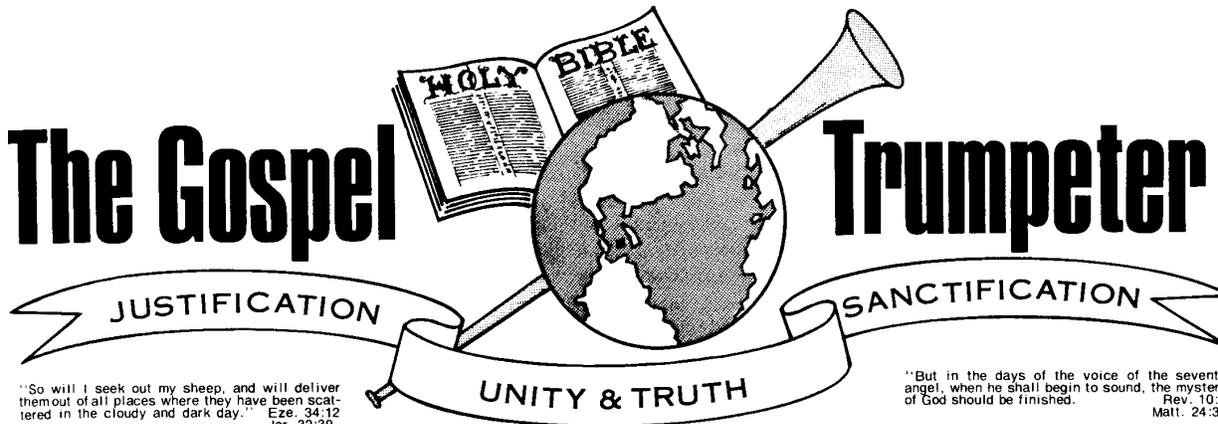


The Gospel Trumpeter



JUSTIFICATION

SANCTIFICATION

UNITY & TRUTH

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

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

SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

Vol. 49 January 2019 No. 1



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?"

Guest Editorial

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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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material for any reason. Not responsible for unsolicited
articles or items.

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Vol. 49 January 2019 No. 1

*"For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down
first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?
Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to
finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man
began to build, and was not able to finish."*

Luke 14:28-30

COUNT THE COST!

Have you ever thought about becoming a Christian? Do you feel that something is missing in your life? You might have tried many pleasures in life, indulged in various sinful habits and vices, yet that void is still there. Friend, Christ is the only answer to what you are looking for and desire. He is that missing piece to the puzzle that you are lacking. Hopefully, as you read this article, you will be made to realize how much God truly loves and cares for you. He desires all men everywhere to be saved and to live free of sin. It is true that life surely has its battles and hard places, but the godly way is by far the best way to live. It is the only way that leads to peace, happiness, and Heaven in the end. So, if you have thought of changing your ways, we urge you to press on.

There are some vital requirements that you must seriously consider when seeking the Lord for salvation. You must seriously consider the cost involved to be successful. Choosing to be a Christian and living a life of holiness is the most important and beneficial decision a man or a woman can ever make. It requires much more than desiring to be forgiven of sin. It

is more than merely believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. This matter is not one to be tried for a while to see whether or not you like it. Many feel that if it fails to work out the way they think it should, they can merely lay it aside. Real salvation requires a complete surrender of your will and life to God. This commitment is not just for the present, but it is to be for a lifetime. This is serious and needs to be given the utmost attention and thought.

In the above Scripture, Jesus was laying out a basic truth to those gathered before Him and for us as well. He instructed men to count the cost to see if they would have enough to finish. You must be determined to go all the way through life with Him no matter what befalls you. If you fail to go all the way, others looking on will begin to laugh and mock at your inability to finish. People will wonder if you are truly serious about serving God. Failure to continue leaves a negative impression of Christianity on other lost souls.

Naturally, it is of the utmost importance to lay a good foundation to build upon. If you do

[continued on page 13]

First Peter 2:1 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,

2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word [that desire comes when you believe the sincere

milk of the word, when you are saved and obey it], that ye may grow thereby:

3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

4 To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of

men, but chosen of God, and precious,

5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

A Spiritual House



Brother Roger L. Decker

Build According to the Pattern

I want you to look into the Word of God to see how the spiritual man can stay spiritual. The word *spiritual* is used twenty-eight times in twenty-three verses of Scripture. It means "supernatural," which is higher than carnal. Four things stand out to me in these five verses in 1 Peter that are necessary to build a spiritual house. First, you must lay aside certain things. Second, you must have a desire. Third, you must have growth. Fourth, there

is a need for spiritual sacrifices.

When it comes to building, a builder never starts at the top and builds down. He must start with a foundation and build up. How does the spiritual man build? Too many men and women go to an altar of prayer and then slide back into their old fleshly ways. Some only serve God a few days, and others may serve Him for a few months.

To build a spiritual house, there are some things that a builder must do. Psalm 127:1 reads, "Except the LORD build the

house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." You should be entirely dependent on God. No matter what your strengths may be, all your efforts will be vain unless God assists you. You are dependent on Him for life, for help, for strength, for wisdom, for disposition to continue, and for success in whatever you do. A laborer must build according to the pattern that the Lord has given.

Hebrews 8:1-5 states: "Now of the things which we have spoken

this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount."

Jesus likens His followers to builders. As a builder, except the Lord build the house, whether it is a church or an individual home, you labor in vain if God is not your source. When I got married, I was not really ready for marriage at that time. The wife was ready, and she was settled down, but I was not. Our house was not a spiritual house, and our labors were in vain. For the first nine years of our marriage, things were very rocky until we brought the Lord into our home. When the Lord came into our home, a drastic change took place in our household.

Be Careful Where You Build

Jesus said in Matthew 7:24-27: "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the

sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it." What does this tell you? You need to build on the Rock, because it is sure that the floods are going to come, and it is sure that the winds are going to blow.

If you look this up in a commentary and study it, you will find that back in Jesus' day, many people found a sandy surface near a stream and built a house. It was fine as long as the stream was dried up, but as soon as the floods came, the house was swept away.

To build a spiritual house, you have some work that you have to do. Great effort must be put forth in order to make it. You cannot let down in any manner or you are not going to make it. If you do not build according to the pattern, the winds will blow you away. The flood will sweep you away if you do not build upon the Rock. I repeat, great effort must be put forth. Too many think they will do just enough to make it. How much would you have to do to just make it inside Heaven? Does anyone know? I do not have the answer. No one knows, so why take a chance. Some feel they do not want to get too religious, but there is no danger in that. I have never seen that happen.

God wants you to gain, spiritually speaking. I am not saying that God just wants you to be more religious, but He does want you to be more spiritual. The world is full of religious hypocrites. I do not believe God wants anyone to add to that. Young person, in order to be spiritual, you have to get by peer pressure. When my wife and I were raising our family, we made our children adhere to the Bible standard for their hair as well as for the way they dressed. I figured until they got out on their

own, they were under our roof and our rule. The peer pressure came from those who did not abide by the standard. There is going to be peer pressure when someone is walking in all the light he or she has. Peer pressure should not come from other Christian young people or adults.

You are going to the Judgment, but you are not going to get by moping along as if you are in a daze, sometimes acting saved and sometimes not acting saved. With some people it just depends on which group they are with. You can be just as spiritual as you want to be. If you want to get close to God, you can do that. Thank God, there is a way you can. The Word of God says to draw close to God.

Many times there has to be a cleansing to get the audience of God. In James 4:8 James said, "Draw nigh [or close] to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded." Jesus mentioned two things that have definitely got to be cleaned up in one's life: the hands and the heart. That phrase "cleanse your hands" originally denoted nothing more than ceremonial cleansing. The washing with water made a man ceremonially fit to approach the worship of God.

The Lord Demands a Cleansing

We read in Exodus 30:19-21: "For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat: When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the LORD: So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their

generations."

Leviticus 16:3-4 states: "Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering. He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired: these are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on." The priests were required to wash and bathe themselves before they entered into a service. Men came to see that God required much more than an outward cleansing, so the phrase came to stand for moral purity.

Psalm 26:6 says, "I will wash mine hands in innocency." We read in Isaiah 1:16 that it was Isaiah's demand that man should wash himself and make himself clean, which is equated with ceasing to do evil. In Paul's letter to Timothy in 1 Timothy 2:8 he urged men to lift up holy hands to God, showing a deepening consciousness of what God demanded. Men began by thinking in terms of an outward washing, or a ritual, and ended up by seeing that the demand of God was moral, not just a ritual. Biblical thoughts or Biblical expressions throughout the Bible demand a fourfold cleansing.

Isaiah 6:5-7 reads: "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." The Lord demands a cleansing of the lips.

Psalm 24:3-4 states: "Who

shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully." Here we see a cleansing of the hands. Psalm 73:13 reads, "Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency." Also, God demands a cleansing of the heart.

In Ephesians 4:23 Paul said, "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind." The moral demand of the Bible is that a man's words, deeds, emotions, and thoughts should be purified. Inwardly and outwardly, a man must be clean.

Jesus said in Matthew 23:26, "Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also."

Being Unstable

James wrote in James 1:8, "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways." What did James mean? A double-minded man acts as though he has two souls: one for this earth and the other for Heaven, and he wishes to make sure he is secure in both. He will not give up this world, but neither will he let go of the thought of Heaven. He is continually distracted by one world or the other. He is unstable because one of the worlds keeps interfering with the other. He knows that he can only be loyal to one, yet he clings to both of them; therefore, he is unstable. These individuals struggle continually. Sometimes they struggle with the standard of the church. Sometimes they struggle with church attendance, especially when something in the world interferes with that attendance.

