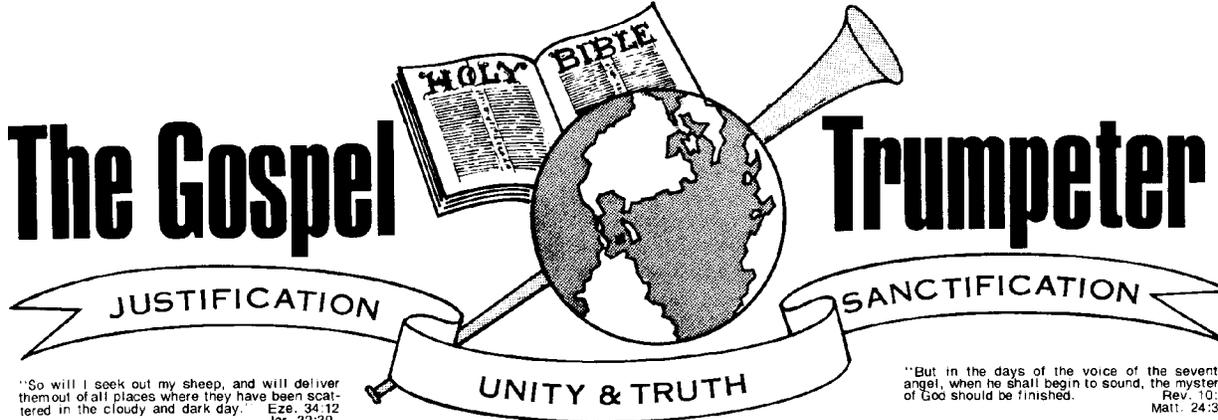


The Gospel Trumpeter



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. 51 August 2021 No. 8



Church of God Tabernacle in Newark, Ohio

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

Psalm 122:1

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

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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CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| The Need of Oil in Your Lamp | 3 |
| God Can Do Exceeding Abundantly Above All That We Ask or Think . 8 | |
| Especially for Young People | 14 |
| What Will You Have Jesus Do for You? | 18 |
| Walking With God | 23 |
| Meeting Announcements | 27 |

Vol. 51 August 2021 No. 8

"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."

1 Corinthians 4:2

Being Faithful

In this verse of Scripture, Paul was speaking first to the ministers of Christ. He was reminding them that they were stewards of the Lord. A steward is one who has been entrusted to be an overseer. They are ambassadors for Christ and responsible to rightly represent the cause of the Gospel. Paul stressed the great trust and spiritual responsibility that had been given to each of them. This honorable position was given to them and was not to be taken lightly. In Acts 20:28 he let them know that as ministers of the Gospel, they were to take heed to themselves and to the flock of God.

Paul then went on to encourage the brethren that they were to be faithful to their calling as stewards. They were to diligently uphold the sacred truths that had been entrusted to their keeping. He cautioned them to keep their reputation clean, clear, and holy before God and man. They were to guard against rash judgments, pride, and self-conceit. In his exhortation he also warned them to avoid unhealthy relationships that could ruin their ministry and to be faithful to watch over the flock of God.

The admonition that he

shared with those ministerial brethren had many good attributes to be considered and heeded. The solid admonition and counsel that Paul gave to them was good and sound not only for the ministry but also for the laity. Every individual who has received Christ's salvation has been made a partaker of the mysteries of God. Therefore, as Paul exhorted the ministers to be faithful to their calling, he also exhorted all Christians to be faithful in their living. It is the duty of every saint to live and conduct himself in a manner that glorifies and edifies God and His church. As children of God, we are to live faithful, consecrated lives before the Lord and the world. Too often people get the idea that their actions do not matter to others. This thought could not be further from the truth.

When the Apostle Paul wrote the words, "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men," he was saying that our lives are as an open book that is written and read by all men. It is through the deeds and the acts of our lives that we manifest our faithfulness to the Lord. This is the reason that it is so important to live

[continued on page 7]

Matthew 25:1 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:

4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

5 While the bridegroom tarried,

they all slumbered and slept.

6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

9 But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

The Need of Oil in Your Lamp



Brother Roger L. Decker

The Jewish Wedding

To truly understand this parable, first you need to understand Jewish weddings. Of course, today they are much different than they were in the days of Jesus. They were much different from what we are accustomed to. The only way we can know anything about their weddings is through commentaries or historians, as very little is written about them in the Word of God.

This parable relates to the

literal Jew, but it is applicable to both you and me. John 1:11-12 reads: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." The Jews were God's people. Their whole history should have been to prepare for the coming of the Son of God. Instead, they were quite unprepared; therefore, they were shut out. The Bible tells us in Amos 4:12, "Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and

because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel."

Preparedness is always necessary. Israel of old looked for an earthly kingdom to deliver them and to put down Rome so Israel could reign. That thinking was still in the minds of the Apostles. We read in Acts 1:5-6: "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at

this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

As we look at the Jewish weddings in the days of Jesus, we see that a wedding was a great occasion. The whole village turned out to accompany the new couple to their new home. They traveled the longest possible road to receive the good wishes of as many as possible. From six to sixty people would follow the marriage band. The Rabbis agreed that a man might even abandon his study of the Law to share in the joy of a wedding feast. It was one of the greatest events of the day.

The point of this parable lies in a Jewish custom that was very different from anything we know today. When a couple got married, they did not go away on a honeymoon. They stayed home for a week, and during that week they had an open house. They were treated and even dressed as a prince and a princess. It was the gladdest week in their lives. Their chosen friends were admitted to the festivities of that week. In the parable it was not only about the marriage ceremony but also the joyous week that the foolish virgins missed because they were unprepared. The story of how they missed it all is perfectly true to life.

I read a story about a man named Doctor Jay Alexander Findley. He was at Palestine, and he said when he was approaching the gates of a Galilean town, he caught sight of ten maidens gaily clad and playing musical instruments as they danced along the road in front of his car. When he asked what they were doing, an interpreter told him they were going to keep the bride company until her bridegroom arrived. He asked the man if there was any chance of seeing the wedding, but he shook his head and said it might be tomorrow, tomorrow night, or a few days. He said that no one ever knows for certain.

He went on to explain that one great thing to do, if one could, at a middle-class wedding in Palestine was to catch the bridal party napping.

The Tragedy of Being Unprepared

The man went on to say that the bridegroom comes unexpectedly, sometimes in the middle of the night. Also, according to tradition, the bridegroom was required to send a man along the street to shout, "Behold, the bridegroom is coming." That could have happened anytime, so the bridal party was supposed to be ready to go out into the street to meet him whenever he chose to come. No one was allowed on the streets after dark without a lighted lamp. Once the bridegroom arrived and the door was shut, latecomers to the ceremony were not admitted. It was an implication directed toward the Jewish nation, but it is a good lesson for you and me.

Israel was God's people. As I said earlier, their whole history should have been to prepare for the coming of the Son of God. They ought to have been prepared for when He came. There were prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah. Isaiah 7:14 reads, "Therefore the LORD himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

We read in Isaiah 9:6-7: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for

ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."

Isaiah 53:3-7 states: "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."

Jesus said in John 5:39 in another version, "You examine the Scriptures carefully, because you suppose in them you have eternal life, yet they testify about me." Israel was above the Gentiles and the pagans because they had the oracles of God. They had the Scriptures, and the Scriptures plainly prophesied of the coming of the Messiah. The prophecies are spoken throughout the Old Testament, but instead of accepting them and being ready, they were quite unprepared. Therefore, as a nation, they were shut out.

Our Scripture lesson is a parable of the tragedy of being unprepared. Many great lessons are in this parable, and we want to look at some of them. First, we find a warning in this parable. Certain things cannot be obtained at the last minute. Some people leave their salvation to the last moment. They want to wait right down to their last breath before they repent. They

mention the thief on the cross who was dying and had no deliverance physically from his punishment.

The Oil of the Holy Spirit

Let us read Luke 23:39-43: "And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

There were two thieves, or two malefactors, hanging on crosses, one on each side of Jesus. Many talk about the one who went to paradise. I wonder in my mind how many chances he had to hear the Gospel? Some who sit in congregations today have had so many opportunities to get saved that thinking about it is actually scary. They have had chance after chance, and yet they put it off when they know they should do something. Unbelief is going to be just as real when you are dying as any other time. Unbelief had hold of the malefactor who did not repent. The devil often convinces people that they have plenty of time. They think, "God will do something to see that I am saved." Friend, He is doing something. He is giving you the opportunity to hear the Gospel week after week.

Our Scripture lesson in verse 3 reads, "They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them." The oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit. We know the Jewish nation had the light of the Word of God, because Psalm 119:105 states, "Thy word is a

lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." There was no way they were going to get the oil without the acceptance of Jesus Christ. For example, it is too late to study for a test on the day of the examination. You know the test is coming. You have been warned. You were told by the teacher there was going to be an exam, but you keep putting off preparing for it, and when that day arrives, it will be too late to prepare yourself. Likewise, if you wait until it is too late to get saved, if you put it off until the last moment of time, when the Bridegroom comes, it will be too late.

When preparing for an exam, many have procrastinated. When I was in school, I did not like to study or bring books home, and I paid for it. Although I graduated from high school, I could have graduated with much better marks than I did had I not been too lazy to study. I did not like studying, and I always thought that I had plenty of time. Often I crammed my studying in the day before the exam. The trouble was, sometimes I did not know when the exam was because the teacher would spring it on us.

It is too late to make some things right the day you are dying. The eldest daughter of King Charles I was dying, and her chaplain went to her and wanted to tell her the way of salvation. Her answer was this, "I have not left the matter to this hour." She already had it taken care of.

The foolish virgins took no oil with them for their lamps. There are some things that you cannot obtain or borrow when you need them. Verse 8 of our Scripture text tells us, "And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out." You cannot receive this oil without Jesus Christ. The oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit, and no one receives the Holy Spirit until he comes to Christ first. You

cannot borrow salvation from someone else, you cannot buy it from someone else, and you cannot give it to someone else. We each must have our own sufficiency of oil to be ready for the Bridegroom.

