

SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

Vol. 47 August 2017 No. 8



Church of God Tabernacle in Newark, Ohio

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

Psalm 122:1

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

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

Brother Roger L. Decker Editor
Workers Too Numerous to Mention

THE CHURCH OF GOD BELIEVES IN:

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

SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS

PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH

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

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Spring 2017 Camp Meeting Report

A SIMPLY WONDERFUL CAMP MEETING!

It was certainly a refreshing time to gather again with the saints of God during this Spring Camp Meeting. Fellowship with the precious individuals who came from near and from far was a great blessing. It was eight days of joy and delight as we feasted on the good things of God!

The camp meeting began June 18, Sunday morning at 10 o'clock, as Brother Roger Decker greeted and welcomed everyone to God's Acres. He encouraged each one to enter into worship, reminding us that the meeting would be over quickly. It was a time for those in attendance to gain help and strength for their souls and to become better equipped to fight the good fight of faith. Many turbulent situations exist in the world today; therefore, God's people need to have their souls more securely anchored in Jesus Christ. It is through the sounding forth of the Truth that men and women are exposed to greater light and understanding of God's requirements.

Brother David Stegmeier delivered the first message of the camp meeting entitled "The Father's Presence." In this sermon he stressed the necessity of a father being in the home to guide and direct his family. Sunday evening Brother Larry Dishman preached a message entitled "Learn the Truth, Love It, and Live It or Lose It." He addressed the importance of having the right attitude toward the Truth and the

possibility of letting it slip away if you fail to love it and live it.

Starting Monday morning Pastor Roger Decker began a study on doctrinal issues of the Church of God. For several mornings he taught on subjects such as, "The True Israel of God," "The Antichrist," "The Great Tribulation," and "The Nature of God's Kingdom." These vital issues were delivered to expose some of the erroneous ideas that false religions teach.

As the meeting continued, other ministers brought soul-searching sermons that brought help to both saints and sinners. Monday evening Brother Larry Dishman delivered a message asking the question, "Are You a Dedicated Christian?" Then Tuesday through Friday evenings, Brother Calvin Foster preached. His sermons covered subjects such as, "Earnestly Contend for the Faith," "The Wonderful Gospel of Jesus Christ," "God's Love for the Souls of Men," and "The Word Made Flesh." Saturday night Brother Larry Dishman preached on the matter of "Leaving a Spiritual Legacy," and Sunday evening he asked the question, "Why Will You Die?"

Friday morning Brother Paul Prinkey preached on "Fast Christians." Saturday morning Brother Garrett Haylock spoke on "Regrets," and Sunday morning Brother Richard Talbot covered the topic of "The Hidden Man of

[continued on page 25]

Isaiah 6:1 In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

2 Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

4 And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

5 Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.

6 Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:

7 And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.

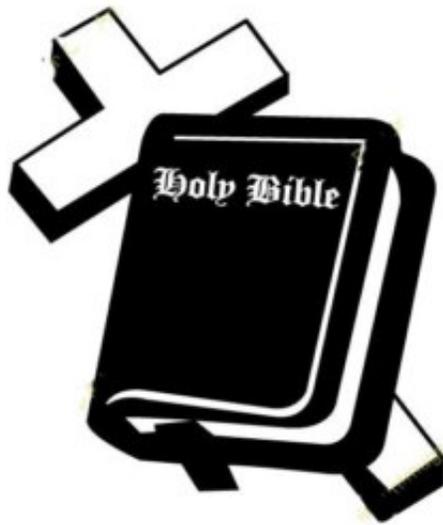
8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send,

and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

Zechariah 14:20 In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD'S house shall be like the bowls before the altar.

21 Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.

Holiness



Brother Roger L. Decker

The Faithfulness of God

The Scripture text in Isaiah lets us know that in the year that King Uzziah died, that era of time came to an end. Under his reign, as long as he sought the Lord, Judah enjoyed prosperity. The reason was that

Uzziah sought help from God in everything he did. God helped him in battle and helped him to build. He gave the king great wisdom and a great army. Also, God helped him to invent things. All was going well until pride got in and did an ugly work.

Saint of God, you need to always be careful of pride. When God blesses you or exalts you with a position in a congregation or exalts you out in the world, you need to be careful. Pride can get in, and then you will get out of the will of God.

King Uzziah died a leper and

died out of the will of God. After his departure from this life, Judah went into corruption. It was then that Isaiah received his call. Our Scripture text says in Isaiah 6:3, "And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory."

Whenever Judah or Israel went into corruption and idolatry, God would raise up a man and put out a call for the people to return to Him and to return to holiness. That is exactly what you need to do if you have gotten away from God and have gone back into sin. When you come back to God, you must come back to the place where you left Him.

Some of the men that God called were Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, and Gideon, just to name a few. They were called to lead God's people in the way of holiness. The Lord demands holiness. Holiness is a command placed upon not only Israel of old but also the new Israel, the new Jerusalem, the Church of God.

When the message of holiness is proclaimed, it will have an effect upon the hearts of those who are unclean. Isaiah 6:5 says, "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts." God is always faithful to His people. He always sends out a call to let you know that He has not forgotten you. If you are in a backslidden condition, if you are not up to par spiritually, or if you are struggling over something, God has not forgotten you. He loves you supremely. He loves you more than your husband or wife loves you. He loves you so much that He gave the best He had to die for you. God is always faithful.

The enemy of souls is working against holiness. The devil is always working to get you to cut corners. He wants to get you out of line, so that you will become depressed or

discouraged. What does he want to do? He wants to separate you from a life of holiness. He wants your life to be of no effect, but thank God for the faithfulness of God. God will work with you and help you. God will be there for you. God will send out a call for you to return to holiness.

After I got saved in 1967, I got away from God and went back into sin. I had in my mind that if I went back into sin, I would only go so far. That is the picture the devil paints. I thought, "I might drink one beer, but I will not get drunk." That was a deception of the enemy. Once a person loses the power of God from his life, there is no telling what he will do.

When I went back into sin, things got worse, but thank God I had a wife who lived for the Lord and God had a prophet with a message for me, and that message was to return to holiness. If you have backslidden, you must come back to where you left God and start afresh. So I returned to the Lord, and He purged my sin. Old things passed away and all things became new. Since then, it has been sweet Jesus all the way!

God's Call to Holiness

You will never do anything in this world that could compare to living for God, no matter how highly you have been exalted in the world. No matter how well you think you have things fixed up and how well you feel physically, there is nothing like serving Jesus Christ; it is a great life! God's call is always to holiness and to come out of false religion and sin. When God calls you out, you will be a son or daughter to Him, and He will be a Father to you.

The seraphims mentioned in our Scripture text represent those who have been redeemed. Those who are redeemed do not fight holiness; they proclaim it. If you are in a religion that fights against holiness, you need to get out of it. It is not helping you to live as the Bible says you must

live to make it to Heaven.

The word *holy* is used three times in our Scripture text. Man is a threefold being: he is comprised of soul, spirit, and body. God wants every part of man to be holy. First Thessalonians 5:23 says, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Holy, holy, holy! God wants us holy.

Away with the thought that the soul is saved, but the body is not. Do you know what operates that body of yours? You may say, "Naturally, it is the heart, the lungs, the kidneys, and the other organs." You are under the control of your mind as well. What controls the body and keeps it holy is having the mind of Christ. Philippians 2:5 says, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

People who fight holiness are going to get worse. There are people gathered under the name Church of God who fight the Bible dress standard, but they used to live by it. They used to dress modestly. Some sisters who used to abide by the Bible standard for the hair now chop off their hair. When people battle against holiness and leave holiness, they get under another spirit, and they will actually believe a lie and be damned.

Romans 6:12 reads, "Let not sin therefore reign [and it will reign if you let it] in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." Holiness is the message of the Church of God that separates her from all man-made churches. She is unique. The Bible lets us know that God's people are a peculiar people and a holy people. We read a Holy Bible and serve a holy God. It is great to serve the Lord. I enjoy serving God.

God requires holiness in your spirit, in your soul, and in your body. God wants you separate from uncleanness. Many churches today do not like the thought of being separate, but God wants His people

separate. He wants you separate from uncleanness, from sectism, from Babylonian institutions, and from sin. Second Corinthians 6:17 states, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you."

You must have holiness in your soul. If your soul is not saved from sin, you are not going to Heaven. You dare not face God at the Judgment with sin in your life. If a preacher tells you that you must sin more or less every day, you need to get away from that false doctrine. If you sin every day, then you might as well offer up animal sacrifices as they did under the old Law. We are living in a day of something better, and that is Jesus Christ. He is the sacrifice for sin.

The Blood of Jesus Christ Cleanses From All Sin

The Holy Spirit, the Third Member of the Godhead, moves inside a vessel that has been cleaned up, and He gives victory over sin and helps you to walk free from sin every day. I love it that way. Away with old dead, drab religion! How can they get up before people and encourage them by telling them they have to live in sin all the time? God has something better than that for people.

First John 1:7 reads, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." How much sin is left when you have been cleansed from *all* sin? If God forgives *all* your sins and cleanses you from *all* sin, then there is no more sin. All does not mean *almost* all; it means completely.

When the Word of God says all sin is gone, *all* of it is gone. There is no inherited sin on the inside. There is nothing sinful inside your vessel after it has been cleaned up at that particular moment. Then what happens? You walk in the light as He is

in the light. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses you from *all* unrighteousness. What was John talking about? You need to stay under the blood of Jesus Christ, like the blood that was put on the doorposts in the Old Testament. When the death angel came, those who had the blood over the doorposts did not die. Today we stay under the blood of Jesus Christ.

People need to stop running around from church to church like nomads. They need to stay under the blood. They need to stay where Jesus Christ is, where they have victory in their souls. Salvation is in the blood of Jesus Christ; it is not in church joining. Church joining is merely a decent way to be married and buried, but also it is a decent way to stay in sin and end up in hell. When one belongs to a church and then dies, often a preacher gets up, as most sectarian preachers do, and tries to preach the deceased one into Heaven, so to speak. The family may say, "He's not talking about the same guy that I know; he was a drunk."

