

The Way of Truth

Vol. 78 "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." No. 4

Why Did Jesus' Suffering Please God?

Message begins on page 5



APRIL
2020

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”—Hebrews 1:1-3.

WE FIND that after Jesus Christ by Himself purged the sins of mankind, He sat down at the right hand of God. I would like for my readers to consider those two facts.

As we approach this important season celebrating the resurrection of our Lord, we need to be anchored by this truth—not only was Jesus crucified for our redemption, He rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and is forever seated at God’s right hand!

First, let us consider the fact that Jesus purchased our redemption with His own blood. In our text, the two words that really jumped out at me were, “By himself.” No one helped Him. The angels didn’t help Him; man didn’t help Him; no one helped Him. He did it by Himself. Only the Son of God could suffer the penalty of sin. It was only Jesus who could give His life’s blood for the sins of humanity. So it was Christ by Himself who purged our sins. Thank God!

The Son of God, this God incarnate Jesus Christ, suffered death for you and for me. Yes, I’m saved because of the blood that Jesus shed. But He shed that same blood for you. When it says here that He by Himself purged our sins, it doesn’t mean that everyone’s sins are automatically forgiven; it means that He has paid the penalty of sin. He has fulfilled the plan of God. He has made it possible for you to know the forgiveness of sins. But for you to take advantage of God’s plan, you must offer yourself to Him, you must forsake your wicked life, you must repent of your sins, and in faith believing apply that blood to your life.

Peter said, “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.” O yes, Beloved Ones, the Son of God came into the earth with the express purpose of giving His life on Calvary so that down here, in the year 2020, you could know this wonderful salvation.

Let’s follow Him for a few moments as we think of the Son of God. I want us to realize that God who speaks to us through His Word wants to remind us that the Son of God shed His blood that we could be saved.

Jesus entered Jerusalem for the Passover. He took His disciples in an upper room and there in that room He poured some juice into a vessel and He drank and

passed it to them, and He said, “Drink, this is my blood which is shed for you.” We as the Church of God observe the ordinances where we partake of the fruit of the vine and we break bread together, and it’s a very sacred time, for it signifies we are remembering His death, we are remembering what He suffered for us. I want each reader to remember what Jesus suffered for you. If you see and understand what the Son of God went through, I don’t know how you can reject Him. If any soul goes into eternity unsaved, it is not the will of God at all, for the Bible tells us that God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth.

Jesus went over into the Garden of Gethsemane and there He wept, as it were, great drops of blood. He prayed to the Father, “Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” But He saw you and I and said, “Not my will, Father, but thine be done.” A second time and a third time He prayed. The weight of the world was upon His shoulders at that hour. He was agonizing over the burden that He was under at that moment, the sins of all the world, but finally God gave Him the victory and He went out of the garden.

Then Jesus was led away to Calvary. The Scriptures say that He by Himself purged our sins. Get a vision of the Son of God. He went through a cruel, hard trial. Then they plucked out His beard and put a crown of thorns on His brow and they treated Him like a criminal. Why did they do that? Did He do anything wrong? Did He ever commit a sin? Was He a murderer? Was He a thief? Was He a liar? No, Beloved, He was the pure Lamb of God. But, it was my sins and it was your sins that caused wicked men to do that to Him, and He took it! When He was reviled, He reviled not again. He didn’t go part way, He went the whole way. He knew that unless He went the whole way, there would be no hope for Greg Tyler, there would be no hope for anyone unless He went the whole way. And so He allowed wicked men to put a crown of thorns on His brow, He allowed them to pluck out His beard, He allowed them to lacerate His back. There He was bleeding, tortured. They put a cross on His back. Get the picture. There He was, blood coming down His brow, blood coming out of His face, blood coming out of His back. “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.” The Son of God, He by Himself purged your sin.

They took Him through the city of Jerusalem and up to a place called Golgotha, the place of a skull. There they took Him and placed Him between two thieves and nailed His hands and His feet to an old rugged cross, and they drove it down in the ground and His flesh tore. When I think about what Jesus went through for me, I could never go back on Him, God helping me. He cried out there, “Father, Father, why

ABOUT THE COVER

Behold a portrait of Jesus Christ bearing His cross on His way up to Golgotha. He suffered for us all. But why did the Father require such a price for our redemption? We trust that through these pages God’s perfect plan will be clearly seen.



THE WAY OF TRUTH
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Devoted to the gospel of our loving Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave freely His life-blood, to save us from our many sins, to sanctify our fallen nature and to bring into one body all true believers, by whose stripes we are healed.

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—Gregory E. Tyler, Editor

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hast thou forsaken me?” There He was hanging between heaven and earth, forsaken by the disciples, forsaken by humanity, and now even seemingly forsaken by His Father. Why? Because we deserved that banishment, we deserved to be forsaken. And He was suffering what we deserved. He suffered, He bled, and then at the ninth hour He cried out, “It is finished. Into thy hands I commend my spirit.” He died. The disciples placed Him in a tomb. But the tomb could not hold Him! He came forth on the third day just as He said He would.

