? Because they think God requires too much. You see, there are some things that people do not want to quit. They would like to have God, but only just in case troubles, afflictions, adverse circumstances, or heartaches come their way. That is when they want to get God off the shelf, so to speak, to have Him bless them.

Remember, just as the clay cannot come against the potter, you cannot come against God. God will allow things to happen to reshape you. Maybe some things about your vessel are not right; maybe there are lumps where there should be beauty. Maybe there are deficiencies where there should be smoothness, or maybe there is hardness and roughness where there should be smoothness. The hand of God will reshape your vessel. The clay cannot shape itself; it cannot become a vessel of honor by itself.

### **Pleasing God**

If you want to make it to Heaven, dear one, before you leave this world, you have to please God. If

you do not, you are not going to see the inside of Heaven. I want you to read what the Hebrew writer said about Enoch in Hebrews 11:5. He wrote, "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God."

What is another word for pleased? You could say that he satisfied, or delighted, God. Enoch was living in a time when there was no church, no telephones, no prayer meetings, no pastor, and no spiritual brethren; yet he pleased God. What a Judgment it will be when saints such as Enoch, Abraham, Job, Daniel, and others stand there and watch as people try to give their excuses about why they did not serve God.

Can you imagine standing there and hearing people say things such as, "God, I couldn't give up worldliness" or "Lord, I didn't like the standard; it was far too strict" or "I couldn't stand the peer pressure; You know how it is to be ridiculed and mocked." Another might say, "Well, You know the battle I had with sinful habits; I couldn't quit" or "I would have gotten saved, Lord, but I wanted to do it together with my family." Dear one, you cannot get saved on a family plan; salvation is an individual matter.

In no way can you obtain a good ending if you leave God out of your life. Maybe you have had the thought that someday, before you slip out of this life, you will turn your heart to God. Maybe you think, "I will get saved, but I want to get saved when I am ready." You can only get saved when God is ready. Now, you can get saved anywhere. You can get saved out in a hayfield, while planting crops, or wherever you meet God's conditions, but it is an ideal condition to get saved when people are praying for you. The "clay" cannot make it without the work of the Potter.

We were like the earth in Creation. Genesis 1:2 says, "And the earth was without form, and void;

and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." What does being "without form" mean? It means it was without shape. Before a person is saved, there is nothing about that individual that has any likeness or resemblance to a Christian. Before I was saved, I surely did not look like a Christian. I was without form. I did not talk like a Christian, walk like one, or look like one until the Spirit of God moved and began to reshape me, just as a potter shapes the clay.

When God begins to work on you with His tender, loving hand, He shapes and molds and makes you into a vessel of honor. There was a day in my life when I would have been fearful to stand before God. Before my conversion, there was nothing in me that could enable me to make myself into a vessel of honor.

In the Book of Jeremiah, we read that at first the vessel was marred, or blemished, and the potter made another vessel as seemed good to the potter to make it. Under the old Mosaic Law, there were many flaws in the life of Israel, so what did God do? He made a new vessel and gave us a Sacrifice so that all sin could be removed, and it seemed good to the Potter.

We read in Hebrews 7:19, "For the law [speaking of the Mosaic Law] made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God." In our Scripture text in Jeremiah 18:7-10 we see some promises that God has for us in these verses, but these promises depend on obedience. Also, there is a promise that is going to take place for disobedience.

Again, verses 7-10 of our Scripture text read: "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent [or He will change His mind] of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I

shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them." Dear one, God can bring down a nation, a kingdom, or an individual very quickly. He does not have to stand around and figure out a way to bring one down. However, God would rather one would turn from the evil punishment that He would do. He said, if a nation would turn from their evil, God would repent.

### The Mercy of God

Let us look at the Word of God to see where God actually changed His mind. In Jonah, Chapter 3, you can read that God changed His mind. We read in verses 1-10: "And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time [he ran the first time and turned from the calling that God gave him, but God gave him another chance], saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee [the effectiveness comes in the preaching of what God bids you to preach]. So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey.

"And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. For word came unto the king [a pagan king] of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sack-cloth, and sat in ashes [these were heathen people, but they believed God]. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor

drink water: But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands.

"Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not."

The Prophet Isaiah said in Isaiah 1:16-20: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

"If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it." This promise is scattered throughout the Word of God. God's Word is so sure that it is going to happen exactly the way God said it would happen.

Deuteronomy 30:19 reads, "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." With all the warnings and the pleadings that are scattered throughout the Word of God, many people still try to mold their own lives.

### Will You Be a Vessel of Honor?

The Prophet Ezekiel said in Ezekiel 18:31-32: "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord

GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye." God's desire is for everyone to live. God does not look forward to bringing judgment upon anyone. After all, it would be so unnecessary if people would hearken to His Word.

God is merciful. Many times God goes out of His way to turn individuals from evil, but instead of their being willing and obedient, they refuse and rebel. God wants to make your life good, right here on this earth; but being a God of justice, if you refuse and rebel, you are going to be devoured with the sword, or the Word. The mouth of the Lord has spoken it.

Dear one, you should know better than to think you can make it without God, yet you continue to try. Why? Are there some things that you do not want to give up? Are those things worth losing your soul? Evidently you feel that they are.

Evidently you feel that smoking (or whatever the vice may be) or unforgiveness has more value than your soul. Do you not think God can help you? Do you not think that God can take away your sins and give you power to overcome them? Dear one, do not underestimate the power of God. He can take a vessel of dishonor and make it a vessel of honor, if you will let Him.

Second Timothy 2:20-21 reads: "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dis-honour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

Those whom God uses are those who purge themselves from the things of dishonor. Paul said in verse 20 that in a great house there

are some vessels of honor and some of dishonor. Will you let God make you a vessel of honor? That is what He wants. He wants you to be sanctified for His service. He is the Potter, and you are the clay.

Paul said in Romans 9:20-21: "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dis-honour?" God wants to make you a vessel of honor. Serving God is not a burden; serving God is a privilege. It is a wonderful privilege to walk down the street with vices of every kind around you and to have victory over those things. It is a privilege to live under the blessings of God rather than under His wrath.

(Compact Disc TR-1643)

## Self-Pity

There is no trace in Christ of self-pity. He suffered the cruelest treatment from His enemies, but no word of complaint ever fell from His lips on that account. It would have been understandable if in the last few hours when mounting indignities were heaped upon Him—betrayal, deserted, stripped, scourged, spat upon, crucified—He had fallen into self-commiseration. No! There is no trace or no suggestion of any such thing. There is bewilderment in the cry of dereliction. "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" There is agony when He exclaimed, "I thirst," but there is no self-pity. On the way to Golgotha, when the Cross was on His shoulders and He staggered under its weight, and the great beads of perspiration broke upon His brow, there were women in the crowd who wept. "Daughters of Jerusalem," He said, with simple dignity, "weep not for Me." When they nailed Him to the Cross and set it up on the summit of the hill, His first thought was not for Himself but for others. He prayed for His murderers, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do." He provided for His mother, "Woman, behold thy son; son, behold thy mother." He pardoned the dying thief, "Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." The self-pitying heart is the self-centered heart. A heart like the heart of Jesus occupied to the point of obsession with the need of others, is forever secure against self-pity, and the cure for self-pity is there.

Robert J. McCracken

*Matthew 4:18 And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a*

*net into the sea: for they were fishers.*

*19 And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you*

*fishers of men.*

*20 And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.*

# Soul Winning



## *Brother Leamon Whitehead*

### **Witnessing to Souls**

I believe Peter and Andrew took Jesus seriously when He said, "I will make you fishers of men." Sometimes I wonder if we are really bombarding the kingdom of darkness and disturbing the devil as we ought to. The saints are in the kingdom of peace, or the kingdom of righteousness. The world is in the kingdom of darkness, and the devil wants to keep them there. The devil knew what Jesus came to do and that the Apostles were His helpers.