Friend, if you want to see the inside of Heaven, you must live a holy life here, all the way into eternity. You are not saved by good works. If you have not humbled yourself before God, you need to. All you have to do is get down before God, confess and forsake all sin, and truly mean what you are praying. When you truly mean what you are praying, something is going to happen in your life. You are going to get up from an altar of prayer a new creature. When I got up from the altar after I got saved, I *knew* that I was saved. When the power of God comes into your life, do not underestimate it. When the power of God came into my life, new things began to take place.

What Is Salvation?

The Apostle Paul did his best to explain salvation when he said in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new

creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Others have tried to explain salvation, but it is so wonderful that no one can truly explain it. In our feeble minds and feeble thoughts and feeble vocabulary, we try to explain what salvation is, but it is better felt than told.

Salvation is not simply making a trip to an altar of prayer. There is no power in a mourner's bench. Now, it is a good place to get saved in front of witnesses. You may say, "I would never do that." Well, if you want God badly enough, you will. I wanted God badly enough that I did not care who saw me. The altar is not where the power comes from. The power comes from God. When you repent, you do not repent to the altar; you repent to Jesus Christ and God sends down the power. When He sends down the power, then you can get up and walk in newness of life through Jesus Christ.

Why is it good to get down on your knees before God and the people? It shows true godly sorrow, that you are truly sorry for your sins and you do not care who knows it. The only thing you know is, you want to get saved. If you are not saved, you may say, "I will get saved before I die." Well, when are you going to die? You do not know. Getting older does not stop the devil from working on you. The devil will work on you right up until you draw your last breath. Why? If he can keep your soul out of the Kingdom of God and keep you in darkness, he has succeeded.

When you confess at an altar of prayer, you are confessing to God. You cannot make up a story to God and say: "Well, I did this, but So-and-So influenced me." Someone might have influenced you, but you need to repent of your sins, not someone else's sins. David said in Psalm 32:5, "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah." Then we read in

Romans 14:11, "For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God."

In Luke 12:8-9 Jesus said: "Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God." To confess Christ, you should acknowledge Him before men.

One of the main reasons that some people will not walk down to an altar of prayer to get saved is that they are full of pride. Others measure themselves by other people. They may think: "I might be considered bad, but I am not as bad as So-and-So. I know what he has done, and I certainly have not done anything like that." How much sin does it take to keep you out of Heaven? The answer is, *any* sin will keep you out of Heaven. You might be a good person, but without repentance you are just another sinner in God's eyes.

Perfecting Holiness

Holiness does not end with the soul being saved. Second Corinthians 7:1 states, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Notice that this verse says to cleanse yourself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. You have a spirit within you that needs to be cleansed. I repeat, man is a threefold being.

What needs to be cleansed in the spirit? Second Corinthians 6:14-18 reads: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in

them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

What is the promise? The promise is that if you leave the yoke of spiritual fornication, He will receive you and will be your Father. Paul said not to be "unequally yoked with unbelievers." The word *yoked* as it is used here is a military term that means to stay in your own ranks. The thought that Paul was trying to convey here was that you must not apostatize from Christianity, or leave the righteous principles of Christianity, and join hands with heathenistic ways.

Now, Paul was not talking about having unsaved friends, but rather he was talking about letting unbelievers influence you away from your stand for Christ. That is the reason you need to be careful of getting too close to people. Everyone has his own opinion and idea about certain things. Some are good and some are bad; therefore, you need to be careful of letting others influence you. One problem that affects some people is having family or friends who have apostatized. Often those who have fallen try to work on those who have not.

Paul asked the question, "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?" Also, he asked, "What part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" There is no fellowship between a believer and an unbeliever. Although these Scriptures are not dealing with marriage, there should never be a union between a believer and a non-believer. You may know of a couple who developed such a relationship, and who seemingly got by, but you need to remember that their lives are not over yet. As Christian parents, you should not consider allowing your child to date someone who is not saved. Also, if they are doing

things that are wrong and cannot keep their hands to themselves, that relationship needs to end.

Some people want the privileges of marriage, but they do not want the responsibility, and that is where abortions come in. Young lady, if you are dating someone and find out that he is a drinker, you need to get rid of him. If he is a drunk now, he may always be a drunk. You may say, "He might get saved." Then you should wait until he gets saved and proves himself.

The model prayer is found in Matthew 6:13, which reads, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." If you date somebody who is not saved, you are being led into temptation. How can God deliver you from evil if you are persistent in walking into temptation?

Proverbs 14:29 tells us, "He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding; but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly." Another translation makes it a little plainer: "A patient man has great understanding, but a quick-tempered man displays folly." What does that mean? A quick-tempered person, one who is angry over the least little thing, needs to be cleansed and perfected in holiness.

What else needs to be cleansed and perfected in holiness? The mind needs to be cleansed. The Apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:22-23: "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind." In other words, you must be careful of what you think upon. There is no need of thinking on something that you cannot have. What is the object of thinking on another man's girlfriend or wife? You cannot have that person, so why even dwell upon such thoughts? You are just wasting your time.

Philippians 4:8 reads, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things

are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue [or strength], and if there be any praise, think on these things." In other words, you ought to esteem them highly, recommend them heartily, and practice them fervently. You must be careful of what enters your mind.

Lay Aside Every Hindrance

Fleshly things, such as the habits of life, need to be laid aside so that you can be holy. Before people come to Christ, generally speaking, they acquire some bad habits. I knew before I got saved that I wanted to unload my bad habits, but I was afraid that I could not do it. I had smoked cigarettes for so long that I figured I could not lay that habit down. I did not want to just taper off, because I had tried that many times, and it did not work.

Other fleshly habits that must be laid aside are a filthy mouth, smoking or chewing tobacco, using illegal drugs, and using slang words. You need to watch out using slang words, where you can give the idea

of what you are really saying and want to say, yet you are not clearly saying it. I am talking about words that insinuate certain things so that people understand what you mean without you actually having to say the words. No one could accuse you of saying it, but they can surely read into what you mean.

Immodest dress is against holiness, as well as immodest actions that do not become a Christian. Holy, holy, holy! The whole man must be holy. Again, Isaiah 6:1 begins, "In the year that king Uzziah died. . . ." There are some things that people need to let die so they can get a clear vision of Christ. In the year that King Uzziah died, Isaiah received a revelation. You need to get your eyes off the things of the world; let them die. It could be that you need to let go of unforgiveness, a grudge, or lust. You will never see the Lord high and lifted up until you let some things go and let them die. Then you will be in good shape to see the Lord, and He will be there to help you. Also, you will be ready to share the Gospel.

Isaiah 6:5-8 reads: "Then said I,

Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me."

Has all sin been purged from your life, so that you can tell the Lord, "Here am I; send me"? The Lord requires holiness of soul, spirit, and body. We do not brag in our own strength, but any boasting that we do is in the Lord. You might be surprised at what God can do for you if you let the hindrances die in your life. Whatever your need is, God will supply it for you, and He will do it now if you let Him.

(Compact Disc TR-1049E)

In Happy Moments,
PRAISE God.
In Difficult Moments,
SEEK God.
In Quiet Moments,
TRUST God.
In Every Moment,
THANK God!



Luke 16:19 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:

20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,

21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his

bosom.

24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come

from thence.

27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:

28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

Messages From Beyond the Grave



Brother Larry Dishman

Carrying a Burden for the Lost

I have been told by certain people there are documents nowadays that indicate people can communicate with the dead. Many people are convinced in their minds that their loved ones in Heaven often send messages to them. I certainly do not believe that is true. Such

attempts to communicate with the dead were expressly forbidden in the Old Testament in Deuteronomy 18:9-14. Therefore, all modern claims of spiritualism, the belief that the living can communicate with the dead, such as those in the New Age movement, ought to be rejected.

Now, in the light of all of that, by the help of God, I am going to do

something different. There was a man who once lived upon this earth. He was a real man, not an imaginary one. As a matter of fact, he was a very rich man. One day he physically died and was buried. Nothing is left of him, as far as his physical body, except dust. However, I am going to let him "talk" to you from the Word of God. It is one thing for

me to talk to you about this subject because I am alive. I have never died physically, so I do not know what that experience would be like. We do not understand many things about death, and we do not understand things beyond death. I am going to let a man "talk" to you who partook of physical death. He is in eternity.

The message in our Scripture text strongly confirms that a man who died is telling us with certainty there is a place called hell. One of the most sobering realities in the Bible presents us with the fact, not a theory, that hell is real. Jesus warned many times about hell and the Judgment. In the Scripture text we have the testimony of two men who used to enjoy the blessings that we now enjoy. One of them also did business, and they both walked the streets of earthly cities as we do today, but the time came for them to die and cross the line of worlds.

I want you to notice in this message that the rich man did not mention the property that he left behind, the money that he left behind, the fine house that he once lived in, or his livestock. However, he did give some information about the place wherein he found himself after death. First of all, this is a message to all of us who are saved. This rich man who died wants to speak to us as saved folks. There is a message here for every Christian. What is it? The rich man said in Luke 16:28, "For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them [the message for every Christian in this chapter is to testify and warn others], lest they also come into this place of torment." Saint, God wants each of us to warn people about what Luke, Chapter 16, has to tell us about what happens to an individual who fails to prepare for eternity.

The Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:11, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." As saints of God, this message should make us better soul winners since there is a real hell, a place of torment forever and ever.

The wicked need to be warned against it. I believe the church needs to be burdened in a greater way along this line. I do not want to experience it, but if each of us could actually experience what happens when an individual dies without God, I believe we would be better preachers, better soul winners, and better Christians.