I remember when the schools never had ball games on Wednesday nights, and especially not on Sundays. Why? Because a lot of the churches held worship ser-

vices then. Today not too many attend mid-week worship services anymore. Now they hold games and tournaments on Wednesdays. It makes no difference to them what the churches do, so they schedule sporting events on Wednesdays and even on Sundays. There is where it comes down to making a decision. What is more important for your child, to go to church or to throw a football, to shoot a basketball, or to hit a baseball? What happens? There are two worlds pulling. The world of Heaven is saying: "You need to be in the house of God." The world's pull is saying: "Come on, the team needs him. He is a valuable player. He is one of the best on the team." One world pulls against the other. I did not have to contend with that, but parents do today.

A person can only be loyal to one world. When you are unstable, you try to be loyal to both worlds, to please both. A good example of being double-minded was the literal Jew. You can read in the Book of Galatians about a struggle laying aside all the old Levitical rites. The Apostle Paul wrote in Galatians 5:1, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." The yoke of bondage that Paul was referring to was the old Mosaic Law.

Today when it comes to Sunday school, two worlds are pulling. One world says to sleep in on Sunday morning and the other world says to get out of bed and get dressed for church. Sometimes I say to myself, "Come on, get out of bed," and I jump out. On the other hand, another voice says to stay in bed for a little while longer.

An unstable man tries to appease both worlds. If he goes out to eat with someone and that person does not pray, he is not going to pray. If someone else

does not mention prayer, the unstable man is not going to embarrass himself by mentioning it. He has another pull working on him. What did Jesus say? No man can serve two masters. Why? He will hate the one and love the other or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. He went on to say that you cannot serve God and mammon.

Laying Aside Hindrances

In our Scripture text in 1 Peter, I want you to look at the things that I mentioned at the beginning of the message. The first one was laying aside some things. Now, Peter mentioned five things that should not be part of a spiritual house. What are they? Malice, guile, hypocrisy, envy, and evil speaking. To lay aside something has an allusion to taking off clothes or discarding them, or to no longer wear them. The Christian should no longer practice malice.

Paul made it very plain in Romans 13:12-14 when he said: "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."

Malice is not only evil, but it is a particular kind of evil. It is an evil that has a spirit of revenge, ill will, and an attitude to do injury to others. Why? A person who has malice in his heart desires to get personal gratification.

You can read in Romans 12:19, "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." Now, that is not as easy as it sounds. Sometimes there is something within you that rises up when you have been

hurt. I am not saying that it is sin, but the humanity part of us can rise up and want to get even or apply some pressure or hurt back at the individual. Paul said to lay that aside. Why? God will take care of the problem.

The Bible says vengeance is the Lord's. If there is any repaying, God knows how to do it. Carnal or fleshly thoughts could cause you to do the wrong thing and ruin your example of being a Christian. Malice is a terrible, destructive spirit. Peter said to lay it aside, or to put it away from you, because if it is in your life, you cannot be a part of the spiritual house.

Next, Peter mentioned guile. What is that? It is deceit of all kinds. Psalm 32:2 reads, "Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." Speaking of Jesus, 1 Peter 2:22 says, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."

Peter then mentioned hypocrisy, or pretense. In other words, pretending to be a Christian. It means that a person is an actor. Such a person is not really sincere about the things of God. The Word of God speaks very strongly against hypocrisy. Job 20:5 tells us, "That the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment?" A hypocrite pretends to be someone he is not. Job 27:8 says, "For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?"

Next, Peter spoke of envy, the resentment of others because they have attained more or possess something that you do not have. Often jealousy is mixed in with it. Proverbs 6:34 states, "For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance." Song of Solomon 8:6 reads, "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the

grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame." Just as the grave refuses to let go, so does jealousy.

The next one Peter mentioned was evil speakings. This includes slander, destroying someone's reputation, or undermining the character of another.

Next, he went on to desire. You cannot make someone serve God. If a person has a desire, he will serve God. If he does not, then he is going to be in and out like a swinging door. You cannot give someone a desire.

Second Corinthians 7:11 reads, "For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter." You can be spiritual, and you can stay spiritual if you want to. Some need to have their desire rekindled. If you want to go far with the Lord, the opportunity is certainly there.

You have a lot to do with your own spirituality. For example, if you want to fool around instead of putting your all into serving the Lord, He is not going to make you do anything different. God is not going to slap your hand because you are playing a game on your cell phone during a church service. He is not going to shut the phone off, but He will trouble your thought life.

When God is speaking through a testimony, a song, or a message, you should not sit and play games. Would it not be terrible to have a heart attack at that time? We are susceptible to such things. When calamity comes and you are fooling around, you might have a struggle getting a prayer through to get help. You should always want to be on praying ground, because you

never know when you might need to pray. Driving down the highway, you may experience some close calls. You will want to call on God right then. You do not want to have to repent first.

Spiritual Growth

Next, the Apostle Peter mentioned growth. To grow spiritually, you need to pray. That is how you got spiritual life to start with. Also, you need to read your Bible. Now, you do not have to read two or three chapters just to say that you read it. I use a Bible reading application, but not when I am studying. When studying, you can take just one verse, two verses, or three verses. You cannot remember a chapter, or two or three chapters, but you can usually remember a verse. It is good to memorize Scriptures. Studying the Bible is altogether different from reading the Bible. Certainly, there are times for Bible reading. Sometimes a verse will light up to you and you can study it. When you study, one of the first things you want to do is ask God to direct you in the study. It is amazing how the Holy Spirit will do that. Of course, you want to ask God in everything, but especially in study.

Peter spoke of growing in grace. Too many people wake up in the morning with everything on their minds except the Lord. He is the first one who comes to

my mind, and I ask for His direction. There is no reason why you cannot grow spiritually. The youth have things they like to do, and so does every other age group, but that is no excuse for not putting God first. Just because there are seasonal sports is no sign that those sports should come before God. Second Peter 3:18 says, "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen."

Today we make spiritual sacrifices. The priesthood has changed, the temple has changed, and so the sacrifices have changed. Today we do not offer animals as sacrifices. We are living sacrifices. God wants the whole man. He does not want you to keep any of the rooms of your spiritual house from Him; God wants the master key to all the rooms. He does not want you to have a special room with a special key.

Romans 12:1 says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." This calls for more than lip service. It calls for a total commitment of the whole person. What are you building? Are you building a spiritual house where the Spirit of God can feel free to move as He desires and a place where the Lord desires to dwell? The Holy

Spirit is waiting for you to tap into His power.

I read a touching story about an American who was with a man from England. They were viewing the Niagara Falls and the whirlpool rapids. The American said to his friend, "Come, I am going to show you the greatest power in the world." He took him to the foot of Niagara Falls and said, "That is the greatest unused power in this whole world."

His friend said: "Ah, no, my brother. The greatest unused power in the world is the Holy Spirit of the Living God."

That is so true. The Holy Spirit waits for you and is encouraging you to come and get as much of Him as you possibly can hold. There is no end to the boundless fulfillment that God will give you. The Holy Spirit wants ones to tap into His power. He wants to show Himself strong in your life. The great news is, you can have access to that great power.

In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit was always there. He moved in the beginning, but now we can have access to Him and can tap into His power through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. You are building a spiritual house. The pattern is there, and the access to help you build it is there. All God asks is that you have the desire to tap into it.

(Compact Disc TR-1964)

"My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee."

Proverbs 3:1-2

Luke 24:45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the

dead the third day:

47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

48 And ye are witnesses of these

things.

49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

The Second Coming of Jesus Christ



Brother David Watson

Seducing Spirits

In this message I want to deal with signs of the end of time. I believe with all my heart that Jesus is coming soon. Our world has gotten worse and worse. The Apostle Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:13, "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." Seducing spirits are more prevalent today than I have experienced in my time. Many a soul is being seduced.

After Jesus' resurrection, He walked with His disciples and had a meal with them. He let them know that the Books of Moses, the Books of Prophecies, and the Book of Psalms were fulfilled. He told them to go out from Jerusalem to the other countries and preach the Gospel. The Gospel must be preached in all the world, and then the end will come. That was the confirmation that He was talking about to them starting at Jerusalem and going to the uttermost parts of

the earth.

Two men in white apparel said in Acts 1:11, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." I wonder what that experience would have been like to have stood talking to someone, and suddenly the earth's gravity turned Him loose. He began to move up toward Heaven. They gazed upward as He went out of

sight. The Bible says that He is coming again in like manner as He went away. He did not go away riding a white horse, and He is not coming back riding a white horse.

The Apostles preached that Jesus was crucified, buried, and resurrected, and then He ascended back to Heaven. He sat down at the right hand of the Father. He warned many times of the events that would take place in old Jerusalem as well as in our day. Solomon, in his writings, said something to which we need to pay close attention. In Ecclesiastes 1:9 he wrote, "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun." He was speaking about history repeating itself (we do know that history repeats itself).

Jesus, in His preaching in Luke 17:28-30, said: "Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." He let us know that history will repeat itself. Lot got in great trouble. He lost part of his family down in Sodom.

The Apostle Paul said in Romans, Chapter 1, that people would fall into the same sins that people were doing down in Sodom and Gomorrah. We know that our society is dealing with those same sins today. We know that men and women have changed their natural use into that which is against nature. They are under a strong delusion, and they are bound under the power of great darkness and sin. God loves these men and women, but they have gone against nature itself. Sin is increasing in our world in this area.

We have heard of heathens in the past, but we have heathens on our streets today. They break up homes, and little children are growing up with the spirit of this evil way. Children see a man live with a man or a woman living with a woman, and they want to go so far as to raise a family. The very instinct of children is to always esteem the mother of the home.

When I was growing up, I always went to my grandmother with problems because she could go to my granddad and talk to him. A house is not a home without a good, godly mother. When a mother is what she ought to be, she takes her children and sits them on her knees and cuddles them. She has love and compassion and will sit up day and night with a sick child. She will see that child through the sickness. She knows the child's pain and feelings.