You cannot borrow a relationship or assume a relationship with God even if you attend church regularly. Your mother and father might have been fine Christians, but that does not mean that you can simply assume that you are a Christian. You must *know* that you are a Christian. You must have your own personal relationship with God.

"Behold, the Bridegroom Cometh"

Another thing that we can learn from this parable is that we need to be ready for the coming of the Bridegroom at all times. All ten virgins slumbered and slept, but the lamps of the wise did not go out, because they had oil in their lamps. Our Scripture text reads in verses 6-8: "And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out."

We know the Bridegroom will come again, but we know not when. Jesus said in Matthew 24:44, "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." He said in verse 50, "The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of." Jesus said in Luke 12:46, "The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers." We have been

warned repeatedly that the Bridegroom is coming.

Malachi 3:1-3 states: "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the LORD, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness." This Scripture is talking about the coming of John the Baptist.

Matthew 3:11-12 reads: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Just like John the Baptist was sent as a forerunner to Jesus Christ's First Advent, God's ministry is a forerunner to the Second Coming now.

Ezekiel 3:17 says, "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me." Colossians 1:28 reads, "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." The preaching is to perfect every man.

Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for

correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." I know there are some who fight perfection; nevertheless, that is where the Word of God will lead you if you will let it.

The Parable of the Wedding Feast

Jesus said in Matthew 22:2-12: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.

"But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless."

We see in this parable that everyone is invited: the Jew first, the Gentile, the out-and-out sin-

ner, and whosoever will. Revelation 22:17 reads, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Romans 10:13 says, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." The call goes out to all people.

Next, we find in this parable that to attend this wedding, one must have on the wedding garment. When an individual comes to Christ, he does not remain the same. There is a change that takes place in the life of everyone who puts on the garment of salvation. The Prophet Isaiah wrote in Isaiah 61:10, "I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels."

Isaiah 61:3 says, "To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified."

Having Oil in Your Vessel

We do not come to God dressed in the garments of the old life. Jesus said in Matthew 22:11-12: "And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless." In other words, he was without excuse. The Bridegroom is coming back for His bride, and He is going to deliver her up to the Father.

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians

15:22-24: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power."

Only those who have oil in their vessels will be accepted. It is the oil that keeps the lamps burning. It is only the oil that lights up the city. Jesus said in Matthew 5:14-16: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

The oil gives you the power to be the witness that God wants you to be. Jesus stated in Acts

1:8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Do you have that power? Jesus said in verses 8-9 of our Scripture text: "And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves."

Has your lamp gone out? If the oil in your vessel has been depleted, Jesus said in Revelation 3:18, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see."

Is the light of salvation shining as it ought to be in your life or has it been flickering to the

place it has almost gone out? The cry is, "the Bridegroom cometh." Just like the old Jewish weddings when that cry was made, a man went before the bridegroom and shouted down the road, "The bridegroom is coming!" That did not mean he was right behind him. He could have come in one day, two days, or maybe three days.

The Bridegroom is coming, but we know not the hour. You do not want to be caught without oil in your vessel. Dear one, you do not want your light to go out, because those without the light were not bidden into the house. Your light needs to be shining bright in your life. It is the oil in the vessel that gives you the power in your life to have on the wedding garment. How is it in your own personal experience? Do you have oil in your vessel? Does the Holy Spirit have control of your life as He ought?

(Compact Disc TR-2432)

[Guest Editorial—continued from page 2]

righteously so that others watching us can see Christ. In John 12:32 Jesus let us know that we are to lift Him up through living as godly examples. In so doing, He will draw all men to Himself. However, if a person claims to be a Christian and lives an unfaithful life, then people will see a distorted picture of Christianity.

Being faithful is a highly important matter. A faithful individual is careful of the things that he becomes involved in. He will be conscious of his appearance, the places he goes, his words, his actions, and his attitudes. Every saint who professes Christianity will always strive to be faithful to Christ in all he does. Titus 2:12 teaches that "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present

world."

A faithful steward is also one who is consistent in his prayer life. It is through a healthy prayer life that one grows spiritually. Prayer is a privilege that God gave man so that he could commune with Him. Jesus said in Luke 18:1 that "men ought always to pray, and not to faint." There are times when a Christian may not feel deeply inspired to pray. The way a person feels must not hinder his prayer life. Prayer is the lifeline that keeps the Christian connected to Heaven's storehouse.

Another good necessity to being a faithful steward is to consistently read God's Word on a daily basis. It is through faithfully reading and studying the Scriptures that a Christian becomes more rooted and grounded in the Truth. As the Christian gives diligence to these requirements, he will gain

deeper knowledge and understanding of Bible doctrines and standards. Through reading the Scriptures and meditating upon the Word of God, flaws in your experience can be exposed and help can be gained.

Last but not least, it is vital that those professing Christianity are faithful in church attendance. Hebrews 10:25 instructs us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together in the worship services. This may seem simple or even elementary; however, these are duties that too many people neglect. Failure to follow these basic fundamentals has left many souls in a weakened condition. It has caused multitudes to fall by the wayside. They have traded spiritual nourishment for pleasure that is far less beneficial to the soul.

Selected

Ephesians 3:14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

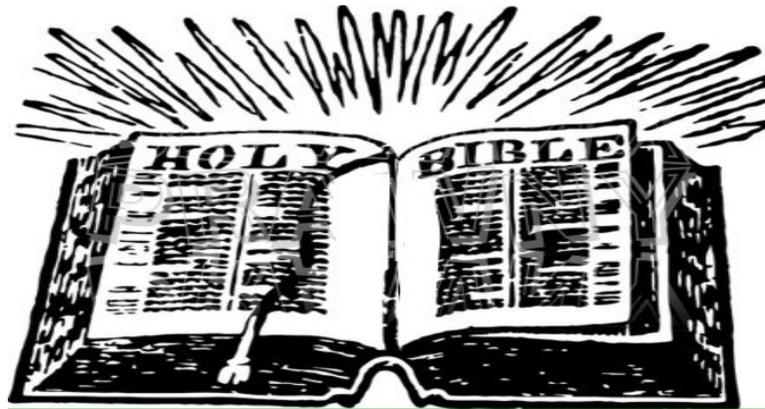
19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the

fulness of God.

20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

God Can Do Exceeding Abundantly Above All That We Ask or Think



Brother Larry Dishman

Praying According to God's Will

I want to focus on verse 20 of our Scripture text, which states, "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." The word *exceedingly* means the same as "extremely, exceptionally, tremendously, or immensely more." God can do extremely more, exceptionally more, tremendously more, and immensely more than we can ask or think.

The Apostle Paul did not stop with the word "exceeding." He

said *abundantly*, which means, "plentifully, exuberantly, luxuriantly, in large quantities, extraordinary, immensely, vastly, hugely, significantly, and distinctly." God does things in extraordinary ways.

Furthermore, Paul did not stop with "exceeding abundantly." God can do above all (or in excess of) that we can ask or think. God can do far more abundantly beyond what we ask. Now, you might think that Paul would have stopped there, but he did not. We are not to the limit. He said, "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly

above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us."

I want to encourage you to pray with faith and ask God to do far more than you can ask or even think. At the same time, I want to be realistic in applying this Scripture text. There are certain mysteries about the reaction between prayer and the sovereign will of God that we cannot explain.

Herod had imprisoned the Apostle Peter and was planning to execute him the very next day. Peter was chained to two guards inside a locked cell with more

guards outside. He was inside a prison with locked iron doors. God responded to the church's prayer. There was not too much faith in their praying, but God honored their prayer just the same. The Lord sent an angel who caused Peter's chains to fall off; then he led Peter through the open iron doors, past all the guards, and out into the street. He was a free man. We see from this verse alone that God can do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.

I should point out that prior to Peter's escape, Herod executed James, the brother of John. Was the church not praying for James' release? The Bible does not tell us, but I believe they were. I believe they were praying for James as much as they were praying for Peter. God could have easily delivered James, just as He delivered Peter. However, God allowed James to die, yet He rescued Peter because this was the will of God. We have to pray according to God's will. Many times the problem is, people seek God's face about something, and it seems that God does not hear, so they give up altogether. Maybe it was not the will of God.

God's Power Displayed Through Sufferings

We read in Hebrews 11:33-39: "Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions. Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned,

they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise."

Those people believed God, but He did not deliver them from their trials. Just because you are a Christian does not mean that every time you are faced with a difficult situation, God is going to deliver you immediately. God often displays His mighty power by working when we are incapable of doing anything in our own strength. At times, for reasons we may not understand, God chooses not to display His power. When God chooses not to display His power in a magnificent way, it does not mean that He has lost His power. He can still do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.

At those times, His power is displayed through the patient, joyous endurance of His people in the midst of their sufferings. I repeat, even when God chooses not to deliver, it is never because He lacks the power. He is able in every situation because He is omnipotent.

When John the Baptist was in prison, I am sure that the disciples were praying for a miracle. In my mind it would have brought great glory to God had He rescued John, but He did not. John was beheaded. Although God could have certainly rescued John the Baptist as He did Peter, God had a will and a reason for the things that happened. We should never question God, because He is sovereign, and He knows what He is doing.

When Jesus predicted Peter's denial, in my mind I would have thought that it would have been

right to pray that Peter would not sin at all, but Jesus did not pray that Peter would not sin. Instead, He prayed that, after Peter sinned, he would be restored and that Peter would strengthen the brethren. It is never God's perfect will that any individual commits sin. However, God's permissive will permitted Peter to sin. Afterward he was converted and restored, and then he strengthened the brethren.