As I looked at this passage of Scripture, I could not help but think of what a compelling motive for prayer, for preaching, and for soul winning it is! In the Scripture text we learn that every responsible human being who leaves this world without God, without a definite change of heart, immediately lifts his eyes in hell, tormented by the flames of hell.

As a Christian, I do not think God would have us lose our vision of what hell is really like and what we read about hell in the Word of God. If we ever lose the vision of what hell is really like, I believe we will cease to carry the burden for lost humanity as we really should. Dear friend, do not forget that hell is ready to engulf the souls of your family members, your neighbors, and your friends if they die lost. Remember the awful threat that hangs over every sinner who is lost without God.

Life After Death

Another message from this man who died is, man does not cease to exist after death. We will be alive ten million years from now. All of us will be conscious for all eternity. There are only two places where we can go; there is no in-between. It is either Heaven or hell; therefore, it behooves each of us to make our calling and election sure. There are some things that we must not guess about. There are some things that we must not doubt. I repeat, we must make our calling and election sure.

Dear one, you need to know for certain that you are saved. Do not go to the Judgment just hoping that you are. You must have this thing settled

so that you know in whom you have believed and that you are persuaded that He is able to keep that which you have committed unto Him against that day. The passage in our Scripture lesson is one of the clearest texts of Scripture that reveals what happens when a sinner dies.

Some religious groups teach that the wicked will be annihilated, but according to the Bible, that is not so, friend. Men are not annihilated at death. The rich man is speaking to us. Though he died and they put his body in the grave, he could speak, he could feel, and he could remember. He remembered his five brethren who were still living on the earth. Man was created in the spiritual image of God; therefore, every one of us is going to live as long as God does. We will never cease to exist because man has a dual nature, both the body and the soul.

A dead man is talking to you, sinner friend. He has a message for you. The message could not be sent to his five brethren. You see, you are better off than his five brethren, because Abraham told him, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." Then the rich man said, "Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent." Abraham said, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." You are privileged today, because you have not only Moses and the prophets but also the New Testament. They did not have the New Testament.

In John 8:24 Jesus said, "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." If you die in your sins, where He is, you cannot go. Man will not be given another chance for salvation after his death. This is what Luke, Chapter 16, is telling you. If you spurn the invitation, if you put off salvation for too long, after death you will not have another opportunity. The fact that the rich man and

Lazarus could not leave their respective places refutes the doctrine of reincarnation. Much truth comes forth from this rich man's words in Luke, Chapter 16.

Avoid the Fate of the Wicked

What else is the rich man saying to the lost? He is saying, "Avoid the torments of hell at all costs." You do not want to wake up in the devil's hell. No doubt, this is the main message from Luke, Chapter 16. The fate of the wicked after death is terrifying! In our Scripture lesson, the rich man is so tormented that he is begging for the slightest bit of relief, but there is no relief.

Consider the Lord's solemn words about this subject. I want you to think about the seriousness of what Jesus said in another place. Jesus said in Mark 9:43-44: "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Then Jesus let us know in verses 45-46 this place is so awful that it would be better to cut your foot off and enter into life halt than to have two feet and be cast into hell where the fire is not quenched and their worm dies not.

In verses 47-48 He said that it would be better to pluck out your eye and cast it from you than to have both eyes and be cast into hell where the fire is not quenched and their worm dies not. Jesus was not teaching that we should literally cut off members of our body, but He was letting us see that nothing, absolutely nothing, is worth leaving this world unprepared to meet God. Whatever is holding you back from getting saved, whether it is a boyfriend or girlfriend, a relative, or some other individual, you would be better off to sever that relationship and get right with God. If it is drugs, alcohol, gambling, or tobacco that has you bound, you need to cut yourself off from it. Nothing is

worth going to this place where the worm dies not and the fire is never quenched.

It is important to open your heart to the Word of God. I want you to pay attention to what Jesus had to say about this subject. He is talking to you, letting you know that when you die, you will take your memory with you. Abraham said to the rich man, "Son, remember." When God says to remember, it will be impossible to forget. Those who find themselves in hell will realize that their memory will serve them quite well.

What will you remember in hell? You will remember the pleadings of a godly mother, a godly father, your Sunday school teacher, and your pastor. You will remember the pleadings of your friend who often spoke to you about salvation. You will recollect the times that you heard the Word of God and God spoke to your heart and tenderly dealt with you. God made you know exactly what He wanted you to do, but you said no. You will remember the opportunities that you had to get right with God.

Your mind will be haunted by the times you turned away from this free and full pardon of Jesus Christ; it was right there waiting for you. Jesus already signed your pardon so that He could set you free from all bondage. You could have had your sins in the sea of forgetfulness, but you walked away from it. Friend, hell is a place of everlasting memory.

Sinning Away Your Day of Grace

Think about what the rich man lost. He lost his riches, his family, his friends, his possessions, his life, and his soul. However, one thing he did not lose that he wished he could have lost, and that was his memory. The rich man's memory was still perfectly functional. He was still able to reason. Undoubtedly, his memory haunted him. If you do not get saved, your memory will haunt you in eternity.

Hell might be slightly less tormenting if one could leave his memory in the grave, but it will haunt you and remind you of all your chances for salvation. In my mind I really believe that the thing that haunts the rich man the most is the fact that he cannot blame anyone. He is faced with the sobering reality that he was the one at fault. He condemned himself to the awful place of torments and misery.

You might try to blame the preacher, your wife, or the hypocrites; however, when you awaken in hell, you will realize that you chose to be there. Jesus made a way that you could be saved and go to Heaven, but you chose hell. Friend, that will be unbearable, but you will have to bear it. That is more than your mind can fathom. The pain, the agony, and the torments will be unbearable, but you will have to endure it.

The rich man who died and went to the other side has something more to say to you. He is sending you another message: Sinner, you can wait until it is too late to pray. I believe this man went through life prayerless because he had everything he wanted in this life. No doubt, he had a glass of wine at his command at any time. He had the best of food, the best of clothing, and a nice place to live. He did not think he had any reason to pray. However, at death's door, he instantly found out that he needed to pray, but he waited until it was too late.

Sometimes it is too late to pray while you are still alive, because you procrastinated and sinned away your day of grace. Sometimes it is too late in the hospital room to get right with God. Sometimes it is too late when someone is thrown out of a vehicle and is lying at the side of the road. Sometimes it is too late to repent with godly sorrow on a deathbed.

Though the rich man probably felt that in life he did not know how to pray, he learned how to pray quickly. Immediately after he died, he began to say, in verse 24, "Father

Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." He then said in verse 27, "I pray thee therefore, father. . . ." Notice that he was learning how to pray. He was being very respectful. He was not acting arrogant or proud. Though his prayer was respectful, it was to no avail.

Think of all the praying going on in hell, especially the young people who have been raised in the church. They went out into the world and let sin take them further than they wanted to go. People who once knew how to pray will be praying in hell, but their prayers cannot be answered in hell. Think about that. Through thousands of years, not one request has ever been granted in hell. If you ever want to pray, you had better pray before it is too late. You had better start praying now, because a time is coming when it will be too late to pray. In this life it might have been a long time since the rich man had cried, but now he is crying. That is a message from beyond the grave. He has something to cry about because he cannot stand the thirst, the pain, and the agony. All those who are in hell are screaming for help, but the only answer is the echo of their own sad cry.

The message from the rich man who died is, he has an undescrivable craving for water. Remember, he asked Abraham to send Lazarus that he might dip the tip of his finger in water and touch it to the end of his tongue. He requested just a little bit of moisture on the tip of his parched tongue. I want you to notice that not even the smallest request for help and relief is granted. This man was not granted one single request to make his pain more bearable.

"Appointed Unto Men Once to Die"

The rich man had another message. This message is to you, sinner friend, and it is also to the Jehovah's Witnesses and other cults.

They say the grave is hell. Luke 16:27-30 reads: "Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent."

If the rich man's five brothers had repented, that would not have kept them from going to the grave. Hebrews 9:27 states, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." That proves that hell is not the grave; it is beyond the grave. This rich man believed that if his brothers would repent, they could escape coming to where he was. Repentance will not keep you out of the grave, but it will keep you out of hell.

The rich man has another message: There is a great gulf that is fixed between those who are in Heaven and those who are in hell. Our Scripture text tells us in verse 26, "And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." Also, I want you to notice the duration of this rejection. The word "fixed" emphasizes how long the separation is going to be. Abraham explained to the rich man that a great gulf is fixed; in other words, it is there today, it will be there tomorrow, and it will be there ten million years from now.

A man who dies in sin will never be able to get over to the other side of the gulf. He cannot escape the suffering. Suffering in this lifetime is lightened by the hope of relief. Some Christian may pat the person on the head and say, "It will not be long, child of God; soon it will all be over and you will awaken on Heaven's shore." On the other hand, the pains of hell will be very intense, but there is no possibility of sleeping or fainting, not even for a

moment. Sinner friend, when you have been there for ten million years and look toward the future, you will only see eternity stretching on and on without any end and with no hope.

The Greek word for *torment* means, "Going all the way to the bottom; having the absolute depths of pain; the most extensive torture that could ever be applied to a human being." The word *torment* suggests the absolute depths of despair. You have gone down as far as a man could go once you reach this torment. You have reached the very bottom, and you cannot go any further than that.

We beg you to come and go to Heaven with us and escape this torment. The choice you make in this life will seal your destiny. You must be diligent to make preparation. It will be too late for repentance after death. By all means, you should avoid the fate of the wicked. Sinner friend, backslider, by all means, you must avoid the fate of the horrible, terrible torments awaiting those who fail to get saved and who disobey God.

Spurn Not the Invitation

Whatever you imagine hell to be like, it will be trillions of times worse than anything you could ever imagine. If you go to hell, you are going to have to climb over the efforts of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. You are going to have to climb over the efforts of the saints of God. This rich man sends the message that, unless you repent, you cannot escape the damnation of hell. If you read Luke, Chapter 16, you will be convinced of the fact that the rich man awoke to the fact that he was there because he did not repent.