A man does not have motherly instincts, yet some men want to live with another man and say that man is his wife, and they want to raise children. According to the Bible, that is a lifestyle that God forbids. Since God is against it, God's people are also against it. Some religious denominations want to put them in positions of leadership in their congregations. That is heathenism, and it is not good. It is sin, and it is the work of the devil trying to take our country down. If there was ever a time when we needed old-time revivals and Holy Ghost filled men and women praying down fire from Heaven, it is needed now! This sin that is in our world sinks deeper and deeper as we travel along the way of life.

Warring Against Evil

The Apostle Paul told us something that I have thought about quite often in studying the Word of the Lord. In 2 Timothy 3:5-6 he wrote: "Having a form of

godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts."

That is what Jesus has forbidden men and women to get into. God wants preachers to stand and warn people that this is a sin that He forbids. He wants it talked about so that it will be understood in young people's lives. Be careful that you do not get talked into this sin. What goes along with this kind of sin is drug usage. The drug business is on the streets, in the schools, in the colleges, and in the prisons. It will take you further and further down in sin. I want to warn you that in these last days in which we are living, sin has gotten much worse. It has a tighter grip than I have ever known it to have.

Sad to say, some states have legalized marijuana. They do not care what it will do to people. They do not care that in about five years their lives on earth will be over when they abuse drugs. Young people's lives are snuffed out early because illegal drugs are taking them out. Sin is taking them down. Sin is influencing young people and destroying their souls. They are blinded and drawn into deeper sin. Sometimes I wonder how much deeper in sin people will go before Jesus returns. So much sin is in our world today.

Religion is all around us, and it is getting more lax all the time. Some in the denominational world used to uphold some standards, but they have lowered them until they are meaningless. I want to talk to you about some fruits that you need to consider. I want to show you some things that are highly important to the Christian.

In Revelation 19:11 John wrote, "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white

horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war." What is He warring against? He is warring against all the evil things coming against the church. What am I doing? I am declaring war against sin. If you are not guilty of any sin that I mention, this Truth will not hurt you, and you will be glad to hear it. On the other hand, if you are guilty of something, the devil is going to puff you up and make you like an old puffer fish: full of air.

You need to realize that God is declaring war on sin, and as His warriors, we are following Him; therefore, we must be willing to use the two-edged sword that He has put in our hands—the Bible. Verse 12 reads, "His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself." The crowns that Jesus had on His head represent the many victories in leading congregations and people. He has led them through trials and difficult times, and He has led them out of false religion, or anything that represents falsehood.

The Rod of Iron

Jesus has had a candlestick and a trumpet sounding in each church age. He has eyes as a flame of fire, and He is warning people. I believe that God is very disturbed at what He is seeing take place in our world. We are living on the verge of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. We are closer now than we have ever been. The Bible lets us know that few people will be saved in this end time. Matthew 7:14 states, "Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Whenever sin is running rampant as it is today, you will be surprised at the impact that it

has on souls. Many preachers are being deceived. Some of them have gotten into a terrible condition.

Describing our Savior, we read in Revelation 19:13, "And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God." Jesus knows the Word of God better than anyone. The Word is bathed in the blood.

Revelation 19:14-15 reads: "And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." The rod of iron is the Word of God.

In Revelation, Chapter 12, we are told that a child was born and would rule the nations with a rod of iron. God rules His people with the Word. He gathers and puts people into the winepress. He is trampling with the fire of His wrath. The wrath of His preaching, or the judgment of the Word, is coming against sin in our world. True ministers are preaching hot against that which is sin. His Word burns the evil in the heart, and God is judging what is in the heart. He is judging the spirit that people possess. He wants you to follow Him. If you follow Him, you will get out of sin and stand with the Truth.

Again, Revelation 19:15 reads, "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." No matter what people do, God is still God, and this thing is still in His hands. There are leaders in our world who act as if they are God, but they are not. God is still on the throne.

I am well aware that lots of people have built themselves a god. There are many kinds of religions in our world today, and if you do not like one, you can go to another one. However, old-time salvation is not that way. Salvation stands separate. Salvation has clean, white linen. God's Truth is pure. When Jesus comes to you, He comes in a pure Spirit, in the righteousness of God, and in the prophecy and the testimony of Jesus Christ. He is raising up the Truth and the judgment of God against the wrong spirits in souls.

Verse 17 states, "And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God." This angel stands in the sun. In the morning time a woman was clothed with the sun. She represents the church, and the sun represents the light of the church. The ministry in this evening time is standing in the light, that great light that God is revealing. God is leading His people in this evening Truth. We are being led in light and understanding.

Christ's Bride

If you study your Bible, you are going to find light and understanding. You will never find it if you leave it laying on the shelf, but you can find it if you will pray and study and dig into the Bible. God will give it to you. He is leading His church on to victory.

God is getting ready to make a call to the marriage supper. Some people say they are going to eat the supper over yonder in Heaven. I want you to understand something, child of God. We are married to Him now. If we are not married now, the church's children would be born out of wedlock. I do not believe

that could be so, because that would be fornication. God's church is not a fornicating church. Romans 7:4 reads, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."

Jesus had a resurrection and went back to Heaven. In Jeremiah, Chapter 3, what did God do to Israel when she became defiled with other gods? He said He gave His wife a bill of divorcement. Do you believe that God divorced His wife? Some people do not know He has a wife. They need to read the Book.

In Jeremiah 3:8 we read, "And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also." That is prophecy, and that is what God did to old Israel and to Judah. Jesus came through the house of Israel.

Those people went into Babylonian captivity when the church, that great mountain, spoken of in Revelation 8:8, went into the sea and the people were under Roman rule. Some of the people loved God and were faithful, and they were saved. However, when the trumpet began to sound, people came out of those places. Some people held on to Truth and came out. They brought a lot of people with them who did not know the Truth, but when they accepted it, they got married to Jesus. They became part of His bride. We are living in the evening time. This is just before Jesus is coming.

When you get married to Christ, you feast on His flesh (the Word) and drink His blood (the Spirit); that is the supper. When Jesus told His disciples to eat His

flesh and drink His blood, He was not talking about literal flesh and blood. He was talking about drinking of the Spirit and eating the Word. When people come out of Babylon and accept the Truth, they get married to Jesus and they start eating this evening supper. They are not going to go to Heaven to get married. When they get saved, they are married.

When Jesus comes back, He is coming after His bride. A big wedding is not going to take place in Heaven as some people say, because we are married to Christ in this world when we get salvation. God's people are eating the supper now. Praise God! I am enjoying the supper.

Jesus said in Luke 22:29-30: "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom." God has given us a table to put our feet under, and we can eat and drink with Him and enjoy the blessings of the Lord as we travel along. Praise God! Every saved individual is a part of the bride. I belong to Him. I have taken the Father's name. He wrote it in my head. I praise God for the Church of the Living God! I am glad that I am married to Him.

Try the Spirits

What are others doing? Two suppers are going on at the same time. At the other supper, people are eating their flesh, or eating their fleshly teachings. The Holy Spirit is not in what they are teaching, and God does not put His approval on what they are teaching. Thank God, if you are in God's church, if you are where the King is, you can get a good cup of blessing and enjoy the Lamb's meat. There is something that is good for you that will bless you, help you, and strengthen you.

Revelation 19:18 reads, "That

ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great." What are these mighty men eating? They are eating their own fleshly teachings. You are either eating with Jesus or eating at the wrong table. They are eating the flesh of horsemen. What were these horses? The red horse and his warrior represent paganism. In the morning time he warred against the church.

The pale horse and the black horse had warriors who had man-made decrees. Who sat on the pale horse and the black horse? They were warriors. One was killed with death, and the other was killed with hunger, and hell followed after him. All that people are going to get out of it is hell; that is sad.

I want my children to know what the true church is. In this evening time, we might not have much time left to declare the Truth. Our families can get trapped in false religion and eat that which would send their souls to hell. Friend, Jesus is coming again, and it may be sooner than you think. Revelation 19:19 says, "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the [white] horse, and against his army." Babylon is against Truth. The people in Babylon are under a strong delusion. Some here or there might have honest hearts. If they are honest, they will not argue with you. They will study the Bible.

I want to point out to you that there is a spirit of antichrist in our world today. You need to know what these spirits are. First John 4:1 reads, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out

into the world." Here is your authority. How are you going to try the spirits? You have to put the Word of God on them. Is what they are teaching in the Book? If it is in the Book, the Spirit of God will agree with it.

Verses 2-3 read: "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God [many people in our world believe as the Jews who say that the Messiah has not come and that Moses was greater than Jesus Christ; that is a spirit of antichrist]: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."

Some were a part of the early church but went out from the church. First John 2:19-22 reads: "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son."

The very minute a person changes the truth about Jesus, that is the minute Jesus will cut that person off. People know better that go out from the church and manifested themselves, and they have a spirit of antichrist. What is a spirit of antichrist? It is one that protests against the Truth that the church holds. They go out from it and wrestle against it; that is the spirit of antichrist. It is people protesting against the Truth of Jesus Christ. You have to stay

with the Truth and stay separate from the things that are wrong.

Judgment Day

I want to bring out the signs of Jesus' coming, for surely He is coming again. First Thessalonians 4:16-17 tells us: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." What good news!

I am glad that Jesus has a better place for us to go. That was a prepared place before He came the first time. God does not have people in Heaven with handsaws and hammers building mansions. No, He spoke this world into existence, so He would not have anyone there with hammers and saws. In John, Chapter 14, Jesus was talking about preparing a place for us in the Father's house. He was not talking about Heaven. He was talking about the church. He prepared a place for us when He went to the Cross of Calvary so that we could have a place in the Father's house, the Church of God. Praise the Lord! When He comes again He will take us far beyond anything that we have ever seen.

When Jesus comes, it is not going to be an all-day affair. He is going to change us in a moment of time. First Corinthians 15:51-52 states: "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." God has something better for the Christian. He is going to give him a glorified body.

