



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

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

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SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

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Vol. 48 April 2018 No. 4



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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Vol. 48 April 2018 No. 4

# ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT for The Gospel Trumpeter

Another year has come to an end for publishing the good news of God's Word. Through the printing of this periodical, the Lord has accomplished many great and wonderful things. Precious souls are being exposed to the glorious message of Christ's love and salvation. God's unadulterated Word is still heralding forth the Truth to those who are fastened in false religious systems. It is shining the light that reveals the good old paths for men and women to seek after and to walk in.

Messages that Pastor Roger L. Decker has preached are printed in *The Gospel Trumpeter*. Various ministers in the Newark congregation and other congregations have preached messages that are used as well. We strive to select Biblically sound evangelistic and doctrinal sermons that ministers have preached. Our desire is to faithfully labor to present writings that will encourage our readers and help them to grow strong spiritually. Wholesome instruction will challenge God's people to press onward in the good fight of faith.

Each year around this time, *The Gospel Trumpeter* prints its financial report of the past year's expenditures for you to view. The purpose for printing this report is to acquaint our readers with the ever rising costs involved in producing a religious periodical.

As we all know, inflation is and has been on the upsurge for several years. Unfortunately, we here at *The Gospel Trumpeter* are not immune to these increasing costs, but we have been affected by them also. You will find a breakdown of the expenses by the different categories at the close of this report. The figures show what was paid out, as well as the amount that is received through contributions.

Although this periodical is being mailed under a second class permit, the postage rates continue to climb each year. We realize that *The Gospel Trumpeter* is a missionary effort and requires a large amount of income to operate it in a successful effort. The pastor and the saints feel the great responsibility to reach out to lost men and women with the Gospel, to present salvation's message to all those who need freedom from sin and false religious captivity.

All the workers on this publication are desirous to see and hear of souls finding the Lord dear to their hearts and to be useful vessels in helping others to live victorious lives for the Savior. It is very rewarding to be a part of an effort that leads individuals from false religion and confusion into the Truth.

As we have done so many times in the past, again, we want to ask our readers to take

[continued on page 22]

Romans 7:14 For we know that the law [the Mosaic Law] is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me;

but how to perform that which is good I find not.

19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

23 But I see another law in my

members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

## How Did Man Get in Trouble With God?



*Brother Roger L. Decker*

### **Without Christ You Can Do Nothing**

These verses of Scripture have been so misused to justify a sinful lifestyle when, in reality, they portray just the opposite. When I was in a service in Upstate New York, I heard a man preach a really good message, but then he closed using these Scriptures to tell the congregation that this was the condition of the Apostle Paul, saying that even he could not live holy.

Verse 17 of our Scripture text

says, "Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." Verse 19 says, "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." Paul was actually dealing with the pitiful condition that he was in when he merely had religion, and he had it in abundance. The Apostle Paul (called Saul at that time) was a very religious man. He gave testimony of his credentials, and it is written in the letter to the Philippians.

Paul wrote in Philippians 3:4-7: "Though I might also have

confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin [the elite tribe], an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ."

Most religions today tell people to do the best they can

and that God understands. In other words, they tell people to work as hard as they can in the flesh, and if they mess up, God will understand. True religion recognizes the fact that we can do nothing without Jesus Christ. We read in John 15:5, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

Many religions are built on works alone. Works are necessary, but you must have Christ on the inside to help you work it out on the outside. James 2:26 states, "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." Philippians 2:12 reads, "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation [How do you work it out?] with fear and trembling." You cannot work anything out until God works it in. Paul said in Philippians 3:4 that he might also have confidence in the flesh. The word *flesh* means "carnal," the direct opposite of spiritual. First Corinthians 3:1 says, "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ."

How did man get in trouble with God? How did Adam and Eve get into sin when both of them were created holy? God is the One who formed the body, and He is the one who gave the soul, or the spirit. They came into this world as adults, not as you and I came in. The answer is, they gave in to the flesh. You have in your flesh all you need to commit sin, regardless of how long you have been saved or how spiritual you might be.

Without Christ you are under the control and dictates of the flesh. Again, the Apostle Paul stated in verse 19 of our Scripture text, "For the good that I would I

do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." Paul was a man who had religion, but he found something warring within his members, taking his mind and his desires captive, and it was sin. This was not after he was saved, but rather before. This was when he was a Pharisee and persecuting the church.

When you truly get saved, you set yourself apart from the world and sin. Even before you are saved, you are being sanctified. You begin to separate from your sins. Then you are sanctified after you are saved as you walk in the light with God.

### **Following the Desires of the Flesh**

The people of Corinth did not need to get sanctified, and they did not need a second work of grace. They had knowledge and understanding, just as we do. No matter how long you have been serving God, there is always the danger that you can follow the dictates of the flesh. I want you to read the words of the wisest man in the Old Testament. When Solomon prayed, God poured out wisdom to him. God gave him not only wisdom but also many other things. Solomon wrote in Proverbs 3:5-7: "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil." Jeremiah 17:9 says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"

Now I want you to read about the condition of the brethren at Corinth. First Corinthians 6:9-11 reads: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of them-

selves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." They had achieved all that was needed to live for God. They were washed, sanctified, justified, and yet they still walked carnally and had to be rebuked by the Apostle Paul.

Man gets in trouble when he follows the flesh. The flesh is contrary to the will of the Spirit of God. Galatians 5:17 states, "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary [or opposites] the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." The inclinations and the desires of the flesh are contrary to those of the Spirit. They draw one away in an opposite direction. While the Spirit of God leads one way, the flesh will lead one contrary to the Spirit. All these things that he mentioned were contrary. They can never harmonize with the Spirit of God.

Romans 8:6-8 says: "For to be carnally minded is death; [He was not talking about physical death here; he was talking about spiritual death. Carnality will lead you into spiritual death, or separation from God.] but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity [or an enemy] against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be [in other words, it cannot be brought into subjection]. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." They are opposites.

Look what the works of the flesh produce. Galatians 5:19-23 reads: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance,

emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

The fleshly mind is against the things of God. The fleshly mind is against coming to church three times a week. The flesh does not like that one bit. The flesh will complain, "Another revival!" A lot of churches have cut back on their services. Why is that? Many people do not want to go to church. What does the Bible say? Hebrews 10:25 says, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more [it does not say *less*], as ye see the day approaching."

The flesh may not want to get up early to go to Sunday school. (Some people camp out all night when stores have certain specials.) The flesh will war against you. The flesh always wants its way.

### **"Lay Aside Every Weight"**

The Apostle Paul had a really good experience with God. Do you think he could have lost out with God? According to the Scriptures, he could have. First Corinthians 9:24-27 reads: "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it

into subjection: [Why? It does not want to come into subjection.] lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

The word *castaway* simply speaks of a person who defects from the truth. The Apostle Paul was fascinated by the discipline of an athlete. He was saying the athletes run and train to receive a corruptible prize. Likewise, the Christian, in order to win the prize, must give himself wholly to God and make serving God the whole duty of life.

I thoroughly enjoy serving God. If you want a life that is exciting, serve God. When I was living in sin, I was often bored. Serving God is exciting, but in order to serve Him, you have to renounce all sin, and you must lay aside every weight that is a hindrance to obtaining the prize. Hebrews 12:1 says, "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight [all those heavy things that keep pulling you down], and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." The Christian should never allow himself to be diverted from the object, but he must keep the goal in view constantly.

One time not long after I had gotten saved, I was really troubled because I saw people doing things that I did not feel I could do. So I went to Brother Wilson and said: "I do not understand how some brethren can do what they do and still be saved." I did not feel that I could have done those things, and I had not been saved as long as they had. He gave me the best admonition that I have ever received. He simply told me, "Keep your eyes on Jesus." I have practiced that in my life. I could have gotten caught up in lots of things, but I was determined to keep my eyes on Jesus. You need to consider,

"What would Jesus do in the same situation?"

Sometimes people say things that they should not say. You need to be careful. You might see and hear a lot of things, and some things might be disappointing, but you need to keep your eyes focused on Jesus Christ. He will not let you down.

The Christian must realize that he is a human being and can grow weary in the battle. Sometimes the flesh may get tired of living right, tired of not doing this and not doing that. That is not a place where the Christian lives, but that can come in on a person. What did the Apostle Paul say? He wrote in 2 Corinthians 4:16, "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." We get tired and weary, but the inward man keeps going.

The Christian denies himself and keeps his eyes fully fixed on Jesus. He dares not remove his eyes from following Jesus, because he knows that he would become shipwrecked. The devil will use various avenues to lure you away from the will of God. When I got saved, I had many bad habits, and the devil would use those things that I was captivated with. You might not have had any bad habits, such as smoking and drinking, and you might have been raised with good morals, but the devil will still find a weak spot somewhere in your life, and he is going to hammer on that weak area.

### **How Sin Works**

Let us see how Adam got into sin. We must go back to the beginning of humanity to rightly understand sin, to know how it works, and to know how to avoid it. In the first chapter of Genesis, we read about the creation of the earth, the heavens, the light, the darkness, the waters, the waters

being divided, and the dry land appearing on the earth. We read about the creation of the seas, the herbs, the grass, and so on. God divided the day and night and created the sun, the moon, the stars, the fish, the fowl, and the creeping things. Then He created the herbs and the fruit trees, and man. That is a very brief summary of the first chapter of Genesis.