Repentance is more than a change of mind, a change of heart, or a change of action. It is more than joining a church or being baptized in water. It is a change from the inside to the outside that makes you a new creature. In Luke 13:3 Jesus said, "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent,

ye shall all likewise perish." The Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 7:10, "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death." The message from the rich man shows what happens when an individual fails to make preparation for eternity. How many are still making the same mistake the rich man made? So many are caught up in the joys and the excitements of life that they fail to prepare for eternity.

I do not ever want you to have the feeling that God wants you to go to hell. He really loves you, sinner; He really cares about you. There are many Scriptures that prove this. Ezekiel 33:11 reads, "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways." God receives no joy whatsoever when a sinner leaves this world unprepared

to meet Him. If you die in your sins, that will be against the will of God. God does not want you to be in a lost eternity. That is the reason the Bible warns in 2 Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." The perfect will of God is for you to come to repentance.

God loves us so much that more than two thousand years ago, He said He would give His only Son so that no one would have to go to hell. The Son said He loves us so much that He would freely lay down His life. No man had the power to take His life from Him. He did it willingly.

When Jesus was on the Cross, sinner friend, you were on His mind. Friend, that is something to think about. More than two thousand years ago, He tasted death for every man. The reason you do not have to

suffer the pains of hell is that on the Cross, Jesus suffered for you. He went to the Cross in your place. It should have been you, and it should have been me, but Jesus took our place. He tasted death for us. Jesus had not sinned. No guile was found in His mouth. He paid the price. He gave His life a ransom for every one of us. That is how much He loved you and me.

Sinner friend, the Holy Ghost is wooing at your heart. He longs to draw you to Him. Won't you be saved? If you go to hell, you will have to go over the top of the love of God and what God has done. If you reject it all, friend, if you can reject that kind of mercy and love, then you do not deserve to go to Heaven. Will you come to Jesus Christ? Do not gamble with your soul. Let Jesus save you and change you, and then you can be on your way to Heaven.

(Compact Disc TR-1039E)

Do You Have a Power Shortage?

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Acts 1:8

Pressing Forward With Christ

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14). Someone reminded a person who needed courage, "Today is the first day of the remainder of your life." If that is true, and it is, you have a wonderful opportunity today to turn your attention to living only for God and to simply fix your determination more fully to live for Christ and His blessed cause.

Have you read carefully in Paul's letters how much he went through and suffered for Christ whom he had rejected? Do you remember when a group vowed not to eat or drink before they had killed Paul? Do you remember how, for his safety, he had to be let down from the upper story of a building by rope to be able to escape to safety? Do you remember when, after a group tried to worship him, it so quickly turned against him and actually tried to stone him to death? Then is when he got a glimpse of Heaven that was so wonderful that he said it was unlawful for him to describe what he saw. Anyway, that visit to Heaven made him more anxious and determined not to fail to go when he finished his battles against evil here.

Well, I am sure Paul did not want to forget the glories of Heaven, and neither should we wish to forget the glories of Heaven, and neither should we wish to forget the many rich blessings we have received from Christ. There are unpleasant things, perhaps unkindnesses from

others, that we, like Paul, should seek to forget.

By all means, let us remember the faithful exemplary life of Christ for us, while on earth, which should be our pattern, and then remember His suffering at the hand of His enemies as they sought to put Him to death. Let us remember the bitter cup from which He drank while dying on Calvary's cruel Cross.

Let us not forget the commission Christ gave to the eleven faithful disciples, which He told them to work at and then pass on to others. To whom were the faithful eleven to pass on the unfinished commission as most of them went to the burning stake for Him and His blessed cause? Are only ordained ministers of today responsible to carry out the commission to take the Gospel to every nation and every creature? The commission is not only for ordained ministers but for every believer in Christ. Every Christian has been commissioned by Christ to help teach all nations of Christ's love and how He gave His life on Calvary's Cross so that every soul might have eternal life as a free gift from Christ.

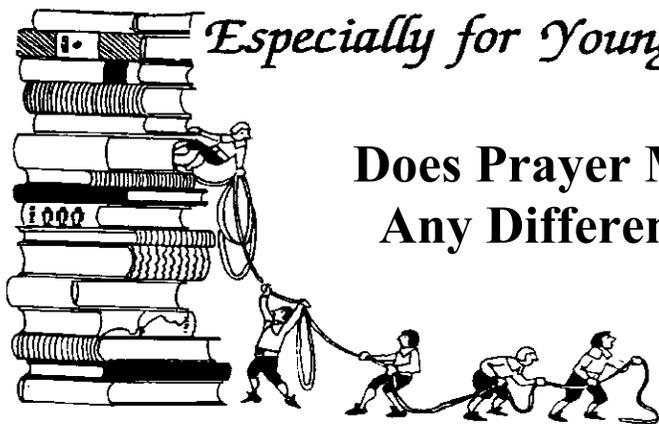
As a missionary told a dear, aged woman of Christ's love and of how He died for her, that her sins might be forgiven, so she could be a Christian and enter Heaven, like all Christians hope to do, she asked how long it had been since Christ died that her sins might be forgiven, and when he admitted it had been 1900 years, she replied, "Why did you wait so long to tell me?" Perhaps you cannot preach like Peter or travel like Paul, but through time Christ has given many ways to help extend His soul-saving Gospel.

When Christ returned from the wilderness where He was tempted so severely for forty long weary days, He began to seek teachers. The teachers He sought, He called fishermen. To some of the disciples He said, "Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men" (Mark 1:17). Remember, dear reader, there are many ways to fish for men, women, girls, and boys. We can talk to them about Christ, "Whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear" (Ezekiel 2:5). This is what Christ considered fishing for men. If God has blessed you with salvation, forgiveness for your sins, and given you hope of Heaven, you must tell others, or you will certainly not be a follower of Christ. Had I time, I could bear this out with many Scriptures. Christ told the eleven disciples and other believers to teach all nations. Christians are to continue with His message in an effort to get the Gospel to all nations and to every creature.

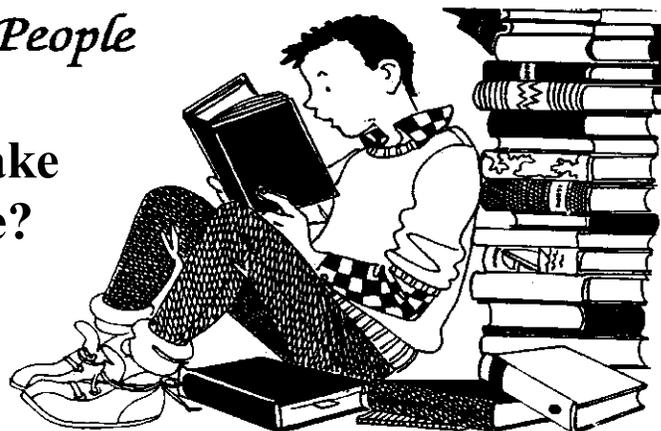
What about Gospel tracts that you can hand to friends and others? Often it has happened that when one put a tract down, another picked it up later and read it and was pointed to Christ. One irate person threw his tract in a fireplace. The title of the tract was, "Prepare to meet God." The paper was burned, but posed itself boldly in the fire and the words could be and yet were read, "Prepare to meet God." Despite his anger, that lost soul truly needed to prepare to meet God. As my memory serves me, he heeded this last minute warning and did prepare to meet God. How wonderful!

Selected

Especially for Young People



Does Prayer Make Any Difference?



The pastor was in his study busily working on next Sunday's sermon when he felt an inner compulsion to talk to Jim Bright. He was a prodigal son who had broken his parents' hearts with his wayward ways. The wonderful outcome of the pastor's Spirit led visit was that Jim gave his heart to Christ.

Jim went home, eager to share the good news with his family. He found everyone at the supper table but his father, who was sitting in the living room. Jim hurried to him and blurted out, "Dad, I was saved a little while ago."

With tears of joy in his eyes, the father said: "Son, twenty hours ago I became so burdened about your salvation that I vowed before God neither to eat nor to drink but to pray until you became a Christian. I told no one of my purpose."

Genesis, Chapter 18, is a fine example of this type of prayer, commonly known as intercessory prayer. The story tells of the impending destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Usually thought of as a man of faith and obedience, in this incident Abraham is shown to be a pioneer of prayer. Abraham interceded in prayer for the people of Sodom, and especially for his loved nephew Lot and his family.

Verse 23 lets you know that the first thing the pioneer did was draw near. Nearness to God is essential for effective prayer. James 4:8a says, "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you." Nearness to God is possible for us today because

of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Paul told the Ephesians in Ephesians 2:13, "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."

For Abraham to draw near to God required a pioneer's faith. It was a daring and presumptuous thing to do. Abraham was a pioneer who broke through the frontier to a personal relationship with a personal God. He drew near to God.

Next, note that the pioneer went with humility and reverence before God. He had an important objective in mind, and most certainly it was an emergency. He did not burst in upon the scene, spurting out his personal concern for close friends. Through this entire experience, Abraham maintained reverence for God. In verse 27 he said, "Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak to the Lord, which am but dust and ashes." He did not boast that God answered his prayers. This pioneer was completely awed that he, who was "but dust and ashes," should be speaking to God.

Notice that Abraham sought to know God's will before presenting his petition. His question in verse 23 was, "Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?" Before interceding for Lot, Abraham wanted to be sure of God's holy plans in this situation. Many people today never bother to inquire about God's will. For instance, the young lady who asks God to bless her new marriage without first asking God if the marriage is His will.

Today many are more concerned with the results than with being in God's will. They are concerned with the material object of their prayers, such as getting a new car or getting a better job. The proof of success in prayer, according to these, is the visible results, not being near to God. Many want to make God do the things that they want done.