In this world we are subject to

gravity, to diseases attacking the body, and to other things. However, when that change comes, God is going to give you a body that nothing will ever harm. There will not be any funeral homes in Heaven. There will be no courthouse or lawyer sitting there in Heaven. Each person must get saved and live a good, godly life in order to make Heaven. Best of all, no devil will be there. We will be rid of him forever. Thank God, I am going where the devil cannot come.

I am looking for Jesus to come, and then there is going to be the Judgment Day. The Bible teaches there is going to be a Judgment. Second Corinthians 5:10 reads, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

Jesus told about His own country and those who rejected Him. He said in the Day of Judgment that it would be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for those people. The people of Sodom and Gomorrah will be there. He said in the Day of Judgment, it will be more tolerable for them than for His own country, the people who rejected Him.

God holds you responsible for what you see and know. Some people have been exposed to Truth but failed to accept it. In hell, whether you believe it or not, there are degrees of punishment. The very sin you go to hell for is going to torment you in hell. The person that committed murder is going to have to wrestle with that in hell, because that is the sin that put him there. The person who drinks alcohol will be in hell wanting a drink, and after death he can never get free from it.

Likewise, in Heaven not everyone is going to have the same treasure. Jesus taught that what you earn is yours. In Mat-

thew 6:20 He said, "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." The Apostle Paul wrote fourteen Books of the New Testament. How would you like to stand beside him? He will be rewarded for that. That does not make him any better than others, but that is

his treasure.

The preaching that I have done is my treasure. According to the Bible, what I have earned is mine. What you earn is yours. If you want to have a good treasure in Heaven, you had better be working on it and earn it now. You need to lay up treasures now and send them on before you. One day you are going to meet

them. I want to see what I have earned on the other side when I get there. Praise the Lord! You need to be saved. Why not turn your life over to the Lord now, before it is too late? You must turn your back on every sin, and God will receive you.

(Compact Disc TR-1330E)

[Guest Editorial—continued from page 2]

not lay a good foundation, the building will not stand. After the foundation is laid properly, the builder must use good materials. If inferior products are used or corners are cut in the workmanship, the building will not meet the inspection requirements. The building will be unable to stand through the storms that beat against it.

In the spiritual sense, it is much more vital to lay a solid foundation. Jesus Christ is the only true foundation for a person to build upon (1 Corinthians 3:11). You must be sure that you build according to His blueprint. Neglecting to follow His pattern and example will result in failure to stand in times of trials. The tower Jesus referred to in the Scripture represents your life. If you build on Him, you will be strong and able to withstand life's storms. The way you build will determine your character. Every Christian must continue daily, consider the cost, and pay the price.

Some have moved to an altar, possibly by an emotional impulse, not because of conviction. They know serving God is the right thing to do. Confession is made, and prayer is offered for forgiveness. This action only appeases the conscience and brings relief for a time, and one feels better, but it seldom lasts.

What does it mean to count the cost to finish? First, this life is likened to a race that all must run. The goal is your eternal destination, which we all must face eventually. How you live and conduct yourself in life determines where you will spend eternity at

the end of the race. This world is only a dressing room to determine your eternal destiny. It will be spent either in bliss with God or in eternal torments with Satan.

Counting the cost of finishing simply means sitting down and considering what you must do to prepare yourself to live for God. Are you willing to forsake all sin and deny self to please the Lord? Real discipleship costs. Salvation is free to all who will come and partake. However, being a disciple of Christ will cost you. All evil pleasures, vices, ambitions, friends, and associates that would hinder you must be laid aside. Too often people desire the blessings of Christ but refuse to pay the price to obtain it. This attitude will never bring the joy and the peace your heart and mind long for.

Counting the cost includes laying aside worldly amusements, places where you cannot take Christ, such as places where the atmosphere is not Christlike. You must be willing to forsake the habits of life, such as tobacco, alcohol, and drugs. These are things that destroy the body and the soul. Your body is to be the temple of God. God said He would destroy he who defiles the temple (1 Corinthians 3:16-17).

Counting the cost includes forgiving others. Harboring unforgiveness can cause bitterness, which must be laid aside. Jesus said, "But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:15). There are those who hold grudges against God

for something they did not like. It is "in him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28). You stand on shaky ground if you hold something against Almighty God. He has the power to cut off your life at any time.

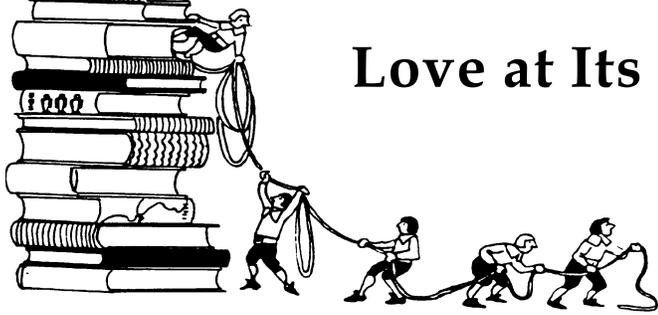
Counting the cost calls for restitution to be made to anyone you have wronged. Perhaps you hurt someone's character or spoke evil of a person. It may be that you have taken something that did not belong to you. In Luke 19:1-9 a man named Zacchaeus, a tax collector and sinner who was saved, told Jesus that he would restore anything he had taken by false accusation.

In counting the cost, one must be aware that he cannot be saved on his terms. It can only be on God's terms and under His conditions. One cannot bargain with God. A complete denial of self and one's own ideas is required to walk with Him. The best way to count the cost is to surrender your heart completely and allow God to see your willingness to go all the way with Him. As time goes on and as you continue to walk with God, He may show you other things that need to be eliminated from your life. Do not allow one thing to stay in your life that God shows you to cease from doing.

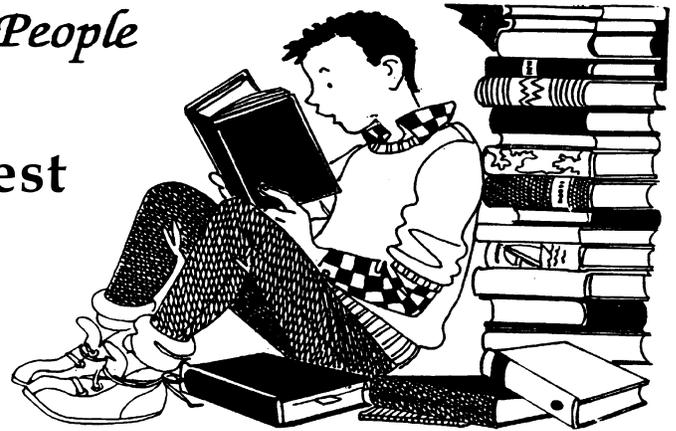
Dear reader, if you desire true joy and a deep, settled peace in your heart, you can have it. You must count the cost to finish the race and pay whatever the price may be. You must surrender all to keep the peace of God operating in your life.

Selected

Especially for Young People



Love at Its Best



When I was a child, my father loved me too much to allow me to follow my childish inclinations very far. He loved me too much to permit me to eat cake and candy three times a day. He loved me too much to allow me to run about whenever and wherever I chose. He loved me too much to neglect to punish me when I was willfully disobedient or when I dallied about my tasks.

During those growing up years, I did not understand why my father so often hindered me from doing something that I had set my heart upon. I did not appreciate his frequent interruptions of my childhood plans. I chafed at his restraint that kept me from roaming whithersoever my fancy might have led. The fact is, I used to feel rebellious and heartbroken sometimes, for it seemed to me that surely my father did not love me or else he would not have been so stern, and I thought, so unreasonable. He just would not see things from my viewpoint at all, and such a dreary time I did have growing up.

Now that I am grown, I can look back over those early years and thank God for such a father. I can see now as I view childhood from the heights of maturity that my father's judgment was far more reliable and safe than mine. I can see that he was thinking about my future and that when he denied me some indulgence, he did so because he knew that, if granted, it would be undesirable. He was a wise father! How greatly I now appreciate his loving consideration for me during those growing up years!

Beyond all doubt, I must have been what folks today call "a problem." I must have caused my father many an anxious thought during those years when numerous other cares and perplexities and responsibilities weighed upon his heart and mind. How easily he might have neglected to discipline me, excusing himself with the plea of the lack of time, but he took time. How much less disturbance he might have felt if he had allowed me to run about whenever and wherever I pleased! But he chose

rather to be disturbed by keeping a watchful eye on my whereabouts.

Love at its best is never lazy, shortsighted, and indifferent about the future, as well as the present welfare of the object loved. Love at its best exercises itself even though great effort is sometimes required. Love at its best risks being misunderstood now in view of the future benefit accruing to the one beloved.

Love at its best is patterned after our Heavenly Father, who denies us some things that we may be desiring very, very much, who restrains us from following our own inclinations very far, and who sometimes permits the rod of chastisement to fall upon us. Like children, we may wonder why He treats us thus, we may even question whether He loves us at the time; but after our tearfully spent day, we will realize in some fair tomorrow that it was His discipline, prompted by the highest type of love, that saved us from eternal despair.

Elsie Egermeier

"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them."

Ecclesiastes 12:1

1 Kings 22:6 Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall I go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king.

7 And Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might enquire of him [four hundred prophets had already told him to go up, so it seems that he would have taken courage, but Jehoshaphat wanted to take very serious precaution]?

8 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may enquire of the LORD: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so.

They Gladly Received the Word of God



Brother Calvin Foster

Receiving the Word of God the Right Way

Proverbs 30:5 says, "Every word of God is pure." In Matthew 7:24 Jesus said, "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a

rock." The Word of God is precious and pure. He said you are like a wise man when you build your house on a rock; then when the rain and the storms come, your house will stand the test. A foolish man builds his house upon sand, and when the rain and the flood come, his house will go down.

Are you happy that you are building your life on the Word of God? I think it is wonderful! Hebrews 4:12 says, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword."

In Job 23:12 Job said, "I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food."