Encountering Disappointments

Even the Apostle Paul, who penned these words in Ephesians 3:20, had great disappointments in his ministry. Demas was one of Paul's fellow workers, yet Demas deserted him. Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 4:10, "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." No doubt, Paul prayed that this brother would see the error of his way and repent, but we have no record of that in the Bible. Paul prayed with a heavy burden for the conversion of the Jews. He wrote in Romans 9:2, "That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart." Yet the Jews largely rejected the Gospel.

Over the past thirty-five years in my ministry, I could tell you how God has worked in my life. In instance after instance, He has done exceeding abundantly above anything I could ask or think. Perhaps you can look back over your life and see situations with which you were faced and God did exceeding abundantly above anything you could ask or think.

In my ministry I am also painfully aware of many situations where God has not answered my prayers. In my mind the answer I wanted would have brought great glory to God, but God chose to work in a different way. Many times I have prayed for sick folks and wanted to see them healed. I thought of the

glory that God would get because the doctors were unable to do anything to help them, but some of them died.

Sometimes it is God's time for a person to go home. In situations like this, if you are not careful, you will say, "Well, if God could not heal him or her, He is not going to heal anybody." Friend, that is a trick of the enemy. God can raise anyone up from an affliction if it is His will. He has not lost His power.

Many times I have prayed to see lost people saved. I have been very burdened for them. I thought, if God would save them, oh how they could affect others, but they chose not to get saved and went out into a lost eternity. Others down through the years have been overtaken by sin. I talked to them and prayed for them. I really hoped they would see the error of their way and repent and come back to church, but they did not. They went out into a lost eternity.

I want to motivate you to pray big prayers by faith so that you can move God in a mighty way. He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that you ask or think. At the same time, I do not want to gloss over the difficult struggles that you will surely encounter in your prayer life.

It Is No Secret What God Can Do

I want you to look at the positive side. God can do abundantly beyond what you ask or think. In other words, God can do immeasurably more than your mind can imagine. I have quite an imagination, but God can do far more.

Many years ago a songwriter by the name of Stuart Hamblen was at a certain place one night and said to his friend, "It is no secret what God can do." His friend said, "You should write a

song about that." Mr. Hamblen went home, and in seventeen minutes he finished writing the song from start to finish. Thank God, it is still no secret what God can do. The song reads:

The chimes of time ring out the news

*Another day is through
Someone slipped and fell
Was that someone you?*

You may have longed for added strength

*Your courage to renew
Do not be disheartened
For I have news for you.*

There is no night for in His light

*You'll never walk alone
You'll always feel at home
Wherever you may roam*

There is no power can conquer you

*While God is on your side
Just take Him at His promise
Don't run away and hide.*

It is no secret what God can do

What He's done for others, He'll do for you

With arms wide open, He'll pardon you

It is no secret what God can do.

Thank God, I am glad to tell you that it is no secret what God can do. Genesis 18:14 asks, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" Friend, nothing is too hard for the Lord, because He can do exceeding abundantly above all that you ask or think. Can you think of anything in your life that is too hard for God? No, friend.

Jeremiah said in Jeremiah 32:17, "Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee." Whatever your situation or problem is, God can do what you cannot do.

The Apostle Paul prayed that the Ephesians would be filled with all the fullness of God.

Friend, can you go any higher than to be filled with all the fullness of God? In case you think it is too much to ask God to fill you with all His fullness, remember that He can do abundantly beyond all that you can ask or think.

The Unlimited Power of God

I want you to think about some things that you need God to do. You might say it is just too difficult and it would be an impossibility. No, it is not an impossibility with God. I want you to dwell for a little while on what you would like to see God do in your life and in the lives of others.

Paul's main point is that the power of God is beyond measure. God has great, awesome power. God's power made the heavens and the earth and everything that is in them. God's power set the stars, the planets, and the galaxies in place. It is God's power that determined the boundaries of the land and the sea.

We can put things in a fire and destroy them. In one day terrorists destroyed a building as massive as the World Trade Center, but God can do so much more. However, His power is much different. Often man's power is destructive, but God's power is constructive. God can take nothing and make something. Man can make things, but he must have materials in order to make them. God does not need to have anything. He can speak things into existence. God says, "Let there be . . ." and it has always happened just as God said.

In Creation God merely had to speak some words and great things happened. This is unlimited power. If you are a child of God, the same God who spoke this world into existence is inside you. He is living in you.

In Mark 2:9 you can read that

Jesus said to the lame man, "Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk." Immediately he that was lame took up his bed and was made whole. If you are without God, you fully deserve the judgment of God, because the wages of sin is death. Let me tell you what God can do. He can take a sinner who is fully deserving of the judgment of God and save him from a devil's hell.

God takes dead men and makes them alive in Christ. It was the power of God that made a virgin conceive and give birth to the Son of God. God's power raised Christ from the dead and took Him to Heaven. God's power made the blind receive their sight. God's power made the lame man walk. God's power caused the deaf to hear. God's power cured men of leprosy. Yes, He can do exceeding abundantly above all that you ask or think. God's power gives life to those who walk in darkness. His power raised Lazarus from the dead.

God's power plants new life in hearts of stone. His power can take a wretched sinner who is bound by sin, save him, and make him a new creature so that old things pass away and all things become new. How can a man change like that? It is the wonderful working power of God. Nothing is too hard for Him. Friend, the Bible lets you know that if you are born again and walking in the light of God's Eternal Word, that power is within you. Paul said, ". . . according to the power that worketh in us."

Paul said in Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Christ was living inside Paul. He had the power of God in his heart and life.

Is God's Power Working in You?

Psalm 66:18 reads, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord

will not hear me." If you have known sin in your life, then His power cannot work in your life. You have to live a life free from willful sin in order for this power to work in your heart and life.

John, Chapter 15, lets you know that you have to measure to certain conditions if this power is going to work in your heart and life. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." In other words, you have to be a Christian. He wrote in 1 Corinthians 12:13, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body."

Jesus said in John 15:7, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." In order for this power to work in you, you have to be in Christ and His words must abide in you. It is more than knowing what the Bible says. If you are not doing what the Bible says to do, then His words are not abiding in you.

I want His power to work in my life. How about you? If you want His power to work in your life, then you have to walk in the light as He is in the light. The Bible is very clear about what you have to do in order for His power to work in your heart and life. Peter stated in 1 Peter 3:12, "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil."

The Bible says in James 5:16, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." You have to be made righteous by the blood of Jesus Christ to have this power working in you. If you are in a religion that says everyone sins every day, the power of God is not working in the lives of those living that way. You must be washed in the blood of Christ to

be made whole.

God's church can do great things for God by God's strength and His power. You can limit God by not asking largely enough. People limited Jesus Christ in the New Testament because they were not praying big prayers. They did not think God could do all the things that He was able to do. Speaking of Jesus, we read in Matthew 13:58, "And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief."

Praying Big Prayers

Paul let us know that God can do unmeasurably more than we can ask or even imagine. Paul let us know that we can take our hopes and dreams and bring them to the altar, and multiply them by ten, and then multiply them by one hundred, and then multiply them by ten thousand, and then when you send that request up to Heaven, God says: "I can do more than that. I am bigger than that."

We tend to think small, and we make God small like us, but God is big and all powerful. Therefore, we need to pray big prayers. You might have a dream about what your life could be five years from now. Maybe you are a young person looking at somebody in a congregation, and you say, "I want to be like him or her, because that person truly has the power of God." Dear one, God says: "I can do more. I have more for you than that."

Friend, there are no boundaries or limits to what God can do in you and with you. What goal do you have for your life? You may say: "I need to get established. I have to get settled and strengthened. All I want, Lord, is to be settled." God is saying: "I can do more. I want you to be a Sunday school teacher" or "I want you to be an evangelist" or "I want you to be a missionary" or "I want you to be

a pastor." Whatever you can think of to say to God, He can do more.

You might have a family member who really needs a touch from God physically, and you may be praying, "Lord, just take away the pain." God may be saying, "I can go to the root of the problem and heal him." A minister once said, "God has a huge room full of answers to prayers waiting to be prayed." Think about that! That is the kind of God we serve. In James 4:2 James wrote, "Ye have not, because ye ask not." God has been stirring my heart about this. He wants to do greater things for the church. We need God to expand our vision of who He is, what His purposes are, and how He wants us to pray. We need to stop thinking small and stop praying small. He wants us to start thinking big and praying big.

Why does God want to do great things for us? Our Scripture text tells us in Ephesians 3:21, "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." God wants the glory, the praise, and the honor. To God be the glory! The glory of God is the way to God, the worthiness of God, the honor and reputation of God. Glory is the sum total of the honor, the praise, and the majesty that belongs to God. Men and angels do not give this glory to God because it is already His. It has always been His, and it always will be His, from eternity to eternity. God wants us to recognize that it is His glory.

Giving God the Glory

In John 9:2 you can read that the disciples came and talked to Jesus and asked, "Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" I like Jesus' answer. He said in verse 3, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the

works of God should be made manifest in him."

God wants to do great things in us and through us and above us, things that we cannot possibly do ourselves. You see, when our backs are to the wall and we have tried and cannot do anything, God will step in and do it; then He will get the praise and the glory. The psalmist said in Psalm 115:1, "Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake." You must give God the glory. He is worthy.

In Acts, Chapter 3, when Peter and John saw a lame man begging for mercy, Peter looked on him and said, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk" (verse 6). What did Peter have? He had God's power working in him.

When the people saw this, they gathered around Peter and John. They were praising Peter, so Peter said, in essence: "Wait a minute! Don't look on us as though by our own power we made this man whole. It was not us; it was God who did this." Too many people want the glory and the praise. They want the pat on the back. We do not deserve any pats on the back. God is the One who deserves the glory.

Again, Genesis 18:14 asks the question, "Is any thing too hard for the LORD?" The problem is that when some people get into seemingly impossible situations, they give up. It is not that they go back into sin, but they give up on faith and miracles. They allow the opportunities to seek God's amazing power to pass by and end up being discouraged. Also, people who could have witnessed the power of God fail to see it.