The communist educational system teaches children the absurdity of prayer by asking the children to close their eyes and pray for ice cream. They do, and when they open their eyes, there is no ice cream. Next, they tell them to close their eyes and ask their communist leader for ice cream. While their eyes are closed, the teacher puts ice cream on each desk. Then, when they open their eyes, the children supposedly have learned that prayer is foolish. In many Sunday schools in America, children are growing up with a similar pagan philosophy of prayer. If they do not get what they ask for, they lose faith in prayer.

Contrast this with Abraham's focused intent. Once he had discerned God's will, he proceeded to ask for the city to be spared for fifty righteous people, then forty, and so on down to ten (verses 24-32).

Many prayers are too vague. People pray, "Lord, save the lost" or "Lord, help the missionaries" or "Lord, help our youth." You cannot tell when such vague and generalized prayers are being answered. You should pray for a specific sinner, for a particular missionary, or

for an individual young person.

It is quite obvious that Abraham was persevering in prayer. He continued until he had reached his objective. Others might have been easily discouraged and quit after reaching a limit of thirty or twenty, but the pioneer persevered until he had reached ten. The New Testament tells us that "men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1).

Finally, even though Abraham held to an incorrect premise, he had the proper spirit. Abraham felt that a righteous man's family would be righteous. He thought that if he could get the saving number down to ten that his nephew's family would be spared. There was Lot and

his wife, which made two; then, there were his two sons, making four, plus the two married daughters, making six, plus their husbands, making eight, and his two unmarried daughters, making ten. Abraham was incorrect in presuming that the family of a righteous man was also righteous. Lot's wife was lost because she would not obey, his sons were lost because of indifference, and his sons-in-law thought he was joking and refused to listen. His married daughters stayed with their husbands to perish. His two unmarried daughters later disgraced themselves in their behavior toward their father and proved themselves to be unrepentant women of the world.

The point is, though, that often one can be wrong in some technicality, but be right in his intentions.

Abraham, our pioneer of prayer, teaches us the precious truth that the accuracy of details is not as important as the purity of motive and spirit. Many times God will correct our errors and answer the prayer that we really meant to pray.

The avenue of prayer is still much unexplored. The frontier is challenging to those brave souls who will venture forth. Much needs to be learned and unlearned about prayer. Young person, will you dare to be a pioneer of prayer?

Selected

One Solitary Life

A young man was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village. He worked in a carpenter shop until he was thirty, and then for three years he was an itinerant preacher. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never owned a home. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put his foot inside a big city. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place where he was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but himself.

While he was still a young man, the tide of public opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. He was turned over to his enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross, between two thieves. While he was dying, his executioners gambled for the only piece of property he had on earth, and that was his coat. When he was dead, he was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend. Nineteen centuries have come and gone, and today he is the central figure of the human race, and the leader of the column of progress.

I am far within the mark when I say that all armies that ever marched, and all the navies that ever sailed, and all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as has this One Solitary Life.

Anonymous

John 21:1 After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself.

2 There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.

3 Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.

4 But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.

5 Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No.

6 And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.

8 And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes.

9 As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

10 Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.

11 Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

12 Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.

13 Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.

14 This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

How We Are Known



Brother Paul Prinkey

The Change in Jesus After the Resurrection

What took place in the Scripture text? Jesus had been crucified. At His Crucifixion, the disciples forsook Him. Jesus warned them that

after He was taken to be crucified, they all would forsake Him. Peter, of course, denied that, and he said that he would not forsake Him. In essence, Jesus responded to Peter, "By the time the cock crows, you are going to deny Me three times."

When the time finally came that Jesus was crucified, by all accounts, all His disciples had left Him.

When Jesus was taken and buried by Simon and Nicodemus, none of the disciples were around. When Jesus was resurrected, the

disciples were already in hiding. The reason for this was that they feared for their own lives. They were afraid that those who took Jesus and killed Him were going to kill them too. Therefore, the disciples started getting a little restless, so Peter came up with the idea to go fishing. The other disciples spoke up and said, "We are going with you."

All the disciples went out, got into a boat, and went fishing all night, but they did not catch any fish. The sons of Zebedee and Peter were fishermen by trade. They knew how to fish. They knew where the hot spots were, but they could not catch any fish. Someone showed up on the shore, but they could not identify who that person was. This Man from the shore called out to them, "Children, have ye any meat?" They replied no, so He told them to cast the net over on the right side of the boat and they would catch something.

Had I been one of those fishermen, I might have thought, "What does He know that I don't know?" Nevertheless, they did what Jesus said, and as soon as they did, they enclosed such a great multitude of fish that they could not even draw the net into the boat. They all saw Him standing on the shore.

Those disciples had spent three and one-half years with Jesus during His ministry and did not recognize who Jesus was. The change in Jesus after His resurrection was so great that the disciples did not immediately recognize Him. Verse 4 of our Scripture text says, "But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus."

As I read these verses of Scripture and studied them, I thought about the fact that my wife and I have been married for more than twenty-five years. We dated for approximately a year and a half before we got married. It did not take me long to recognize Michelle whenever I saw her somewhere. After marriage, whenever she was coming down the hallway, I did not

have to wonder: "Who is this stranger in my house? Does she belong here?" No, I knew who she was and could easily identify who she was, because I spent every day with her.

Those disciples were spending every day with Jesus in the ministry, helping Him as He ministered to the people. They knew what Jesus looked like; they could identify Him. Even when Jesus came walking along and John the Baptist spoke up and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God," Andrew went and got his brother Peter and said, "Come, we have found the Messiah." Andrew knew exactly who to take his brother back to, and he was able to identify Jesus on short notice. Although those disciples knew what Jesus looked like, after Jesus went through His death, burial, and resurrection, a change took place. Jesus was not as identifiable as He was before He was crucified. The Bible backs this up.

A Risen Lord

We find that when Mary Magdalene was in the garden and brought herbs to treat the body of Jesus, the angels were at the tomb, and Mary Magdalene was grieved because the body of Jesus was missing. Someone spoke to her and she turned around. She supposed that He was the gardener, and she said, "Jesus' body is missing; He is gone." When Jesus spoke her name, her eyes were opened and she was able to identify Him. Here was a woman from whom Jesus had cast out seven evil spirits. She had worshiped Jesus, washed His feet with her tears, and dried them with her hair. This was a woman who could identify who Jesus was before His death, but she could not identify Him after His resurrection. When He spoke her name, however, she could identify Him.

We also find two men who were on their way to Emmaus from Jerusalem. They were getting out of town because they were expecting someone to chase them down to kill

them. While they were lamenting over what had happened in Jerusalem and the death of Jesus, Jesus joined up with them, but they did not know who He was. Men who had been around Jesus for several years could identify Him before He was crucified, but afterward they did not know who this Man was who walked with them. As He walked with them, He began to recite the Scriptures and the prophecies concerning Him.

You can read in the Book of Acts, Chapter 5, that Gamaliel spoke when Peter and other disciples were on trial before the council. He said it had happened before that a religious leader rose up and was killed, and all the followers were scattered. Then he admonished the council to let them go. In verse 39 he said, "But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God."

You can read in Luke 24:32 that later the disciples said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?" Jesus was quoting to them the same prophecies that He had tried to encourage their hearts with before He was taken to be crucified so that they would not become discouraged. When they got to the place where they were going to stay for the night, they sat down to eat. Jesus took the bread and broke it and asked the blessing, and their eyes were opened. Up until that time, they could not identify Him. As soon as Jesus prayed, He disappeared out of their midst and appeared somewhere else. Then they knew who He was.

Two disciples got excited. Night was coming, and it was not a time to travel in that country. Highwaymen were out there ready to kill them, so they hurried back to Jerusalem. They were getting back to the other disciples to tell them that they had seen Jesus.

Meanwhile, Jesus appeared before the other disciples. The two disciples came and told them, "We

have seen Jesus!" While they were there telling the others, Jesus walked through closed doors. What happened? Luke, Chapter 24, tells us they were frightened. Jesus began to talk to them. Verse 45 says, "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures." When He spoke, light dawned upon them and they had no more fear. They did not continue to hide themselves behind closed doors.

Newness of Life

The disciples went into the synagogues and began to rejoice and wait on the advent of the Holy Ghost, which was to be given on the Day of Pentecost. These are all proof that Jesus' appearance was altered. As the disciples were there in the ship that day, Jesus told them to cast over on the right side, and they would catch something. Soon they enclosed a great multitude of fishes. One man in the boat did not have to identify Jesus with his two eyes. What was the difference? He recognized His work.

For three and a half years that disciple had seen Jesus work miracles—things that were not thought of, things that were unheard of, things that had never happened before. They brought to Jesus all who were lame, all who were possessed with devils, all who had diseases, and all who could not hear, see, or talk. The Bible says He healed them all. Miracles happened that had never happened in history.

John stood and watched it. The night that they had communion together, John lay there at Jesus' breast. When the disciples were afraid to ask who was going to betray Jesus, they said, "Get John to ask. Jesus will answer John." (John was the one who recognized Jesus.) So John asked, and Jesus said, "He who dips his hand with me in the sop." John passed the word to the other disciples.

When the disciples saw someone on the shore, John told Peter, "That

is Jesus," and Peter did not question him. Peter jumped in the water and swam to shore. When he got there, lo and behold, the Man there did not have a fishing pole or a net to catch any fish with or anything to cook with, but He had bread and fish on the fire. Jesus was waiting there with a meal already prepared for them. John recognized the work that Jesus did.

I would like to deal with a few thoughts concerning how we are known. The disciples knew who Jesus was because of the works that He did. He was identified by the works that He accomplished, and we are known in the very same way. We are known by the works that we do. Paul spoke in Romans 6:3-4 of being baptized unto death that we might be raised to newness of life, as Jesus was. The newness of life that we have when God delivers us out of sin makes a change in our lives that turns us around completely. Life is not the same as it was.