In the second chapter, God placed man in what is called the Garden of Eden, which the Scripture says He planted. He put trees in the garden, and those trees were good for food to sustain the man. He also put in the midst of the garden one other tree—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Then came the commandment. Remember, Adam and Eve were not little children. They did not come through procreation as we know it; God created them as adults. The commandment was very simple: do not eat of that tree. He did not tell them not to touch it, but He told them not to eat of it.

The first chapter deals with creation. The second chapter talks about man and his helpmeet, and everything was going well. In the third chapter, we read that another voice appeared on the scene. As we get into this third chapter, we learn of another character. The Bible says he was subtle, or crafty. The serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field which the Lord God had made. What did the serpent do? He got Eve to talk to him, and that is exactly what he wanted to do. You must not carry on conversations with the devil. When you recognize the devil, you need to rebuke him in Jesus' name. Eve carried on a conversation with the serpent. What happened? She disobeyed God and sinned. When sin was finished, it brought forth death.

James 1:14-15 states: "But every man is tempted, when he is

drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished [or has run its course], bringeth forth death." The devil told Eve that she would not die, but God said she would. Many times you have to make up your mind to obey God or the flesh. What took place? Isaiah 59:2 says, "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."

Adam and Eve's fellowship with God ceased. Is it not terrible when you do not have fellowship with God? Have you ever been there? Even after you have been saved, if something hinders you in your life, do you not feel terrible until you can get that thing straightened out?

Things change when you get out of fellowship with God. Things were not the same as before for Adam and Eve. Genesis 3:7-9 says: "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?"

God knew where Adam and Eve were all along. No one can hide from God. God was giving them an opportunity to repent. God is very patient, and He was calling on them to admit what they had done, but they did not admit it yet. Verses 10-11 continue: "And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that

thou shouldest not eat?" Did either of them fall down on their knees and say, "Oh, yes, God, please forgive me"? No! What happened? The same thing that goes on yet today. They began to make excuses, and they continued in their sinful condition. You can read throughout the Bible of the excuses that people give for not serving God.

### **What Did the Law Do?**

I want you to notice there was a law, there was a will, there was knowledge, and there was a choice of yielding or not yielding to a known command of God. The Bible says where there is no knowledge, there is no chargeable sin. Romans 5:13 tells us, "For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed [or charged] when there is no law."

Earth's first couple had a knowledge of right and wrong. Sin became a force of evil, and then it became present in the world. Every individual who comes into this world and who reaches an age of when he definitely knows right from wrong becomes accountable to God.

The Apostle Paul said in Romans 7:9, "For I was alive [he was talking about being alive unto God] without the law once [he did not have any knowledge of wrong]: but when the commandment came, sin revived, [Disobedience came alive. What happened?] and I died [or separated from God]."

The Law stirred up sin. When did sin get stirred up in your life? Sin got stirred up when you knew it was wrong. Sin is against God, yet you do it anyway. This stirs up the conscience and condemnation. Romans 7:13 says, "Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become

exceeding sinful."

Paul was alive without the Law, but when the Law against coveting came, sin became exceedingly sinful. What was Paul saying? He was a very covetous individual, getting by until the commandment came: "Thou shall not covet." This stirred something in him. Paul was under the Law. He sat at the feet of Gamaliel. He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, a Pharisee, circumcised the eighth day, and of the tribe of Benjamin, but none of that would help him overcome the sin that was in his heart.

No doubt, you heard the Law when you were a child as you grew up. I did. My mother told me, "Roger, you should not lie" and "Roger, you should not take something that does not belong to you." She brought the Law to me. You do not necessarily just hear the Law by listening to a preacher. The Law comes into the home by parents raising their children right, telling them not to lie, not to cheat, not to steal, and not to use bad words. They are bringing them to a knowledge. That is how God brings each of us to a knowledge. Then the Law is like a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. We cannot overcome sinful things on our own. Without Christ we cannot overcome the lying, the stealing, or any other sinful habits. Where should people turn? They need to turn to Jesus Christ.

### **The Need of a Savior**

Man got into sin by allowing fleshly desires to take him out of the will of God. He overstepped the commandment, not one of the ten commandments, but the commandment that God gave him in the garden. We know that man got into sin, and we know how he did, but here is the best part. How does he get out of sin and how does he stay out? I like that getting out business, but I like

that staying out too. There is no way the Law could deliver a man or a woman from sin.

We all need a Savior who can not only break the power of sin but also give us the power to live as a Christian ought to live in this present world. Luke 11:21-22 states: "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils."

Now, the strong man is the devil, and his palace is an unregenerate heart. He has no concern for eternity or hell or being lost, but then the stronger appears. How does He appear? He comes through the Gospel and overtakes him. He takes away his sources, his goods, and his armor wherein he trusted. He changes them around and uses them, not for the flesh, but for the Kingdom of God.

When you get saved, you come away from that altar with the same eyes, the same feet, and all the other members of your body that you had before. The only difference is that you use them in a different way. You do not use your members to serve the flesh anymore; you use them to serve God. He turns the power of thought in your life and changes all the members into instruments of righteousness.

If you have not been regenerated, then you are under the power of the strong man. Oh, you may say that you can do whatever you want to, but you are not telling the truth. You may boast in your own strength, but there is no power against sin in your own strength. One thing for sure is that you do not have to stay in that condition. Thank God, you can be free. You can be saved and live a life free from the strong man. The strong man no longer has to make his abode in

your heart. You can let the stronger man live there.

The strong man has quite an arsenal that he uses. The weapons that the strong man uses are sinful habits. He could use tobacco, alcohol, drugs, gambling, or unforgiveness (that is a big one). Oh, how the devil likes to get people to the place where they cannot forgive. Do you know what happens if you hold unforgiveness in your heart? God cannot forgive you. Some people hate others. Sometimes it is because they personally have a problem with someone or because somebody else has had a problem with that person. Some people have malice and revenge in their hearts. Jesus wants to bind the strong man. How did Adam and Eve get into sin? The same way that people get in it yet today: through their own humanity, or the flesh. What is it that Satan uses? He uses the lust of the eyes, the pride of life, and the lust of the flesh.

How can you get out of sin? How can you stay out of sin? The only way you are going to get out is through Jesus Christ. You cannot work yourself out of it. You cannot buy yourself out of it. You need to always keep this in mind: the longer you hold on to sin, the stronger it gets. It is like a cancer that spreads. If you are going to get rid of it, you want to get rid of it as quickly as you can. Do not hang onto something that is bad. If you were a smoker, you would not carry a stick of dynamite around with you. That would be asking for trouble. Why do you want to carry sin around when you know it is going to get worse? How can you get out of sin and stay out? You must be obedient to the Word of God. Just as you want your children to obey you when you are raising them, God wants His children to obey Him.

*(Compact Disc TR-1844)*

2 Corinthians 13:5 Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be

reprobates?

6 But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates.

7 Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear

approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates.

8 For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.

# EXAMINE YOURSELF



*Brother David Watson*

## **Be an Example of the Believers**

Have you ever gone to a doctor and then he sent you to have x-rays taken? After the x-rays, you probably went back so he could tell you what the x-rays showed. Then perhaps he sent you to a specialist, and you were hoping that place would find the problem so that you could receive help.

When it concerns your spiritual health, the Apostle Paul said you ought to examine yourself. You ought to "x-ray" your own Christian living and search to see where you are with the Lord. You need to know for yourself whether you are really standing

where God would have you to stand. You should want to please the Lord, not be a reprobate. Proverbs 14:12 reads, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." You should want to be right with God.

If you are honest in heart, you want to know what is going on in your relationship with God. When you pray, you do not want to feel that something is in the way. If you are doing a work for God, you should want to know it is approved by Him. You should want God's stamp of approval on what you are doing. Therefore, you need to examine yourself and know for sure where you

stand with God. You need to stand with the true teachings of the Bible.

It is very serious that you know exactly where you stand with God. This life is not to be guessed at. You should not go along and just think you are right; you had better *know* that you are right. You should not have any doubts about your soul. I have talked to people and asked them, "Are you right with the Lord?"

Some said, "Well, I think I'm all right." Others said, "I don't know for sure." You need to know for sure that all is clear between you and the Lord.

You need to examine yourself

and be a good example to others. The Apostle Paul said that you should not live unto yourself. You have an influence on others. People are watching you to see how you live in this life. They are taking account of your actions, your talk, and what you are doing in your Christian life. You need to ask yourself the question, Am I being a good example to others around me? Jesus is your pattern. Some people whom you meet along life's way have never read the Bible. Many of them are looking to see how you live, and they are watching you day after day.

When talking to young Timothy, in 1 Timothy 4:11-12, the Apostle Paul said: "These things command and teach. Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." You must live the Word of God, not just talk about it. You need to let the Word become a living force in your life. If the Word is a living force in your life, it should be springing up so others can partake of it. It should be speaking good things of the life that you are living.

In your conversations, do you talk to other people about God? Do you need to ask anyone to forgive you for anything that you have done or said? Your conversations need to be holy, good, and clean so that other people can pattern after you.

Paul said to be an example of the believers in charity. We are people who love to give of what we have to others. We let them know that we care about their struggles along life's way. As God's people, we must show charity toward others. We should show compassion toward others. We care about the church and support the church by paying tithes and giving gifts to the church. Why? We love God for what He has done for us. God

volunteered to do everything for me, so why should I not volunteer for Him? If God dwells in your soul, there is a love beyond human expression that goes deeper than you can explain.