Sometimes you may not have resources to do certain things. You may not have the health, the

emotional stability, the finances, or the education. You may dismiss those things as impossibilities. Perhaps you do not really believe in the power of God in this modern age. Your mind cannot stretch far enough to accommodate what God can do. Maybe your prayers do not ask enough to accommodate what God can do. Brother, sister, do not think small, because God is not small. He is bigger than any problem that you could ever encounter.

God wants you to pray bigger prayers, life transforming prayers. God wants you to pray nation transforming prayers. What if you stop thinking about what God cannot do and start turning those impossible situations into what God can and will do? You should not think about whether God wants to do something special. You can look in the Bible and see that God loves doing great things. The Bible is filled with true accounts of God doing exceeding abundantly above what anybody asked or thought possible.

Nothing Is Too Hard for God

Do not be guilty of praying small prayers. It is impossible to ask God for too much, assuming that it is in line with His will and He gets the glory. You cannot think a prayer so large that God in answering will not wish it was larger. For example, do not pray for crutches; pray for healing. May God open your eyes to see Him in His power. You should pray for the Lord to multiply the few loaves and fish so that God can get the glory.

We need to pray for the powerful conversions of lost sinners. Many times we pray for some sinners because it looks as if they are on the verge of getting saved and may be counting the cost. You also need to pray for those who seem like impossible cases. I have seen God save

people that, in my mind, looked like there was no way they would ever get saved. I have found that I was wrong because God can do far more.

Have you prayed for an old-time revival? God can do that! Second Chronicles 7:14 states, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sins, and will heal their land." God is waiting for you to start believing, and then you will see Him work.

Many times your faith will be tested to believe God when the mountains are right in front of you. That is the way it was with the children of Israel. The Red Sea was right ahead of them, and the Egyptian army was behind them. In essence, they said, "What are we going to do?"

In Exodus 14:13 Moses said, "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day." God divided the sea, and they crossed through on dry land. Pharaoh's army came, thinking they could do the same thing, and they all drowned in the sea. God did exceedingly above all that they could ask or think. Who would have thought that God would part the waters so they could cross on dry ground?

God is a God of promises. Sometimes God says things in the Bible that He did not say to you directly, but according to 1 Corinthians 10:11, "they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

Do you know what I found about God? He keeps His Word. Even when it seems impossible, even when circumstances point to the very opposite, God always keeps His Word. God's promises are like the stars in the heavens. The darker the night, the brighter they shine. The promises of God

are just as sure as they have ever been. No prayer is too hard for God to answer. When God is going to do something wonderful, He starts with a difficulty. When God is going to do something miraculous, He starts with an impossibility.

When was the last time you really prayed a big prayer, taking your imagination as far as you could go and effectually, fervently prayed about that? God Almighty is not limited by circumstances. No problem is too hard for God to solve. You can never break His promises by leaning on them. God did not promise an easy voyage, but He promises a safe arrival. One song says, "You can't ask too much of our God." I want you to think about that.

God Can Deliver From Sin

Are you earnestly contending for the faith that was once delivered to the saints? My mother and father had faith in God, and it worked. The song entitled "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," written by Joseph Medlicott Scriven, reads: "*What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear! What a privilege to carry Everything to God in prayer! O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear, All because we do not carry Everything to God in prayer!*"

If you are lost, this message is for you too. In the Bible you can read about a young man who said, in essence: "I am tired of these rules at home. I'm going to tell you what I'm going to do. Dad, I'm moving out. Give me the portion of goods that belongs to me." Not many days after that, he took a journey to a far country. He had money, and since he had money, he had friends. He probably started drinking some, and maybe he used drugs. He ran with the wrong crowd and lived it up for a while. There are

pleasures in sin, but the pleasures of sin do not have a blessed ending.

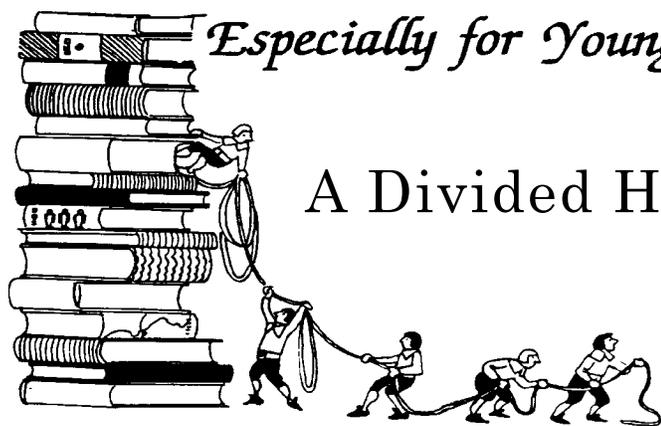
It was not long before he found himself without money. He searched for a job, but the only job he could find was in a hogpen. Soon he smelled like the hogs and looked dirty. As he started to think about his situation, he realized that he had really messed up. No doubt, he thought: "I have a father who loves me and has a nice farm, and I had a nice bed back home. I had plenty to eat and nice clothes to wear. Now here I am so hungry that I could eat the husks that the swine eat," but no one gave him any. He made a terrible mistake, so he said, "I am going to get out of this hogpen, go home to my family, and ask to be a servant."

When his father saw him a long way off, he ran to meet him. The father hugged him, and the son said, "Father, I have sinned in your sight and against heaven." His father told his servants to get the best robe and put it on him, to put a ring on his hand, and to put shoes on his feet. The servants did not wear shoes, so he was letting his son know that he was not a servant. In essence, he said, "This is my son who was dead."

What did God do for that young man? He did exceedingly above anything that he could have asked for. If you are unsaved, that is what God can do for you. What is it like to be a Christian? God is saying, "I will do far more than that for you." If you have a need in your heart and life, you need to talk to God about those things. You may not want to ask God because you think those things are too big, but you can ask God for the big things. He can do the great things.

(Compact Disc TR-2118)

Especially for Young People



A Divided Heart



At our house, we have a set of children's books with awesome character-building stories. One book contains one of my favorite stories about a girl who was an absolute sweetheart at school, and her teacher loved her. She had a wonderful attitude and would do anything her teacher asked her to do. However, when she went home, she was a completely different person. She was disrespectful, grouchy, and unkind to her mother. Her mother wondered how she could change this?

One day her mother had a visit from her daughter's teacher, but the girl did not know that. The girl came home and the teacher was in the living room. The girl's mother asked her to set the table, and as she did so, the girl grumbled and complained, not realizing that her teacher was in another room and could hear everything she said. Then her mother said they were having a guest for dinner, asked her to set one more plate, and told her the guest was in the living room waiting. Can you imagine how embarrassed the girl felt when she saw that it was her teacher, who had only seen the nice, sweet side of her? I would say that young lady had a divided heart. You would have to wonder how such kindness and meanness could come out of the same heart.

As I thought of some exam-

ples of a divided heart, I thought of the classic story of Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. During the day, Doctor Jekyll was kind and compassionate. He took care of people, and the community thought he was wonderful. However, at night when he shut the doors and all his patients went home, he would drink a concoction that turned him into Mr. Hyde, and he would get very mean. He had a divided heart.

You can read Bible stories about people who had divided hearts. Hosea 10:2 reads, "Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty." Let us look at the background. When you look at a Scripture, it helps to study what was going on. When Hosea brought this proclamation from the Lord, Israel was struggling with Baal worship, and they were not truly worshipping God. This was something they struggled with a lot, and they wanted to mix the two. According to one commentator, they had a strong affection for Baal worship. Baal worship often included human sacrifice, and more often than not, they sacrificed little children. Also, it involved prostitution. When people went to the temple for worship, prostitution was taking place in their worship services. When they built a city or a house, often they would bury small children alive in the foundation. This was Baal worship, and Israel tried to mix it

with true worship. They had divided hearts.

This is similar to what happened on Mount Carmel. First Kings 18:21 tells of a contest between God and Baal. Elijah said to the people, "How long halt ye between two opinions? [They had divided hearts between the true God and Baal. The people wanted to serve them both.] if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word."

Worshipping God and worshipping Baal are two conflicting ways of worship. Old Israel wanted to serve both. One reason Baal worship was such a problem was due to peer pressure. Israel's neighbors worshiped Baal, so they did not want to be different. Perhaps they thought people would make fun of them.

The Baal worshipers were partying, dancing, and drinking. Baal worship seemed exciting to them. Quite possibly, some thought: "We really should worship God. He brought us out of Egypt. He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Others probably thought: "What if we could have just a little of both worlds? We could have some true worship and yet have Baal worship." Elijah called them out on it and told them to make a choice. Another translation says they were limping between two opinions, going back and forth. It

was as though they were saying, "We will serve God and Baal at the same time."

What does a divided heart look like? One of the major characteristics of the chameleon lizard is that it changes color to blend in with its surroundings. Often there is a temptation for the Christian to blend in. Sometimes a young person may think, "I will be a Christian because that is what I am supposed to do, but when I am at school, I would rather not look different." When you are at church, do you act one way but when you are somewhere else you act a different way? Are you halfhearted in serving God? Are you ever halfhearted in doing your chores? You may think, "Oh, I have to clean my bedroom again," and you throw things in your closet, hoping no one will look in your closet.

Have you ever been halfhearted about your homework, doing the least amount of work possible? Being halfhearted could be like having a divided heart. You may think, "I would like to have good grades, but I really don't want to put that much effort into it." Sometimes a person with a divided heart may think, "I have to do this, but I really don't want to." Have you ever gotten into a fight with a sibling and your mom told you to apologize? A halfhearted apology is saying you are sorry when you are not sorry at all. You are just trying to get out of trouble. Often a person with a divided heart just goes through the motions.