When Jesus was resurrected, life was different. He was not bound by any holds of the earth. He could walk through closed doors. He did not do that before He was crucified. He ascended up to the right hand of the Father. Earth held no gravitational pull on Him. His life was completely changed. Likewise, when you are buried with Christ and baptized into His death, you are raised and resurrected to newness of life. Everything is different. The world should not have any pull on you in this life. God gives you freedom from the world. After salvation, you should not be recognized for who you were before you were saved. The change in your life and in your heart should be that great.

Salvation Makes a Difference

I remember when I first got saved and came to live for the Lord. It happened over Christmas vacation while I was in school. When I went back to school, those same children with whom I went to school, who

were there before Christmas vacation, had not changed. They were the same as they were before, but something had happened in my heart. I had yielded myself to the Lord and had gotten saved.

When I got back to school, a young man with whom I was friends asked me while we were alone one day in gym class, "What happened to you?"

I asked, "What do you mean?"

He said: "You are different. Something has changed about you."

God opened the door for me to witness to him, and I told him: "I got saved over Christmas vacation. I gave my heart and life to God. I quit the sin business, and I am a Christian now."

He said: "I knew something had happened. You are different than you were before."

You will be different when God saves you. Your life should turn around 180 degrees when you start on a new path for the Lord. You should not be recognized for who you were before when God makes a change in you. After you are saved, your life changes completely, and people are going to recognize you for who you are by what you do. Your life is under constant scrutiny. Somebody is watching you, even when you do not think so. People see how you act, what you do, and how you live. Your life is leaving a testimony for everyone that you are around.

The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch, according to the Bible. Why was that? Their lives mimicked the life of Christ; they lived as Jesus lived. They endeavored to do everything that Jesus taught them to do; because of that, people began to dub them with the name "Christian." It is so sad that term is used so loosely today. Many people flippantly say, "I'm a Christian." Some find themselves saying, "I am a true Christian." I did not know there was any other kind. They want to emphasize the term Christian by adding something in front of it, but there is only one kind

of Christian. The disciples first proved this when they began to be called Christians in Antioch.

God Knows You By Your Works

Solomon said in Proverbs 20:11, "Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right." Sometimes we see children not behaving themselves and say: "You have to watch out for that boy right there; he is sneaky."

Proverbs 16:3 says, "Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established." Your mind can be established by good works. As a young child of God, I endeavored to establish good works in my life. One way that I did that was by establishing a good thought process. Philippians 4:8 says, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." You need to get your mind settled on things that are right, and your works will be honorable.

Your love for God will result in a life devoted to Him. If you get saved and live for God, He is going to know whether or not you mean it. When you say: "I'm going to live for God for the rest of my days. I love the Lord, and I am going to be a child of God until I die," God knows whether or not you are devoted to Him.

I heard a story one time about a young fellow who was in the military and stationed overseas. He asked his superior officer if he had received a letter from his devoted girlfriend, and he replied: "No, there is nothing here for you. When was the last time you received something from her?"

He answered, "About six months ago."

He said, "She doesn't devote very well."

God knows whether or not you are devoted to Him. Also, He knows whether you will "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). In order to do this, you need to put some hard effort into it. You must seek to please God first. This is a lesson that you need to learn from Jesus. He said in John 8:29, "And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him."

God's testimony about His Son on the Mount of Transfiguration was, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). Jesus always did those things that pleased the Father. God knows you by your works. If you are a Christian, you will willingly obey God and make sacrifices for Him. It will not be hard. God will not have to drag obedience out of you.

As a child growing up, my parents took us to church every time the church doors were open. When they had opportunity to attend other church meetings, we went. As a child growing up who was unsaved, I did not like it, but Mom and Dad took me anyway. When I dragged my feet on them, so to speak, they encouraged me with the "board of education" to the "seat of knowledge," and they got me on the move. If I hesitated, I felt some more "encouragement." They had to "encourage" my obedience, because I did not want to go.

When I got saved at sixteen years of age, they did not have to drag me to church anymore. I had my Bible, and I was ready to go. I started having a desire to want to make sure my appearance was better. I took more care and attention about the way I appeared. I conducted myself better, because I wanted to live for the Lord. After I got saved, obedience was not something that was hard. It was something that I willingly gave to God, and it is still that way today. This is not just something that starts out that

way in Christianity, but it stays that way throughout life.

Staying Consistent

As life continues, it gets more complicated. Greater responsibilities come all the time, but the thing that stays constant in my life is that I willingly obey God. This is the way it has to be. God knows you by your works, and the congregation knows you by your works. Also, the congregation knows who you are by the way you manifest yourself to others. Maybe you are not very cordial. Maybe you are not easy to talk to. Maybe you need to change your attitude. The congregation knows your works by how you manifest yourself and by your faithfulness to the services.

As a pastor, I look around when the church doors open. I take notice of those who are there and those who are not. I miss those who are not there. If I do not know the reason they are not there, I wonder where they are and wonder if something has happened. It is a relief to find out there is a good reason that someone is missing. I believe it is a relief to the congregation because we like to be able to have confidence in one another, to know that whenever the church doors are open, this is where brothers and sisters in Christ like to get together to have fellowship and to worship the Lord. If someone is missing and no one knows why, doubt may begin to work. Something starts working that is not good for the congregation. Your faithfulness to the services is important to God and to your brothers and sisters in Christ.

The congregation knows you by your participation in the services. When the pastor says, "Let's all get our Bibles out and turn to John, Chapter 21," do you get your Bible out? Your participation is important, not only in the church services but also in the work that goes on. The congregation knows whether you are someone who can be counted on. Some people are willing to do any-

thing in their power to help. They get a reputation for the works they do in the congregation.

You are known by your works by the people that you get out to church and win to the Lord. When was the last time you invited someone to a church service? When was the last time you took the opportunity to hand somebody a tract and invite them to the church services? When was the last time you took the opportunity to witness to someone and ask that person if he is saved and ready for eternity? God is counting on you for this. The people that you are around in everyday living recognize the kind of works that you do.

The world knows you by your works, by the way that you go through hardships and cope with adversity. People are watching. They will say, "Hey, doesn't the Bible say such and such?" The next thing you know, you might be in a discussion with them over what the Bible says. The world watches when you go through hardships. They see how you handle adversity. They see what you do whenever things do not go your way. What are your actions and reactions? Are you Christlike? Are you living for the Lord? Are you serving God in Truth or are you merely carrying a profession but it really does not mean much? The world has its eyes on you.

Living a Faithful Life

Statistics state that a person influences approximately one hundred sixty people in a lifetime. Sometimes people notice your life when you do not even know it. People are watching how you live.

The world knows you for the care and concern that you show others. When people are going through hardships or adversity, how do you treat them? Do you show them the love of God? The world knows you by the concern that you show for their souls. Sometimes people put on a hard front and act as though they do not want to hear you

talk about the Lord or to show that you care. They try to act as if they can handle whatever is coming their way, but do not let that hinder you from showing care and love. Sometimes when you reach beyond that surface of hardness, you may find a tender heart underneath.

Sometimes just walking over to somebody and saying, "I'm praying about what you're going through" shows your care and concern for the hardship that person is going through. The world knows you for the good things you do whenever you have an opportunity. Do you reach out to those who are in need, to those who are lost, to those who are going through rough places? Do you reach out to be an encouragement to others?

Sometimes you may need to take somebody out to eat and have a conversation with that person to let him know that you care, that you are praying for him, and that you desire to see him come to church and yield himself to the Lord. God can do so much through your life if you will allow Him to work through you in these ways. The works that you do will leave a testimony behind for your life.

Older Christians in the church leave behind a heritage by living lives faithful to God. They did not budge whenever people around them were moving, getting shaken up, and falling by the wayside. They remained steadfast for the Lord. They left a testimony and a heritage that we can look at because they stood solidly for the Truth; they left behind a legacy of good works in their lives so that we can follow in their footsteps and do the same thing. Are you a pillar in the Church of God, somebody who can be counted on, somebody who is solid in the Truth?

We need more of that today.

Some time ago I read something that really stood out to me, and it left an impression on me. It said that Truth is so obscure these days and lies are so well established that unless people have the Truth and love the Truth, they will never recognize it. We need to be established in good works. We each need to be established in our experience so that people know us for who we are and by what we do.

God is watching each of us, and the world is looking on. The Christian experience is defined by a consistent life. Consistency is so important. So many people are missing this in their lives. Too many families are missing consistency. Are you faithful to God? Is your life consistent before the Lord? Can God count on you for faithful service? As the world looks on your life, are people seeing a faithful life? Are they seeing someone they can count on? We all need God's help every step of the way. This is not something that you can do on your own, but God will give you strength and help you to stay consistent every day of your life.

You can only go forward, not backward, if you will trust in God and stay faithful to Him in everything God has shown you to do. There is no way to fail if you will continue to trust God and follow Him. Friend, you do not have to lose. Sometimes we sing the song, "On the Winning Side." Are you on the winning side? Are you faithful to God? If the Lord has revealed to you that you need to shape up, now is the best time to do it. If you have a need, won't you pray?

(Compact Disc TR-1719M)

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. . . . my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:13,19

Proverbs 1:5 A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels.

John 10:27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

Listening to the Voice of God



Brother Steve Strelecky

Take Heed How You Hear

Many voices can speak to us. The world is full of all kinds of voices, and too many times those voices drown out the voice of God. If you hear the voice of God through all this noise and confusion going on around you, it will take some effort on your part.

The dictionary makes a distinction between hearing and listening. As I was studying, I found more than two thousand references to the word *hear* in the King James Version of the Bible, and only one reference that had the word *listen* in it. However, more emphasis is put on the word *listen* than on the word

hear in today's language. When you look at the Scriptures, you will find varying degrees of hearing.

Let us look at the Hebrew and the Greek words for the word *hear*. They are very similar to the English word in the sense that they treat this concept of hearing the same way. It is a common word used for the actual process of hearing with the ears. In the Book of Revelation, Jesus said, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith." He said those same words repeatedly.