All except one of the disciples

lost their lives in the line of duty because they were serving God and causing the devil trouble. We could call them "devil disturbers." They shook up the kingdom of darkness and the enemy. Why? They took Jesus seriously when He said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." They went out fishing for men. Sometimes I wonder if the devil does not have some Christians running scared and maybe just trying to stay saved. Christian friend, that is not good enough. The Lord saved us and redeemed us from sin, and He called

us into the work of God. Soul winning is not just for the preacher, but every saved individual needs to be fishing for souls.

The Scriptures let us know that these brethren were causing the devil a lot of trouble. The devil used people and circumstances, but he was behind all the trouble. In Acts, Chapter 12, you can read that Peter was locked up in prison by Herod the king. Herod was going to have him killed the next day, but God brought Peter out of that prison. The reason this happened was that Peter was a "devil disturber." Peter was

winning souls. The devil is going to get disturbed when you get close to his kingdom and deal with hearts and fish for the souls of men. The devil does not like it.

There is a world out there living in sin and wickedness, lost and undone without God. There are souls who want to hear about salvation. I pray that God will give the saints a greater burden to win more souls for Him. Are you busy working in the kingdom, witnessing to the souls of men and women? We can get caught up with the cares of life, but we are to win others to the Lord. Sometimes you may get a little tongue-tied and feel that it is hard to talk to people, so you need to pray for holy boldness. We need that boldness when we go out to win souls for God. The saved are the only ones who can win precious souls. Sometimes I think I am too quiet about it.

All the Apostles except John were killed, and they tried to kill him too. They tried to boil him in oil, but the oil would not harm him, so they put him on the Isle of Patmos to die. Why? They did this to him because he loved God and he was preaching the Truth. He was bombarding the kingdom of darkness. As we look at the population today, we have more people to witness to. A greater number of souls are out there to work with than at any time in history.

### **Are You Carrying the Gospel to Others?**

I wonder if the devil does not have too many Christians trying to stay in the safety zone, but I pray that God will anoint us in a mighty way so that we can see precious souls get saved and turn from the ways of sin. God is just the same today as in the days of the Apostles. He wants to save people. I have never seen a time as wicked as it is today. We have never lived in such a time. Wickedness is all around us. Sometimes I feel like the devil backs us into a corner, daring us to open our mouths. Nevertheless, the Lord

can give us power over all the work of the enemy. I thank God for the precious messages of Truth.

Do you know why the Lord has blessed us with the Truth? So we can carry it to others. If you do what God wants you to do, it will not always be convenient. It will inconvenience you some, but oh, to see souls saved! Oh, to see more loved ones, children, dads and moms, and grandmas and grandpas delivered from the world of sin! I am telling you, it will be worth it all!

In the Book of Acts, we see the evidence of what Jesus said He would do if the Apostles would follow Him. Peter stood up and preached on the Day of Pentecost, and about three thousand souls were added to the church. Some probably think that sounds good, but they do not believe that can happen in our day. I believe it can! The days of miracles are not over. God has not called an end to things yet, and He wants to save souls. I repeat, no one can carry the message of salvation but those who have experienced it. The mighty army of God is the only one that can carry the message of Truth to the lost and dying world.

What did Jesus say to His disciples? He told them to go and He would go with them. I hope God will help you to see that He is the same today. The disciples got serious about this. I believe Peter and Andrew liked fishing. They probably loved the smell of the fish and the smell of the sea, and they made a career out of fishing. Then Jesus came along and said, "Follow me, I will make you fishers of men." This makes me want to shout, because it was not long after Jesus returned to Heaven that He fulfilled what He promised. They believed Him, and they followed Him.

If I were to preach and three thousand souls got saved, the people would have to pray me back to life. I get excited when one soul gets saved. Someone may say, "Oh, times are different now." Yes, a lot of things are different, and one thing that is different is that we are not

getting the work done that needs to be done. People are going to hell every minute of the day because we are not getting the job done.

The next day Peter preached again, and about five thousand souls believed. I repeat, the disciples took Jesus seriously. Do you know what was happening? The devil was becoming angrier by the minute. If you do not disturb him, he will not disturb you much. We are supposed to disturb the devil. How are we going to do that? We can do that by witnessing to souls. You can witness to someone at the shop where you work or at the grocery store. You ought to witness for God every time He gives you an opportunity. You need to pray that God will give you holy boldness and loose your tongue.

If you are not careful, you will size people up and decide: "I believe I would be wasting my time on that person. I don't believe he would want to hear about the Gospel." So you wait for another opportunity. I have seen people get saved that I thought were not really interested, so we do not know who might be interested. If you keep the seed bottled up, it is never going to grow. It has to be sown. God has been so good to me, but I feel that I have not done enough for Him. He is just the same today, and we cannot do anything on our own. God can work with a dedicated heart that is given to Him and use it for His glory. Peter was an ordinary fisherman, but Jesus used him and the other Apostles to be fishers of men. We still need fishers of men yet today! There is a greater work to be done.

It is easy to pray and wait for souls to come in, but that is not usually how it happens. My heart is burdened for souls, and I am never satisfied with that part of it, but I want to do my best.

### **Time to Get Out of Your Comfort Zone**

Getting back to the Apostles, we read in Acts 4:1-3: "And as they

spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide."

How long has it been since you have caused the devil any trouble? Many of us would probably have a testimony of how the devil has caused us trouble recently. How long has it been since you got in his sandbox by witnessing to a neighbor who is lost or by witnessing to someone on the job, and that person has become interested in serving God? The devil does not want to lose any of his servants. If you want to make the devil angry and get him excited, just try to win souls. You have not seen the side of the devil that you will see when you really get serious about fishing for souls. It will not take long for the enemy to get upset with you.

I have never been satisfied with what I have accomplished for the Lord. He has done so much for me. The only work that is going to last is what we do for God. The Apostle Paul said in Ephesians 6:10-12: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

That is where the battle is. Remember, these people do not like the light, but they love darkness. When a child of God gets around them and his light shines, the devil wants to put a bushel over it to cover it up. He does not like light. Souls are going to get free to serve God when the Word of God is preached and that seed is sown. The only thing that is going to set them free is the Truth of God's Word.

May God help us to win souls.

We are getting close to the end of time, and people are not interested like they used to be. The Gospel has not lost its power. It has just as much cleansing power today as it has ever had. The blood will never lose its power. I realize that it seems like an uphill battle and that we have a lot of opposition to press against, but the Gospel still works. May God give us confidence and get us out of our comfort zone and help us to work more fervently.

The devil has told me many times: "If you are going to get anybody to believe this Gospel and get saved, you will have to lighten up on the message a little. People do not like this kind of preaching these days." Then someone will get saved, and they love it just as much as I love it. I love the old-time religion just as it is. I do not want to change it or rearrange it, but I love it just like it is. If people will come and taste of the Lord and see that He is good, they will say: "I don't know why I waited so long. This is the best thing that has ever happened to me."

Sometimes you may get a little complacent just trying to keep your own head above the water, so to speak, but Paul said we are more than conquerors. God will give you what you need to take you through and to help you to win others. The pastor does not always preach just to feed the saints, but part of that message is to win lost souls. If he feeds the saints all the time and does not speak to the lost, the congregation will dwindle. We need young people as well as older people in order to have a thriving church. We must talk to God and make sure we have not lost hope in winning souls.

### **Halfhearted Service Will Not Work**

The present time is the darkest time that I have ever seen in this old world. Sin is all around us right in a country that has been called a Christian nation. I never thought I would witness what we are witnessing

today, but the darker it gets, the brighter the light shines. There is not enough darkness to put out the light. That is what the devil does not like. Sinners can tell whether or not you are a Christian as you work on the job or wherever you are.