Paul also said to be an example of the believers in spirit. People can discern your spirit. The Apostle Paul had good discernment about people. I believe that if you have a good spirit, the Holy Spirit will speak to other people for you. You see, there is something about the Spirit of God that manifests Jesus in your life. People who possess the Spirit of God will manifest a good spirit and be examples of what God has done in their lives. This is not what education or intellect does. Some people do not have very much education, but they have a godly spirit that causes them to be a good pattern for other people to look at. They have the right spirit.

King David of old prayed for God to put the right spirit within him. It takes a right spirit to help you to live right. If the right spirit is there, it will manifest a good pattern for other people to see in you. You are not here to please yourself. God put you here to please Him in this life. God put you here for His glory and for His honor. When He saved you, He put His Spirit in you so that you can be a good example of what He does for people when old-time salvation gets hold of them.

The Apostle Paul let us know about the change that takes place in salvation. The Holy Spirit makes a difference in the life of a Christian. He can do a work in your life that nothing else in this world could ever do for you.

### **Exercising Faith**

The Christian ought to be a good example to other people in exercising faith. You should not doubt the Lord. We have so

many examples of what God has done in His Word as well as among His people. I thought of Martin Luther when he was wrestling so much with that religious system of wrong. One time he wrote a letter and stated that he looked out the window and saw the big sky overhead, and he said he did not see a pillar anywhere that was holding it up. We build buildings with columns and pillars, but God put all of that up there with no pillars to hold them up. His Word holds them up. One thing I know for sure is that when God saved me, He made me a new creature. He makes a difference in every person who gets saved. That ought to be uplifting to you. As a Christian, you ought to be a good example of faith and trust in God. He really loves and cares about us. He does so much for us every day we live.

The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 13:1, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." Day by day, you must live by faith, act in faith, and believe that God sees your needs. He cares about you. He will take care of every need that you have. That is the kind of pattern that you need to be. A fellow said one time that he trusted God for everything. When he gets an electric bill, he asks God to help him pay the bill. Sometimes you need God to help you pay bills. You need His help daily along life's way. God has a good, clean, wholesome life for you. Have you ever felt anything as clean as the Christian life? It is so clean, so pure, and so undefiled. By living it, you can be a good example to others.

In Luke, Chapter 15, you can read about the prodigal son. He went away from his father's house and journeyed to a far country. He wasted all his goods. Finally, he ended up in a hogpen

feeding the hogs. He realized that was not where he wanted to be, so he remembered how good he had it back at his father's house. He wanted to go home where things were clean.

You need to stay clean in the Lord and be a good example with nothing to be ashamed of. You should want to keep your spirit clean, your talk clean, and your living clean as you go along. You need to give attendance to reading your Bible, to exhortation, and to doctrine. That is being a good example before people. You may attract other people to God by reading your Bible day after day when they see you sitting with your Bible in your hand. I have heard about people who have read the Bible until they wore it out. The pages were thin and worn, and they influenced other people. I have heard children say, "I have seen my daddy and my mother read the Bible, and I have seen the pages get thin."

Often people take notice of what you are reading. There is no better reading than the blessed old Book that instructs you about the way home to Heaven. Concerning the doctrine of the church, you should know how to put the precept where it should be and the line where it should be, instructing others so they can follow and know that you have given them good advice. You can be a good example of the believers not only by reading the Bible and exhorting others about what the Bible says but also by living its plan. Then when people read it themselves, they can see that you are living the Bible way. People want to see that you are living the doctrine that you teach.

### **Neglect Not Your Talents**

First Timothy 4:14 says, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee." Many people are gifted with abilities, talents, and call-

ings from God. As a child of God, you should be willing to exercise your gift and be a pattern to other people. You have something precious. If I gave you a gift, I would like for you to admire and use the gift that I gave you. In Matthew, Chapter 25, Jesus told a parable of a man who gave five talents to one man, two talents to another, and one talent to another. The man who had five talents increased his to ten. The man who had two talents received two more, and the man who had one talent hid it in the earth. You need to use the gift that God has given to you. God gave it to you so that you could be a blessing to others.

It is not just the gift of preaching or the gift of teaching that is going to do all the work. When I first started living the Christian life, a little old lady about ninety years of age raised her hand and asked if she could say a few words. She got up and testified, and her testimony touched me in a great way. It was not the preacher. I do not remember who he was or what he preached, but I have never forgotten the lady who stood and witnessed to the congregation that day. You see, you might have a gift that will touch somebody else. You need to use your gift, whatever it may be. God has given it to you, so you should not bury it. You should be an example to the people around you with what God has given you. You need to take care of it, because God has given it to you to work good things.

If you are going to lay up treasures in Heaven, you have to work at it. You have to do some things here in order to earn treasures in Heaven. When I get to Heaven, I will not get the Apostle Paul's reward. I did not write fourteen Books of the New Testament. I will not get someone else's reward. The only treasure that I will receive will be what I have earned.

I have heard people say they will be happy if they can just get inside the door of Heaven. With that kind of attitude, they will not even get inside the door. I am going to do all I can for God and use what I have for Him, because He has given it to me. God will not ask you to do anything that He has not given you the ability to do. You need to be a good example in what you are doing for the Lord.

### **Fellowship With One Another**

You need to examine yourself concerning your fellowship. You need to work to have good fellowship with others. You need to learn to be a good mixer and mix with your brothers and sisters in the congregation. People should feel welcome when they come in among the people of God. The saints ought to make them feel that they love them.

First John 1:7 states, "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." God washes away every sin when He saves you. He does not save you a little at a time, and you cannot hide sin in your heart and be saved. If you are really saved, you will have a heart full of love. First John 4:18 says, "Perfect love casteth out fear." You do not have to fear having fellowship with your brother or sister in the family of God.

A saint has the love of God and ought not to be afraid to speak to others. Also, you should not have to be afraid that someone is going to talk about you when you turn your back. Fellowship is something that you can enjoy, and it is much needed. You need to esteem others. I do not think it is wrong to pat someone on the back and express your love and appreciation. You are in the family of God together. The

saints should be bonded together and should believe in one another.

You may live in a better house than someone else does and drive a better car, but that does not matter in the family of God. You might have a better way of explaining things than someone else does. You might have a better education than someone else, but that does not matter either. What really matters is the love and the Spirit of God that brings the saints of God together.

You ought to do your best to become acquainted with others so that you can discern when a brother or a sister has a burden or a problem and needs help during the trial or the test. That is the kind of examination that you need to give yourself.

I have seen people come to church and rush out as soon as the service was over. That is not good fellowship. I remember when I was a pastor, and people would come to the altar to pray. A certain person would hurry to the back door. He never came to the altar to pray, but he would go to the back door. When he came in, he always sat down and looked around and had nothing to say. As soon as church was over, he would get in his car and go. Dear one, there is more to fellowship than that. How can you be a blessing to others if you do not have fellowship? God needs you to help.

It is good to bear one another's burdens. Galatians 6:5 says, "For every man shall bear his own burden." You have your life to live, but you can help others by having fellowship with them. You need to show care and love for others. I thank the Lord for the fellowship of the saints of God. When you come to shake someone's hand and ask how that person is doing, that does the soul good. If the light is shining in your heart, you will see the

need of fellowship and the need of the church being together.

Jesus told His disciples in John 13:35, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." If you walk in the light, love others, fellowship with others, and care about others, the world will look upon the saints and say, "They have something that others do not have." You need to examine yourself and ask yourself these questions: Am I doing that? Am I really enjoying this? If you are miserable here, you would surely be miserable in Heaven. You had better enjoy your brothers and sisters now, because when this life is over, you are going to live together for a long time over in Heaven.

The Apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 5:8-11: "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." Verse 14 continues, "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

As a child of God, you should want to produce good fruit. You should want to live in goodness and righteousness and do that which is acceptable with God, not having fellowship with the works of darkness. May your fellowship be fruitful as you fellowship with the Lord and with His people. God will bless you for doing so.

### **Walk Worthily**

Ephesians 3:8-9 says: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see

what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ." The Apostle Paul had a desire to bring this Truth to other people. He wanted to share that which he had from God with other people. He was willing to reach over to the Gentiles to fellowship them and to help them understand this mystery of the mission of Jesus Christ. He wanted to share with them why Christ came to this world, why He died and was resurrected, and why He went back to Heaven and is sitting at the right hand of the throne of the Father. Jesus is still saving and forgiving people and raising them up to sit together in heavenly places where they can enjoy fellowship with one another.

The church has a lot to offer. The more you give, the more you will receive from God. Let me say this humbly. If you do not share that which God has given you, you will never get any more from God. If you want more from God, give away what you have. God has always been on the giving side. The heavens give, the sun gives, the moon gives, the stars give, the oceans give, the rivers give, the earth gives, and the church must give. The church gives by preaching the Word of God to the world. Saint, you have something to offer that will beat anything the world has ever come into contact with. You have a good case of old-time salvation that will put you in a heavenly place where you can have fellowship with God and with His children. What a blessing it is!

Have you examined yourself to see if you are walking worthy of this great gift? You have something wonderful, and you must walk worthy of it. The Apostle Paul admonished in Ephesians 4:1, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation

wherewith ye are called."

Whatever calling God has chosen for you, you need to be found worthy of doing it. God knew your ability when He gave it to you, and He knew you could do it if you would apply yourself. It is a work that God has called you to do. God did not save anyone to sit and do nothing. No, He saved you to be a working force for Jesus Christ. You need to work at what God has called you to do.

If you call on God to help you, you must be faithful to Him to use what He has given you. He has been faithful to you. God has grace for you, and He will give you grace to walk worthy in the things that He has called you to do.