Another way to look at it is being double hearted, which means having a false heart. Psalm 12:2 tells us, "They speak vanity every one with his neighbor: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak." It is like double-talk. For instance, you may say one thing to a person's face and another thing be-

hind that person's back. Someone may say, "You look so nice in that dress," and when that person walks away, the person says, "I can't believe she wore that!" You may tell your parents that you are a Christian, and then if someone at school asks, you say, "No, I'm not a Christian." Perhaps you have two sets of vocabulary: one for church people and one for others. Are there certain words that you say around your friends, but if you say them around your parents, you would be in trouble? If so, it might be that you have a divided heart.

The Lord may let you slip and say things when you are around your mom or dad. God will put people in your life to check you. Thank God for godly parents who bring those things to your attention. However, if you are not careful, you will keep your vocabulary separate, because you know that some words are inappropriate to be using. If you are doing that, your heart is divided.

In 1 Chronicles, Chapter 12, we can read of David's mighty men who were skilled at warfare. One Scripture talks about when it came to hurling stones and shooting arrows, they could do it both left-handed and right-handed. They were very skilled. Verse 33 speaks of the men of Zebulun and the men of Issachar and the different places they came from. Specifically, this verse tells of some outstanding characteristics of those men. They were experts in war.

Those men were shepherds and farmers, yet they left what they were doing to help David. They were experts with all the instruments of war, which means they were trained to use all kinds of weapons, although they were only farmers and shepherds. There was no standing army at that time, similar to what we have where people go and train, yet they could march in rank

together. This required great discipline, but they did not have double hearts. They had one purpose and one goal, and they were fighting and working together toward that. They were not halfhearted.

Men who go to war must be disciplined, march in rank, able to use just about any weapon, and work together so they can win. What if they had been double-hearted, had a false heart, or were halfhearted? What if their attitude was, "This is a hopeless cause." That would be halfhearted. If they were doublehearted, halfhearted, or of a divided heart, would they all have obeyed orders? Chances are good that they probably would not have. There would have been some grumbling in the midst.

When the heart is divided and you do not have a single purpose, a lot of other things can start to work. The men of Zebulun were recorded in the Bible for some important characteristics. They did not have divided hearts.

What are the dangers of having a divided heart? An old saying says, "He is here today and gone tomorrow." This speaks of someone very unreliable. You cannot depend on such a person. He might show up and he might not. He may promise to do something, but nothing happens. Perhaps his attitude is, "I kind of want to, but I don't have time." No one can depend on him. Such a person does not have a single purpose as did the men of Zebulun. One week he may say, "I'm going to live for the Lord," but the next week he says, "This is too hard." When he faces a little persecution, he falls away. He goes back and forth with a divided heart. If you are doing that, you are not wholehearted. You do not have a single purpose, or a single goal that you are working toward. You are not practicing discipline to achieve

that single purpose.

Why do you think the men of Zebulun could shoot with their right hand as well as their left hand? It was because they practiced. This required discipline. How do you think these men could march in rank? It took practice. They had to learn how to do it, and they had to be disciplined. It was the same with the instruments of war. A divided heart is a lazy heart. It is undisciplined and unwilling to put forth effort.

Another danger of having a divided heart is the loss of identity. When your heart is divided, you do not know who you really are. I read a quote that said, "When you join the devil's team, you won't feel comfortable going to the Lord's locker room at halftime." Imagine that you are playing on a literal football team, but during halftime you go to the other team's locker room. That would show a divided heart.

This reminds me of a story. When my dad would go to football games, he sat on the side that had the most comfortable benches, not necessarily the side he was cheering for. That did not always go over well, as you can imagine. No doubt, people looked at him and wondered which team he was really cheering for.

When you have a divided heart, who are you really? You are one person when you are here and another person when you are there. You really do not know who you are. You are acting like a chameleon. You are trying to fit in, but you do not really fit in anywhere.

I thought about Daniel. How was he able to take such a bold stand? Commentators believe he was very young when he was taken to Babylon, maybe in his late teens. The Scripture says that Daniel purposed in his heart. He was determined, but he could not have done that had his heart

been divided. He decided ahead of time that he was going to do what was right no matter what. Daniel was taken away from his home, and he lived among pagans. Daniel had a very godly name, but they gave him a pagan name. He was sent to pagan schools, yet he never forgot who he was. He was able to take his stand because he had a single purpose and an undivided heart. Even King Nebuchadnezzar, with all his power, could not change Daniel's purpose.

Young person, when you know who you are, you can serve God anywhere. Will you dare to be like Daniel? I challenge you to dare to be different and dare to have an undivided heart. Many people in this world are two-faced. Too many times you do not know if you can depend on them. People often say one thing, and then later you hear that they did not mean it at all. They say something completely different.

Will you dare to read your Bible, pray, and be disciplined? If you feel that you have a divided heart, you need to ask God for help. David said in Psalm 86:11, "Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name." You need to remove anything from your life that divides your heart.

In 1519 Captain Cortes sailed with his soldiers to Veracruz. They were there to conquer that land. Once they arrived and all the soldiers had gotten off the ships, Captain Cortes had all ships burned. Why? So none of the soldiers would turn back. They were in a war, and they did not have the option of retreating to the ship. They had to go forward or die. Young person, if something in your life is causing you to have a divided heart, you need to remove it. Are you holding on to something that is dividing your heart?

An old story is told about catching monkeys. Natives had a

way of trapping them. They would set out a jar and fasten it so it could not be moved, and then they would put something inside. Some stories say they used a banana and others say they used peanuts. When a monkey came along and saw the jar, it was curious about what was inside, so it would reach inside the jar. Its open hand went in and out easily, but when it grabbed hold of something and made a fist, its hand would not come out of the jar. It held tightly to what was inside the jar. The monkey did not want to be captured. It wanted freedom, but it also wanted that banana. In my mind I can imagine the monkey's friends saying: "Let go and come on!" and the monkey saying, "I want this banana." It held on until it was captured. It gave up freedom for a banana. Because of a divided heart, it was captured.

Sometimes you may need to let go of something if it is causing your heart to be divided. Many Scriptures talk about God wanting your whole heart. Psalm 138:1 reads, "I will praise thee with my whole heart." Psalm 119:145 says, "I cried with my whole heart." Jeremiah 24:7 states, "I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart." God wants your whole heart. He does not want you to be halfhearted, to be double hearted, or to have a divided heart. Jeremiah 29:13 reads, "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."

Do you feel that your heart is divided? Do you feel that sometimes you are going one way and then other times you are going another way? Are you one person at church and someone else when you are at school or at work? Are you trying to live for God and live like the world at the same time? Are you wavering between two opinions? Are

you like a chameleon, trying to blend in with whoever is around you? Are you living for the Lord halfheartedly? Do you say whatever will get you out of trouble at the time, not really meaning it?

If you have answered yes to any of these questions, what are you going to do about it? Are you going to continue to live with a divided heart and pretend that everything is okay? If you have been letting your desires

divide you, causing you to be halfhearted, you need to pray as the Psalmist David did when he said, "Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart" (Psalm 86:11).

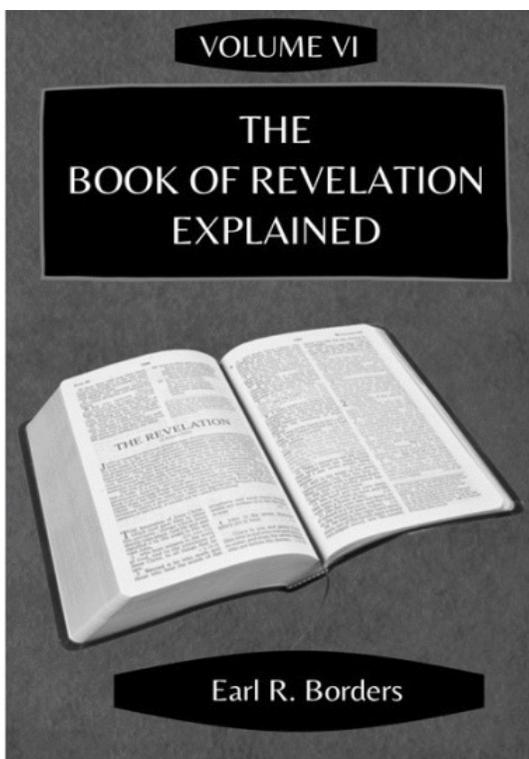
Your heart was made to serve the Lord. When you have a divided heart, you are no longer able to do what you have been created for. Do not be discouraged and say: "I might as well just give up. I am struggling. I

can't do this." God can fix your divided heart and make it as good as new. Do not be ashamed and think that you are the only person who has felt like this and that you might as well give up. Jeremiah 8:22 says there is a balm in Gilead. Young person, there is healing for whatever you are dealing with.

Sister Sheri Strelecky

The Book of Revelation Explained Volume 6, by Earl R. Borders

We are pleased to announce that the sixth and final volume of the six-volume series, *The Book of Revelation Explained*, is now available. In this final volume, the truths of Revelation, Chapters 20-22, are examined. As with much of this apocalyptic writing, these chapters are commonly misunderstood and mistaught. In this volume, these chapters are viewed in the scheme and harmony of the preceding portions of the Revelation. It is the burden and desire of the author that the Spirit of God may use this book to enlighten the eyes of understanding of the saints to the precious and vital truths being conveyed in this portion of the Revelation. We trust that this book will be a blessing to you and an enhancement to your spiritual growth.



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Mark 10:46 *And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging.*

47 *And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.*

48 *And many charged him that*

he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me.

49 *And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee.*

50 *And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus.*

51 *And Jesus answered and said*

unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight.

52 *And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.*



What Will You Have Jesus Do for You?

Brother James Presley

Determined to Reach Jesus

In our Scripture reading, we find the story of blind Bartimaeus. Jesus was coming out of Jericho, and a great number of people were following Him. No doubt, this caused Bartimaeus to wonder what was going on since he could not see. He did not know that Jesus was walking by, but when he heard the great crowd coming, he knew that something out of the ordinary was happening. Perhaps he asked, "What is going on?"