We must remember that our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but our fight is with the devil and the kingdom of darkness. Souls are in prison there, and there is nothing to help them to get free but the Gospel. The true saints of God are the only ones who can help sinners. Our wrestling is against the rulers of the darkness of this world and against spiritual wickedness in high places. This is not a literal battle. That is the reason Paul went on and said to put on the whole armor of God. It is a dangerous place out in the world; it is a spiritual war zone. Some Christians have lost their lives out there while some have backslidden and lost their salvation. Those fiery darts are flying thick and fast.

The enemy wants to get to your leader, or your pastor. Satan tried to get to Jesus when He was a little baby. In essence, Herod told the wise men: "When you find Him, bring me word again. I want to worship Him too." That big liar was full of the devil. He wanted to kill Jesus, and when He escaped his hands, he killed all the male children up to two years of age to try to make sure that they got Him. Jesus came on a mission, and because of Him, we can be saved. Praise God! Now He has called us and sent us on a mission. Let us not fail Him in this fight against ungodliness and sin.

Proverbs 11:30 says, "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise." We need wisdom in winning souls. The Word and the blood have never lost their power. They will work for us today as they have worked in the past, but time is running out. Most of my years are behind me, and you are not getting any younger, so we need to renew our efforts and take more seriously what Jesus said: "I

will make you fishers of men." The Word of the Lord is the bait to make hungry souls bite.

Jeremiah 16:16 says, "Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the LORD, and they shall fish them." You have to put your all into being a fisher of men. If you put your all into it, God will honor that. When you run into difficulty, one of the first things the devil tries is to convince you that the Lord has somehow forsaken you. That is a trick that sometimes works. That is the reason the devil has never gotten rid of it. He will tell you: "Look at all you have done for God and the sacrifices that you have made. If He really loved you as He says, where is He now?"

Mary and Martha went through something similar to this. They never doubted that Jesus had the power to heal, but they could not get Him there in time to heal Lazarus. He had more power than they realized. Jesus was in no hurry. It was no harder for Him to raise Lazarus from the dead after he had been dead for four days than it would have been to hurry there and heal him.

### God Will Not Fail You

The enemy will try to discourage you and cause you to doubt and wonder about God. If you are on God's side, He is on your side. No matter what comes or goes, if you know down deep in your heart that you are on God's side, if you love Him, if you serve Him, and if you stay with Him, He will never leave you. You can just get rid of that thought and spend your energy on something else.

No matter how dark your situation gets, I do not think anyone ever suffered as much as Job did, yet he never fell into despair. He finally came to the conclusion that he had searched for God, but he could not find Him and did not know where He was. If he had stopped there, that would have left him in despair, but he added, in so many words: "I don't

know where God is, but He knows where I am. When God has tried me, I shall come forth as gold."

One thing that people have trouble with is that their problems appear to them to be bigger than God is. I do not want to discourage you, but you will have problems as long as you live. You may think your problems are bad now, but they may get worse; however, that does not mean that God is not God. That does not mean that He has forgotten about you, but the enemy will try to disturb you over that. You need to make sure that you are on God's side. Even when you cannot see Him, feel Him, or hear Him, when it seems that the clouds are as brass and your prayers are not getting through, you need to remember that Jesus is standing somewhere in the shadows.

I am not afraid of God failing me; I want to make sure that I do not fail Him. You are going to face some hard things, but He will take you through whatever might come your way. In 1 Corinthians 9:19-22 the Apostle Paul said: "For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."

You might have to get out of your comfort zone to work for God. Tomorrow always seems to be a more convenient time. Sometimes you may get calls in the middle of the night, but if you will rise to the occasion and do what you can, do what God wants you to do, you will be blessed. I would rather have somebody call me in the night and get me out of bed than to have a

throbbing headache and be unable to sleep, wouldn't you? Again, Paul said, "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."

Saints, we are the army of God. We are to carry the Word of God to the lost. Jesus said we are the salt of the earth and the light of the world; we are to be an example.

### Are You Willing to Be Used of God?

Paul said in 2 Corinthians 12:15, "And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." Paul said he would gladly be spent working for the glory of God. In other words, he was willing to be used of God. These men were truly devil disturbers. They were an endangerment to the devil's kingdom. I would like to see the devil get really disturbed. Some may fear what he might do if he became really angry, but what do you think the Lord is going to be doing? If you fail to sow the seed and fail to work to get men and women saved, the devil is not going to get excited.

The Apostle Paul gave his life for the work of God. As a Pharisee, before he was saved, he persecuted the church. Paul openly confessed, in so many words: "I was ignorant when I was doing that. I thought I was doing God a service." He did not know how much harm he had done against God. Paul said he persecuted the church beyond measure, but the Lord forgave him. After he got saved, it was as if he could not do enough to repay God for all the wrong that he had done. He loved God.

The Apostle Paul made three missionary journeys. He was not on vacation. No, he was establishing congregations, preaching the Gospel, and winning souls. He encountered much opposition. One time when he put wood on a fire, a poisonous serpent jumped out of the fire and bit his hand. The old devil did much to oppose Paul, but he did

everything that he could for God. He suffered shipwreck and many other perils. He was taken outside the city, stoned, and left for dead. I do not know how long he laid there, but when he rose up, he went back into the city.

Paul was glad that he had something worth living for and something worth dying for. He made that long journey to Rome, and eventually he lost his head at the hands of Emperor Nero. The late Brother Wayne Hafley often said when preaching: "Now, don't get mad at me. If you do, I'll know who your daddy is." Who do you think Nero's daddy was? His daddy was the devil.

The enemy of souls uses some people, but we should not get a bad attitude against them. We need to look beyond that. If those people were to get saved and have a new master, they would not be doing what they do. We do not want to be around people who are so sinful, but the Lord can make saints out of them. Then we would like to have them for next door neighbors. What they need is salvation! The enemy is reigning over his kingdom, and he is trying to oppress the church in every way he can.

Have you ever heard the song that says, "We've got the power in the name of Jesus"? If you go in His name, you will have the power. If you are working for Him, you have the power, and He will go before you. The devil likes to work on the pastor of a congregation because he is the one who is leading the people. I was never in the military, but I believe if they wanted to get the enemy soldiers all mixed up, they would shoot their leader, and then the soldiers would scatter. The devil shoots often at the pastor. He is leading a flock of God's people, and the enemy would like to knock him out of the race.

The devil has a lot of power, but his power is no where close to God's power. Now, the devil is not a dummy. He has been doing evil since the Garden of Eden. He was

never an angel in Heaven, but he has always been an opposer. We are not fighting against flesh and blood, but our battle is against the kingdom of darkness. That is the kingdom we were in at one time, but we were delivered by the power of God. Only Christ can deliver people out of the kingdom of darkness.

To be a successful fisher of men, it takes much more than sailing around on the sea of life. People seemingly are just sailing on the sea of life, unconcerned about their souls. To be a successful fisher of men, you need wisdom. He who wins souls is wise. Also, you need holy boldness. You may be called upon to go right into the devil's stronghold and rescue souls. Satan will not be happy about that. Jesus said in Revelation 2:13, "I know . . . where Satan's seat is." God wants us to take the battle to him. May God help us to remember that Jesus is just the same today as He was then.

The brethren in the early church were serious about spreading the Gospel. Acts 17:6 says, "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also." They had heard about the Apostles. They had heard about the stir that was being made and about the men who had turned the world upside down. In reality, it was already upside down, and they were trying to get it turned right side up, as it ought to be. A stir was going on because they dared to follow God. God had done great things in their midst.

I have loved ones who are lost. I was raised in sectarian religion, and all my family is in sectism. I have been a Christian for a long time, and I wish I could have a greater impact on them. I feel the pressure, and I know most of us have lost loved ones whom we would like to see saved. I believe that if I really follow Jesus and take Him seriously that He will make me a fisher of men and will give me the wisdom I need to win souls. Saints, we need to pray for a greater burden for the lost and work harder for God, and I know we will see results for our efforts. When

the late Brother Amburgey talked about false doctrine, he said, "Well, it sounds good, but there is a problem with it—there is no Truth in it." So it really is not good.