### Pleasing the Lord

In Ephesians 4:2 the Apostle Paul continued, "With all lowliness and meekness. . . ." The word lowliness means much more than you might think. In Matthew 11:29 Jesus said that He was meek and lowly in heart. He did not ride into Jerusalem in great pomp and splendor. He could have done so if He had wanted to. God sent a chariot of fire to get Elijah, and He could have had a chariot of fire go into Jerusalem if He had wanted to.

Paul was teaching lowliness and living a meek and humble life.

Paul said out of weakness he was made strong. Jesus was crucified in weakness. He could have called ten legions of angels had He wanted to, but He did not do that. He was meek and lowly, and you must be meek and lowly if you are going to do anything for God and for the people around you. God gives grace to live that kind of life.

Paul said to walk worthily, "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love." These things pay off because they help you to bond with the saints. Sometimes you may need to suffer a little with others when you do not understand them. You should not unchristianize them. You should suffer long with them, and God will bless you for it. God was long-suffering with you when you were unworthy of it.

First Thessalonians 4:1-4 reads: "Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. [If you are pleasing God, He will give more grace and greater possessions of the things of God. You will learn of God and be a

fruitful person in the field with the Lord. You ought to walk to please God. What is walking? It is making progress and moving forward with Jesus.] For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour."

You ought to compare your life to the Word of God. Nobody is any more sanctified than the Word he lives by. Your vessel should be a vessel that honors the Word. If you let Truth sanctify you, then you will be an honor to the Lord as you travel along this way of life.

You need to examine yourself and ask this question: If this were my last day on earth, when the undertaker comes to pick up my body, would everything be as it needs to be? Am I pleasing to the Lord? Am I ready to go? I cannot promise you that you will be here tomorrow. You are one heartbeat away from eternity. If everything is not right between you and God, this is your moment to repent. Do not put it off.

(Compact Disc TR-1325)

*In every step, in every stride,  
I'll let the Savior be my guide!  
His Word, His love, I will embrace,  
And let His wisdom set the pace.*

*First Kings 20:22 And the prophet came to the king of Israel, and said unto him, Go, strengthen thyself, and mark, and see what thou doest: for at the return of the year the king of Syria will come up against thee.*

*23 And the servants of the king of Syria said unto him, Their gods are gods of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they.*

*24 And do this thing, Take the kings away, every man out of his place, and put captains in their rooms:*

*25 And number thee an army, like the army that thou hast lost,*

*horse for horse, and chariot for chariot: and we will fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they. And he hearkened unto their voice, and did so.*

*26 And it came to pass at the return of the year, that Ben-hadad numbered the Syrians, and went up to Aphek, to fight against Israel.*

*27 And the children of Israel were numbered, and were all present, and went against them: and the children of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of kids; but the Syrians filled the country.*

*28 And there came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the LORD, Because the Syrians have*

*said, The LORD is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the LORD.*

*29 And they pitched one over against the other seven days. And so it was, that in the seventh day the battle was joined: and the children of Israel slew of the Syrians an hundred thousand footmen in one day.*

*30 But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city; and there a wall fell upon twenty and seven thousand of the men that were left. And Ben-hadad fled, and came into the city, into an inner chamber.*

# God of All Situations



**Brother Paul Featherstone**

## God's Promise to Deliver

We find in verse 22 of our Scripture text that the prophet told the king of Israel, "Go, strengthen thyself, and mark, and see what thou doest: for at the return of the year the

king of Syria will come up against thee [to attack his armies]." In verse 23 we read, "And the servants of the king of the Syria said unto him, Their gods are gods of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in

the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they." What a big mistake for them to say that! In essence, they bragged, "Let us get them down in the plain and we will win."

The Syrian king hearkened to them. Through the man of God, in

essence, God told the king of Israel, "Because Syria has boasted that I am the God of the hills and not God of the valleys, I will deliver them into your hand." The Syrians did not realize that God is God, and He has power in the hills, in the mountains, in the plains, and in the valleys. God has power in all places. God made a promise to deliver the Syrians into Israel's hand, and then they would know that He is the Lord.

I am glad that I serve a God who can deliver. He can deliver from sin, He can deliver from temptation, and He can deliver from anything you might be facing. Though you may be oppressed by sin, you can go to Him for rest. God is able to deliver you.

Syria's king made a big mistake when he hearkened to his servants' voices. Many religious leaders have done just as the king of Syria did. They have listened to the people and hearkened to what the people wanted and did not pray and ask God what He wanted. That is the reason a lot of places are in a mess. Leaders did not take matters before God and let Him lead and guide and direct. They let men tell them what to do.

The Syrians paid a dear price. In verses 29-30, we read that one hundred thousand footmen were killed in one day, and then a wall fell on twenty-seven thousand men who were left, which is a total of one hundred twenty-seven thousand men who were killed that day. Because of the Syrians' pride, all those men were killed by God's hand. Proverbs 16:18 tells us, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." James 4:6b says, "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."

King Nebuchadnezzar learned a lesson when he bragged. He said he built great Babylon. Because he was lifted up with pride, God caused him to become like a beast. Read Daniel 4:33. He ate grass like an animal for seven years. When he came out of that, he had a different attitude. He was humbled, and he began to praise God. God knows how to humble those who have pride. That is what

the Syrians learned. They had pride. They thought they knew what they were talking about. They thought they had Israel whipped.

### **The Trial of Your Faith**

Spiritually speaking, I live on the mountain, but I am not always home. There are times when I have a mountaintop experience. Many times when I am going down the road in my old pickup truck, I sing some songs of the church, and God blesses and helps me. Sometimes I have to come off the mountain and go through a dark valley.

Valleys of depression and sorrow may feel as though God is a million miles away when He is very near. Child of God, God is with you, even if you feel as though He is far away. In reality, He is just a prayer away. Praise God forever! Sometimes it may seem that your prayers cannot get through. It may seem as if the Heavens are brass, but God is not far away.

Friend, God is right there beside you, just as it says in that poem about the footprints. In that poem a man had a dream and saw two sets of footprints in the sand. Later, he saw only one set of footprints and said, "I don't understand why, when I needed You the most, You would leave me. He [Jesus] whispered, My precious child, I love you and will never leave you. Never, ever, during your trials and testings. When you saw only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you."

The enemy will come along and try to tell you that God has forgotten you, but you do not have to allow the devil to do that. The devil is a liar and the father of all lies. You do not have to put up with the enemy when he comes around and tries to discourage you. When he comes around and tries to convince you that God does not care and that He is not listening, you can plead the blood of Jesus Christ and say, "I am still going to serve Him." In Job 13:15 Job said, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

You have to make up your mind: "Lord, I am Yours. I am going to walk in the light as You are in the light." God's people will go through dark valleys and trials at times. Why? James 1:3 says, "Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience."

Sometimes we go through a valley so that we can grow spiritually, but God has not forgotten us. We belong to the King. As God's people, we are going to be a tried and a tested people. There is no such thing as a problem free life. God is molding us and making us after His will. God will always have a people; He always has and He always will. He will stand by you when everybody else walks out the door.

You can read in the latter part of Hebrews 13:5 that God promised in His Word, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Even at death's door, God will be right there to take you across the chilly Jordan River into Heaven's wonderful place. Friend, I want to encourage you. Although you are going to go through mountaintop experiences, you are also going to go through the valley, but in that valley God is still the God of the valley as well as the God of the mountain.

First Peter 1:7 tells us, "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." The second stanza of a hymn written by Isaac Watts reads: "*Must I be carried to the sky On flowery beds of ease? While others fought to win the prize, And sailed through bloody seas?*"

### **Jesus Is the Answer**

You will have to go through times of darkness, and you will go through valleys. God is molding you. Another songwriter wrote, "*He's still working on me, to make me what I need to be.*" We have to go through tough times so that God can knock off some of the rough

edges. He is the Potter. We often sing, "Have Thine own way, Lord, Have Thine own way, Thou are the potter, I am the clay." God is molding us and making us stronger Christians. The Apostle Paul told us in 2 Timothy 2:3, "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." We are going to go through some difficult trials in order to be strong and to have good courage in the battles that lie ahead.

Dear brother or sister, perhaps you have been going through a deep, dark valley. I want to encourage you to hold on a little longer! You are too near the crown to lay down the cross. Do not give up! The race you have run will soon be over. Just hold on. It will not be long until we will be home. God has not forsaken you or forgotten you. Cheer up! The battle is almost over. Hallelujah!

We have nothing to hang our heads about. If God be for us, who can be against us? God is on our side, just as He was on Israel's side. He is the same God today as He was back then. Israel had a whole bunch of people against them, but God overcame their enemies. He helped them to overcome them. God helped His people to kill one hundred twenty-seven thousand Syrian men. How much more can He help you and me when we face the devils and the demons of hell? There are not enough devils and demons in hell that can cause us to give up or to

quit. We have no reason to quit. I want you to read the chorus to the song "God Is Still on the Throne," written by Kittie L. Suffield:

*God is still on the throne,  
And He will remember His own;  
Though trials may press us  
and burdens distress us,  
He never will leave us alone;  
God is still on the throne,  
He never forsaketh His own;  
His promise is true, He will  
not forget you,  
God is still on the throne.*

Praise God forever and ever! I am glad that we serve a God who is more interested in our making it to Heaven than we are. He is doing everything He can to help us to get to that heavenly city. Yes, we are going to face the enemy. Remember this: the devil has power, but God has *more* power. The devil cannot make you do anything that you do not want to do. He cannot make you sin, and he cannot make you give up. He can put pressure on you, put temptations on you, and put persecution on you. Thank God, you can put your feet down and say, "I am going to serve God regardless of the circumstances, whether I am on the mountaintop or in the valley. My heart says, 'Yes, Lord, I'm going to go with You.'" In the latter part of Joshua 24:15 Joshua said, "As for me and my house, we will serve the

LORD."