When Bartimaeus heard that Jesus was passing by, he was thrilled. Why was that? He had probably heard about Jesus healing the sick and raising the dead. He had heard about the miracles that Jesus performed. Bartimaeus might have thought, "If Jesus did those miracles for others, He can help me."

Blind Bartimaeus was sitting along the highway begging. He wanted a change in his life. When he heard that Jesus was coming, he got excited and began to cry out, "Thou Son of David,

have mercy on me." Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. Bartimaeus was not going to give up. People told him to hold his peace, but he cried out the more. Think about that. He was eager to get hold of Jesus because he needed something from Him.

There may be people in your life who try to hinder you as some tried to hinder Bartimaeus, but you must not let them. It might even be your own family. You might have to stand up to your family and say, "I'm going

to go the right way." That is not always pleasant or enjoyable.

When I first came to church, I was called dumb, brainwashed, stupid, and ignorant, but I kept coming anyway because God had gotten hold of my heart. I am so thankful that I found the Church of God. When I found it, I was determined not to go back into sin. There is nothing better than salvation. When I was ridiculed and criticized, I took a stand for God. If you take a stand, it may hurt to begin with, but God will use it for His glory and to your benefit. I am so thankful that God is able to do that.

If people try to stand in your way, you need to stand for what is right. That is what blind Bartimaeus did. People were not going to stop him. He cried, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." This got Jesus' attention. Bartimaeus was determined to reach Jesus. Jesus stood still and called for him. Bartimaeus did not sit still when he heard Jesus call for him. He cast aside his garment and headed for Jesus. That is how fast you need to move when the Spirit of God speaks to you. God sees your heart, and He knows whether or not you are living right. He will show you a need in your heart, whether it is a wrong attitude or bitterness or whatever it might be.

God Wants to Help With Your Needs

Why did Bartimaeus cast aside his garment? It was a beggar's garment, and he was not going to need it anymore. He knew Jesus could heal him. When you come to God, you should believe that God can do what you request of Him. He has all power. Revelation 3:5 reads, "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name

out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." You get a new garment when you get things straightened out with God. It is a pure, clean garment.

God has a different plan for your life. He does not want you to lay along the road begging anymore. He wants you to work in the fields. Mark 10:52b says, "And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way." After Bartimaeus received his sight, he said, "I'm going to follow Jesus." Jesus is the One who did everything for him.

What should you do? You should follow the Lord every step of the way because He has done so much for you. He has saved you, helped you, and kept you clean. He has been there for you like a father. Mark 10:51 states, "And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight."

Bartimaeus had a need, and he cried out for mercy from the Lord because he wanted his need met. He was blind and unable to help himself. There was not one thing he could do to cure his blindness. Webster's Dictionary defines the word *need* as "a lack of something wanted or necessary."

The devil can use a need against you to depress, to discourage, or to cause you to doubt God. The devil can use many things against you that are not sinful. Perhaps you have financial problems, which can be discouraging. It can be stressful not knowing how a bill is going to get paid. Maybe you have family problems. Most people have family members who are unsaved. It could be a husband, a wife, or siblings not getting along. It could be a rebellious or a lost child. Possibly you have employment needs or problems on the

job. Maybe you have a physical ailment that the devil uses to discourage you. That is one reason it is good to do visitation. You can receive encouragement, the person you visit can too, and God gets the blessing. It may give you a greater burden for the work of God when you go out and talk to people who are suffering physically. It brings encouragement to them.

Even Jesus needed help to carry His Cross. A need is anything that is too heavy for you to carry and you need help carrying it. A need is something that you cannot fix yourself, but you need Jesus to fix it for you. The devil wants to try to keep your mind focused on your problem. Many of us have had circumstances that we did not know the answers to. The devil will do anything to get your focus off God and on your problem.

Bartimaeus was blind, and he could not fix that. He needed Jesus to fix it for him. As Jesus came by that day, Bartimaeus cried out to Him and begged for mercy. When he came to Jesus, the only thing on his mind was receiving his sight. With his sight he could take care of himself, work, help others, and follow Jesus. Friend, God wants to help you with your needs. If you have a need in your life, no matter how big or how small it may be, He is asking, "What will you have Me do?"

God Has All Power

If you are living right and calling out to God for help, He has help for your need. Nothing is too big for Him. Jesus has the answer to the biggest problem there could possibly be. Mark 10:27 reads, "And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible." Why is it possible with God? He knows it all, and He made all

things. The Bible lets us know that by Him all things consist.

When I think about the beginning of time and how God created the earth and everything in it, I really get excited about what God can do. When I studied Creation, the human body, and its operations in school, I was amazed by all that God created that we cannot even see in the body. Since God can do all of that, not one of your needs is too big for Him to fix. My prayer is that this message is an encouragement to you. Trust the Lord. He is more than able to meet your need. If you have a need, lay it in Jesus' hands and let Him take control of it.

The Apostle Paul said in Ephesians 3:20, "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." Jesus can do anything. Paul said, ". . . according to the power that worketh in us." What is this power? It is the same power that opened Bartimaeus' eyes. In Mark 10:52 Jesus said, "Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole." It is that power that works in us. We have to trust God and believe.

Bartimaeus went to Jesus knowing that He could heal him. How is your faith? Is it as strong as it once was? Maybe you need more faith. God is able to meet every need. We have seen Him do amazing things. It is amazing the things that God has power to do. If you need faith, God has extra faith for you. He will help you. What is it that you want Jesus to do for you? Do you believe He can do it? I am positive that He can.

If a billionaire were to come to you and ask what financial need you had, you would have an answer for him. Jesus is far more powerful and far richer than the richest man on earth. God can do anything in your life.

"Is Any Thing Too Hard for the Lord?"

Genesis 18:10-13 says: "And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also? And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old?"

Think about that. God, through an angel, was talking to Abraham and, in essence, said, "This time next year you are going to have a baby." Sarah was about ninety years of age, and Abraham was about ten years older. God showed that He can prove medical science wrong. He is more than able to heal and do anything that man cannot do. Sarah laughed when she heard the angel say that she was going to have a baby. The angel asked Abraham why Sarah laughed. In Genesis 18:14 the question was asked, "Is any thing too hard for the LORD?" That is one of my favorite Scriptures.

When you are going through a hard valley, is anything too hard for the Lord? When you are feeling sick and do not know what the answer is or how to fix the problem, is anything too hard for the Lord? If you have lost children, lost loved ones, financial problems, or job problems, nothing is too hard for the Lord.

No doubt, you have loved ones who need to be saved. Perhaps you have prayed prayer after prayer, and you might think they are not going to get saved. Nothing is too hard for the Lord. I am so thankful that God is mer-

ciful. He is able to do all things. He is not a respecter of persons. What He does for one, He will do for another. When you see prayer answered, you need to thank the Lord.

Jeremiah 32:27 reads, "Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?" Why did He say "all flesh"? He wants you to know who made you. The Lord can do anything if you will lay it in His hands and ask for His help. The problem is, many times people do not ask, and they try to work things out themselves. Sometimes you have to keep praying and leave things in God's hands.

Joshua 10:12-14 reads: "Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel."

Israel was fighting against the Amorites, and Israel needed some help from the Lord. Had the sun gone down, it probably would have been very rough. So Joshua said, "Sun, stand thou still . . . and thou, Moon." The Bible lets us know that the Sun did not go down a whole day. This was something that did not make logical sense. God was on Joshua's side. God was there to help him. God put His big hand out there and held the sun and the moon in place. Who did the miracle? God did. Who did the miracle when Bartimaeus needed

help? Jesus did. If God can make the sun and the moon stand still, He can supply your need. No matter what it may be, no matter how hard it may be, He is more than able to supply your need.

Miracles That Jesus Performed

Jesus is asking you, "What will you have Me do?" God can supply your every need. I am going to list some things that Jesus did while here on earth, and then you can decide if you think He can supply your need. You know what your need is. You know what you are going through in life. Following is a list of some of Jesus' miracles:

In John, Chapter 2, Jesus turned water into wine.
In John, Chapter 4, He healed a nobleman's son.
In Mark, Chapter 1, He drove an unclean spirit out of a man.
In Matthew, Chapter 8, He healed Peter's mother-in-law who was sick of a fever.
In Luke, Chapter 4, He healed many that came to Him.
In Luke, Chapter 5, the disciples had the miraculous catch of fish because Jesus told them where to fish.
In Matthew, Chapter 8, Jesus healed a man with leprosy.
In Luke, Chapter 7, He healed a centurion's servant.
In Mark, Chapter 2, He healed the man who was let down through the roof.
In Mark, Chapter 3, He healed a man who had a withered hand.
In Luke, Chapter 7, He raised a widow's son from death.
In Mark, Chapter 4, Jesus calmed the storm.
In Matthew, Chapter 8, He cast demons out of a man and sent them into a herd of swine.
In Matthew, Chapter 9, He healed the woman with an issue of blood.

In Luke, Chapter 8, He raised Jairus' daughter.
In Matthew, Chapter 9, He healed two blind men.
In Matthew, Chapter 9, He healed a man who could not speak.
In John, Chapter 5, He healed an invalid.
In Luke, Chapter 9, Jesus fed about five thousand.
In Mark, Chapter 6, He walked on water.
In Matthew, Chapter 14, He healed the sick as they touched His garment.
In Mark, Chapter 7, He healed a daughter who was demon possessed.
In Mark, Chapter 7, He healed a deaf and dumb man.
In Matthew, Chapter 15, He fed four thousand men, plus women and children.
In Mark, Chapter 8, He healed a blind man.
In John, Chapter 9, He healed a man who was born blind.
In Matthew, Chapter 17, Jesus healed a boy with an unclean spirit. Also, the temple tax was in a fish's mouth.
In Luke, Chapter 11, He healed a demonic person who could not speak.
In Luke, Chapter 13, He healed a woman who had been crippled for eighteen years.
In Luke, Chapter 14, He healed a man with dropsy.
In Luke, Chapter 17, He cleansed the ten lepers.
In John, Chapter 11, He raised Lazarus from the dead.
In Mark, Chapter 10, He restored Bartimaeus' sight.
In Matthew, Chapter 21, the fig tree that bore no fruit withered away.
In Luke, Chapter 22, Jesus healed the servant's severed ear.
In John, Chapter 21, He did another miracle with a large catch of fish.