After some days of revealing Himself, He ascended into heaven. I believe it! He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. Beloved, the gospel message is so wonderful that not only did Jesus die and was buried, but on the third day He came forth from the grave triumphant over sin and death and hell. That didn’t end the story—He ascended into heaven right before the disciples’ eyes, and even now He is at the right hand of the Father. The scripture says He is seated at the right hand of the Father.

Hebrews 8:1 says, “Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.”

Hebrews 10:12, “But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.”

The expression “sat down” is used in connection with Christ’s work for us. The tabernacle and the temple had no seats. The priests performed their work standing. This meant their work was never finished. The high priest entered the holy of holies year after

year. The Aaronic priesthood never finished its work. However, when Christ atoned for our sins He entered the heavenly sanctuary with His blood, and He was seated at the right hand of the Father signifying the satisfaction of the Father for the work that He did, and the fact that it is finished once and for all.

Though His work on Earth is finished, Jesus is seated at the right hand of God for a purpose: “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

So there you have it. This same Jesus is alive today and awaits our prayers. He is waiting to make intercession for us. He is our Advocate.

Romans 8:34 says, “Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”

This living Christ wants a personal relationship with each one of us. So remember that though He finished the work He had before Him while here on Earth, and though the plan of redemption was finished, He is still working on behalf of His children, for He is “seated at the right hand of God.” †

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THE POETRY PAGE

JESUS PRAYS

William B. Tappan

'Tis midnight; and on Olive's brow
The star is dimmed that lately shone:
'Tis midnight; in the garden now
The suffering Savior prays alone.

'Tis midnight; and, from all removed,
The Savior wrestles lone with fears;
Even that disciple whom He loved
Heeds not his Master's grief and tears.

'Tis midnight; and, for others' guilt,
The Man of Sorrows weeps in blood;
Yet He who hath in anguish knelt
Is not forsaken by His God.

'Tis midnight; and from ether plains
Is borne the song that angels know;
Unheard by mortals are the strains
That sweetly soothe the Savior's woe.

THE WONDERFUL STORY

Charles H. Gabriel

O sweet is the story of Jesus!
The wonderful Savior of men,
Who suffered and died for the sinner—
I'll tell it again and again!

He came from the brightest of glory,
His blood as a ransom He gave
To purchase eternal redemption,
And Oh, He is mighty to save!

His mercy flows on a like a river,
His love is unmeasured and free;
His grace is forever sufficient,
It reaches and purifies me.

CALVARY

Mrs. D. Jaques

Sinners, turn to Calvary's mountain:
See the purple flowing tide;
View the never-failing fountain
Opened in Immanuel's side;
See Him hanging, bleeding, weeping—
For your sins He bleeds, He dies!
Ah! you careless still are sleeping!
Wake by His expiring cries!

Trembling sinners, burdened, sighing,
Cast your weight beneath the cross!
If your sins are with Him dying,
And all gain you count but loss;
Join your penitential wailing,
With the Savior's deeper groan;
His compassion never failing,
Loudly speaks in that last moan.

Christian, turn to Calvary's mountain;
Take your cares and leave them there;
While you wash in that blessed fountain,
You shall be divinely fair.
Tempted soul, or pierced with sorrow,
Lay your griefs within His heart;
Peace and ease your pain shall follow,
Precious balm His wounds impart.

THE LORD IS RISEN

Thomas Hastings

How calm and beautiful the morn
That gilds the sacred tomb,
Where once the Crucified was borne
And veiled in midnight gloom!
Oh, weep no more the Savior slain!
The Lord is risen—He lives again!

Ye mourning saints, dry every tear
For your departed Lord;
"Behold the place; He is not here!"
The tomb is all unbarred;
The gates of death were closed in vain;
The Lord is risen—He lives again!

Now cheerful to the house of prayer
Your early footsteps bend;
The Savior will Himself be there,
Your Advocate and Friend.
Oh, weep no more your comforts slain!
The Lord is risen—He lives again! ✠



"And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

—Acts 1:10, 11.



keep your heart pure. Forgive others.

This month we have an article written by Bro. Tom Harris from our local congregation. May the Lord bless this young man.

In Christ's love,
Sis. Crystal Gossard

THE CHURCH OF GOD

By Bro. Tom Harris

WHAT IS the Church of God? First, let us think about what the Church of God is not.

The Church of God is not Bro.

Greg's church in Hagerstown, or Bro. Shippy's church in Jamaica, or Bro. Sanford's church in Mississippi, or Sis. Meldy's church in the Philippines. The Church of God is not the Pope's church. It is not ruled by any man. The Church of God is not even a building.

Let's look at Ephesians 1:22, 23: "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body ..." The Church of God is the body of Christ. Its members are those who are saved, those who have been born again and given a new life. Jesus told Nichodemus in John 3, that unless a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. So the Church of God is not a building; it is a group of people, a body. The Church of God is comprised of every saved person on this earth, no matter where they are. Every person on this earth who is serving God to the best of their knowledge, who is living to all they know to be truth, is a member of the body of Christ and the Church of God. I Corinthians 12:12-14: "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, ... whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many."