Perhaps you have been going through a difficult time and no one else knows about it. God cares for you. That is the reason it is important for us to pray one for another, because we do not know the battle that others are going through. We do not know the test that someone else is going through.

I want to challenge you. Maybe you are facing things that you do not understand. Friend, you do not need to understand. You just need to hold God's hand. Hold on a little longer; help is on the way. God will be with you. He promised in His Word that if you call upon Him, He will answer. Jeremiah 33:3 states, "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." Friend, God is available twenty-four hours a day, three hundred sixty-five days of the year. On a holiday, you do not have to worry about calling on God and having Him say, "I'm busy."

I am glad that we can go boldly before the throne of grace and obtain mercy and help in time of need. God is our helper and strength, a present help in the time of trouble. If you are discouraged and feel like quitting, that is not the answer, friend. Jesus is the answer.

*(Compact Disc TR-1932)*

## THE WORD OF GOD

**For feelings come and feelings go,  
And feelings are deceiving;  
My warrant is the Word of God  
Nought else is worth believing.  
I'll trust in God's unchanging Word  
Till soul and body sever:  
For though all things shall pass away,  
His Word shall stand forever.**

*Especially for Young People*



## Even When It Rains



On Sunday afternoons a warm-hearted, Christian merchant usually spent some time on the street giving out Gospel tracts. Feeling very tired one rainy Sunday afternoon, he stayed home to rest. On the desk lay a bundle of tracts.

He heard a stealthy step. Then the door was pushed open and his eleven-year-old boy came in. Seeing his father there, the boy asked in surprise, "Why, Father, aren't you going out to distribute tracts today?"

"It's raining too hard," he lightly replied.

"Dad, when it's raining, doesn't God save people?"

The merchant was startled at such an awesome question. So he explained, "When it is raining hard, few people are on the street. Moreover, I'm very tired, so I'm not going out."

"Shall I go for you?"

"It's not convenient in this rain."

"What does that matter if I wear my rubbers and raincoat?" the child begged.

Then, taking silence for consent, he ran out and was back in a moment in his rain clothes. Running excitedly, he called, "Father, I'm ready. Please give me some tracts."

Seeing the lad's eagerness, his father handed him a few, warning him to be careful and to return when he was through. In

high spirits the boy started out to distribute the tracts. In the downpour the streets were nearly deserted. Only occasionally was he able to dispose of a tract.

Darkness was coming on; the rain continued relentlessly. Finally, only the last tract remained in his hand, but there wasn't a person in sight to whom he might give it. He walked another block, but still he was the only one on the lonely street. What was he to do with this last tract?

"There's a way," he thought, "People don't come to me. Why don't I go to them?" With quick steps he approached the nearest house and knocked.

"Who's there?" came a voice from within. His heart was thumping, half with fright and half with joy. He waited a moment, but as no one opened the door, he gathered up his courage and knocked again.

"Who's knocking?" He kept it up until the door opened, and there stood an old woman whose distressed face was a sharp contrast to the eager one of the boy on the doorstep. With face wreathed in smiles, he said respectfully, "Lady, pardon me, but I've come specially to bring you the Gospel." He placed the last tract in her hand.

The next Sunday evening, the small street chapel was crowded as usual. The merchant

was acting as usher, and of course, his young son had come along. After songs and prayer, the chairman asked if anyone wanted to testify to the Lord's grace. An old woman with the light of heaven on her face arose and voiced her praise.

"Thank God!" she exclaimed.

"He sent a little angel to save me. Otherwise, last Sunday night in my loneliness, poverty, and utter despair, I would have ended it all. It was pouring rain. I had reached the dregs of human suffering, having lost both my husband and my son. After a long struggle, I gave way and started to hang myself. Suddenly there was a knock at the door. I made no move, thinking to wait until the person had gone before taking my life. But the knocking continued until I had to open the door. There stood a boy with the face of spring, who gave me a Gospel tract. As I looked at it, I knew that God had not forsaken me. I could not keep back the tears, but confessed my sins and asked for pardon. Praise the Lord! He saved me."

The lad softly whispered in his father's ear, "She's the one!" Only then did the father know that God had sent his child to find a lost sheep by means of a tract, even when it rained!

Selected

*Romans 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

# Understanding Sin



*Brother Mike Wilks*

## **Sin's Destructive Journey**

The only way to understand sin is by reading the Word of God. The Bible is like a magnifying glass, and the more you read it, the more you will see yourself as God sees you. Without God's Word you have no idea how far away you are from God. You may think you are doing fine, but the Bible will reveal how wicked your life really is and how you need to fix it before it is everlastingly too late. The world is engulfed in sin. It has been overcome by it, but you do not have to be overcome. The Gospel was sent to give freedom from the bondage of sin.

If you are living in sin, you are on a journey, and unfortu-

nately unless you repent, your eternal destination will be hell. When you transgress the law of God, you become a sinner. Sin is an immoral act, considered to be a transgression against divine law. Sin is taking people on a journey whether they know it or not. There is a power to sin.

You may ask, "What is the power of God like?" Have you ever seen someone get saved and then watched that person's life become transformed for good? Sin does the exact opposite of that. It will control your life and cause you to do wrong until you are lost. You do not want to go down that path. The Gospel is pleading with people to do what is right. Some parents plead with their children not to sin. You

must make the decision whether or not you are going to overstep God's law. Sin takes you on a destructive journey.

First Corinthians 14:38 reads, "But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant." If you want to be ignorant about the things of God, God will tell you to go ahead, but you will answer for it one day. As a Christian, people may ask why you live as you do, why you go to church, why you read the Bible, why you pray, or why you dress as modestly as you do. One day it is going to become very clear to them why you do the things that you do in the Church of God. You are going to stand before God one day, and these things are going to seem so petty and small. I am

talking about eternity and the awful cost of sin.

In 2 Corinthians 2:11 we read, "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices." You can understand Satan's devices. The Word of God was sent so that you could understand what is working on you. Righteousness can be ascribed to you through forgiveness. When you bow at an altar of prayer and ask God for forgiveness, righteousness is ascribed to you, and you are given a new heart.

The opposite of that is sin, which is ascribed to a curse. That curse is separation from God. The only prayer of a sinner that God will hear is a prayer of repentance. The blood of Jesus cleanses and puts you in a justified state so that you can speak to God. That is how important Jesus is. If you do not have that blood, you cannot talk to Him. However, you must have a knowledge of sin first. Babies do not go to hell. They must come to the age of accountability first. They must have a knowledge of sin. If you knowingly break God's law, that is when sin is ascribed to you. Babies and little children that die go to Heaven.

### Having a Knowledge of the Law

One must have a knowledge of the law of God to commit sin. If you watch football, you have seen the referees running around. They need to have a knowledge of the game before they can throw down a flag, otherwise they would not know what to look for. It is the same way with sin. You must have a knowledge of right and wrong before there is a violation.

That is where the church comes into play. It is so important to be in the house of God so that you can learn. It is really easy to believe when the Spirit of God is

working. You do not find that out in the world. You are not going to feel God working in your soul as you do in church. That is the reason it is so important to be in the house of God. You must have a knowledge. If you have sin in your heart, you need to get it cleaned up.

Romans 7:7-8 says: "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead." The word *concupiscence* means "strong sexual desire." In essence, Paul said when that commandment came, letting him know that he was not to covet and not to lust, he knew at that point his behavior was wrong. Every man and every woman comes to a decision when the knowledge of God comes to them and they understand it. When you know not to steal and you do it anyway, an unpleasant feeling comes along with it. You know that you are wrong if you put an item in your pocket that does not belong to you or if you lie on your income taxes.

God is watching your behavior. Did you know that? He is watching everything that you do. One day I went into a grocery store and there were two large pieces of steak in a package in the cooler. I knew that the price was wrong. I put the package in my grocery cart, and as I was walking around the grocery store, God said, "You need to tell an employee that the price is marked incorrectly," so I went to the meat counter and told someone there was no way the price could be right. He looked at it and said, "That's our fault—enjoy it!" I was tempted not to tell the meat counter employee that the package was marked

wrong. It was their fault, but as Christians we are living by a higher standard.

There is an eye watching you. When you commit sin and you know better, God is watching you. The Bible states in Numbers 32:23, "Be sure your sin will find you out." Your sin follows you everywhere you go. It is right around the corner mocking you. Things will come to your mind that you will regret. Young person, if you lie to your parents, you can be sure that your sin will find you out. If you lie to anyone, your sin is going to find you out.

There are times at work when honesty costs me a lot of money, but some people recognize the honesty and show their appreciation. God is watching every one of us.

### Keeping God's Commandments

Romans 7:9-13 reads: "For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful."

Every time you hear a message, a foundation is being laid. I enjoy reading the book, *Pilgrim's Progress*, and I try to read it once a year. When Pilgrim had the burden of sin on his back, the power of God worked on him, and he realized that he needed help. He searched for a way to get rid of his burden. That burden became so heavy for Pilgrim that it caused him to

seek relief. The only relief from the burden of sin is in Jesus Christ. That is where the Gospel is trying to direct you. It is trying to direct you to meet Jesus. He is the only One who can fix the sin business.