Jesus can help you with your need. He did all those miracles

and many more with nothing but His Word. He spoke, and people were healed. He raised the dead.

Jesus performed many miracles while He walked on this earth. Those miracles proved that He fulfilled the Scripture found in Matthew 28:18, which reads, "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Jesus has all power. This is the same Jesus that asked Bartimaeus, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?"

Calling on Jesus

I hope you can see that God is more than able to help you with your need. However, as with anything else God does, you cannot just sit back and hope. You have a part to do. Had Bartimaeus just sat there silently, Jesus never would have stopped.

What was the first thing Bartimaeus did? He recognized that he had a need. The first thing you need to do is recognize that you have a need. It may be a spiritual need. Maybe the devil is working on you. You need to recognize that and do something about it.

Bartimaeus knew that he was blind, but he had to put action with what he knew. He started crying out to God so loudly that the people told him to hush, but he was determined to reach Jesus no matter what. Nothing was going to quiet him, and you cannot let others quiet you when you are reaching for God. When the crowd tried to tell Bartimaeus to be quiet, Mark 10:48 says that "he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me."

The devil will try to do everything he can to keep you from getting your need met. He wants to discourage you and press you down. You may be living a perfect, clean life and have problems in your family, your home, or

your job. You may be living a good life, and yet feel pressed down and discouraged. We all have been there, but God has something better for us. Whatever your problem is, you need to take it to the Lord and leave it there at His feet.

You need to press on and keep calling on Jesus, just as Bartimaeus did. When Bartimaeus got Jesus' attention, he told Jesus exactly what he wanted Him to do. Sometimes when you have problems, you may pray: "Lord, I don't know what needs to be done, but please do something. I need you."

We each have lost loved ones. We must go to Jesus and say, "Please save them, Lord." Do not be afraid to ask God to save somebody. You need to be determined that you are not going to give up. God is able to save them. Do not be afraid to ask God for precisely what you want.

Honesty with God will get your need met. If you are struggling with sin, if you have something that you are battling, do not try to make it sound better than it is. If you keep falling, you need to pray, "Lord, I am struggling with sin." When God sees that you have an honest heart, He will work with you. He is patient and long-suffering. If you have sin in your life, do not blame others. For instance, a married man may say, "Well, if she had not said that to me, I would not have lost my temper." Friend, you need to go back and make that right no matter what she said. You need to be accountable for your actions and be honest before God.

Ask, Believe, and Expect

You must do three basic things to get your needs met by God. First, you have to ask. Matthew 7:7 says, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall

find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." That is very plain. You must ask the One who can give it. This is a promise from God, one you can rely on every day of your life. Hebrews 4:16 tells us, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." If you want to receive anything from the Lord, you must first ask Him. He wants to be asked.

What is the second thing you must do? You must believe when you ask. Nothing comes without believing. This is what faith is. Trust in God. To what did Jesus attribute Bartimaeus' sight being restored? Jesus said in verse 52 of our Scripture text, "Thy faith hath made thee whole."

Jesus is saying: "I have all power. All you have to do is ask Me." If you are going to get your need met, you have to believe the Lord. He is more than able to meet your every need. Matthew 9:28 states, "And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord." They were healed because they believed that Jesus could do it.

You have to believe. When you believe, the Bible says to believe that you have already received it. Trust in the Lord. We have heard testimonies of ones saying, "Thank You, Lord, for saving my husband" when he was not even saved, but down the road he did get saved because the wife claimed it. Sometimes you have to claim healing, claim the victory, or claim the deliverance that God has for you. You must believe that God is more than able to perform what He said He would do.

Matthew 21:21 says, "Jesus answered and said unto them [His disciples], Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt

not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done." The mountain represents needs. No matter how big the mountain is, God can take care of it, but you cannot doubt. You have to ask, and you have to believe. You have to trust that God is going to do it. Things that seem immovable in your life are just like that mountain.

The third thing that you must do is expect God to move on the circumstance. Psalm 62:5 says, "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him." If you have loved ones who need to be saved, you need to pray, trust, believe, and expect God to save their souls. God can.

The definition of the word *expect* is, "to anticipate; to look forward to; to anticipate the occurrence of." In other words, you expect that something is going to happen. When you talk to God and ask Him to help you in your trials or with your burdens, you need to believe and expect it to happen.

Bartimaeus received his sight because he asked, believed, and expected God to move. Why was that? It was because of all the things that he had heard about Jesus. He knew that Jesus could do it for him.

Again, the Apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 3:20, "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." God has something for each of us. I want to see greater things worked in our lives. I want to see more souls saved. I want to see more bodies healed. God is able to do all these things. Do you have a need? Is there something that you want to talk to Jesus about? What will you have Jesus do for you?

(Compact Disc TR-2117)

Genesis 5:21 And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah:

22 And Enoch walked with God

after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters:

23 And all the days of Enoch

were three hundred sixty and five years:

24 And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.

Walking With God



Brother Josh Kemp

A Daily Walk

In the *Jones' Dictionary of Old Testament Proper Names*, the name *Enoch* means "dedicated or initiated." It takes a dedicated life to walk with God. You cannot do whatever you want to do and walk with God at the same time. Amos 3:3 asks the question, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" The word *walk* means, "to go forward; to follow." Walking with God is a forward, constant movement. You must keep pace with God as you walk from day to day. You cannot be idle with God. Amos 6:1 reads, "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion." You must not slow down, sit down, give up, cool down, or lag

behind in this Christian walk.

The *Amplified Bible* of Genesis 5:21-24 reads: "When Enoch was sixty-five years old, he became the father of Methuselah. Enoch walked [in habitual fellowship] with God three hundred years after the birth of Methuselah and had *other* sons and daughters. So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. And [in reverent fear and obedience] Enoch walked with God; and he was not [found among men], because God took him [away to be home with Him]."

The word *habitual* means "regularly or repeatedly doing or practicing something, or acting in some manner or nature of habit." Walking with God is a daily

walk. You cannot go on yesterday's grace and strength today. You need to draw power each morning for the present day. If I am running late in the morning, I may not have much time to pray, but I do get down before God. It is not always a long prayer, but I make sure I pray. When Peter walked on water and began to sink, he simply cried out, "Lord, save me" (Matthew 14:30). Are you in awe of what God can do for you? Are you in awe to see God lifted up in His glory?

The word *obedience* means "in compliance with an order, a request, a law, or submission to another authority." We are to be at one another's feet,

and we are to be submissive to one another. I should not take such a stand on some form of Truth to the point where I disfellowship a brother. We can have differences, but the spirit of unity through Jesus Christ keeps us together.

The Bible tells us in Hebrews 11:5-6: "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

Do you have the same testimony that Enoch had, that you are pleasing God? Are you seeking God diligently every day? Are you redeeming the time? Paul wrote in Ephesians 5:14, "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." God sends the Word of God through messengers and ministers, and you cannot walk with God unless you are awake. The Scripture says to awake from sleep. Some people think that Scripture is meant for the lost, but in Ephesians Paul was talking to the church.

Being in the Presence of God

I try to encourage people on my job that God is the right way and that God has commands. People need to be awakened out of sleepiness, spiritually speaking. The ministry is sent forth to awaken people. Ephesians 5:15-16 reads: "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." To walk with God, you have to be awake spiritually. No one knows you better than God knows you. If you are awake in Christ, you will walk circumspectly, diligently,

and perfectly before Him.

Life has a way of getting busy, and sometimes God only gets the short end of our time. May God help us to make sure that we are redeeming the time. You have to take the time to have closeness with God, to walk with Him, and to be in His presence. When walking with someone, you can feel that one's presence. Can you feel God's presence in your life?

When you are walking with God, you have to walk God's way. If you want to go your way and God wants to go another way, that is not walking with Him. May God help you to go His way. There is a right path to walk to follow the Word of God. Walking with God and being in His presence is an awesome thing.

Genesis 3:8 states, "And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day." I thought about the song "In the Garden," which reads:

*I come to the garden alone,
While the dew is still on the roses,
And the voice I hear falling on my ear
The Son of God discloses.*

*He speaks, and the sound of His voice
Is so sweet the birds hush their singing,
And the melody that He gave to me
Within my heart is ringing.*

*I'd stay in the garden with Him,
Though the night around me be falling,
But He bids me go; through the voice of woe
His voice to me is calling.*

*And He walks with me, and He talks with me,
And He tells me I am His own;
And the joy we share as we tarry there,
None other has ever known.*

God's Plan to Dwell Among People

Sadly, when Adam and Eve sinned, they hid themselves from the presence of the Lord. God's plan all along was to dwell among people, but sin separated them from Him. How that must have hurt God to be separated from the people He created. Sometimes when people get saved, they fail to keep doing the things that I am talking about. Friend, if you will listen to God, He will point you back to Him and say: "This is why you failed Me. This is the reason you did not do what you were supposed to do." You have to spend time with God to walk with Him.

How do you think it makes God feel not to have the special daily connection with you? I thought about how Israel commanded to set up the old tabernacle. They followed the instructions and the different things they were to do. God told the children of Israel of His desire to dwell among them. Exodus 29:42-46 reads: "This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee. And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory. And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priest's office. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the LORD their God."

In Exodus 33:13-23 Moses' desire was to see the glory of God. I am talking about different places in the Bible that tell us

God wanted to be close to His people and to dwell among them. His desire today is to dwell among us. When I pray in the morning, I say: "Lord, I do not want people to know me. I want them to know You through me." God has taught me to have patience with the people with whom I work, especially with people who cuss and make fun of religion and say, "Oh, you don't have to do that."