What are some characteristics that distinguish the Church of God? I Corinthians 12:25, 26 says, "... but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it." I believe the Church of God is manifested in those verses. One of the ways in which you can distinguish the Church of God is by the care that the members have for each other. This holds true for any Church of God congregation. Within the body



of Christ, there is a level of care, compassion, and love that no other organization can match.

Within the Church of God, all members are significant. I Corinthians 12:20, 21: "But now are they many members, yet one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you." There are no insignificant members in the Church of God. Every member is important. There is no prideful standing on rank or position in the Church of God. Indeed, we read of Christ Himself in Hebrews 2:11, "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." We see that even Jesus did not stand on rank, but He set an example of humility.

While Jesus may not have been ashamed to call us brethren, we do know from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Head of His church. He was the One who purchased it, and therefore He has the right of ownership and the position of the Leader and Head. Acts 20:28, "... to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." By giving His life, Jesus made it possible for us to be saved and to be members of the body of Christ.

I Corinthians 12:18 says, "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him." It is Jesus who enables us to become members of the body of Christ, and it is He who places us as He sees fit. A position in the Church of God is not a job that is applied for. Qualifications are not gained through school or training. We read of Paul in I Corinthians 2, "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. ... And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." Words mean nothing if the Spirit of God is not behind them, and the Spirit of God is not something which is taught. It is something which is given. In the same way, positions in the body of Christ, God's church, are not positions appointed by men but by God. He places the members as He sees fit.

What happens when you become a member of the Church of God? Being a member of the body of Christ has numerous advantages. One of the biggest advantages is that we have access to the numerous promises of God. Promises of stability, strength, peace, and joy. There are promises for all kinds of different situations. I have personally claimed so many promises over the years. One of my favorite promises is found in II Timothy 1:7: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." In this promise I have found motivation, encouragement, confidence, and strength. Being a part of the body of Christ grants you the privilege to claim these promises for yourself.

Being a member of the body of Christ also implies that we are the children of God. Romans 8:16 says, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." We are brothers with Christ. If this be the case, then we are also heirs with Christ. Titus 3:7: "That being justified by his grace, we should

be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” We are granted the same privileges as a child of God.

Being a member of the body of Christ also entails a friendship—an incredible friendship. A good friend is one that will listen, give advice, tell you to grow up, tell you to get over it and keep going, and protect you if needed. Every quality that makes a good friend is covered in Jesus. This is one of the biggest advantages of being a Christian—having the friendship of Jesus Christ. It is a friendship that we have instantaneous access to. We can access to this friendship at any time through prayer.

WHO CAN ENTER THE CHURCH OF GOD?

Hebrews 2:9: “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.” II Peter 3:9: “... not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” We see that it was the plan of Jesus to die for all, with the desire that no one perish. Jesus came to Earth with the desire that no one miss the great gift which He brought. Salvation is available for all. It was available for me. If you are saved, it was available for you, and if you’re not saved, then it is available for you. There are those who say that only a predestined few who are going to heaven, and the best we can do is hope that we are in that number. This is not the case. The verses that we just read show that salvation is for all.

HOW DOES ONE ENTER THE CHURCH OF GOD?

First of all, membership is not granted by any man. It is not granted by any board of individuals. John 14:6: “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me.” We also read in I Timothy 2:5 that there is “one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” It is only through Jesus that one can become saved and enter the Church of God.

The first step in entering the Church of God is belief; belief that God sent Jesus into the world to bring salvation. But it doesn’t just take belief. Many people will say they believe in God, but they don’t have salvation. In James we read that even the devils believe in God, so what else does it take? As we read earlier from II Peter, He is “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” It takes repentance to enter the Church of God. Acknowledgment that up to the present point, the life you are living is not pleasing to God.

Entering God’s church also requires submission. This is difficult for most people. Many see submission to God as weakness. I remember struggling myself with the knowledge that I needed to submit my life to God. Even though I knew that I was helpless in myself, I still found it so difficult to trust anyone else with my life. Since having submitted to God, I can assure you it is the best thing I have ever done.

Submission does not imply weakness. It only means that you realize your need of help. The Christian is not a weak person. Again, “For God hath not given us [Christians] the spirit of fear, but of power, and love,

and of a sound mind.” Our strength comes from God. If God be for us, who can be against us?

There is one more point I would like to make: entering the Church of God, becoming a Christian, requires more than being a good person. Let us read Matthew 19:16-22. I feel such a burden when I read this story, because it points out the truth that it takes more than a good life to receive salvation: “And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.”

It is obvious that this young man had lived a good life. When Jesus listed the commandments, the young man said he had done all of them since he was a boy. Then, he asked a simple question, “What lack I yet?” He knew something important was missing in his life that was keeping him from completely following Jesus. If only more people would ask themselves this question. Jesus told him that the riches he had acquired meant too much to him. This young man lived a good life, but he had not submitted himself completely to God. When he found this out, he went away sorrowful, for he had great riches. He went away unsaved, not willing to submit all to God.