Many people's lives are miserable, and they cannot deal with their problems, so they drink alcohol or take drugs. Drug use is epidemic. If the Gospel was an epidemic, the world would be made right, but sin is working. The biggest decision that you will ever make is whether or not you accept Jesus Christ into your life. If you end up in hell, you cannot come back. You are going to be there forever. The decisions that you make in life are going to affect your eternal destination. You are going to be somewhere after death, and it is all going to be based on the decisions that you make.

Speaking to the saints, John said in 1 John 5:3, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." God's commandments are not grievous to the saved, but His commandments are grievous to the sinner. Many commandments are grievous to sinners, and that is the reason they do not like to come to the house of God. A minister of God preaches the Gospel, and then God talks to individual souls. I do not know how you have been living, but God does, and He will convict you of your wrong.

Maybe you have read a tract and something in there caught your attention. I know of one sister who got saved after she read a tract. She followed the instructions in the tract, and then she repented and asked God for His forgiveness and was saved. That is how her journey with Christ started. Tracts are still an effective tool to win souls. By giving out tracts, you could help

somebody to find the way to God. One brother said he was sitting on a barstool in a bar when God began to talk to him. God can talk to people wherever He wants to, and it is not always in church. You are blessed when God begins to deal with you or draws you to Him. He is trying to deliver you from the old condition called sin. Sin actually becomes a curse.

### **The Awful Effects of Sin**

There are three comparisons by which we are taught about sin in the Bible. In the Old Testament, there are types: the first one is leprosy, the second one is leaven, and the third one is Egypt. I want you to study these for a little while so that you can understand what sin really is.

The reference to leprosy and lepers occurs sixty-eight times in the Bible: fifty-five times in the Old Testament, and thirteen times in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, the instances of leprosy most likely meant a variety of infectious skin diseases. Leprosy was a dreaded disease because once a person contracted it, unless God had mercy, he eventually died. There is a correlation between leprosy and sin. Leprosy is contagious, and it comes by skin contact with another person infected with the disease. If you surround yourself with ungodly people, eventually you are going to succumb to the power of sin. We all have heard of the Ebola virus, and it is spread through direct contact also. Many people here were once very concerned about it.

You should be concerned about sin, because sin kills not only the body but also the soul. What kind of people do you surround yourself with? Sinners do not flood to the house of God because they are not of the same spirit. It is not until a person is born again that he desires fel-

lowship. When one sins, often it is because he is surrounded by others who are doing the same thing.

Leprosy is a dreaded disease, and once it gets hold of someone, it begins to damage the nerves in the body. When that happens, the infected person begins to lose the sensation of feeling. Do you realize how dangerous that is? They say that when people with leprosy would fall asleep, because their nerves were so damaged, that rats actually ate their fingers in the night and the lepers did not even realize it.

What is the lesson? Once sin begins to deceive you, you become past feeling, as Ephesians 4:19 says. You can actually get past the feelings of guilt working in your life. In sin you keep overriding the guilt and the condemnation that comes along with it. Eventually you will no longer feel the guilt of sin as you truly should. You become past feeling because the leprosy of sin is working to destroy your sensitivity to the Gospel. It is so important to obey the Gospel when you are young, because the older you get, the harder it will be to obey the Gospel. No one is outside the reach of the Gospel. Even if you are one hundred years of age, you can still be saved.

### **Sin Destroys Your Sensitivity**

Leprosy and pain buffer conduct. There are lots of things that you do not do because you are afraid of the consequences. I do not play flag football with young men anymore because I probably would not be able to move very well for a week if I were to do that. The thought of pain buffers my conduct. There are certain things that we do or will not do because of the consequences.

When you are young, there are lots of things you do because

you are brazen. Maybe you want to impress some girls. Sometimes people do dumb things in their youth because they do not really register danger. However, as we get older, we begin to understand these things. In your youth you might have driven your car at a high rate of speed, but as you get older, you know better because you realize there is a chance that you could be killed.

Once you lose your sensitivity to the Gospel, you are going to go deeper and deeper in sin until you are lost forever. You can get past feeling the call of the Gospel. If you are living in sin, you need to be concerned, because sin will numb you. If you go to a dentist, he is not going to put you in a chair and immediately start drilling a cavity. First, he numbs the area that he is going to work on, because otherwise you could not take the pain.

Sin works in a similar way. You start out with a tender conscience, but Satan will begin to numb your conscience, and you will begin to nibble on bait until you are numb and you transgress the law of God and become a sinner. The full force of sin is no longer felt because the devil has been working on you. Sin is deceptive, and just like leprosy, it numbs you. Sin destroys your sensitivity to the things of God.

When a message goes forth, you can either accept it and obey it or you can let it go in one ear and out the other, so to speak. You must make a decision. When the devil is working on you, he uses specific bait just for you. When a fisherman goes fishing, he knows what bait to use for the kind of fish he wants to catch. The devil knows where your weakness is, and he is going to use bait that you will nibble on. The more you are attracted to it, the more danger you are in. If you are not careful, the devil will get you to the place where you

become numb to the things of God. God is trying to warn you. He is crying out against sin, but if you ignore Him, He cannot help you.

### **The Bondage of Sin**

James 1:14 states, "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." When a person chops down a tree, he can chop through about 75 percent of that tree trunk before it will fall. Do you realize that without God sin can be chopping away at you, and you could just be holding on by a little strand? The next trial or temptation could take you down. You need to be strong in the Lord and go to the house of God where you can be warned about these things. Sin can be working, and you may not even be aware of it. God's warnings come from the Word of God.

Once you transgress the law of God and go down into spiritual Egypt, you become the property of the devil, and you enter into bondage. There is much bondage that comes with sin. After you get involved with it, you do not know how far down you are going to go.

You may say, "I have been drinking for five years, and I don't have a problem with it." Sin is always changing. You have a flesh, and your body will begin to crave things, just as it does food. If you are into drugs or alcohol, eventually it will tear you down and make your life useless.

Down in Egypt, godly habits get replaced by worldly ones. When that happens, you need to be alarmed. If you have transgressed the law of God, you ought to repent and let it work for good and learn from it. What happens when the electric power goes out? The power company scrambles to get it back on. When necessary, they bring in

linemen from out of state who work hard to restore power because people's lives depend on it.

You need to realize that if your power with God is broken, you need to scramble and get it restored before it is too late. However, you cannot just walk back into salvation. The devil will lie to you all day long and say that you can go out in sin and then just walk back to God anytime you want, but it does not work that way. The whole time I have been saved, that has not been my experience. I have watched people walk away, and they do not walk back in and get saved. It can be a difficult road to get back with God because the enemy is working. You must understand what is working on you. Sin will bring bondage.

### **Looking Back**

We read in Exodus 1:11-14: "Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Rameses. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel. And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour: And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour."

Those Israelites had a desire to worship God. Moses said, "Let us go three days into the wilderness to worship." You can backslide and have a desire to worship, but just as Pharaoh, the devil says: "Make him work harder and afflict him more." Sinner friend, you are in bondage, and the only way you are going to get out is to have a desire. Be encouraged. The Bible says if you are as smoking

flax, God will work with you. If you have the slightest desire to want to be saved, you have God's full attention. The Gospel is beautiful.

You need to understand sin and what is working on you. Sin has a power to it. There is a power that is beyond your ability to fix. You are human. If you are living in sin, there is only one place to go to get it fixed, and you cannot do it yourself. You may say that you are going to try to do better, but the devil laughs every time you say that. You cannot do better on your own. Before I got saved, I tried to pray, and I said that I was not going to drink anymore. I made lots of statements, but they did not mean a thing, although I desired to do better. If you want to do better, you are blessed, and God sees your desire.

Numbers 11:4-5 reads: "And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting; and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick."

Friend, sin will cause you to take a look back at what you have given up, but there is no way to be saved unless you are willing to give up your sin. You cannot merely raise your hand and say, "I am willing to make a commitment." It does not work that way. You must repent of your sins and turn away from them. You have to quit the sin business entirely. Why would you not want to quit the sin business? Why would any minister get up and preach and tell you that you cannot be free from sin? People want to quit sin. I wanted to quit. I was sick of being ashamed and sick of being led around by the nose by this old flesh, but I had no power against it without Jesus Christ.

## **Weighed and Found Wanting**

The Gospel says if you want freedom from sin, you can have it. Do you want it? Do you want to be free from sin? When you begin to understand what sin really is, you will want freedom from it. It is your personal responsibility to get into the Book. Also, it is your personal responsibility to get yourself to the house of God. If you were bleeding to death, you would not hesitate to call for help. You need to realize that if you are living in sin, you are in trouble with Almighty God. He said He is angry with the sinner every day, but He is only angry with the one who knows better. There must be a knowledge of sin before it can be ascribed to you, so be encouraged.

The Gospel reveals what sin is, and Jesus wants to fix it. That is what I love about the Gospel. You cannot find help anywhere else. There is only One who can help you, and His name is Jesus. He is sitting on the right hand of power right now. He is on David's throne, the throne of mercy. He wants to extend mercy to every sinner. One day He is going to get off that throne, and there will be no more mercy. You need to quit playing around as if you have nine lives. You only get one chance at life. If I had died while I was living in sin, I would be lost eternally. Friend, do not play around in sin any longer.