The Word of God was just that good to him. It is good to the soul. We cannot express this joy of salvation that we enjoy. I cannot express the joy, the peace, and the blessings of God's salvation. In Luke 2:14, when Christ was born, the angels came and said, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

The thought I am going to try to express, and the Scriptures back me up, is that when Peter preached to the people, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41). The thought on my heart is, the people *gladly* received the Word. I hope you will gladly receive the Word of God. Jesus told His disciples in Luke, Chapter 10, that if the people of a city where they preached the Gospel did not receive the Gospel, they were to wipe the dust off their feet from that city and go on down the highway and leave them alone, because it would be worse for them than for Sodom because they refused to receive the Word of God.

Sometimes preaching the Gospel can be offensive to people by telling them what God has said. They can have resentment and displeasure, not only toward the man of God but also toward the people of God. So I want you to receive the Word of God in the right way.

As we preach the Gospel in the different areas of the country and sometimes different areas of the world, people are going to receive the Word of God in different ways. Jesus told a parable about the four different types of ground, which describe how people receive the Word of God. As I preach the Gospel, I always want to pray the prayer, "Lord, let the Word fall on good ground." I am not preaching about my own ideas, my opin-

ions, or how I feel, but I am preaching the Word of God. It is pure, and it is what will save your soul.

Preaching the Word

Jeremiah 1:4-8 states: "Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child. But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD."

The Lord was telling His prophet to go and tell the people what He had to say and not to be afraid of their faces. Some of them were not going to receive the Word of God, and some of them were not going to like what he said. God had a prophet, a man of God by the name of John the Baptist, who got his head cut off for telling the truth of the Gospel. In essence, God was saying: "They might shut their eyes and go to sleep. Some might walk out on you, but go ahead, man of God, and tell them what I told you to say."

The Apostle Paul, being the elder minister of young Timothy, referred to him as his son. Paul sat at the feet of Gamaliel. Paul was wrong when he persecuted the Church of God, and only God could stop him because his mind was set against the Church of God. He had made up his mind to stamp out this thing that Jesus had started, until he met Jesus on the road to Damascus.

Paul told young Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:1-4: "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall

judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season [preach the Word, that which is pure, powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword]; reprove [with the Word], rebuke [with the Word], exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine [they will not want to hear it, so they will shut their ears and their hearts to it]; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

Paul told the young minister to reprove, or to correct, people. People receive reproof in different ways. Some people will love you when you reprove them. Proverbs 9:8-9 reads: "Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning."

Taking Reproof

Another point of view for reproof with the Word of God is that it will give you favor with people. Proverbs 28:23 tells us, "He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue." I want to be around people who are going to tell me the truth. If I have something on my face, tell me that I have something on my face. Do not overlook it and say, "You look good today" and try to flatter me. You need to be careful of people who always flatter you. It is good to be around people who tell you the truth. They tell you the truth because they love you. They do not want you to go astray or to make a mistake.

When Jesus asked His disci-

ples in Mark 8:27, "Whom do men say that I am?" He wanted to know, and they told Him what they had been hearing. So in reproof, some people will take reproof and will love you, but others will not take it.

Again, the Apostle Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:2, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." I want you to read another Scripture to prove that some people take it the right way. The psalmist said in Psalm 141:5, "Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head: for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities." That is how you should take the reproof of the Word of God.

We want to share this great salvation that God has given us, the joy and the lifesaving Holy Spirit that is in our hearts, with the world. We want to tell others what they are missing. It is a joy that we cannot express. The psalmist said, "Let the righteous smite me." A righteous man is going to tell you right, treat you right, and be your friend. When he tells you something, it is going to be a kindness to keep you on the right way, to keep you on the strait and narrow way.

You should want to receive the Word of God in the right way. God is looking out for you. He does not want anyone to be lost. If you are lost, it is going to be your fault because God will stop at nothing to save your soul. It is up to you. He will not make you get saved. He wants you to get saved willingly.

Strength to Stand

In Matthew 10:32-36 Jesus said: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father

which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. [The Gospel is going to make people angry, and it is going to cause people not to want to obey. Some are not going to like you. Nevertheless, do not let your mother, your father, or your wife or husband hinder you from serving God.] And a man's foes shall be they of his own household."

I remember as a young man getting saved at eighteen years of age and still living with my mother and my unsaved brothers and sisters. A relative of mine used to get angry at me for standing for God. He told me one time, "Calvin, take this money and go down to the paper stand and buy me a racing form." He was a gambler. I looked at him and said, "I cannot go down to the paper stand and buy that racing form, because that is gambling."

He did not like that, but the Spirit of God gave me the strength that I needed to do what was right. I stood for God, and as years went on, before he died, we became buddies. I do not believe that he ever accepted the Lord, but we did have an understanding. A man's foes will be of his own household.

Everyone is not going to be happy when you get saved. Jesus said: "And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matthew 10:38-39). I am glad I found life in Jesus. I found what I was looking for. When I tell about my relative, I do not speak disrespectfully of him.

"Walk Worthy of God"

I want you to look at the Apostle Paul's writings in 1 Thessalonians, Chapter 2. I want you to see how Paul expressed himself to these saints after preaching the Word of God to them and ministering to them. He said in verses 1-13: "For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain: But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention. For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

"For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness: Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.

"Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe: As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory. For this cause also thank we God

without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."

God's Word Will Not Return Void

The Prophet Isaiah wrote in Isaiah 55:8-11: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

None of the Word of God is going to return to the Lord void. When the man of God speaks the Word of God under the anointing of the Holy Ghost, that is God talking to you, and believe me, it is going to accomplish that which

He wants to accomplish. You can run, but you cannot hide.

The Word of God is not going to fall to the ground. No man is bigger than the Word of God. That two-edged sword swings to the people and then back to the preacher. I have to practice what I preach. I have to live by the Word of God. If I did not, I would have no power in my preaching. God's Word will not return to Him void, but it shall accomplish what He desires to accomplish. You do not want God to be against you. If God be for you, who can be against you? On the other hand, if God be against you, who can be for you? It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God.

People who do not want to be reproved love darkness. In John 3:16-21 Jesus said: "For God so loved the world [even those little babies sitting on your lap, Christ died for them so they could enjoy this great salvation someday], that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that

believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light [but there is not enough darkness to put out the light], because their deeds were evil.

"For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. [John the Baptist did not hold back his tongue when those hypocrites came. In essence, John said to them: 'What are you Pharisees doing down here? Who told you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring some fruit for repentance.'] But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."

Do you have a saved husband or a saved wife? If so, you are so blessed. You should live a life to see your children get saved. May you show God that you love Him. May you receive the Word of God as it is, not the word of men. May God bless you is my prayer.

(Compact Disc TR-2018)

A Good Answer

A New Hebrides chieftain sat peacefully reading the Bible, when he was interrupted by a French trader. "Bah," he said in French, "why are you reading the Bible? I suppose the missionaries have got hold of you, you poor fool. Throw it away! The Bible never did anybody any good."

The chieftain replied calmly, "If it wasn't for this Bible, you'd be in my kettle there by now!"

Selected

Acts 4:1 And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them,

2 Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

3 And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide [here we are reading of the first persecution of the church, Peter and John in this particular case].

4 Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.

5 And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes,

6 And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.

7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?

8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rul-

ers of the people, and elders of Israel,

9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;

10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.

11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men [they were fishermen], they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

14 And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among them-

selves,

16 Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it.

17 But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.

18 And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.

19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

21 So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done.

22 For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.

Is It Evident That You Have Been With Jesus?



Brother Reggie Stegmeier

Investing in Spiritual Things

I want you to consider verse 13 of our Scripture text. If there was ever a time when you ought

to be serious about the things of God and your salvation, it is now. Young people often live lightheartedly and delve into frivolous matters. Young person,

What will you do when the party has ended? A day will be coming when you are going to be on your deathbed, and you are going to want God. The time to request

His presence is today.

I want you to look at verse 13 of our Scripture text, which reads, "Now when they [verse 6 tells us, the kindred of the high priest] saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." Is there evidence in your life that you have been with Jesus? There is a quote that asks, "If you were on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?" Is there substantial proof to support that you have been with Jesus? When was the last time you spent an hour with the Lord? When did you last spend two hours in deep meditation, talking and communing with God? When did you last spend a whole day doing nothing but things that pertain to your spiritual well being?

Many people spend countless hours in worldly endeavors, and many times whole days in the things of this life. How about things that pertain to eternal life? The body that you inhabit is temporary. One day you will go to your long home, and it will matter then how much time you spent with Jesus.

How much time are you investing in spiritual things? How much of your time have you given God today? If you are finding it hard to give God and the work of God much time, I would like to ask you when you will have time? I believe one automobile maker had a slogan at one time that said, "If not now, when?" You are commanded to remember God now. You need to give Him your days now, not postpone it for some future time.

Ecclesiastes 12:1 says, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them."

Proverbs 27:1 reads, "Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not [for we are but humans, operating with finite human minds, not really knowing or controlling] what a day may bring forth."

The Bible tells us in 1 Peter 4:17, "For the time is [present tense] come that judgment must begin at the house of God [but the Apostle Peter did not stop there; he took it a step further]: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" This is certainly a sobering question. The Apostle Paul let us know in his epistle to Timothy that the house of God is none other than the Church of the Living God. We are brought before a judge, and certainly God is our Judge, and we stand in judgment right in the house of God.

Making the Ultimate Sacrifice for Christ

I would like to take you inside the courtroom where a man named Christian was set to appear before a judge for preaching and teaching in that forbidden name of Jesus.

"Citizens present in the courtroom, ladies and gentlemen of the jury, before we begin the trial of Christian, I would like to make you aware of a few rules of conduct in the courtroom. [If you have ever been in a courtroom, you know that it is a sobering time. It ought to be that way in the house of God.] An orderly, quiet, and dignified atmosphere reflecting the importance and seriousness of the inquiry to ascertain through justice must always be maintained. All persons must conduct themselves accordingly. All spectators and officers of the court not engaged in the business of the court must be seated in the courtroom. They are not to congregate in the hallways adjacent to the judge's chambers

or the judge's entrance into the courtroom.