One thing is all it takes to keep us out of the kingdom of God. One thing between ourselves and God will prevent us from receiving salvation. I believe that a lot of people realize they are missing something in their relationship with Jesus. When they discover that a complete relationship will require them to give something up, it is too much for them, so they ignore it. They harden their conscience to their lack until it doesn’t bother them anymore. They may continue living a good life, but it is not a Christian life. We must be careful that nothing comes between us and God.

In summary, the Church of God is not simply a building, it not simply a title, but it is the body of Christ. All who are saved and living for God are members. Membership is open for anyone; however, membership is not given by any person, but by Jesus. One enters the church by believing in Jesus and submitting his life to Him. ✚

VIEW OUR WORSHIP SERVICES LIVE!

As many of our readers know, we can be found on the internet at www.wayoftruth.org where in addition to reading past issues and other information, you can view our general services every Sunday LIVE at 10:40 A.M. and 6:00 P.M. E.S.T. Enjoy Spirit-filled singing and preaching. Also, our mid-week service at 7:00 P.M. Wednesdays is aired live. Tune in and worship with us!

Why Did Jesus’ Suffering Please God?

2019 Cayman Convention Message by Bro. Harley McClung

GOD HAS given us another lovely, lovely day to be in Cayman and to be a part of this wonderful convention. We truly have been sitting in heavenly places, and God has blessed us richly.

We’re happy to be here. We wouldn’t be here without the invitation that Bro. James so graciously gave to us. Your hospitality here is second to none. We always, always feel a very, very warm welcome. You make us feel very glad to be here, so we appreciate coming to work with you and with the other saints who came from other places. We love you all, and it’s a delight to be a worker together with you and our God.

We’re here tonight to do our little bit to try to point out some things to you if you have not yet chosen the upward way, and to help you to see what God has done for you to make heaven your home. God has made us all free moral agents to choose what path we want to walk on. The way we’re traveling is a matter of our decisions. It is really a difficult task to persuade men because it seems like some people have their minds made up to take the wrong path. Paul ran into it. Jesus witnessed it, but Peter said, “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.”

If you have your Bibles, we ask you to turn to a familiar passage of scripture found in Isaiah, chapter 53, verses 6-12: “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. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

Verse 10 of Isaiah 53 that I just read, says, “Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him;” so tonight, I entitle my thoughts by asking, “Why Did Jesus’ Suffering Please God?” Why would God (whom John said, “is love”), the loving Father, the One that is so merciful, so kind, so good would want to see His Son suffer? Why would any father want to see his son suffer? “Yet it

pleased the Lord to bruise him.” Well, I don’t know about you, but that seems somewhat of a mystery. A *mystery* is “seemingly something unknown or obscure.”

We live in a world where there are a lot of mysteries. Maybe it’s because I’m not too educated. Maybe it’s because I don’t know so much that so many things are a mystery to me; but I have to tell you, there are just some things that puzzle me. We will live in a world today where there is so much technology, and I guess it puzzles me now that it seems to all of us that we just can’t do without it.

Have you ever thought about what it would be like to be without our cell phones? I don’t know about you, but the cell phone is a mystery to me. I mean, it really is! Do you know I can take it and touch certain numbers and reach all the way over to the Philippine Islands? Not only can I talk to someone over there, but I can see the person. Do you know what is so much more amazing? The person can also see me with this little device. Isn’t that a mystery? Well, somebody somewhere developed it, engineered it, and invented it. So, somebody somewhere knows how it operates, but I’m going to tell you tonight, I don’t. I don’t know how this operates, but I’m thankful to have it. I don’t know what I would do without it. Maybe sometimes I should try to do without it because at times it can be very time consuming. So there are a lot of mysteries in the world.

When we consider the mysteries that are in the world today, we get so puzzled; but in reality, a lot of people don’t really have any idea or any desire to dig into the great mystery of godliness. Paul said, “Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” So while technology is a mystery, so is the mystery of godliness.

Women are also a mystery! There was a book written, which says, “Women are from Venus; men are from Mars.” Do you know what that tells me? They’re different. Women are different from men and men are different from women. That’s the way God made us. That’s the way God intended it to be. Someone said, “Opposites attract.” God made a woman then, to be a woman; God made a man then, to be a man. Let me tell you something: what is a real mystery to me is why a woman wants to be a man and a man wants to be a woman. We’re living in a day and time that they want us to believe that it’s normal. So, I’m telling you, for people to believe that it’s normal, it’s an abomination. It’s unacceptable to God. We live in a world where, if we preach and teach against it, then people are going to look down on us, but Sis. Jutan told us this morning, “You just preach the Word. You just tell the people.” If we don’t tell the people, who will?



THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS

When it comes to the mystery of godliness, it's really a mystery to people because they know nothing about righteous living. They know nothing about what it would really take to get on, and stay on the strait and narrow way that leads them to heaven. God help us to see what is the way and have a desire deep within our hearts to get on it and stay on it. We can have that if we come to the place where we have a little understanding of this great mystery of godliness. I know and realize that even, as Christians, we don't have all of the understanding. We only see through a glass dimly, but there is a day and time coming when we're going to be able to see clearer, if we live right and do what God tells us to do.