You are a living soul made in the image of God, and you have a responsibility to be a Christian. The greatest title that you could ever have is Christian. I do not hang my head when I tell people that I am a Christian. Jesus has been so good to me. He is not just a story; He is a reality. You need to get on board, because this train is heading for glory.

The Bible is inspired by God. If you measure to it, you will have great peace, and great

power comes along with it if you obey it. Someone may say, "I do not have peace in my experience." Are you obeying the message? Sin disrupts peace in your life, and the only way you are going to get peace is to accept Jesus Christ into your heart.

Money cannot bring you happiness. That kind of happiness is superficial. Maybe you have just started dating somebody, and you are excited about that, but the reality of life is going to come knocking on your door one day. You are going to have to go to work to pay the bills, and then the government will take a big part of what you make. Your car will break down, you might have problems in the home, and the water heater is going to break. Life is going to come at you really fast, but it is much easier if you have Jesus.

The greatest thing that God wants to do is to help you. I thought of all the years that He watched me struggle along. He probably thought, "I want to help him, but he just refuses." Friend, do not refuse Him. God loves you, and I can guarantee that if you get saved, your life will be much better.

I can say that if you get saved, it will be the greatest thing that will ever happen to you in this world. Salvation is the greatest thing that has ever happened to me. I thank God for my children and for my godly wife. I have lots of blessings in life, but nothing tops being saved. I skied the Rockies, traveled a lot, tried the bottle, and many things searching for something that would satisfy me. I could not find it in the things of this world. However, I found true satisfaction when I found Jesus Christ. Salvation does not get old. It is fresh every day. There is power in it! There is instruction for every avenue of life, whether you are young or old. The Gospel is made for the

whole man.

If sin is working in your life, you need to do something about it. You need to ask Jesus for forgiveness. If you are unsaved, you need to be alarmed, because you have only one life. The Bible says that today is the day of salvation. Do not worry about what is going to happen tomorrow. You need to worry about right now. Where do you stand before God?

Are you clear in your soul or are you weighed in the balances and found wanting? There is a call going on, and God is calling you to repentance, sinner friend.

Heaven is going to have godly people there. That is where I want to go. I want to go where the saints are residing. I do not care about going to the movie theaters. I do not care about dirty jokes. I do not care

about the things of this world. Heaven is paradise with Jesus. I want to go there one day. Do not miss it. Do not miss it for the whiskey. Do not miss it for the drugs. Do not miss it because some job is going to pay you ten or twenty thousand dollars more a year.

(Compact Disc TR-1783)

[Annual Financial Report—continued from page 2]  
a greater burden for the work of *The Gospel Trumpeter*. Your prayers do contribute a tremendous amount to the success of this effort of missionary endeavor. Your financial support is also needed and

appreciated. You may not realize the impact that your sacrifice is making; however, the Lord is recording every act of love and devotion to His great cause. We trust that He will bless you.

## Statement of Condition for 12 months ending January 31, 2018

	Income	Expenses
Supplies.....		\$ 29,234.39
Miscellaneous Expenses.....		5919.79
Wages.....		47,771.68
Payroll Taxes/Insurance/Workers' Comp.....		24,890.77
Donations/Offerings.....	\$15,535.25	
Equipment Purchased.....		24,739.07
Equipment Maintenance/Repairs.....		3,131.32
Postage.....		71,139.70
Subtotals.....	\$15,535.25	206,826.72
 <i>Balance paid out of the general fund of the Church of God congregation at Newark, OH.....</i>		
		\$191,291.47

**A Christian should aspire to do the will of God:  
nothing MORE,  
nothing LESS,  
nothing ELSE.**

*Exodus 15:17 Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O LORD, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established.*

# Planted in Zion



*Brother Josh Thilmony*

## **Victory Is Through the Power of God**

God's Word never gets old. It is alive, and it says something different every day. It will be just what you need. It is good to plant things. Some get more excited about planting things than others do. The Bible likens Christ to a tender plant. When you are around Jesus, He grows on you. I am thankful for our Lord and Savior. I have never been sorry for the day I started serving Him. Since the day that I turned my life to Him, I have never regretted it. I am thankful to be saved!

In this song of rejoicing, Moses started talking about the mountain of God they were headed for. They were headed to God's holy mountain, Mount Zion. We know that Mount Zion was a wonderful place.

The Bible says that King David took the "castle of Zion," and the Jebusites in the city called "Jebus," which is Jerusalem now. In essence, they told David, "You are not going to come here; you are not going to take this place." Nevertheless, David took the castle of Zion. It became his place, and it became known as the city of David. Zion is still the place where the great King lives and reigns, and we are thankful for that.

I am thankful for the blessing of having a King and a kingdom that was set in place by the hand of God, and it is forever! Zion is where the throne of Christ is, in the middle of His people, and He is still reigning. God wants to plant you around His throne, right where you can sip on the grace of God day after day. Isn't that wonderful? The grace of God keeps flowing out of God's throne.

The grace of God was put here by God, and you can keep drawing on it. No matter who is around you and no matter who is failing around you, you can have a blessed walk with God and have His presence in your life. God's love can overflow in your life, and God will bless you.

Psalm 91:7 says, "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee." God will be with you through thick and thin. God wants to plant you in Zion. I planted a tree in my front yard, and I do not plan to ever move it. I plan to leave it right where I planted it. God plants us in Zion, and when He did, He did not intend for us to ever go anywhere else. God does not want you to be moved.

Being planted in Zion is all by the power of God. You cannot do it

on your own. Exodus 15:13 states, "Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation." Zion is a holy place. You cannot get there on your own, and you cannot stay there on your own.

One wonder of living for God is, you do not have to despair about whether you are good enough or strong enough. It is not by your own strength. The Scripture says, "Thou hast guided them in thy strength." It was God's strength that put Pharaoh in a heartless position with his first-born dead, and he told the Hebrews to leave. At the Red Sea, it was God who parted the waters.

Today you do not have to sit and wonder, "Can I keep the victory?" We do not need to have great human intellect to keep the church going. It is done by the power of God through the simplicity of the Gospel. It is all about Christ. You are just an empty house of clay without Him. Victory is by the strength of God. You should not entertain the thought of giving up. Serving God is not too much. You can be strong in Him. He can keep you and help you.

Again, Exodus 15:13 reads, "Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation." It took the strength of God to get the Israelites out of Egypt and into Canaan. It took God's strength to defeat those mighty nations that they went against and the giants that they labored against. It was God's power, and it still takes God's power to defeat the enemy.

One song says, "*Thank God for the eyes that God has given us to see the truth.*" That is by the power of God. It is not by an incessant amount of studying or a high amount of education. No, thank God for education, but it is divine revelation that does the work. God has to open your eyes. Being planted in Zion happens when God is on your side, when God is with you. God can do great things, not only in your

religious life but also in your physical life.

### **Continuing in the Faith**

God will give you the best things in this life. God is so good. When you have the presence of God in your life, the greatest things in this world become so cheap. The most expensive and beautiful jewelry becomes cheap compared to the treasure that you have inside. This outlasts anything you can get in this world. I thank God for His strength and divine grace. God will keep you.

Are you dealing with hardship? A man came into my office one time and wanted advice on buying a vehicle. He was a professing Christian. Soon after he bought one, many things started to go wrong with it. He said, "I prayed and prayed about this, and now it seems that everything is going wrong." He came in again and said: "Now the cost of the repairs are up to hundreds of dollars, and this vehicle is not under warranty. I am so mad at God! I told God last night that I am going to quit tithing. God never gives me a break!"

I questioned him, "Are you mad at God over money?"

He said, "Well, I'm not mad, but I am disappointed."

I shared with him that God does not promise that everything is going to be perfect in this world. The beauty of being a Christian is not that God removes all your problems, but He helps you to endure them. May God give you grace to endure your problems and help you through them.

I have learned not to belittle people's problems, because their problems are big to them. Sometimes those problems may be difficult, but God's grace will help you through. I also told him, "God has ways of helping you, and you are not going to have to do this on your own."

Not long afterward, he came to see me again and said: "Do you know what happened? I went back

to the place where I bought the vehicle, and they said they would cover five hundred of the six hundred dollars that I spent in repairs." He was very happy about that.

God has ways of working things out. Some things are spiritual battles. You cannot reach Zion's heights on your own. It takes the divine grace of God and divine revelation to get planted in Zion by the grace of God.

Acts 14:22 reads, "Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." Do not think that getting saved is going to remove all your problems; it will not. There is a glory in the fight that you get in when you seek God and He pulls you through. It brings joy to your heart.

When I got saved, I had to battle lots of different things. I had to press beyond what all my friends thought of me, and I had to be willing to pray over my food in front of them. That was a hard one for me, and it held me back for a long time. Also, I had to get past my family. A girl told me, "Your religion is stupid." That bothered me, but I had to get past it all.

Sometimes this journey is difficult. There is a battle to fight. Salvation is a free gift, and God gives it to you freely. The hard part is getting yourself to humble down before God. At times, humbling yourself and saying, "God, whatever You want" is the hard part. God will not do that part for you. You have to get to the point that you totally surrender to Him.

### **Genuine Repentance**

One way to get planted in Zion is through a great deal of conviction. Isaiah 19:1 says, "The burden of Egypt. Behold, the LORD rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the

midst of it." I want you to look at the verse in general. When God comes in and people's hearts start melting, that is conviction. When God is around, hearts will melt. When you are lost, full of sin, that bears down upon you and causes you to feel guilty.