"Attorneys are required to complete an appearance form. They are not to approach the bench and engage the case manager in conversation while court is in session. Court is called into session. The session is terminated by the case manager in attendance in the courtroom. At that instance when the court is called into session, the gavel is sounded, all talking and moving about in the courtroom will stop, and attention will focus on the judge's opening remarks. Bailiffs are those in charge of prisoners present or adjacent to the courtroom and will maintain order and be alert to security problems that may arise during session of court. All persons doing business with the court must be properly attired in business or casual clothes that present a respectful, dignified appearance before the court. No eating, drinking, or smoking shall be permitted in the courtroom during session of court. Your honorable judge presiding court is now in session. (Gavel is sounded.)

"Will the Plaintiff please rise and state your claim?"

"Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, this is an indictment of breaking the law of speaking in that forbidden name. The indictment set forth is that Christian claimed to be a follower of Jesus Christ and a Christian indeed. He was caught speaking as a Christian, dressing as a Christian, and preaching that there is no other name given whereby men must be saved. To this indictment, the Defendant pleaded guilty. If we prove him guilty, you must find him so.

"We will prove this, as particular as it can be, that Christian was speaking, dressing, and preaching Christ. It will appear to be a most barbarous fact to preach of such a man who has been dead for over 2000 years.

This Christian was a teacher by trade, but spent most of his time talking about this man named Jesus. He claimed this man named Jesus has saved him from his sins and has given him a brand-new life. His days were spent mostly working for, what he called, his Heavenly Father and his Heavenly Father's business and spending much time witnessing to others of things he claimed he experienced and saw and also much time he spent in prayer and reading out of that old dusty book called the Bible.

"Your Honor, if I may, I would like to share a similar case that occurred many years ago where the Defendant was also found guilty. This individual in this case was a married lady twenty-six years of age [a true story] with a baby she was yet nursing. On being taken before the proconsul, she was commanded to sacrifice to idols. Refusing to do so, she was put in a dark dungeon and deprived of her child, but for two of her keepers. These two individuals allowed her out in the fresh air several hours a day, during which time she was allowed to nurse that child. Finally, the Christians were summoned to appear before the judge and urged to deny their Lord, but all remained firm.

"When Perpetua's turn came, her father suddenly appeared carrying her infant in his arms and begged her to save her own life for the sake of her child. Even the judge seemed to be moved by this. 'Spare the gray hairs of your father,' he cried out, 'spare your child, offer sacrifice for the welfare of the emperor.'

"Perpetua answered, 'I will not sacrifice.'

"'Are you a Christian?' the judge demanded.

"She said, 'I am indeed a Christian.' Perpetua and all the other Christians tried with her that day were found guilty and

ordered to be killed by wild beasts as a show for the crowd on the next holiday.

"They entered the place of execution, clad in simplest of robes. Perpetua was singing a hymn of triumph. The men were to be torn to pieces by leopards and bears. Perpetua and a young woman named Felicitous were hung up in nets, at first naked, but the crowd demanded they should be allowed to wear some clothing. When they again returned to the arena, a bull was let loose on them. Felicitous fell, seriously wounded. Perpetua was tossed, her loose robe torn. She fell loose, but she hastened to the side of dying Felicitous and gently raised her from the ground.

"When the bull refused to attack them again, they were dragged out of the arena to the disappointment of the crowd, which wanted to see their deaths. Finally brought back to be killed by gladiators, Perpetua was assigned to a trembling young man who stabbed her weakly, several times, not begging, having been used to such scenes of violence. When she saw how upset the young man was, Perpetua guided his sword to a vital area as she died."

Is Jesus Lord of All in Your Heart?

Why do I speak of such horrific events? These individuals and many like them down through the annals of history have stood for that Holy Name, and they have gone all the way to their deathbeds refusing to denounce the name of Jesus. Today people will trade, as Esau did so many years ago, their experience with Christ for just a morsel of bread. They will lose all that God has given them, all that evidence, for the mere pleasure of a fleeting, passing moment. Saint of God, do you have this kind of evidence in your life that you

have been with Jesus?

Revelation 12:10-12 reads: "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives [one translation says, 'they held their lives cheap to keep that evidence of being with Jesus'] unto the death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."

This is speaking of the victory and the success that the early morning church had, as is also portrayed in our Scripture text, and why they had so much success in the furtherance of the Gospel. It was because they loved not their lives unto death. They held their own ways, their own thinking, their own desires, their own wishes, and their own plans cheap and in light of a greater cause. Oh, how we need this evidence that we have been with Jesus! Oh, how we need God in our lives! The Amplified Bible says, "They did not love and cling to life even when faced with death [holding their lives cheap till they had to die for their witnessing]."

In Matthew, Chapter 16, Jesus enumerated the conditions and the cost of true discipleship. In verses 24-26 He said: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, [Notice that Christ always listed self first, because that is the greatest battle one faces daily. That is the reason the Apostle Paul said, 'I die daily.' Every day you must lay yourself on the cross, on the altar of Jesus.

You must do away with your own wishes and your own plans for the furtherance of the greater cause of Christ.] and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

One condition of discipleship, or one requirement that must be met to follow the Lord, is to love Him more than your own life. There is a very beautiful song, which says, "*Jesus be Lord of all the kingdoms of my heart.*"

Undeniable Proof

The persecution of the Christians during the reign of the Roman emperor, Marcus Aurelius, during the second century A.D., was very bitter. The emperor himself decreed the punishment of men who had refused to bow down to his image. He ordered them to take off their clothes and stand on a frozen lake until they were prepared to abandon their Nazarene God. Forty naked men marched out there into the howling storm on a winter's night. As they took their place on the ice, they lifted up their voices and sang, "Christ, forty wrestlers have come out to wrestle for Thee, to win for Thee the victory, to win for Thee the crown."

After a while, those standing by watching noticed a disturbance among the men. One man edged away, broke into a run, entered the temple and prostrated himself before the image of the emperor. The captain of the guard who witnessed the bravery of the men and whose heart had been touched by their teaching tore off his helmet, threw down his spear, disrobing himself, and took up the cry as he took the place of the man who had weak-

ened. The compensation was not slow in coming, for as the dawn broke, there were forty corpses on the ice. They had gone home to be with Jesus.

The evidence of being with Jesus will speak to other people. Oh, how we need faithful witnesses in our communities, in our congregations, and in the world! So many people profess to know Christ, but so few have this kind of evidence. So few have the hard evidence that they are indeed Christians. Throughout the pages of God's Eternal Word, many had this hard evidence. Think of Joseph and his patience down in Egypt, the Hebrew children in the fiery furnace, Daniel in the lions' den, and Christ on the Cross. Many examples show evidence that they had been with Jesus. Our Scripture text states in verse 13, "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus."

Is it evident that you have been with Jesus? You need this evidence, saint of God. It is not enough to say, "I am a Christian" or "I go to church" or "I read the Bible and pray." Surely those are good things, and they are part of the evidence, but you also need some undeniable proof in your life that you have been with Jesus.

The Bible says we are created in the image of God. Ephesians 4:24 tells us that "God is created in righteousness and true holiness." That is the image God wants you to have in your life when He recreates you in righteousness and true holiness. If you were summoned to court for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you? What kind of evidence would you need? What witnesses could be called to stand to testify for or against you?

The Supernatural Work of Salvation

A story is told of a Japanese lady who called to speak to the headmistress of a missionary school. She called and asked, "Do you only take beautiful girls in your school?"

"Why, no," was the reply on the other end of the line. "We welcome all girls."

The Japanese lady said, "But I have noticed all your girls are beautiful."

The reply came, "We teach them to love our Savior Jesus Christ, and He gives them a look of holy beauty."

The lady said, "I myself am a Buddhist, and I do not desire my daughter to become a Christian, yet I should like her to attend your school to get that kind of look on her face."

This is the reply of countless millions the world over. They want the benefits of Christianity, but they are unwilling to submit and pay the price. This beauty and evidence of Christ only comes through the supernatural work of salvation. It is only wrought through the life-changing power of the name of Jesus. It is impossible to get the benefits of Christianity without Christ, the Author and Finisher of our faith, just as it is impossible to get inside God's Heaven one day without having God in your life. Away with this idea of "do your best down here, and someday you will get up there." No, your best is not good enough. You need Jesus in your life. You cannot know or have access to God without Christ, from which the name Christian originates. Oh, how everyone needs Jesus and salvation here and now! Do you have proof in your life that Jesus dwells within you? Are His righteous garments in your home? Is His Book there? Psalm 149:4 reads, "For the LORD taketh pleasure in his peo-

ple: he will beautify the meek with salvation." Is it unmistakably obvious that you have been with the Lord? If you are ever going to see other lives changed, you first must experience a change of life yourself. Can the world see Jesus in you? If not, in whom are they going to see Christ? They must see Jesus in you.

One songwriter asked, "Can the world see Jesus in you?" As one brother used to say, "That is the million dollar question." The song reads:

*Are you walking in the footsteps
of the One you call Lord,
Are you living each day by His
Holy Word?
Surrendered completely, are you
His through and through,
Can the world see Jesus, can they
see Jesus in you?*

*If your neighbor has a burden,
will you carry the load,
Will you help some poor stranger
as you travel life's road?
Will you reach out to someone,
just to see what you can do,
Can the world see Jesus, can they
see Jesus in you?*

*In your living does the life of Christ
always appear,
Do your actions and words edify
and help to cheer?
Will you stand up for Jesus, no
matter what others do,
Can the world see Jesus, can they
see Jesus in you?*

Examine Yourself

The Apostle Paul exhorted in his writings to examine yourself for this undeniable proof that you need so badly. He wrote in 2 Corinthians 13:5-7: "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? But I trust that ye shall know that we

are not reprobates. 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." The Greek says that we have this proof, and oh, how we need it!