In a few short years, the morning church had carried the Gospel to the then-known world. It is no wonder that the devil was so upset. You talk about shaking his kingdom! They shook it with the message of the Cross and the message of Jesus. The same message, the same Word of God, has never lost its power. They took the message to the end of the then-known world. The devil was stirred when Jesus was born. As I mentioned earlier in the message, he tried through Herod to destroy Jesus. The devil was very upset. You need to remember that the battle is raging, not up in Heaven, but right here on the earth.

In the day when paganism was reigning, the Christians went to work exposing that thing with the Gospel, and the saints of God won the battle. When you get over in the devil's territory, he is going to get upset. If he has not bothered you or troubled you, maybe you are too at ease. If you get over in the devil's sandbox, you will know it. That is exactly where you ought to be with God's help. It is important because lost souls are bound in the kingdom of darkness, and Satan is the ruler of that kingdom.

Uncle Bud Robinson once said that he prayed that God would give him a backbone like a saw log. He wanted to stand firmly for God and not yield to anything evil. He said, "Lord, give me a backbone like a saw log, and help me to chew on the devil as long as I have teeth. When my teeth are gone, help me to gum him 'til I die." I do not think he loved the devil, do you? Does your fishing for souls upset the devil? Are you fishing earnestly enough and often enough and seeing results?

*Philippians 1:27 Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.*

*Acts 11:19 Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.*

*20 And some of them were men*

*of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Greeks, preaching the Lord Jesus.*

*21 And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.*

*22 Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.*

*23 Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with*

*purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.*

*24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.*

*25 Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul:*

*26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.*

# The Name Christian



**Brother Richard Talbot**

## **How the Power of God Worked in the Early Church**

I want you to consider some thoughts about the name "Christian." The Christians were first called so in Antioch. As I deal with

this thought, I want you to consider the setting of the Scripture reading. We find that great persecution scattered the church. Upon Stephen's death, the Word of God began to spread. At Stephen's death, we find that Saul was there as a witness, but

shortly afterward Saul was converted and became a great man of God. He went out preaching Jesus, whom he once persecuted.

Hearing about the power of God working in Antioch, the church in Jerusalem got excited and said they

needed to send someone there to see what was going on, so they sent Barnabas, who was full of the Holy Ghost and faith. When he went, he began to see all the works of God. He witnessed how the church was growing and how many souls were being saved, so Barnabas went to get Saul (later called Paul).

Barnabas was not jealous or envious of Saul. There was no division working in his life. Barnabas knew that Saul was a great and powerful man of God in the work of God, and Barnabas knew that he needed some help. He did not try to do it all on his own. He brought Saul back to Antioch, and they labored together there for a year, teaching, preaching, and instructing the people in the way of Christ. It was Barnabas who introduced Saul to the brethren at Jerusalem after Saul's conversion. You can read about that in Acts, Chapter 9. Barnabas had a special connection with Saul, and they worked well together.

The term "Christian" has stuck with the saints of God down through the ages of time, and it is with us yet today. The name Christian was not a name of divine origin. Jesus Christ never referred to His disciples as Christians. The disciples referred to themselves as the brethren, the fellowship, the saints, or the disciples. Jesus referred to His followers as disciples, as if they were His students.

When you think about this idea of putting names on people, some seem to get attached to the names more than the reality of the cause. It was worldlings, or history says it was worldly soldiers of the Greek population, that put the name Christian on the disciples. The name Christian only occurs in two other places in the New Testament. One was in Acts 26:28 when King Agrippa said to Paul, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

I believe that King Agrippa had in his mind a real picture of what it meant to be a Christian. As King Agrippa trembled under the Apostle Paul's testimony, his heart was

touched, and his spirit was broken. Agrippa did not take the term Christian lightly. I believe he knew the depths of what it would mean if he were to take the name Christian. Today too many people have lost all connection with what the name Christian really means.

The Apostle Paul wrote his letters, not to Christians, but to the saints. The other place in the Scriptures where the term Christian is used is in 1 Peter 4:16, which reads, "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf." I believe Peter was trying to get the attention of the people to whom he was writing. He was not using that term loosely.

Christian is a popular term. Many people claim to be Christians. Often when everybody is the same thing together, not much suffering is involved. However, Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:12, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Something has gone wrong with the idea of what a Christian really is in our age and time.

### Christianity Is Unique

What was the reason for the saints being called Christians at Antioch? Antioch was the capital of Syria, and it was the third largest city in the world at that time, behind Rome and Alexandria. It was an extremely wealthy city, and according to history, it was the most disreputable city in the world. Antioch was an extremely wicked city filled with pleasure, lust, and evil.

It is amazing to me that God moved right into Satan's kingdom and raised up a church. There is not enough darkness to put out the light. Saint, if you have the light of God in your soul, your environment should not put out that light. The darker the surroundings, the brighter you ought to be able to shine. During Paul's last time in Antioch, Antioch became the central place from which Christianity spread throughout the

world. God used Antioch and the many souls that were being saved as a springboard to spread out into the rest of the world.

I believe God likes to take difficult populations and do wonderful works with them. He moves when there is no idea that there is any hope of its ever coming about. He moved right into Antioch, sent some ministry there, and the hand of God was with them. They began to preach, and the power of God began to fall until they got the attention of the saints of God in Jerusalem. They sent Barnabas, and Barnabas went after Saul, and then the work began to prosper. Again, Antioch became the springboard for Christianity to the rest of the world. You can read that in Acts 13:1-4 and Acts 14:24-28.

Muslims intend for every person in the world to become a Muslim; that is their goal. France, by population alone, may become a Muslim republic; soon it may no longer be France as we have known it. That is just one small country. Through immigration, the Muslims are overflowing the French population, and in so many years, the Muslims expect to take full control. This is their ideology. Those in Christianity have cut down on the number of children they have, perhaps averaging only one or two children per family. Muslims teach having many children, because their idea is for everyone in the world to become a Muslim.

When you think about Christianity, is it right for Christians to aim at global evangelism? Should we be concerned about spreading Christianity everywhere we can? Only Christianity is unique. The meaning of the word *unique* is, "only one of its kind, to be without equal, singular, not being complicated with other things."

True Christianity holds all the characteristics of being unique. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a unique Gospel. We have a unique Leader (one of His kind). We have a message that is unique in this world. We

have a power with God that is unique. We have a hope that is unique in the society in which we live, Church of God. This claim is made by most Christian commentators on the basis of their understanding of the Gospel.

The uniqueness of the Gospel is that it tells us what we cannot do. God has done this for us. Now, in all the Far Eastern religions, you will find men in search of God. However, in Christianity God came down in search of men. God sent His only begotten Son into the world, so that whosoever should believe on Him could have eternal life.

### **The Unique Message of the Gospel**

God has come down to the earth in the person of His Son to reveal Himself to us, which is the only way we could ever understand in terms of human life. The dissension between Christianity and all other systems of religion lies basically in the message that God came to secure. Of all the self-help books, the counseling books, and the teachings of great philosophers of years gone by (some of their wisdom is beautiful and some of their words are very powerful), none of them can say as Jesus did in Matthew 11:28, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

No other religion that stands out can say as Jesus did in John 6:51 to the world, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever." No religion in the world outside of true, genuine Christianity has such a powerful, outstanding message.

Church, do not let the Christian message be dragged down into the dirt. Do not let it become so common to you that you feel that you do not have a firm hold on the things of God. The most powerful people have God working on their side.