If you want to be planted in Zion, you have to deal with your sin. You have to get to the point that you are uncomfortable with your sin. The Bible says in Psalm 15:1, "LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?" The answer to the question is, those who tremble at God's Word. If you want to get to Zion, you have to go through conviction. You will thank God for it later. It is never comfortable or fun. It is a big gamble to leave God out of your life.

The Bible says that God will not despise a broken and a contrite heart. If you want to get help from God, that is the condition you must go to Him in. Jesus said, "If you fall on this stone, you will be broken." That is a good brokenness to have. People will like you better. No one likes someone who is stuck on himself. It is good to realize that you messed up your own life and quit blaming others. You have to take responsibility for your own actions.

Look at the language the Prophet Isaiah used in Isaiah 19:1. Isaiah has been called "The Shakespear of the Old Testament." I think that is a good description. The Prophet Isaiah said, "Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud." God is on the move. The Bible talks about Jesus coming back again, but that is not the only time God moves. Jesus said in Luke 11:20, "But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you." When it is your time to be under conviction, you will feel miserable, because it is your time to surrender to God.

In so many words, Jesus told the church at Ephesus: "If you do not repent, I will come to you quickly and remove your candlestick out of his place." My Bible says to behold

the goodness and the severity of God. God is good, but it is good to think about His severity too. They both ought to move you. Some people get saved with fear, and others are saved through mercy and love.

If you want to be planted in Zion, you have to realize that if something is wrong in your life, you have to take it to God. John the Baptist went out preaching, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2). The Bible lets us know that people came out of the towns to hear John. They were moved by his preaching and went on to be baptized. They had confessed their sins. If you are lost, you need to confess and forsake all your sins. That is how you get planted around the throne of God. You have to confess to the Lord and get it worked out with Him.

Genuine repentance is how you get planted by the power of God. This repentance that John preached was not a halfhearted prayer. This repentance runs deep, and it is not to be repented of. Your determination will be, "I am serving God, and I am not turning back." That kind of repentance is what gets you planted in Zion. You must make up your mind to serve the Lord and give Him everything.

### **Callings and the Gifts of Helps**

Matthew 4:20 reads, "And they straightway left their nets, and followed him." Verse 22 continues, "And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him." When I was first saved at sixteen years of age, those verses did not mean a lot to me. Those men left their boats and their father. Now that I am older and have a family, I do not want my children to leave me. Those men left their father and the family business and followed Christ. I do not believe that is the plan that God has for everybody, but the plan is for everyone to follow Jesus. That is how you get planted in Zion. You have to leave familiarity behind. Have you followed God as whole-

heartedly as those men did?

Now I want to talk to you about getting involved in the work of God and being productive. If you want to get planted in Zion, you have to be involved in the work of God. One Scripture that God used to stir my heart is in the Book of Exodus. When God sent the Israelites manna, they went out and gathered it. They were to gather an omer for every person, which was approximately two liters of manna. Exodus 16:18 tells us, "And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack."

The thought that really stirred my heart was that it did not say anything about anyone gathering nothing. Everyone has something to do for God. I am concerned that, as a culture, people have lost the burden for productivity. A faithful brother back home shared a schedule that Thomas Jefferson made up for his daughters. He had his daughters busy all day with two hours of foreign language, two hours of music, and so on. He had everything scheduled. These girls were ten and twelve years of age, and they worked all day. Although that is secular, if he had that kind of burden for secular things, what kind of burden should the Christian have for the work of God?

I allow my boys to play games, such as computer games and video games, but I put time limits on them. Every once in a while, I tell them, "I don't want you boys to be married and playing video games while ignoring your family." I have seen it happen. Young men have to grow up and get past the game playing.

The Bible talks about the church going out and conquering. The Christian has a real battle to fight. As a Christian, you need to ask the Lord to lead and teach you. God does not knock a person over the head with a calling, but He has a calling for everyone. It would do the church good if everyone would seek God and say: "Lord, what is my calling? What do You want me to

do?"

According to 1 Corinthians, Chapter 12, God has several callings. He gives out gifts to every person. It would do you good to look around the church and say, "Lord, what needs to be done?" There is a lot more to do around the church than just preaching. Preaching is the most important calling. The Word of God is the highest priority we have. However, the Bible talks about the gifts of helps. If people were not operating the gifts of helps, the church would be hindered.

I will give you examples of gifts of helps. The first example is, developing your talent and preparing to use it for the Lord. Preaching, teaching, and music are wonderful ministries. Are you training your children? Sometimes children have a tendency to resist. They may not

want to practice their piano lessons as often as they should or they may want to quit. You should talk to your children about finding their calling. There is more to do than just going to church. God will give you a calling that will fit you.

Another example of the gift of helps is using what God has given them for the Lord. The Bible lets us know that those who have wealth should be ready to distribute some to others. That is a ministry. Have you ever heard about J. C. Penney? He started tithing 10 percent, and by the time he was done, he was tithing 90 percent. We do not preach a prosperity Gospel; however, if you give more, you will have more joy.

My point is that everyone has something that he or she can do. Those who are close to retirement could use their retirement time for God. Sometimes when people retire,

they get busier and have less time for God. The Bible says that whatever your hands find to do, you should do it with all your might. I do not believe this is talking about worldly pursuits but about doing something for God. You need to find something to do for God and give of yourself.

I read about a man who went to a presentation and saw this man who had been drumming for sixty years. He said it was so moving, and the experience was phenomenal. The drummer had been doing it for a long time. Someone commented, "It pays to stick with something." How is it with you? Are you planted in Zion and giving yourself to God? Do you know what your calling is? I am concerned that some do not.

*(Compact Disc TR-1828)*

## The Art of Happiness

Happiness does not depend upon what happens on the outside of you, but upon what happens on the inside; it is measured by the spirit in which you meet the problems of life.

Happiness does not come from doing what you like to do, but from liking what you have to do in the work of God.

Happiness comes from putting your whole heart into God's work and doing it with joy and enthusiasm.

Happiness grows out of harmonious relationships with others based on attitudes of good will, tolerance, long-suffering, understanding, and love.

The master secret of happiness is to meet the challenge of each new day with the serene faith that: "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

# Meeting Announcements

## **MEDINA, OH**

April 4-8

[Please note time change for Sat./Sun. morning services.]

**Revival:** Church of God, 6745 Wooster Pike, Medina, OH

Evangelist: Brother Calvin Foster, Kensett, Arkansas

Service times: Wednesday - Friday 7:00 p.m.; **Saturday 10:30 a.m.**; **Sunday 10:30 a.m.** & 3:00 p.m. A meal will be served by the local congregation after the morning service.

For further information contact: Pastor Mike Miller. Telephone: 269-447-4227

## **NEW CASTLE, IN**

April 6 & 13

**Revival:** 9<sup>th</sup> Street Church of God, 125 South 9<sup>th</sup> Street, New Castle, Indiana 47362

Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi

Service times: 7:00 p.m. Friday night services only on the April 6 & April 13

April 27-29

Evangelist: Brother Marty Simpson, Jonesboro, Georgia

Service times: Friday 7:00 p.m., Saturday 5:00 p.m., Sunday School 9:45 p.m.

Morning Worship 10:45 a.m. & Evening Worship 5:00 p.m.

For additional information contact: Pastor Allen Polston

Telephone: 765-524-1776

## **MT. PLEASANT, PA**

April 21

**Fellowship Meeting:** Church of God, 109 Salvation Lane, Mt. Pleasant, PA

Service time: 10:30 a.m. A meal will be served by the local congregation.

MOTELS: *Holiday Inn Express*, 724-547-2095 (This is on the same road as the church. Please mention that you are there for the church meeting.);

*Super 8 Motel in New Stanton*, 724-925-8915 on I-70W, 10 miles north of the church); *Melody Motor Lodge*, 724-628-9600 on 119N in Connellsville).

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

April 30-May 6

**Revival:** Church of God, 109 Salvation Lane, Mt. Pleasant, PA.

Evangelist: Larry Dishman, Hurly, Mississippi

Service times: Monday-Saturday 7:00 p.m.; Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.

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

## **SUMMERSVILLE, WV**

April 30-May 6

**Revival & Fellowship Meeting:** Church of God, 74 Armstrong Rd., Summersville, WV 26651

Evangelist: Brother Leamon R. Whitehead, Minerva, Ohio

Service times: Mon. - Thurs. 7 p.m.; Fri. 10:30 a.m. & 7 p.m.; Sat. & Sun. 10:30 a.m. & 6 p.m.

Meals will be provided by the local congregation Friday thru Sunday following each service.

Lodging may be obtained at the Econolodge for \$50.00 per night by calling 304-872-6900

Tell them you are there for the Church of God meeting.

Visit the website @ [www.ChurchofGodSummersvilleWV.com](http://www.ChurchofGodSummersvilleWV.com)

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

## **KENSETT, AR**

May 25-27

**Memorial Day Fellowship Meeting:** Kensett Church of God, 409 SE 2<sup>nd</sup> St., Kensett, AR 72082

Special Guests: Brother Leamon & Sister Patty Whitehead will be ministering in message and song.

Service times: Friday evening at 7:00 p.m.; Saturday 2:00-3:00 p.m. will be a teaching class on

"Introduction to the Book of Revelation." A dinner will be served at 4:00 p.m. The Saturday evening

worship service will be at 7:00 p.m. Sunday Worship services will be at 11:00 a.m. & 5:00 p.m. A

dinner will be served after the Sunday morning service.

For more information contact: Pastor Calvin L. Foster.

Telephone: (Church) 501-742-3961 or (Cell) 501-593-5105

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