The Bible says to examine, or to test and evaluate, yourself to see whether you are holding on to your faith and showing the proper fruits of it. There is a proverb that says, "He that never takes inventory will soon become bankrupt," and that is so true. You need to examine your life. Do you have undeniable proof that you have been with Jesus?

In what became known as the "Sermon on the Mount," Jesus warned the people about false prophets. Jesus said that one way to tell whether they were true or false is by their fruits, whether they are good or evil. The fruit is the evidence, or the outward manifestation, of what is at work inside the heart. What fruit are you producing? What is at work in your life? What is in your heart? Your fruits, or lack thereof, will be the determining factor on the Day of Judgment. God will look, as Jesus is there with Him, at your fruit, or your proof, to decide whether or not you make it in.

Is there adultery in your life? Do you have fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness (that means lustfulness), idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, or any kind of inconsistency in your life? What about emulation? That word means, "having to match or surpass someone else's achievement." Have you ever been around people like that? If you tell about something you did, that person always has a better story.

What about wrath, strife, sedition (conduct of your speech inciting people to rebel against authority of the state)? Those are the works of the flesh. What

about heresy, illicit sex, envy, murder, drunkenness, and reviling (excessive partying, dancing, carousing, or drinking)? These are works of the flesh. These are proof that you have *not* been with Jesus. Proof that you have been with Jesus, or the fruit of the Spirit, is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance (self-control). These are evidence that you have been with Jesus.

If someone were to examine your life, would any spiritual fruit, or hard evidence, be found to convict you of being a follower of Jesus Christ? I am not speaking of how many Bibles fill your home, how many bumper stickers cover your car, how many crosses you have on display, or what you are claiming to be. If your coworkers, your close friends, your children, your wife or your husband were asked about you, would they be able to easily say: "Oh, yes, he is a Christian. He does this. He acts this way. He has this kind of attitude. He is very patient, long-suffering, and forgiving. He studies, prays, is faithful to the house of God, and witnesses to others. He has a good testimony in the church and a good testimony in the community. He lives an upright life"? Would they be able to say all of this about you or would they stumble around and say: "Well, I think so, but I am not sure. He claims to be a Christian"?

You need this evidence in your life. If you are ever going to reach a lost and dying world, you need evidence that you have been with Jesus. I realize you cannot rely solely on what others think of you or what others say about you. It is a personal salvation, and you must be clear individually before the Lord. However, others certainly should see a definite change in your ways and the effects of Jesus living on the inside. Others certainly should see Jesus in you.

Up-to-Date Evidence

The message is very simple. Is it evident that you have spent time with Jesus? I am not asking if it was evident that you were with Jesus in times past, but do you have evidence *right now* that you have been with Jesus? I think many times of the wonderful, sixth-seal brethren and how prolific and intelligent they were. They spoke eloquently because they fed their minds on wholesome material. They read good things. They meditated and feasted on wonderful things. The Bible says out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks, and so it was. They fed upon all those good things, and then they began to write. They wrote hundreds of songs that we still sing today. That surely was evidence that they had been with Jesus. Maybe you are not a songwriter, but you ought to have some evidence. You ought to be a patient individual. You ought to be kind, long-suffering, giving, and forgiving. You ought to have some evidence that you have been with Jesus.

I have enumerated many things, but I want to talk more about this evidence that is needed to prove beyond a shadow of doubt that you have been with Jesus. Usually the first thing that takes place in an investigation is the collecting of evidence. There is hard evidence, or actual evidence gathered from the scene of the crime. Then there is circumstantial evidence, or evidence that is not bearing directly on the fact in dispute, but on various circumstances from which the judge or jury might infer the occurrence of the fact in dispute.

Next comes the court appearance, where the case is presented before a court of law. There are statements made by both the plaintiff and the defendant, and then there are the testimonies of witnesses. Finally, the case is

decided and the verdict reached based on the evidence presented by the attorneys and the testimonies made by the witnesses. Now, if all of this were conducted in your life, what kind of verdict would be reached?

Evidence is that which is obvious to the eye, the available body of facts or information indicating, whether a belief or proposition is true or valid, information given personally drawn from a document or in the form of material objects tending or used to establish facts in a legal investigation or admissible testimony in court. Without evidence they cannot bring a charge, and so it is with being charged as a Christian. Without evidence how can anyone charge you as being so? Many years ago, a songwriter penned these words: "*May I prove I have been with Jesus, who is all my righteousness.*"

The Power of Divine Healing

Our Scripture text says they saw the boldness of Peter and John and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men. By their standards, they were "unlearned and ignorant men," so they had to receive this power and knowledge from someone. Even the world at that time recognized and the world today will recognize that they had been with the higher power. They had been with Jesus. There was something different about their lives. What stood out to this great company of educated rulers was the boldness that these two unlearned and ignorant men had and the proof that backed up their message.

What kind of proof did Peter and John have? Well, they had just healed the lame man, whom the Bible says was lame from his mother's womb. Do you know how old he was when he reached that point of healing? He was over forty years of age. The Bible

says he was carried there. That, to me, is a marvel. Here was a grown man carried. He was not carried to a doctor. He was carried to the temple where Jesus appeared when those brethren came in the midst.

Acts 3:1-7 reads: "Now Peter and John went up together [That tells me that they were in fellowship. You cannot go into the house of God and expect God to move on your behalf if there is fussing and fighting and carrying on. You will trouble the Spirit if you do that. God wants you to go into the house of God in unity. In your home you should have unity with one another. Peter and John had that unity.] into the temple at the hour of prayer, [In other words, when it was time to be there, Peter and John went. Certainly this is evidence of being with Jesus. You will have a desire to be in the house of God with the saints of God every time the doors are open. If you cannot be there, it is not a lack of desire, but it may be that you are sick or out of town, but if you can be there, you will be. You will have a desire to go.] being the ninth hour [about 3 p.m.].

"And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple [Oh, how we need to go to God for physical healing. You need to go to God with your problems. Do you suppose after a few days maybe he got a little discouraged? How about after a few years? How about forty years? He was above forty years, the Bible says. He was laid there daily. Then along came Peter and John, men of God, and reached out to him.] which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms.

"And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive some-

thing of them. Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: [What did Peter have? He had evidence that he had been with Jesus. He had the power of God in his life. He had healing power. Certainly the ministry of God has the power to heal yet today. God can still heal, and God can still touch lives.] In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength."

I do not know what was different about this hour from the previous forty years of his life, but I know that because Peter had the evidence of Christ, he was able to bring about this wonderful miracle on this lame man. Here this man stood and the people questioned Peter and John. They knew one thing, that these men had been with Jesus. They had the undeniable proof that they have been with the Lord. Oh, how we need this so badly!

Boldness to Stand

Peter and John had boldness, and we need boldness too. In the schools young people need boldness to stand up for God. Many times I am asked what the future holds. It may look dismal and gray and dark to you. Psalm 23:1 tells us, "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want." The Lord is still our Shepherd. We do not have to be discouraged. Jesus said in John 14:1, "Let not your heart be troubled." We do not have to be distressed, discouraged, or dismal. God placed us in this day and age in which we live. I do not like to see people have such a dark outlook on the future. Yes, there are many things that go on that we do not agree with and do not go along with, but would you have liked to have lived back in the day of Jesus Christ when Herod sought

to kill all the male babies up to two years of age? He said to kill them, and they did. Would you have liked to have lived in those days when Noah and his family were righteous? No one else even heeded the message except eight souls. Saint, we are living in the best day. We are living in the most opportune time. Oh, how we need to have a good outlook on life. You need to be encouraged! The Lord is still our Shepherd.

What evidence did Peter and John have? They had boldness, and oh, how we need this! How we need to have an answer in the schools and workplaces. We need to have an answer when people ask questions about the evil in this world. We can tell them it is because of sin, because of individuals who refuse to yield to God. They are possessed by the devil, taking up guns and shooting innocent people. That is none other than devil possession, evil from the pits of hell. Oh, how we need God so badly! Do not be so certain in your life that you will not go that far. If you deny the Lord, your only hope, your only assurance, you are certainly heading on the road to do just that.

Who taught these unlearned and ignorant men? The Bible says the Holy Spirit is our teacher and guide, and He taught these wonderful brethren. The world called them "unlearned and ignorant men." The Spirit gave them a boldness that could only say one thing: they had been with Jesus. God had taught those brethren through His teaching agent: the Holy Spirit. What else had instructed these fishermen? The Word of God taught them.

Faithfulness to God

The Bible tells us in Psalm 119:97-105: "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. Thou through thy com-

mandments hast made me wiser [What has? God's commandments.] than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts. I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word. I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me. How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

One great man of God said this one time: "Commit something to memory every day. Commit one verse to memory every day, and thus train the waters of the great reservoir of wisdom to irrigate your daily life." Oh, how we need to keep His Word! David said in Psalm 119:11, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."

Truly the Holy Spirit and the Word will give undeniable proof, and the proof that will follow is faithfulness to God, faithfulness to the house of God, and faithfulness to the hour of prayer. Certainly this will be evidence of righteousness in the Christian's life. In Acts 3:1 you will notice that when it was time to go to church, Peter and John went to church. In our Scripture text, this miracle in question by the masses that started with one now touched five thousand according to Acts, Chapter 4. It started with one individual: the healing of that one man.

Never underestimate your work with one soul. Speaking of Jesus, John 4:4 tells us, "And he must needs go through Samaria." Why? Jesus went there for one woman who needed Him. Again, never underestimate your deal-

ings with one individual. You need to put some time, effort, work, and finances in working and dealing with souls. It will truly reap great dividends.

The lame man whom they carried daily to the temple received a miraculous healing. That was true evidence that they had been with Jesus. Is there evidence in your life that you have been with Jesus?