I have never heard of any writings by Buddha, Allah, or any

other religious leader say as Jesus did in John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life. . . ." Only in true Christianity is there anything recorded (not in any organized forms of religion) where someone said to a convert as Jesus did in John 8:11, "Go, and sin no more." In Jesus Christ we have a unique message.

Other religions boast of their great education and intellect and strive for human perfection, but in Christ, in just a few short years, twelve unlearned men turned the world upside down, brought down kingdoms, and changed the course of history. There is power in being a Christian.

It is common knowledge that people are often referred to by whom they follow. John and Charles Wesley went out preaching. They never established the Methodist Church, but their followers came along and began to erect churches in their name. Martin Luther never established the Lutheran Church, but his followers came along and established the Lutheran Church in his name. Students are known by those whom they choose as their teachers.

One brother said, "The very moment you open your mouth to say you are a Christian, you have a high standard to live up to." Christianity is unique not only in its outward standards but also in its doctrines. Today professing Christians are so common that many times people put no real weight of value to Christianity. The men in Antioch were noted to be like Christ. They were obeying the teachings of Christ, and they honored Christ above all other gods and idols, refusing to worship any other gods but Christ. Therefore, it would be only natural that the world would refer to them as Christians because they were so Christlike. You know a person by his dress, by his character, and by his conduct.

True Christianity still holds to

one God, one faith, and one doctrine. Some organizations try to make Christianity a mockable religion that can fit into just about every circumstance and situation of life.

### **How Is Your Witness?**

As true Christians, we are identified by our actions, our dress, our behavior, and our speech. You can read in Matthew, Chapter 26, that when Peter stood by the fire and betrayed Christ, some who stood by said, in essence, "You are one of them, because your talk betrays you." To convince them that he was not, he began to curse and bring himself down to their level.

It is sad, but today a lot of parents are too soft-hearted concerning their teenage children. They do not want them to stand out so much, so they let the world's talk come into their homes. It becomes commonplace to their children, and they merge in with the world, just as Peter was trying to merge in with his surroundings.

After Peter denied Jesus, He turned and looked at Peter. I can imagine that look must have pierced the depth of Peter's heart. The look that Jesus gave Peter brought him to tears, and he repented and straightened himself up. Later he became a mighty man for God. Today I would that Jesus could give people a look like that and look right into the depths of their souls. Some try to be like the world and try to merge into the world around them rather than to be true Christians. God wants His people to be in the open.

When I worked for General Motors years ago, I worked in an office with seven other men, and they were all worldly men. Every Monday morning they would come in and talk about their wild weekend. I would sit at my desk and listen, and it became very grievous to me. As I thought about it, the Lord brought to my mind while I was in prayer, "You need to start talking to them about what you did on your weekend."

The following Monday morning I went into the office, and they began to talk about their big weekend. Finally, I said: "Hey, fellows, I want to tell you about my weekend. I went to church Sunday, and we had one of the most glorious services. We heard some truth preached," and I proceeded to tell them about the message and tell them how the Word of God fed souls and blessed hearts. They did not even stand around and listen until I got done.

After several months, one of the men in that office took me off to the side and said: "Preacher [I was not a preacher at that time], I want to tell you something. Don't you tell the other guys that I am telling you this, but I want you to know I admire what you are. Please don't tell the other guys I said that."

I said, "All right, I won't."

When you come out from the camouflage and speak, there may be somebody that needs to hear what you have to say. Sometimes it is difficult, and it could be embarrassing because you do not fit in with the world. You have to come out of the hiding places. You should not be ashamed of being a real Christian. You need to let society know that amongst all these so-called Christians, there is one who truly stands for God and righteousness.

### **By What Standard Are You Raising Your Children?**

Too often parents attempt to make things more comfortable for their children in the world. We must choose between being strangers in this world or being strangers in Heaven. When I was a teenager, the phrase "tanning your hide" had a whole different meaning than it does today.

It does my heart good to see parents raising their children according to old-fashioned godly standards. Parent, you need to raise your children to be real Christians. You need to teach them from when they are little on up that they are differ-

ent. We do not dress as the world does; we do not wear those kinds of clothes.

Sometimes children will come home and tell you, "Well, Johnny's parents let him do this." I said that to my parents. I would find somebody who could do things that I was not allowed to do, and I would come home and try to use that to pressure my parents into letting me do what others were doing. My mother would say, "Well, I'm not Johnny's mother; I'm your mother, and you are not going to do it!" That was the end of the discussion.

My mother and father never gave in to those pressures. They held the standard high, as they felt they should hold it. Today some children try to chide their parents. In too many homes, children have more power persuading their parents than the parents have on the children. Is there enough godliness in your children to mark them as Christians? You should not try to attract attention to yourself. As a Christian, do you have enough godliness so that the world can look upon you and say, "There is a real Christian"?

Young Christian teenage girls should not be raised as though they are to be beauty queens. They do not need the world's help to increase their appeal to the opposite sex. They should be taught at home to be more concerned about inward beauty. The inward character of the heart is far more essential than the outward appearance.

Parents firmly established in the Truth should hold the reins on their young boys, teaching them discipline both in work and in play. Boys who grow up in their teenage years with sound moral values do not just happen to end up that way as adults, but they have to be trained and brought into control.

Some parents have said, "I'm going to turn my children over to God, because I can't do anything with them." As a parent, it is your duty to raise your children to be Christians, not to allow them to be loose in their values. You are to

teach and train them and put your heart, soul, and mind into your home and family. It is your God-given responsibility to raise your children to be Christians. Certainly, as they get older and make their own choices, there is not much you can do about that. You can have the consolation that you did the best you could by the help of God; that is all you can do.

Many parents are coming under the pressures of the society in which we live. They would rather their children were not noticed, so they try to compromise their standards just a little here and there to try to ease them through the public school system. They are never really known as Christians.

### **The Principles of Holiness**

God's people will not follow the trends of the world, whether it is by hair style, by dress, by sex, by conduct, by jokes, by talk, by desires, by sports, or by any other activity that people get involved in. The Church of God dress code should never be altered to suit the activities that we are doing; we should adhere to the dress code of the Bible. That dress code is modesty, no matter what you are doing.

There is not much difference between some people who profess to be a part of the church and those who are a part of worldly religion. Now, the identity of the Christian has not changed with time. They were first called Christians at Antioch, and what identified them then still identifies the Christian today. Nothing can alter the quality and the expectation of the name. It must continue the same as the Teacher.

If the Teacher were to change His ideology, or His teaching, then it would be all right for the students to change. In Christianity we all are students, and Christ is the Teacher. Does He change? The Scripture says in Hebrews 13:8, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." If you lay claim to the name

Christian, then you must follow the same pattern set down in the Scriptures, because our Teacher does not change.

James 1:17 says there "is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." It is sad that so many people have lost the true meaning of what it means to be a Christian. Do you know why they have lost the meaning of Christianity? The religious world has lost sight of the Teacher. Jesus Christ is no longer held as the main example to go by. The principles of holiness are no longer upheld as practical to live by today.

I was talking to some people in our public school system some time back, and we were talking about how much things have changed over the last few years. When I was in school, you never saw a girl go to school wearing a pair of pants, but today you rarely see a girl go to school in a dress. I remember that when I was younger, the Baptist and the Nazarene churches taught against dating, card playing, gambling, and immodesty. They taught that the girls should wear dresses and that the boys should wear long pants. They taught those principles to go along with holiness. Also, they taught long hair on the women and short hair on the men. Over the years, many people have lost sight of the Teacher. Church, we must not lose sight of our Teacher.

### **What Makes a Person a Christian?**

Many people associate the idea of being a Christian with the country in which they live. Many claim to be Christians because they are United States citizens. Others consider themselves to be Christians because of their religious affiliations. Some people who, either do not go to church or do not have any connection with religious organizations, but who like Gospel songs and live good, moral lives claim to be Christians. Seldom do people today relate true Christianity with how a person

lives and conducts the affairs of his life. True Christianity is identified by how we conduct ourselves, how we live, and how we handle the affairs of our lives.