You use your hearing to understand what is said. In all three languages (Hebrew, Greek, and English), the concept moves further than hearing or understanding; it includes

obeying. When the Bible tells you to hear, it is telling you to obey; therefore, it requires action on your part. So if you hear properly, you must obey.

The Hebrew word for *hear* is **shama**. This Hebrew word occurs more than a thousand times in the Old Testament. It is the everyday word for *hear*, and it simply means to hear. However, the extended meaning is, "Listening, paying attention, obeying, understanding, and in the technical sense, hearing a case in the courtroom." It is often translated as the word "heed."

Another meaning of the word *hear* is "to hearken." The chorus of a song in the *Evening Light Hymnal*

entitled "The Last Call" says, "*Harken* (another spelling of the same word) *to the Spirit's voice.*" What was the songwriter trying to tell us? The Spirit has something to say, and we had better take heed. It is often translated "to heed, to understand, or to obey."

The Greek word **akoue** is very similar to **shama**. In the Hebrew it is the usual word for hearing. It also implies listening attentively or respectfully. When you go to the house of God, you ought to listen attentively and respectfully, because God has something to say, and you will be held accountable for it. You must go into the house of God ready to hear and obey. The meaning is often extended to cover hearing effectively and performing what is spoken. Again, it requires action.

You are not just to sit and hear but to take action. You must either measure to light or go backward. By the help of God, I want to walk in the light. Psalm 10:17 says, "LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear." In other words, God has something to say, and He is going to cause you to hear.

Having an Ear to Hear

Isaiah 50:4 states, "The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned." Sometimes God has to shake me and wake me up and say, "Listen." Verse 5 reads, "The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back." The word *hear* means "to perceive sound by the ear; to be capable of perceiving sound; to listen; to consider favorable." Hearing is one of the five senses. A person who is unable to hear has a condition known as deafness. Sad to say, many people are spiritually deaf. What does that mean? They do not have an ear to hear what God

says to them.

Hearing even occurs in your sleep. The ear processes sound but does not necessarily react to it. For example, as I am going to sleep at night, I can hear crickets, and sometimes I hear the wind rustling in the leaves. I hear the normal night sounds outside, but soon I go to sleep and no longer react to those sounds. Also, before I go to sleep, I may hear creaks and sounds of the house cooling off. As the temperature cools down, the plumbing pipes may expand or contract.

According to the dictionary, the word *listen* means "to make an effort to hear." The difference between the words *hear* and *listen* is that to listen you have to put action into hearing. You have to pay attention and give heed. Listening is something that you consciously choose to do. You choose either to listen or not to listen.

When I say something that my children do not want to hear, they teasingly put their fingers in their ears. They make a conscious decision that they do not want to listen. When you listen to something, you try to interpret the noise, or understand it, and then you provide an adequate response. Listening requires concentration so that your brain can process the meaning of what you are hearing. Listening leads to learning, and it takes practice. It is not something that you are born to do.

When your children are little, you teach them to be quiet in church, and as time goes on, you train them to listen. When they get in school, they continue that process of being trained to listen when a teacher is talking. It takes practice.

A simple way to understand listening is to ask yourself what kind of response you should want from a person who is listening to you. What you would want most is to be understood, not just heard. Sometimes people do not take enough time to listen to others because they are distracted or because they have other things on their minds. Do you take the time to listen to others? Sometimes people merely want someone

who will take the time to listen to them.

As Christians, we are to be servants, and part of our service is to be available to listen. I do not always have the wisdom or an appropriate response, but when some people talk, they work out their problem. They need to verbalize it, and when we take time to listen, the rewards are immediate.

When you spend time with God, you should not always be talking. Sometimes in prayer you need to listen to God to hear what God has to tell you. When you read the Word, you need to meditate to understand what God has to tell you. The most important quality in listening is to listen effectively.

If you are not careful, while listening to a message, reading your Bible, or getting counsel from your pastor, instead of saying, "Speak, Lord, for I'm listening," by your actions, you may be saying, "Listen, Lord; I'm speaking." You never want to get in that place. You should be like Samuel when the Lord called him. He answered, "Speak, Lord, for I am listening." That should always be your attitude.

Be Not Hearers Only

Basically, there are four types of listeners. One is the non-listener. A non-listener is one who is too preoccupied with his own thoughts. He hears, but he does not pay attention. If you are not careful in your Christian walk, you can get too preoccupied and become a non-listener.

The late theologian William Stringfellow once said: "Listening is a rare happening among human beings. You cannot listen to the word another is speaking if you are preoccupied with your appearance or impressing the other, or if you are trying to decide what you are going to say when the other stops talking, or if you are debating about whether the word being spoken is true or relevant or agreeable." That would put a person in the category of the non-listener.

Truly listening is being attentive to a person and letting him know that what he is saying is important. Whether you are talking to God or a person, he should be most important at that particular time.

William Stringfellow went on to say, "Listening, in other words, is a primitive act of love, in which a person gives self to another's word, making self accessible and vulnerable to that word."

The second type of listener is the passive listener. A passive listener hears words but does not absorb them. In James 1:22-27 we read: "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

These verses challenge you to deal with any sin in your life so you can truly receive, or hear, the Word. James then warned about the difference between superficial listening and substantial listening. The person who listens superficially looks around, makes eye contact for a little bit and may say, "Yes, I understand," and continues to look around. That is an example of superficial listening. That individual is not really locked in on what the other person has to say. It is the same with hearing the Word. You may sit in church and hear a word now and then, but your mind is off on something else. That is another example of superficial listening.

James let you know that you need to put into practice *substantial* listening, and he warned against passive and uninvolved listening. James also taught that you must be an active listener, diligent to understand and to be responsive to God's Word so that Truth touches your heart and brings a change in your life. You must put into practice what is being said. This does not come by your own strength, but by the power of the indwelling Spirit of God through faith. It takes God to make that change, but you need to be an active participant. You must be active in your salvation.

The third type of listener is called the selective listener. This is one who listens and grasps the meaning of the conversation, but only if it interests him. This is the most common type of listener. This person does not want to listen to a topic that differs from his own views and values. If it does not go along with his views, he is not interested. That should not happen in the house of God. As the Word goes forth, you need to be an active participant. You should not stop listening, even if it does not line up with your views.

If a message does not line up with the way you feel about certain things, maybe if you listen, your view will change, and you will line up with the Word of God. If you are so stuck on your own way of thinking, then how are you going to be an active listener so God can work to make a change in your life? God may be trying to show you that your ideas or traditions do not line up with what His Word says, so He is trying to bring about a change.

Some people refuse to listen because they feel their way is better. You need to cultivate the discipline of listening. When a person cultivates the ground, he is working it so that he can plant something. The Bible talks about breaking up your fallow ground. Sometimes your ground can become stagnant, and God is trying to break up that ground. You need to be an active participant and listen. God wants to dig around you.

Being an Active Listener

The fourth type of listener is the active listener, and this is the best kind of listener. Brother Emerson Wilson used to say that you should hear what God has to say in two ways: one is with your ears, and the second is with your heart. You should hear what is being said and listen with patience and an open mind. You need to be completely focused on the one bringing forth the Word as God has given it to him.

Just listening to somebody is showing them love. Have you ever thought about that? By listening you are showing that you care enough about that person to listen. When your pastor is preaching the Word, by listening to him, you show him that you love him. Active listening will bring about a change. When you actively listen, you are showing God that you love Him and that you love His Word. May God help us never to lose His Truth. Listening to the Word requires a response, and as you respond in the way that God wants you to respond, you are showing Him that you love Him.

By listening to what God has to say through the preached Word, through the Sunday school lesson, in private prayer, and in devotions, you are showing God that you love Him and value what He has to say. You are giving yourself to God by attentively listening and being an active participant.

In the giving of your time and attention to what another person is saying, you are a servant, and part of being a servant is giving of your time. When you go into the house of God, are you giving Him your time by actively listening to what He has to say? God wants you to be a good, active listener. When He points out something in your life, He wants you to respond.

When a person talks to you and you are truly listening, you are making that person feel as though he is important. It may be something totally trivial, but taking time to listen means a lot to a person.

As an active listener, you must prepare your heart to receive what God wants you to hear. If you get up late on Sunday morning and become irritated and rush into church, there is a chance that you will not hear God's voice because you are distracted and upset.

Getting to church on time takes preparation. That means getting to bed early on Saturday night, and laying out your clothes and the children's clothes on Saturday night so that you are not rushed. The devil will use anything, whether you cannot find the right clothes, your shoes, your keys, or whatever it may be. By making preparation on Saturday night, you can make Sunday morning run more smoothly.

When adversity happens and you go to the house of God, you are not in a receptive mood. Two people can go to church and sit side by side, and one can walk out knowing that God really spoke to him and the other will not get a thing out of the service. Why is that? One prepared his heart to hear and the other did not. They both heard the same message and the same songs, but one person was unprepared.

What Kind of Listener Are You?

Listening is very important in everyday life. Husband, you need to listen to your wife or your marriage is going to go down. There are times when your spouse needs someone to listen to her. She has problems and burdens, and she needs you to listen. You may not be able to solve the problem, but by listening, you let her know that you care. That will endear you to your wife. She is at home all day with the children, and she might become frustrated.

Parents spend a lot of time teaching the children, but sometimes the children need somebody to listen to them. Being there to listen to your children and the problems that they are having is of paramount importance. At times you need to sit down and talk with your children because of the problems they are going

through and the trials they are facing. It is a wonderful opportunity to point them to God.

Sometimes as a parent, you are very limited in what you can do for your children, but it is wonderful to point them to God, because He can help them. You need to listen to your children. You cannot keep a close relationship if you do not communicate. You need to take time to listen to your family—your children, your spouse, your extended family—as well as your friends.