Let me tell something tonight, the blood of Jesus is all-sufficient. It is all-powerful. It has all the means to help us to get our hearts pure and clean. It is there to help us to get in a place where we can be reconciled to God, and then live the holy life so that one day we can see Him as He is. When we see Him as He is, then we will see that we're like Him. I want to be like Him when He comes. A mystery, "seemingly something unknown or obscure." Isaiah 53:10, "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him." Why would the heavenly Father want to bruise His Son, Jesus? That's a deep thought. That's something that all of us really, really ought to ponder deeply when we read of Gethsemane.

THE SUFFERING OF JESUS

I read a book, not too long ago, of what Jesus went through in the Garden of Gethsemane. Many times people read over that account but they do it too lightly. Bro. Leston said this morning, "We need to read and study and really put our hearts into what the Scriptures really teach." You need to read the account of Jesus in the garden. Jesus went through some suffering in the garden. Someone said that His suffering in the garden was even greater than the cross. In the garden, Jesus was considering what was before Him and He was considering His life. Listen to me, Jesus loved life just as much as we love life. He wanted to live. He didn't want to die, but He knew what was before Him. He said, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." In other words, "If there's some other way, if there's something else that could be done, and if there's some other way to redeem a lost and dying world, let this cup pass from Me."

The second time, Jesus prayed the same prayer, but the third time, it became real serious with Him. Even though He was Immanuel, even though He was the Messiah, even though He was Christ, even though He was God come down from heaven, He still had on Him the robe and the veil of human flesh. Jesus had feelings. He suffered just like you and I would suffer. When He was in the garden and went to His Father the third time, and He got down on His knees and cried, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me," the Bible says that He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood.

Another book that I read was talking about when someone gets so deep, so deep in agony, his skin can

actually secrete blood. I don't know if that was what the Bible was talking about, but this one thing I know, Jesus was in agony and in great, great suffering there because He was in the midst of making a decision Himself. "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not my will, but as you want; and Father, what do you want from Me?" "Well, my Son, I want you to suffer. It pleases Me for you to suffer." That's what Isaiah said: "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him." This is Isaiah's prophecy of Christ's suffering. So, when we read of the account in Gethsemane, we need to read it in depth. We need to study it. We need to give due consideration to it so that we can get a little grasp of this great mystery of godliness.

Jesus went through extreme scourging. In passing, let me say this, and I don't want to be offensive in any way: some of the things that we teach, or see that the Bible teaches, and we advocate it, it causes some people to get offended. "Oh, there he goes again! He's going to be talking about modesty. He's going to talk about me having to carry a cross. He's going to talk about things that I have to do." Yes, we have things to do. What did Jesus do? What is it that we have to do in any way, shape or form, that can compare to what Jesus did? The suffering that He did! If Jesus were to ask us to stand on our heads for weeks and weeks and weeks, it wouldn't compare to what He went through, but He wouldn't ask that of us. Everything that Jesus asks of us in the Word of God is so reasonable. It is so reasonable! He doesn't ask of us anything that we can't do. If He asks us something that we need to do, it's for our benefit and to bless us. If it seems hard or difficult, He always gives us the grace to help us. He gives us the power and the strength, so there are no excuses. He did go through extreme scourging.

There was a crown of thorns placed on Jesus' head and He went through the street in open shame. I believe that Jesus was embarrassed. I'll tell you something tonight: one of the hardest things for me to endure is embarrassment. Have you ever really, really been embarrassed? It will take you low. Jesus had to suffer open shame, the intense grief, the heartbreak of His mother's tears, the physical agony of the cross, and the absence of a comforting Father. He hung there, writhing in pain. It came down to the time where, I don't know if He looked around a little bit, or was considering this or that, but He realized His Father wasn't with Him. "I'm here all alone. I'm hanging here. It's just Me. I'm doing all of this suffering. I'm doing all of this by Myself. Where's my Father?" He said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him." It caused Him grief—the physical agony of the cross—the absence of a comforting Father.

JESUS SUFFERED WILLINGLY

How can we harmonize these teachings with a holy, loving God? How could the Father get any pleasure at all out of seeing His Son going through this? Well, there's an answer to this mystery, and there's something that you, Dear Sinner Friends, need to deeply consider because it is not God's will that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Let me tell you something, Jesus didn't have to do this. He could have

called 10,000 angels and they would have come to rescue Him, but where would you have been? Where would your hope be tonight if Jesus had come down off the cross? If He had decided He wasn't going to the cross, where would our hope be tonight?

How could Jesus' suffering ever be considered a pleasing thing to the Father or to anybody? The only answer that we can only hope to obtain a little bit is that "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." That means "God is love." He loved mankind so much that while we were His enemies, He sent His only begotten Son to suffer this agony so that we could have a hope, so that we could get out of the horrible plight that we sold ourselves in, and so that we could have the power invested to us through Jesus Christ to come out of that horrible condition. No wonder David said, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" Sinner Friend, who are you that God considers and loves so much that He wants you to be saved to the point where He was willing to sacrifice His only Son? "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" The only answer is that God loves you. He loves us. That's a mystery.