We are products of a "live and let live" society, wherein no one wants to be blamed and no one wants to choose to make Christianity a strict and noble life. The masses of people have long since rejected that idea. People have become victims of their acceptability to everyone else and never step on people's toes or upset anyone. We never had a teacher like that. Our Teacher was not afraid of stepping on toes. He was not afraid of upsetting anyone. How have people become so complacent of the society in which we live?

According to an article written several years ago, in England approximately 64 percent of the population identifies themselves as Christians, and less than 10 percent of the 64 percent regularly attend any church at all. Christianity is a popular name as the world looks on. Those who claim the name ought to be living a Christ-ordered and Christ-centered life so that the world can look on and know that they are different and realize that they are Christians. If you claim to be a Christian, others ought to be able to see that you are a Christian by your attitudes, by how you control yourself, by how you handle your frustrations, by what you look at, by what you listen to, and by the places where you go and do not go.

Others may be religious, but you ought to be a real Christian for the world's benefit. They need to know what really makes a person a Christian. First of all, a Christian must be born again. To be born again means that you must change from one kingdom to another. Some people say they are born again, but their lives have never changed. A real, born-again experience will change you completely. To be born again, you must be convicted of your sin, and you must repent and forsake all sin. When you are born again, your life changes and you move into a new

realm of life, from the world of the flesh to the world of the Spirit. It is not of the will of man, but it is of the will of God.

When you are born again, you must lay aside all known sins and whatever habits you are convicted of at the time. You must be willing to make a clean break with everything that God shows you that He is displeased with, and you must believe that God sent Jesus to die for you. Then God will accept you from the merits of Jesus Christ, His sacrifice on the Cross, and as being redeemed by the blood. Once you are born of the Spirit of God, all things become new, and old things pass away; then you become a new creature in Jesus Christ. When you really get this experience of being a Christian, you will no longer be difficult or hard.

### **Selling Out to God**

I had my hardest time of being a Christian in the years before I truly sold out to God. As long as I tried to hold on to a little of myself, I had a hard time being happy as a Christian. The moment I died out to self and Jesus Christ really came in and took hold of my life, I was changed and I knew I was. I felt the change, and I have never been sorry, ashamed, embarrassed, or thought it was too difficult to live a holy, godly, Christian life. God has never failed me. You cannot live in both worlds; you will be a stranger in one or the other. I like being well known to Christ and being a stranger to the world.

As a parent, you need to teach your children as they grow up that they are living in a strange world. As a Christian family, you should not allow some things. You should not try to make it too easy for your children. They are going to be hurt. Their feelings are going to get hurt. They are going to go through some hard times in school. Sometimes my heart broke for my children. At times I wept over the battles my son went through as he was growing up in school, because I could not let

him do this or that.

As children are growing up, they are going to fall and scrape their knees and elbows. You cannot protect your children from all the hurts. You have to teach them that connection with Christ.

In John, Chapter 8, you will find a very powerful discourse that Jesus had with the scribes and the Pharisees. He came at them with sound principles of truth. Beginning with the woman caught in the act of adul-

tery, Jesus began to teach them that He was the light of the world, and that he who followed Him would not walk in darkness but would have the light of life.

Jesus said in verses 31-32: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Is your heart truly sold out to living for God? Are you sold out to the message of the Church of God? You should not be afraid to

teach your children Church of God doctrine, Church of God modesty, and Church of God standards. You should uphold the Truth and make no exceptions for the world. You need to be true to God. You need to make sure that you are not a failure to Christ.

(Compact Disc TR-490M)

## Youth Corner

### "I Cannot Get Away From God"

Many years ago, a young coachman was living with a gentleman's family near London. He had good wages and a comfortable place; but there was one thing that troubled and annoyed him. His mother lived in a village close by, and from her he had constant visits. You may wonder that this was such a trouble to him, but the reason was that whenever she came, she spoke to him about Christ and the salvation of his soul.

"Mother," he said at last, "I cannot stand this any longer. Unless you drop that subject altogether, I shall give up my place and go out of your reach where I shall hear no more such of cant."

"My son," said his mother, "as long as I have a tongue, I shall never cease to speak to you about the Lord and to the Lord about you."

The young coachman was as good as his word. He wrote to a friend in the Highlands of Scotland and asked him to find him a place in that part of the world. He knew that his mother could not write and could not follow him, and though he was sorry to lose a good place, he said to himself, "Anything for a quiet life." His friend got him a place in a gentleman's stables, and he did not hide from his mother that he was glad

and thankful to get out of her way.

You may think it was a pity she thus drove him to a distance. Would it not have been wiser to say less, and thus not to lose the opportunity of putting in a word in season? However, she believed that she was to keep to the directions given her in the Word of God—that she was to be instant not only in season but also out of season. True it is, that the foolishness of God is wiser than men.

The coachman was ordered to drive out the carriage and pair the first day of his arrival in Scotland. His master did not get into the carriage with the rest of the party, but said he meant to go on the box instead of the footman.

"He wishes to see how I drive," thought the coachman, who was quite prepared to give satisfaction. Scarcely had he driven from the door, when the master spoke to the coachman for the first time. He said, "Tell me if you are saved?" Had the question come to the coachman direct from Heaven it scarcely could have struck him with greater consternation. He felt simply terrified. "God has followed me up to Scotland!" he said to himself, "I could get away from my mother, but I cannot get away from God!" At that moment, he knew what Adam

must have felt when he went to hide himself from the presence of God behind the trees of the garden. He could make no answer to his master, and scarcely could he drive the horses, for he trembled from head to foot.

His master went on to speak of Christ, and again he heard the old, old story, so often told him by his mother, but this time it sounded new. It had become a real thing to him. It did not seem to him then to be the glad tidings of great joy, but a message of terror and condemnation. He felt that it was Christ, the Son of God, whom he had rejected and despised. He felt for the first time that he was a lost sinner. By the time the drive was over, he was so ill from the terrible fear that had come upon him that he could do nothing more.

For some days he could not leave his bed, but they were blessed days! His master came to read God's Word and to pray, and soon the love and grace of the Savior he had rejected became a reality to him, as the terror of the Lord had been at first.

He saw there was mercy for the scoffer and despiser. He saw that the blood of Christ is the answer before God, even for such sin as his had been, and he now felt in his soul the sweetness of those blessed words, "We love Him because He first loved us." He saw that Christ had borne his punishment, and that he, who had tried to harden his heart against God and against his own mother, was now without spot or stain in the sight of that God who had so loved him as to give for him His only Son. The first letter he wrote to his mother was to tell her of the joyful tidings: God has followed me to Scotland and has saved my soul."

Selected

*Exodus 14:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,*

*2 Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea.*

*3 For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in.*

*4 And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them; and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD. And they did so.*

*5 And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?*

*6 And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him:*

*7 And he took six hundred chosen chariots and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them.*

*8 And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel: and the children of Israel went out with an high hand.*

*9 But the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pi-hahiroth, before Baal-zephon.*

*10 And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the LORD.*

*11 And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?*

*12 Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.*

*13 And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever.*

*14 The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.*

*15 And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward:*

*16 But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea.*

*17 And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen.*

*18 And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen.*

*19 And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them:*

*20 And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night.*

*21 And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.*

*22 And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon*

*the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.*

*23 And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.*

*24 And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians,*

*25 And took off their chariot wheels, that they drove them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the LORD fighteth for them against the Egyptians.*

*26 And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen.*

*27 And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.*

*28 And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them.*

*29 But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.*

*30 Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore.*

*31 And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses.*

# "Stand Still, and See the Salvation of the Lord"



*Brother Donald Orr*

## The Great Deliverer

The children of Israel were faced with something that they had no control over. They had been crying out to the Lord because of the bondage. The Egyptians were hard taskmasters, so God sent Moses to deliver them.