One time a famous actress was walking down the street, and she passed an open door through which she saw an invalid girl lying on a couch watching people pass by. Thinking to cheer her up, she went inside. The sick girl was a devout Christian. The actress, impressed with her words, her patience, her submission, her heavenly lit countenance, and the manner in which she lived her religion, was led to seriously consider the claims of Christianity. She was thoroughly converted and became a true follower of Christ.

The actress told her father, the leader of the theater troop, of her conversion and her conviction that she could not live a consistent Christian life and still be an actress. Her father was upset, and he attempted to convince her that her living would be lost and their business ruined if she persisted. Because she loved her father dearly, she consented to fill the public engagement set for a few days from then, of which she was the star. The play was set to go on, and as that evening came, her father rejoiced that he had won back his daughter and that her living was not to be lost. However, as the actress came out on stage to the applause of the large audience, she stepped forward, a light beamed from her beautiful face to the now silent audience, and she repeated:

*My Jesus, I love Thee, I know
Thou art mine;
For Thee all the follies of sin I resign;*

*My gracious Redeemer, my Savior
art Thou;
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus,
'tis now.*

Through Christ she had conquered. She left with the audience in tears and retired from the stage, never to appear on it again. Through this, her father was converted. Through their combined evangelistic labors, many were led to Christ.

"My Jesus I Love Thee" was written by a sixteen year old boy, William Ralph Featherston, at the time of his conversion to Jesus Christ. He did not live to be very old. He passed away just before his twenty-seventh birthday. He sent a copy of the song to his aunt, who encouraged him to have it published, and it became a very well-known hymn.

The Cost of Discipleship

Is it clear to all those about you that you have been with Jesus? Are you spending time with Him in your life daily? I cannot impress upon you enough the importance of spending time daily with Jesus, daily reading God's Word, daily meditating, and daily praying. Prayer is never a substitute for obedience. When you pray, you must obey, because in your praying, God will roll back the curtains of your life and say: "Son (or daughter), you are falling short in your life. You need to do differently. You could be so much more productive if you would handle this differently." In order for your prayers to continue to be effective, you must get down to business with God. To see the fruits of your prayers, you must obey.

How is it with you? Do you have a healthy appetite for God's Word? I do not understand people who claim to be Christians and seemingly have no desire to dust off the pages of the Book above all books. It is the greatest

Book ever written, and it is the greatest Book that will ever be written. You could live a million years and not even scratch the surface of the truths hidden in God's Eternal Word. You can live a lifetime and attempt to, and you need to, and you must. There is so much in God's Word, so many promises for the taking.

Sinner friend, God promised to save you. God not only promised to save you, but He has promised to keep you. He has promised to give you a more abundant life, but you must accept the Gospel call. The cost of discipleship is, you must deny self.

Many are quick to provide evidence of a lot of things. People can tell jokes, tell stories, share good news about books they have read, and talk all about current events. Those things are often good and sometimes enjoyable, but it is evidence of what they have been feasting on. In Matthew 12:34 Jesus said, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." The mouth is simply a puppet for what the heart is feasting on.

Are you feasting daily on God's Word? God prepares a table full of good things for you to eat. Do you have a healthy appetite? Are you feasting on the things of God daily? Are you listening to your pastor and obeying what he is asking and saying you should obey? This is evidence that you have been with Jesus. This evidence will be noticeable to the world around you; it will be a light. The Bible says that it will be a light and a witness to the world about you. It will be evidence that will light up all those about you.

One poet said: "Yes, they had been with Jesus. There is a change in their speech. There is a change in their walk. There is a change in their lives. They had a change in their hearts. Yes, they truly have been with Jesus."

As one songwriter said, the Lord is going to take first place in your life, and you will gladly give it to Him. To get this evidence, you will have to change some things in your own life. You must change your priorities and change the way you are conducting the daily affairs of your life. For example, instead of starting your morning with a cup of coffee and reading the newspaper, you will start on your knees in prayer and with the Bible at the breakfast table. That is a good way to start your day, and that is a good way to have a good day. You need to start your day with the Lord; that is the only way to have a successful day.

Make Room for Jesus

I am going to ask you to make some room now in your own heart. The devil will say, "Go about your own way, and you will be fine." Friend, you need to make room for Jesus. God gave me this poem some time ago. It reads:

Make room for Jesus, for that blessed retreat,

*Where in sweet devotion, I worship
at His feet.*

*Making room for Jesus, room
for Him each day,
In my plans and actions, letting
Him lead the way.*

*Making room for Jesus, room for
that still, small voice,
Hearing His gentle whisper,
making His will my choice.
Making room for Jesus, room
for reading and prayer,
Room for worship and duty,
oh, what strength lies there!*

*Making room for Jesus, clearing
things from my way,
All things that would hinder what
He'd have me obey.
Making room for Jesus, for that
fellowship so sweet,
Knowing He demands me to
with Him daily meet.*

*Making room for Jesus, so that
others might see,
All His grace and riches rare,
the life of Christ in me.
Making room for Jesus for
that blessed retreat,
Where I sit and listen to what
He expects of me.*

God desires the best for you, but you need that evidence in your life, that undeniable proof. Daily you are faced with a crossroad, and either you choose to go the Lord's way or the way of the world. I admonish you to make the right choice and go God's way. Do you have the evidence that you have been with Jesus? Has it become obscured by trouble and cumbered weight?

Maybe you are so burdened that people do not see you rising above your circumstances. Perhaps people do not see the peace of God that passes all understanding at work in your life. If that is the case, God wants to give you that evidence. All He asks is that you humble yourself under His mighty hand. If you have a need, if you are lost, I pray that you will be saved. There will come a day when the party in your life will end, when that joyride or thrill you are on will be gone, and then you will wish to God that you had made the right decision to serve God.

(Compact Disc TR-1105)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cayman Islands
January 14-20

REVIVAL: Church of God, Cayman Islands
Evangelist: Brother Roger L. Decker, Newark, Ohio
For further information contact: Pastor Garrett Haylock
Telephone: (345) 916-6367

2019 Camp Meeting Dates at God's Acres

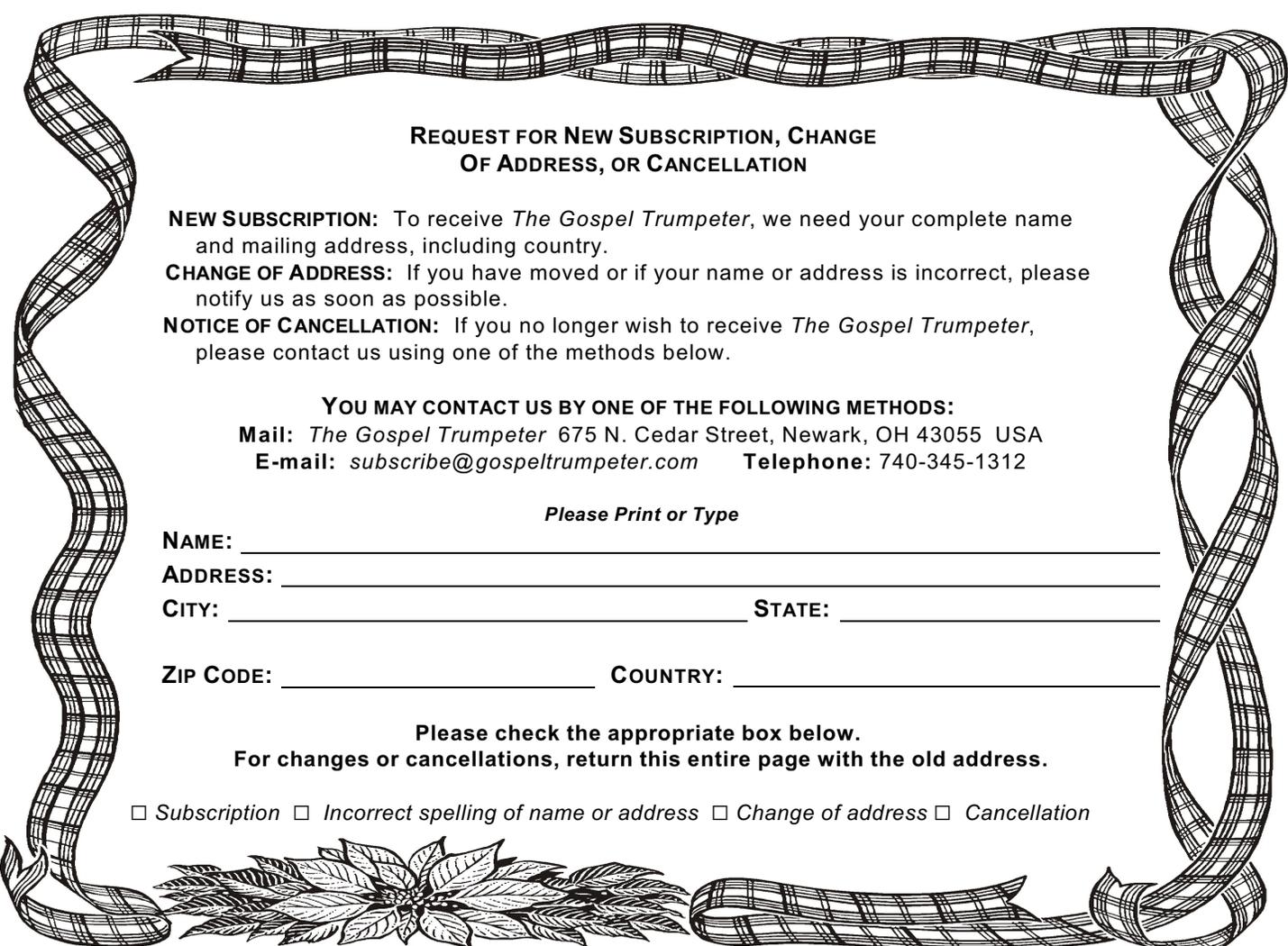
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