THE MYSTERY OF LOVE

When we look at this sin-sick, sin-cursed world that we live in, how could a holy God, a righteous God, love man who is obeying and actually honoring His arch-enemy? How could God love someone who does that? Well, that's a mystery; but this one thing for sure all of us need to know, *He does love us*. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The problem is: very few people will actually believe what the Scriptures teach of God's great love.

Someone might say, "Well, I understand that God loves me, and I'm thankful that He does." You need to be more than just thankful; you need to be more than just grateful. We all need to be in a place where we believe to the point that we're willing to do something about it. Listen to me, *faith* (or believing) is an action word that produces action.

I was in Jamaica one time, and I asked a person, "Do you love the Lord?" She said, "Yes, I love the Lord." I asked her, "Are you a Christian?" "No, I'm not a Christian." That's a conflict. You can't really love God unless you serve Him. John said, "If we love Him, we will serve Him." That is the proof of our love. So tonight, if we look and see all that God has done for us, and to us, and we can't love Him in return, what path are we on? What then is our ultimate destiny? Where are we going?

Someone asked, "Well, I get it that God loves us, but why couldn't God just save people without forcing His Son to the cross?" Well, to some degree, I suppose, that might be a reasonable question; but what we need to see and understand is how horrible in the sight of God sin is. People don't look at sin like God looks at sin. Actually, a lot of people in the world today who are religious don't consider sin so bad. As matter of fact,

there are religions in the world today that believe you can't be freed from sin and you can't be freed from what is an abomination to almighty God. Listen to me, if that's the case, Jesus went to the cross in vain because He shed His life's blood there, and His life's blood has power in it. It has power to save a soul from sin.

There are people in the world today that will put Jesus' blood right in the same category as bulls and goats. Under the Old Covenant, they had to bring bulls and goats to atone for their sins, but we find clearly in Hebrews that the blood of bulls and goats could not make the comer thereunto perfect. So anyone who says you have to live a life of sin is putting Jesus' blood in the same category. Sin is so repulsive to God that not just any sacrifice will do. God has set in motion the New Covenant. Under the Old Covenant, God allowed bulls and goats to atone for sin, and He winked at ignorance, but He doesn't any longer.

THE NEED TO REPENT

Dear Ones, God is now calling everyone to repentance. Repentance is not just saying, "I'm sorry." Repentance means so much more. It's getting off the downward road and getting on the upward road by a decision; not just any decision, but a committed decision, a determined decision. "I was serving sin and Satan, but I'm not going to do that, by the grace and the power of God, anymore. I'm now going to, by the power of His blood and His grace, serve Him. I'm going to do it, no matter what comes my way." This is the reason that it pleased the Father to send Jesus Christ to do all that He did to enable us to be able to make this decision, to make this commitment so that now we can be reconciled to the Father and be brought back to the rightful Owner of all of us. All of us belong to God by the right of creation, and He has sent His only Son to shed His life's blood to redeem us.

We need to see that the Redeemer, Jesus Christ, has paid the price. He paid the price there on Calvary that you and I could not pay. You don't have the money in all the world to pay for your salvation. Even billionaires with all of their money cannot buy their salvation. It took the price that Jesus paid. We need to believe and accept that tonight. Many people are giving so little attention to this, but so much attention to the world.

I talked earlier about how handy-dandy the cell phone is. I believe God has given man such intelligence to create things like this. Many people are putting more time into the use of the cell phone than they ought to be. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" People are so busy, busy, going here and there, doing this and that, trying to gain just a little bit more. If a rich man, with all that he has, loses his soul when he leaves this world, he's going to have nothing.

Tonight, we need to see what Jesus did for us. See Him there hanging on the cross. He did that so that you and I could be free from the power and tyranny of sin and Satan, and so that we could serve Him and be what He wants us to be. The Lord gave us a covenant. He gave those in the Old Testament a covenant, but He has given us a better covenant, a new covenant, a

glorious covenant. In the Old Testament, He said, “See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish” (Deuteronomy 30:15-18).

This better covenant given by the Lord is a covenant of grace, whereby He has extended to us mercy. Through Jesus’ mercy that has come by His sacrifice and by His blood being spilt there on Calvary to pay the price we could not pay, we can now become Christians; not just having a profession, but Christians in every sense of the word.

There was a man who was a store clerk, and as he saw a minister passing by, he said to him, “Sir, I have a question.” “Yes.” He asked, “How much religion do I need to keep me from going to hell?” You know, there are a lot of people in the world today who might not ask that question verbally, but they might be asking that question with their actions. Do you know what this man was really doing? He was a double-cheat. He was trying to cheat the devil out of his soul going to hell, and he was trying to cheat God out of his allegiance. He really didn’t want to walk in the way that was provided for us that would bless us every single day of our lives. He didn’t really want that because he didn’t understand the mystery. He didn’t comprehend the value and the beauty of it because he allowed Satan to put some blinders on him so that he couldn’t see the value of true and genuine Christianity.