When they were faced with the Egyptian army at the Red Sea, they did not ask for that trial, but they were placed there to learn of the power of God. It may appear to you that God was letting them down by taking them out into the wilderness and letting the Egyptian army pursue them, but that was not the case. Their freedom was close. Can you imagine the thoughts that might have been going through their minds? They had gathered every-

thing they could, and they had taken it with them, thinking they would soon be free.

This could happen to you. You may see victory ahead, yet you may still be in a battle. You may be faced with circumstances and cannot see the way out, so your faith becomes tested. The enemy will whisper all kinds of depressing thoughts to you.

Your mind may start to wonder, "What if this or that happens?" The longer you dwell on that thought, the more nervous you become. If you continue to listen to the "what ifs" without turning it over to God, you may find yourself in bad shape. It is in those times that you need the Lord more than ever. Some turn to the arm of the flesh to work out their problems. They try to reason things out. What you need to do is cry to

the Lord, just as the Hebrew people did. God was willing and able to help them.

You should cry to the Lord with a true need for His help, knowing that you cannot make it without His help. You should not murmur and complain. This is the key when you are in a battle. You need to recognize the fact that He is the One who can provide help. You need to let God handle the problem.

Psalm 34:19 says, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all." Afflictions do not have to be physical. Many times the battle is in the mind. The enemy can attack you, and others around you may not even know what is going on, but in your mind there is a hot and furious battle raging. What do you need to do?

You need to cry to the Lord. He wants to hear your cry to Him, because it shows your dependence upon Him.

First Peter 3:12 reads, "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." When you ask God for help, He is not going to turn His head and refuse to help you. The Bible says that His ears are open to your cry. He is waiting to hear from you and willing to help you. I find myself asking God for help all the time. I need God all the time.

### A Spiritual Battle

As life goes on and seems to get more and more difficult, you need to realize that you cannot handle it in your own strength. You need God's guidance, strength, wisdom, and discernment every moment of every day. As I was meditating upon this, the words of a song came to me. A Gospel songwriter wrote a song entitled "I Need You Now." Have you ever found yourself in that place of just calling out to God, saying, "I need Your help right away"? God is not going to turn His head away, but He will be right there, willing to send the help that you need.

Another song that came to me is entitled "I Need Thee Every Hour." The first verse reads, "*I need thee every hour, most gracious Lord; No tender voice like Thine can peace afford.*" When God speaks, it is something that you cannot purchase; it is a gift to have Him to speak peace in the time of trouble and calm the storm of life.

The second verse says, "*I need Thee every hour, stay Thou nearby, Temptations lose their power when Thou art nigh.*" Sometimes you will have battles with temptations. Temptations take many forms. The enemy can come in like a flood and try to tempt you to do something that you know is wrong. You need to cry out to the Lord and say: "God, I need Your help. I do not want to

do wrong or sin in any way; please help me." With every temptation God will make a way of escape so that you do not have to sin. He will move right in, but it does not just happen automatically. You have to ask for help for whatever trials come along in your life. He will be faithful to help you.

The third, fourth, and fifth verses read: "*I need Thee every hour, in joy or pain, Come quickly and abide, or life is in vain. I need Thee every hour; teach me Thy will, And Thy rich promises in me fulfill. I need Thee every hour, most Holy One; Oh, make me Thine indeed, Thou blessed Son.*" The refrain reads, "*I need Thee, oh, I need Thee; Every hour I need Thee; Oh, bless me now, my Savior, I come to Thee.*" We do need God every hour of the day. Our battle is not like the children of Israel's, but in the spiritual sense, many of the battles they faced, we face.

The enemy of souls takes on many forms. The Bible lets us know that many spirits have gone out into the world. Many times the battles we face are spiritual battles. We are representing God. Sometimes the stand that we take on holiness and living free from sin brings persecution. You may think, "What is going on?" God can help you to discern the fact that you are battling a spirit, either through people or circumstances. The devil will try to get you to drop your guard. You must guard against doing the wrong thing or showing a wrong attitude or a wrong spirit. This is a spiritual battle.

### "The Lord Shall Fight for You"

The condition of our world today is changing for the worse. We need the Lord more than ever. Many tragic events are going on in our world. Moves are being made behind the scenes, and sometimes out in full view, trying to wipe out the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Some want to water down the Gospel and say everybody is going to Heaven, but that is not the truth.

Some want to take the Bible and come up with something that everybody can accept. This is what we are facing today. For thousands of years, the Word of God has stood, yet we are faced with attempts by the enemy, just as in the Dark Ages, to relegate it into obscurity. If it is not read or preached, it becomes obscure. Some want to muzzle the preacher to keep him from presenting the Gospel to people. The Bible says there is no new thing under the sun. The attacks of the enemy just get recycled.

Many things were done in the Dark Ages to try to eliminate the Gospel, but God has always had a people. The message of Truth went forward, and many people received help.

Sometimes the realization that we need God more than ever really hits home. What lies ahead of us in the future? Only God knows. We can speculate and scare ourselves, but only God knows what tomorrow holds. If it is God's will, we will see tomorrow, but we may not. Only God knows what is going to take place. We just need to be prepared.

God wants His children to be victorious. In order for this Gospel message to be effective, we must be victorious in every aspect of our lives. The children of Israel cried out to God for the plight that they were in with Pharaoh. Exodus 14:13-14 reads: "And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."

The children of Israel had no weapons and no ability to fight for themselves, so they cried to the Lord with all their might, in essence, saying: "God, we need Your help! We do not know what is going to happen. Pharaoh is right behind us." What happened? God put a pillar of fire in front of them to direct them, and then He moved it behind them to protect them. They were wonder-

ing what was going to happen. The Red Sea was before them and Pharaoh and his mighty army was behind them. What were they going to do? Moses told them to "stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD." Many times this Scripture comes to us as we are facing battles. God reminds us that we do not need to take control of the situation, but we need to let Him move. We need to stand still and see the deliverance of the Lord.

The children of Israel were literally standing and waiting for God to move, and God moved. Many times you are not literally standing and waiting for God to move, but you are on your knees in a bowed position, saying: "God, I need Your help. You see what is happening. You see the circumstances. You see what is going on in my life. I need Your help." Now, you should not pray that prayer and say, "I am going to take hold of this situation." No, you should let God move. When God moves on the scene, you will know that He has moved. Often He opens doors that were closed permanently. He does things that are impossible. You may be faced with a situation that you cannot see any way out of. God can cause someone not to be able to sleep at night and speak to that person, and the situation will get resolved. It is God who works it out. You have nothing to do with working it out except calling upon God and asking for His help.

### **Stand on the Promises of God**

Second Corinthians 10:4 tells us, "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds." We do not take up literal arms and fight our battles with carnal weapons. No, we rely on the power of God through prayer. We hold to the promises that God is going to move, and that is key. Sometimes people fall short of the complete victory that God has for them. They do not wait for God to move. They may

step to the right or to the left or try to back up when they need to move forward. Instead of waiting for God to move, they say, "You don't know my circumstances." No, but I know that God is able to do the impossible. He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we can ask or think, because He is God.

Perhaps you have been praying for your children to be saved for quite a while without seeing any progress. It may seem that the barrier is like a ten-foot-thick stone wall. What can you do? You must continue to pray and stand on the promise that God is able to move and cause things to happen. He is able to bring them into the church when you do not expect them. He is able to cause them to fall under conviction and get saved. He is able to save and able to keep.

The enemy will tell you, "You do not see anything happening, so you might as well give up praying." Sometimes it may appear that nothing is happening, but are you giving up short of a miracle? God is able to do the impossible.