Seeing the Glory of God

I have told people at work who are going through struggles and addictions: "You need to have it settled that you are not going to give up no matter what." Emotions will go up and down. Sometimes you may feel God and other times you may not. One day I could not feel the strong presence of God at work. I was looking up to God and the sun was coming through the clouds. As I was sitting in my truck reading the Bible, the glory of God filled the truck. As I was thinking about how Enoch walked with God, I thought, "If Enoch could do it, then I can do it." God is no respecter of persons. If God could give me victory over the struggles and the trials of life, He can give you victory. It does not matter how old or how young you are. Enoch walked with God for three hundred sixty-five years. May God help us not to get weary in the journey.

Moses desired to see the glory of God. Exodus 33:13-23 reads: "Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people. And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. And he said unto him, if thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. For wherein shall it

be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth.

"And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name. [Does God know you by name? He knows His sheep by name. I thank God that He knows my name.] And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory [Moses wanted to see the glory of God, not the glory of the people]. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.

"And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen."

In Exodus, Chapter 40, when Moses finished the work, verses 34-35 tell us: "Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle."

Throughout time, God has wanted to dwell among His people. God wants His people to walk with Him faithfully. The problem is, God cannot dwell among sin. God hates sin, and He has always hated sin. However,

something great was about to happen, and something great did happen.

Living a Sin-Free Life

Hebrews 10:1-4 reads: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. [Once a year the high priest went in where the presence of God dwelled, but it was not personal with the people until Jesus Christ came. They looked forward to it but could never obtain it.] For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."

Something had to change, and thank God it did change when God sent His only begotten Son into the world to become the ultimate sacrifice for sin. Jesus became sin on the Cross. God had to turn His face away from His only begotten Son because He became sin. What a sacrifice!

The Bible tells us in 1 Peter 2:22, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." I thought about all those people who looked forward to the day of Jesus Christ, when He died on the Cross. On that day the debt was paid. The people could not pay the debt, but God paid the debt through His Son Jesus.

How can you walk with God and live in His presence? You can walk in the light of God's Word. John wrote in 1 John 1:5-7: "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship

with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we [this is something we have to do] walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

How can you live in His presence? Thank God, through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, you can live in the presence of God. You can live in God's presence through living a holy, sin-free life. You can live in the presence of God through obedience and by spending quality time with Him. God desires you to live in His presence. He is waiting on you to get some clutter out of your life so that you can fully live in His presence.

The keys to having the power of God are living in His presence, obedience, and self-denial. Jeremiah 29:11-13 reads: "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." This is something that you have to put your whole heart in, everything within you. First Timothy 6:6 states, "But godliness with contentment is great gain."

"The Fellowship of His Sufferings"

How is your daily walk with God? Are you striving to be what God wants you to be? There is a price to this walk. You must deny yourself and be obedient to God's Word to have His presence. I want to be a better Christian. I want to grow in God and have a greater walk with Him. I want to hold His hand.

I think of a child. I remember when my son Luke was little and

wanted to go everywhere with me, and I was obliged to take him. I loved it when my little boy wanted to go with me. Luke wanted to go everywhere I went, and he would hold my hand. That is how I want to follow God. I want to approach God as a child, as it says in His Word.

The Apostle Paul said in Philippians 3:13-14: "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." There are some things that you have to put behind you. You have to forget those things that are behind. People in your family and in your community might never forget the things that you have done wrong, but through faith and living a godly life, you can live those things down. I thank God that He does not remember my past transgressions against me.

Saint of God, you need to press on with everything that you have in you. Lethargy and indifference will come against you, or anything that will put out the fire. When it comes to the devil, let us play hard to get and stand for God.

In Philippians 3:10 Paul wrote, "That I may know him,

and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, [It is not easy to suffer. We just want to have a good day. Sometimes I pray: 'Lord, give me a good day. I need a good day today.' He makes it a good day, but sometimes it is a hard day.] being made conformable unto his death." The Apostle Paul wanted to fellowship the sufferings of Christ. He knew where the power of God was.

I read *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*. Throughout time, evil people have killed the saints of God. They killed a man by the name of Polycarp. He was on the outskirts of a town and they took him. He prayed with such fervency that the guards repented that they had captured him. They wanted to tie his hands to the stake before they burned him, but he said: "You don't have to tie my hands to the stake. I will stand here." The book said that the flames went up around him, so they stabbed him. There was so much blood that it put out the fire.

I want to go further with God. More than anything in my life, I want to be a soul winner for God. How is your daily walk with God? Are you striving to be where God wants you to be?

(Compact Disc TR-2515)

Find out what God would thee do,

And do that little well.

For what is great and what is small,

'Tis only He can tell.

Meeting Announcements

Findlay, OH
August 11-15

Revival: Lima Street Church of God, 119 East Lima St., Findlay, OH 45840
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi
Service times: Wednesday - Friday 7:00 p.m., Saturday 3:00 p.m., and Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m. **Approximate meal times:** Friday 9:00 p.m., Saturday 5:00 p.m., and Sunday 12:30 p.m.
For more information contact: Pastor Joshua Thilmony @ 419-721-7384
Website: www.limastreet.org

Newton, KS
August 18-22

Revival: Church of God, 400 N. Meridian Road, Newton, KS 67114
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi
Service times: Wed.-Sat. 7:00 p.m.; Sunday Worship 10:45 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.
For more information contact: Pastor Brandon Gonzalez @ 316-217-2696
Website: www.churchofgod-ks.com

Summersville, WV
August 20-22

Revival: The Church of God, 74 Armstrong Rd., Summersville, WV 26651
Evangelist: Brother Allen Borders, Warrensville, North Carolina
Service times: Friday 7:00 p.m., Saturday 6:00 p.m., and Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.
For more information contact: Pastor Earl R. Borders @ 304-872-4047
Website: www.ChurchofGodSummersvilleWV.com



Fall Camp Meeting

at God's Acres
August 1-8

Three Services Daily

10:00 a.m. 3:00 p.m. (teaching service) 7:00 p.m.
(The first service begins at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday)

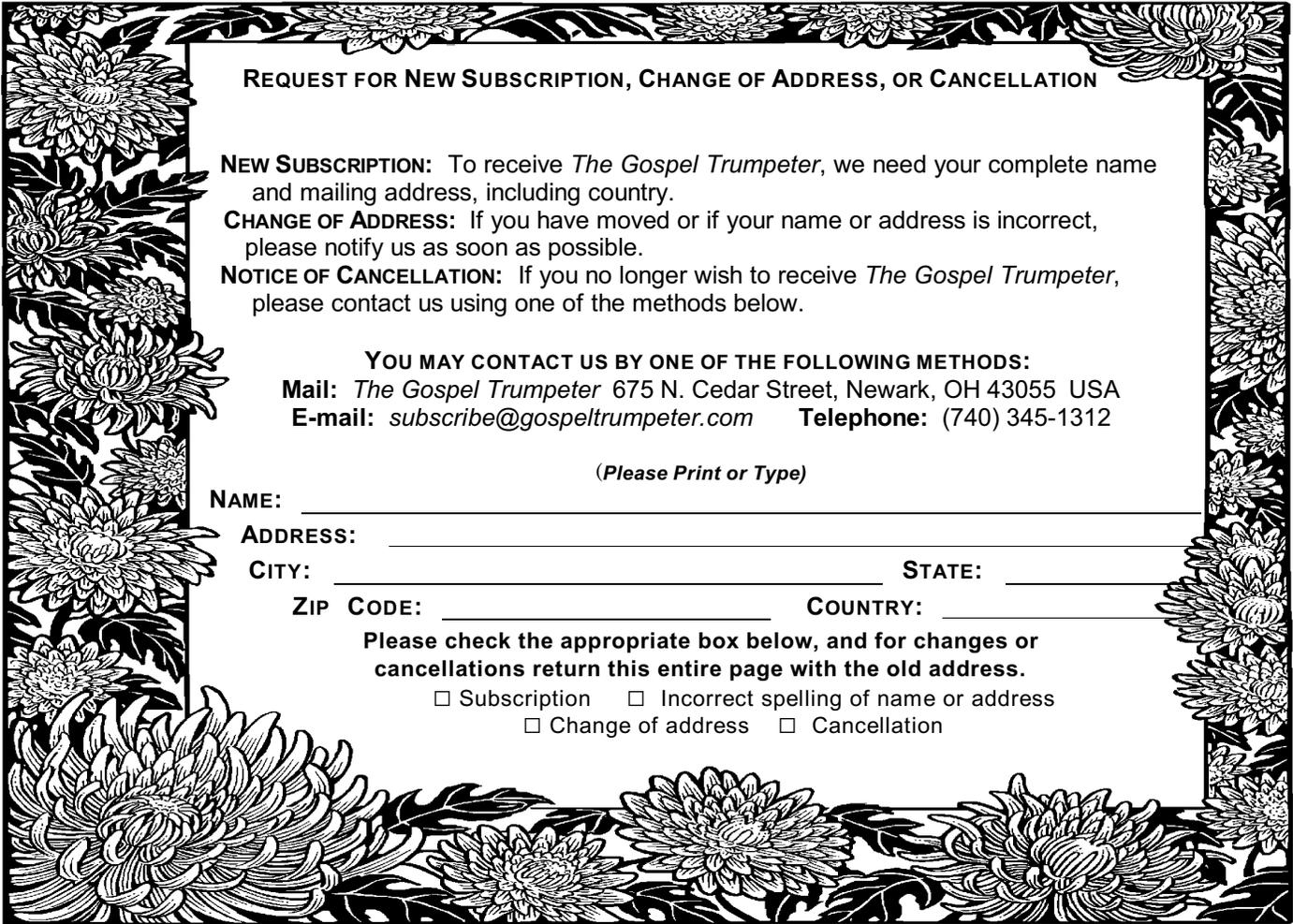
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