We’re not here tonight trying to get anybody to join church, or to get someone to sign a decision card, or to turn over a new leaf. We’re here tonight trying to get you to see the value of accepting Jesus Christ as your Savior and the Lord of your life, to be a Christian in every sense of the word, and then live the good life. Jesus said, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” A glorious life, a life where you will have deep, deep contentment; deep, deep joy; deep, deep peace, and a deep communion with our eternal God.

CONCLUSION

Why did it please the Father to see His Son suffer? So that you and I could have this relationship with God. God wants a relationship with us. He wants us to be His children. He wants to be our Father. He wants to walk and talk with us. He wants to show us things of great, great beauty. He wants to come one day and take us by the hand and lead us to glory. There’s coming a day when all of us are going to face this Lord who suffered so greatly as He did. We find in Revelation that every eye is going to behold Him. Even those that pierced His side will stand before this righteous Jesus who did everything for us so that we could have a hope.

When we think about it pleasing the Father, it now gives us a hope, because He knew if His Son didn’t take that sacrifice, then we would never have a hope. Jesus

went to the garden, He went through that mock trial, He went through all the embarrassment, and all the pain and agony of the cross so that He could pay the price for our salvation.

Tonight, the question is, what are you going to do with what Jesus did for you? Are you going to receive it or reject it? This is really important because the Scriptures tell us, “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void.” It’s going to cause all of us here to make a decision, whether to accept Him or to reject Him.

We’re going to give an invitation song to see if you will come and taste and see that the Lord is good. By tasting to see that the Lord is good, you’ll get just a little glimpse of this great and wonderful mystery that has been given to all of us so that we can see how good God is, how much He cares for us, and how He wants us to be saved. It’s not His will that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. When the invitation is given, please give consideration to what Jesus did for you, and what price the Father paid for your redemption.

May God bless you. †



SANCTIFICATION
GOD'S COMMAND

Scriptures: Psalm 119:89; Hebrews 12:14; Ephesians 5:18; Matthew 25:4, 10; Genesis 17:1; Psalm 24:3, 4.

Psalm 119:89 For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven.
Hebrews 12:14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.
Ephesians 5:18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.
Matthew 25:4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

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.

Genesis 17:1 And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

Psalm 24:3 Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?

4 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

Memory Verse: Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.—I Peter 1:16.

Aim: To show that God intends that His Word operate in the human heart.

INTRODUCTION

WE ARE God’s creation, and the Word tells us that we were created for His pleasure. Every good thing that we have came from the hands of our loving heavenly Father; so why should it seem at all

unreasonable for Him to prescribe the laws by which we should live? We must remember that He is all-wise and knows everything from the beginning to the end and that everything He does is for our good. We should indeed be very grateful for the privilege of having such a wise and all-powerful Being to guide us through our pilgrimage here on earth. This world is not our home, but we are merely strangers sojourning here for a few short years, preparing ourselves for the life to come. Let us ever remember that all of us have an eternity-bound soul and our greatest concern should be its welfare. Too many of us are paying too much attention to the welfare of our physical bodies and are neglecting the most important part of our being, our soul. What is our life? In terms of eternity, it is merely a vapor which appeareth for a little while and then vanisheth away. Just looking at this matter from the viewpoint of common sense and reasoning, wouldn’t it seem wise to have the greatest concern for our indestructible souls instead of our natural bodies, which are so soon to perish and return to the dust from which they came? How I wish I could indelibly impress upon the minds of everyone the deep truth of Jesus’ words to Martha, when He told her there was but one thing needful, and that was to know God and do His holy will! What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and then lose his soul in a never-ending hell? Nothing, absolutely nothing. This is, by far, the most important question that confronts us human beings, and it deserves our most serious and earnest consideration.

MEDITATIONS

GOD’S WORD IS EVERLASTING—Psalm 119:89—For ever, O Lord, thy word—The Word has always existed, for we read in St. John 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word.” And it shall never pass away, for Jesus said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.” God has ordained that we should live by His Word and obey His every command, for it is His Word that shall judge us in the last great day. Thus, it behooves us to read and meditate upon it diligently so that we may know what His commands are. It is not safe to merely follow the preacher, for there are too many false prophets in the world today. We are commanded to be careful how we hear and to search the Scriptures to see whether or not the things we hear are the truth. This is the only way we can be sure of the truth, and it is the truth that shall make us free, free from sin and the entanglements of the world.

GOD REQUIRES A HOLY LIFE—Hebrews 12:14—Follow peace with all men—We are to live in peace with our fellow men, that is, we must so conduct our lives that we do nothing to gender strife or, as Paul said, “As much as lieth within you, live peaceably with all men.” **And holiness—**Here is a very plain and easy-to-be-understood statement that without holiness no man shall see the Lord. To be holy merely means to be free from sin. God hates sin, and no one with sin in his soul can possibly enter heaven. Sin is a transgression of any known command of God; and if we love God, we will keep His commandments and thus be perfect, as in Matthew 5:48, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”

GOD REQUIRES A SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE—Ephesians 5:18—Be not drunk with wine—To spend your money for wine and strong drink is wrong, for the Word says, “Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfieth not?” Also, “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.” The drink habit is one of the worst evils that curses this fair land of ours, and the saddest part of it is, that it is increasing at an alarming rate. **But be filled with the Spirit—**It is the Spirit who gives the Christian strength to live a life that will be pleasing in the sight of God, for He has promised to fill the hungry soul. It is God’s will that everyone be filled with the Holy Ghost, and He is ready and willing to give the Holy Spirit to him who asks in faith believing, as we read in Luke 11:13, “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” It is the Spirit who gives us grace to stand and to be overcomers over all the forces of evil. We are all familiar with the great change that was wrought in the life of Peter when the Spirit came in. Before, he followed Christ afar off; and when the test came, he denied his Lord. But after the day of Pentecost, he had the power and courage to stand before the powers of evil and to say, “We ought to obey God rather than men.”