What happened to Moses and the children of Israel? They crossed over on dry ground through the midst of the Red Sea. No matter what the nay sayers say, that event really happened. So many people today, and even some religious people, say it did not quite happen that way. The Bible account is true. Romans 3:4 says, "Let God be true, but every man a liar." After the Israelites walked on dry ground and exited the sea, the Egyptian army followed them. The Bible tells us the Lord troubled the Egyptians and took off their chariots' wheels. Then the Lord told Moses to stretch out his hand over the sea, and the waters came together, and that was the end of all the Egyptians that followed them.

When victory came, praise broke out in the camp of Israel. Exodus 15:1-10, 18 reads: "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD,

for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him. The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name. Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea. The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone.

"Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. And in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee: thou sentest forth thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble. And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea. The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them. Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters. . . . The LORD shall reign for ever and ever."

If you are having difficulty in gaining true victory, you may need to start praising God for when He has blessed you in the past. God wants to hear praise, and it edifies and builds up everybody around you when you praise God for what He has done for you. It serves multiple purposes.

Standing on the promises of God will help you in the midst of trials. We are to rest in the promises written in the Bible and by faith believe that God is no respecter of persons. What He has done for others, He can do for you. He can move on the scene and perform miracles.

### **Miraculous Deliverance**

The Apostle Peter had some problems, but God moved in a

miraculous manner on his behalf. Acts 12:1-7 states: "Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.

"Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him. And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison. And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands."

Sometimes when you are doing the will of God, you may find yourself in circumstances beyond your control. In Peter's case the church went to prayer and prayed without ceasing for Peter to be delivered. While they were praying, God moved on the scene and dispatched an angel into that heavily guarded prison. Peter had chains on him and was sleeping between two soldiers. The angel smote Peter on the side and said, "Arise up quickly." When he did, the chains fell off. Peter might have wondered at that time what was happening. The angel led him out of the prison right to the house where they were praying for him.

The saints could hardly believe that Peter was actually standing there. God did exceedingly abundant things for Peter and for the church at that particular time. God was not done with Peter, and that is the reason He dispatched an angel to get Peter out of prison and send him on his way. Also, God did not want

Herod to get any glory out of killing Peter. The church was built up, and their faith increased because God performed that miracle.

In Mark 16:15 Jesus gave the great commission: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." They went and did as Christ told them to do.

God is no respecter of persons. His power has not changed. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Praise the Lord! The Bible says in Isaiah 43:2, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." In a spiritual sense, we pass through troubled waters many times in life. Sometimes you will face all kinds of turmoil as you journey through life, but God said, "I will be with thee." That is another promise that you can stand on. The rivers shall not overflow you. When those billows come against you and want to overwhelm your soul, you can stand on that promise. You can stand in the strength of God, knowing that He can take you through and deliver you.

When the three Hebrew boys went into the fiery furnace, they did not go in there by themselves. They went in with the Son of God. The same is true today. The Lord will go right with you through the battles. What do you have to do? You have to call upon Him and say, "God, I need Your help." You could face problems on the job, at school, or with family members, but God will be right there to help you.

### The Way to Victory

Someday our work will be done. Revelation 7:13-14 reads: "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and

made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

If you make it to Heaven, you will have a white robe. It is not going to be a white robe because you are an angel, but because you will have made it through tribulations and trials with Jesus Christ by your side. You will make it through because you will have overcome. You will make it through because you will have fought the battles of life victoriously. In the times you needed to stand, you will have stood for the right; therefore, a crown will be awaiting you in Heaven.

Are you standing the way that God wants you to stand? Are you waiting upon the Lord? Do you need salvation? You must have salvation to begin the road to Heaven. Although you will face many battles along the road of life, God can give you victory. God wants to help you with your battles, but you need to turn over the reigns of your life to Jesus Christ and let Him direct your life. You need to turn over the control of your life to God and say: "God, You can have my life. Help me to do what You want me to do."

Sometimes it is difficult to humble yourself and ask for God's help. That is because the enemy is battling you, but you can ask for God's help anytime, anywhere. You do not have to speak audible prayers; you can pray in your mind. When you do that, you are showing God your need of Him. If you are having difficulty standing, you need to pray about it. God wants to hear from you. Just a little talk with Jesus makes it right. Sometimes when you pour your heart out to God, there is a release that happens. It is a transmittal of your burden over to God, which is where it needs to be. He is God. He can handle what you cannot handle. God has the help you need. You just need to give your problems to Him, and you will see the salvation, or the deliverance, of the Lord.

(Compact Disc TR-1556)

# *Announcements*

<b>Niles, MI</b> September 2-4	<b>Revival:</b> Coulter's Chapel Church of God, 3176 Detroit Road, Niles, MI 49120 Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi For more information contact: Brother Dave Frazer. Telephone: 269-635-1530 or 269-684-3499
<b>Medina, OH</b> September 3-4	<b>All-Day Fellowship Meeting:</b> The Church of God, 6745 Wooster Pike, Medina, OH Saturday service times: 10:00 a.m. & 2:30 p.m. Meal will be served by the local congregation. Sunday service times: Sunday School 9:30 a.m.; Worship Services: 10:30 a.m. & 4:00 p.m.
September 6-9	<b>Revival:</b> The Church of God, 6745 Wooster Pike, Medina, OH Service times: 7:00 p.m. nightly For more information contact the church at 330-725-5993 or call 330-421-0187
<b>Harvey, IL</b> September 11	<b>Special Services:</b> Church of God, 14701 Myrtle Avenue, Harvey, IL 60426 Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi For more information contact: Brother Charles Johnson. Telephone: 708-606-7136
<b>Chicago, IL</b> September 12-18	<b>Revival:</b> Harding Street Church of God, 3924 W 14 <sup>th</sup> Street, Chicago, IL 60623 Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi For more information contact: Brother Aurelius Reedy Raines. Telephone: 708-751-1534
<b>Kalamazoo, MI</b> September 19-25	<b>Revival:</b> Comstock Avenue Church of God, 555 Alger Street, Kalamazoo, MI 49041 Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi For more information contact: Pastor Jerry Miller. Telephone: 269-998-3194
<b>Morehead, KY</b> September 26- October 2	<b>Revival:</b> Blue Bank Church of God, 3200 Blue Bank Road, Morehead, KY 40351 Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi For more information contact: Brother Jeff Fannin Telephone: 606-784-2858 or 606-776-2639 or 606-784-9241
<b>Newton, KS</b> October 3-9	<b>Revival:</b> The Church of God, 400 N. Meridian, KS 67114 Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi For more information contact: Pastor Sandy Killfoil. Telephone: 316-587-5275
<b>Summersville, WV</b> October 3-9	<b>Revival:</b> The Church of God, 74 Armstrong Road, Summersville, WV 26651 Evangelist: Brother Leamon Whitehead, Minerva, Ohio Service times: Monday-Friday 7:00 p.m., Saturday 6:00 p.m., Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m. For more information contact: Pastor Earl R. Borders. Telephone: 304-872-4047 Visit our website: <a href="http://www.ChurchofGodSummersvilleWV.com">www.ChurchofGodSummersvilleWV.com</a>
<b>Newark, OH</b> October 15	<b>All-Day Meeting:</b> The Church of God, 675 N. Cedar Street, Newark, OH 43055 Special speakers, food, and fellowship. Service time: 10:00 a.m. Lodging will be available. For reservations contact: Brother or Sister Dave Bush at 740-345-1213 For more information contact: Pastor Roger L. Decker. Telephone: 205-422-5917
<b>Brighton, AL</b> November 14-20	<b>Revival:</b> The Church of God, 1111 India Street, Brighton, AL Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi For more information contact: Pastor Karl Wilson. Telephone: 205-422-5917
<b>Canby, OR</b> November 22-27	<b>Revival:</b> The Church of God, 522 N. W. 2 <sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Canby, OR 97013 Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi For more information contact: Pastor David Stegmeier. Telephone: 503-313-0227

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