It is most important to listen to God. What does it mean to listen to God? When I read and study the Word, I must put everything else aside and concentrate on what God is saying to me. I must give Him my undivided attention. Spending time with God and listening to what God has to say is the only way that I can develop my listening skills.

A prayer closet is one place where you can get away and give God your undivided attention with minimal distractions. Often if I pray silently, my mind wanders in many different directions, but if I pray aloud, I am more focused on my prayers. Sometimes I even read aloud. Listening to God is no small issue. It is very important if you want to stay victorious in your Christian life. If you want to grow and prosper spiritually, you must be an active

participant and an active listener. If you are not prepared to listen, you cannot respond with your heart.

You could fall into playing church if you withhold your heart from the Lord. Your religious activities would then become an experiment in futility. You do not want your worship to get to the place where you are merely going through the motions. If you are not an active participant, that is what will happen. God wants you to be further along than that.

What type of listener are you? God wants you to be an active listener. I teach a welding class, and I tell my students that everything I teach them is important because some of the things that we do are a matter of life and death. We deal with gases and with welders that can shock them. We deal with machinery, and if they are not paying attention, they can be seriously injured; therefore, they must listen carefully.

Everything contained in the Bible is important. It is not just a matter of physical life and death, but it is a matter of where you will spend eternity. If the Lord has pointed out something that you need to act on, that is a part of listening, and it demands a response. What is your response to the message?

(Compact Disc TR-1608)

Is JESUS the anchor of Your soul?

“That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast. . . .”

Hebrews 6:18-19

[Spring Camp Mtg Report—contin. from p. 2] the Heart." Brother David Stegmeier taught a series of vital lessons on "Threats to the Effectiveness of the Church of God." His timely instructions included, "Compromise," "Scarcity of Faith," "Lukewarmness," "Worldliness," "Uncertainty," and "Lack of a Burden."

In the mornings Sister Karen Wilks and her helpers held services for the young children in the old barn. The children sang spiritual songs, learned Scriptures, heard a story, and had time to play outside. Saturday morning the children gathered into the tabernacle to bless our hearts with singing and reciting Scriptures that they had learned. What a blessing these little hearts gave the saints!

As it has so often been said, it is difficult to tell others what we enjoyed most while at the camp meeting. Trying to put into words all the good things that took place is beyond our vocabulary. We could say that it was simply wonderful, but that would not really describe it adequately. God's presence surely filled the atmosphere in a very sweet way. Each service proved to be rewarding and spiritually uplifting to everyone in attendance. Time after time, we were blessed as the Lord refreshed us in an overwhelming manner.

The congregational singing

brought much joy to the hearts of God's people. The anointed voices of the choir greatly prepared our hearts for worship. Our hearts were greatly blessed as the children's choir and the young people's choir sang so beautifully. This year Brother and Sister Harvey Kelly came from Honduras for the first time. Their singing was a real blessing to our hearts. Other solos, trios, quartets, and instrumentals added much to the worship services and truly lifted and blessed our hearts and brought forth shouts of praise in the camp. All these songs of praise echoed throughout the tabernacle as the saints lifted their voices to God. Many clapped their hands as the glorious melodies rose up to the wonderful Lamb of God. Many shouted as they rejoiced over the goodness and grace of our Heavenly Father.

The main purpose of any religious meeting is to hear the Word of God expounded by men of God who are anointed of God. It is still through the preaching of the Gospel that the lost are made aware of their sins. Through the clear sounding of the trumpet, men and women are awakened to their need of the Savior. There was certainly no lack of Truth going forth during this camp meeting. Each minister who stood behind the sacred desk was empowered by God's Holy Spirit to

deliver the message that the Lord wanted delivered.

The altars were not barren but found penitent souls seeking their way into the heart of God. It was a great joy to see precious souls pleading for God's forgiveness and to be filled with His Holy Spirit. It is still a glorious sight to see souls who were loaded down with sin translated from the power of darkness to the kingdom of God's dear Son.

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

Finally, if you were unable to attend the camp meeting or unable to stay for the entire meeting, we encourage you to order the recordings of the services, which are available on compact discs as well as DVD's (see page 26 for details). We are sure you will be satisfied thoroughly when you hear all the good things that were brought forth.

"Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

Isaiah 40:28-31

Spring 2017 Camp Meeting Recordings

Recrd. No.	Date	Message Title	Minister
TR-1899 TR-1900	6-18-2017	The Father's Presence Learn, Live, and Love the Truth or Lose the Truth	Bro. David Stegmeier Bro. Larry Dishman
TR-1901 TR-1902	6-19-2017	The True Israel of God Threats to the Effectiveness of the Church of God: Compromise	Bro. Roger Decker Bro. David Stegmeier
TR-1903		Are You a Dedicated Christian?	Bro. Larry Dishman
TR-1904 TR-1905	6-20-2017	The Antichrist Threats to the Effectiveness of the Church of God: Scarcity of Faith	Bro. Roger Decker Bro. David Stegmeier
TR-1906		Earnestly Contend for the Faith	Bro. Calvin Foster
TR-1907 TR-1908	6-21-2017	The Great Tribulation Threats to the Effectiveness of the Church of God: Lukewarmness	Bro. Roger Decker Bro. David Stegmeier
TR-1909		The Wonderful Gospel of Jesus Christ	Bro. Calvin Foster
TR-1910 TR-1911	6-22-2017	The Nature of God's Kingdom Threats to the Effectiveness of the Church of God: Worldliness	Bro. Roger Decker Bro. David Stegmeier
TR-1912		God's Love for the Souls of Men	Bro. Calvin Foster
TR-1913 TR-1914	6-23-2017	Fast Christians Threats to the Effectiveness of the Church of God: Lack of a Burden	Bro. Paul Prinkey Bro. David Stegmeier
TR-1915		And the Word Was Made Flesh	Bro. Calvin Foster
TR-1916 TR-1917	6-24-2017	Regrets Leaving a Spiritual Legacy	Bro. Garrett Haylock Bro. Larry Dishman
TR-1918 TR-1919	6-25-2017	The Hidden Man of the Heart Threats to the Effectiveness of the Church of God: Uncertainty	Bro. Richard Talbot Bro. David Stegmeier
TR-1920		Why Will You Die?	Bro. Larry Dishman
TM-387 TM-388 TM-389 TM-390 TM-391 TM-392	2017	Spring Camp Meeting Songs #1 Spring Camp Meeting Songs #2 Spring Camp Meeting Songs #3 Spring Camp Meeting Songs #4 Spring Camp Meeting Songs #5 Spring Camp Meeting Songs #6	
2017		Spring Camp Meeting Choir Songs # 1 (1 CD) & Spring Camp Meeting Choir Songs # 2 (1 CD) Morning Messages in MP3 Format (1 CD) & Evening Messages in MP3 Format (1 CD) Afternoon Teaching Services in MP3 Format (1 CD) All Songs in MP3 Format	

All messages and music recordings are available only on regular CD's or MP3 format. (Cassette tapes unavailable.) The suggested donation for regular CD's is \$3.00 each and for DVD's is \$5.00 each. DVD's are not available for the afternoon teaching services. The suggested donation for MP3's is \$10.00 each. The postage is \$3.00 for one CD or MP3 and \$0 .35 for each additional. Recordings may be ordered by writing *The Gospel Trumpeter*, CD Ministry, 675 N. Cedar St., Newark, Ohio 43055, or by calling (740) 345-1312, the Print Shop. Please make check or money order in U.S. funds payable to *The Gospel Trumpeter*.

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Newark, OH**
July 30-August 6
Camp Meeting: Church of God, 675 N. Cedar Street, Newark, OH 43055
The first service begins Sunday morning at 10:00 a.m. Three services daily, plus a prayer service each morning. Service times: 10:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m., & 7:00 p.m. The afternoon service is a teaching service. Special children's services in the mornings and a youth service at 6:00 p.m. each evening. Campers are welcome. All sites are full hook up; 30 amp & 50 amp service. All campers must stop at the lodging office to register and to get a water regulator before set up. For lodging reservations, call Brother or Sister Dave Bush @ 740-345-1213. Lodging is a free-will offering basis. For more information contact: Pastor Roger L. Decker. Telephone: 740-344-2543
- Medina, OH**
Sept. 2
All-Day Meeting: Church of God, 6745 Wooster Pike, Medina, Ohio 44256
Service times: 10:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. A meal will be served after each service. For more information call 330-725-5993 or 330-421-0187
- Medina, OH**
Sept. 5-10
Revival: Church of God, 6745 Wooster Pike, Medina, Ohio 44256
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi
Service times: Tuesday - Friday 7:00 p.m., Saturday 6:00 p.m., and Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 4:00 p.m.
For more information call 330-725-5993 or 330-421-0187
- Chicago, IL**
Sept. 17-24
Revival: Harding Street Church of God, 3924 W 14th Street, Chicago, IL 60623
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi
For more information contact: Brother Aurelius Raines.
Telephone: 708-751-1725 or 708-747-1534
- Kalamazoo, MI**
Sept. 25-Oct. 1
Revival: Comstock 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
- Morehead, KY**
October 2-8
Revival: 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
- Kentucky**
October 13-15
Revival: Church of God in Kentucky (more information will be forthcoming).
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi
For more information contact: Brother George Sparks. Telephone: 859-749-3324
- Mt. Pleasant, PA**
October 16-22
Revival: Mt. Pleasant Church of God, 109 Salvation Lane, Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi
Service times: Monday-Saturday 7:00 p.m.; Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.
For more information contact: Pastor Paul Prinkey. Telephone: 724-547-2151
- Newark, OH**
October 23-29
Revival: Church of God, 675 N. Cedar Street, Newark, OH 43055
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi
Service times: Monday-Saturday 7:00 p.m.; Sunday School 9:30 a.m., Morning Worship 10:45 a.m., and Evening Worship 6:00 p.m.
For more information contact: Pastor Roger L. Decker. Telephone: 740-344-2543

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