THE PARABLE—Matthew 25:4—But the wise took oil—If we be wise, we will want everything that God has for us, and we will earnestly strive to go on unto perfection, as commanded in Hebrews 6:1, or in other words, seek the experience of sanctification. If we do not do this, sooner or later the oil will burn out of our lamps, and our lights will go out and leave us with merely an empty profession. **Verse 10—And the door was shut—**We must keep our experience with God up-to-date at all times, for we know not what another day may bring forth. Jesus tells us to watch and pray, for we know not what hour the Son of man cometh. When God shuts the door of opportunity, no one can open it, and so far as we are concerned, it will forever be closed. What a sad awakening it will be for the millions who are ushered into the presence of God with sin in their souls as they hear the saddest of all words, “Depart from me into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”

GOD REQUIRES PERFECTION—Genesis 17:1—Walk before me, and be thou perfect—Here is another perfectly plain command that refutes the present-day belief among so many nominal Christians that we must sin more or less every day. God told Abram to walk before Him and be perfect, or in other words, he was to be perfect in his obedience to every command of God. We have one recorded instance of his implicit obedience in his preparation to offer up his son, Isaac, as a sacrifice. He believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. We, too, can be perfect in our generation, if we keep all the known commands of God. If we love God with all our hearts, this will be easy to do, for the Word says that His commandments are not grievous.

GOD REQUIRES A PURE HEART—Psalm 24:3—Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?—Or who shall be saved or have the approval of God upon his life? **Verse 4—He that hath clean hands—**The plan of salvation has not changed with the passing years, for in David’s day, in order to have God’s approval, people had to have “clean hands” that were not defiled by the stain of sin. They also were required to have a pure heart, a heart full of love and compassion for God and their fellow men. The vain and the proud have always been an abomination in the sight of God. It is the meek and humble souls who are pleasing in the sight of God. The Word says that Moses was the meekest of men, and we know that he was greatly used of the Lord in delivering the Israelites from Egyptian bondage. At first, King Saul was very meek and humble, and the approval of the Lord was upon him; but in later years he lost his humility, and the Lord left him. In the end he committed suicide. Let us ever cultivate a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price, and remember the words of Jesus, “Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.” **Nor sworn deceitfully—**God wants us to deal honestly with our fellow men and never to take any unfair advantage of anyone, or in other words, we must do unto others as we would they do unto us.

CONCLUSION

The study of this lesson should impress our minds with the reasonableness of God in desiring to guide our lives as it pleases Him. It should help us to realize that everything God does is right and cannot be improved upon. If we are submissive to Him, everything He does will work out for our own good. He has given us His Word to live by. How happy we will be if we only heed His every command willingly! Remember, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,” and that is God’s holy Word, or the Bible. We have within us a soul that only the pure teachings of God’s Word can satisfy; and unless it receives this spiritual nourishment, it will die. I do hope these comments will constrain you to leave nothing undone that will help you to live a life in tune with God’s holy Word.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Why should God have the right to order our lives?
2. What is the most important thing in life?
3. How long shall the Word of God endure?
4. What is meant by holiness?
5. What is meant by a Spirit-filled life?
6. What is the significance of the oil in the parable of the ten virgins?
7. How can we be perfect in the sight of God?
8. What benefit have you personally derived from the study of this lesson? †

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WINNING A CROWN

By the late C. W. Naylor

Part XX
How to Walk to Please God

SOMETIMES people think that the Lord is a hard master. They are ready to say, like the servant, in the parable of the Pounds, “I feared thee, because thou art an austere man” (Luke 19:21). The motive of the service of such persons is fear, not love. They serve God because they are afraid punishment will come upon them if they do not. They look at the results of not doing instead of looking at the results of doing. Their religion is a negative thing, and can have little of joy in it. Their service is a forced service, and not really and truly a willing service. If they do not serve God, hell will be their doom; therefore, they try to do that which is right or which they esteem to be right.

God is not a hard master. His requirements are all reasonable. Thus says Micah: “What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (Micah 6:8). Is there any hardship in that? anything that we cannot gladly do? No, God is not a hard master; He is a God of loving-kindness and of tender mercy. Paul calls our service to Him a “reasonable service.” God is always just; He is always kind; He always makes all the allowance that He ought to make for us. If we are weak, He will strengthen us; if we are ignorant, He will give us of His wisdom; if we grow faint, He will uphold us; if He is kind to the unthankful and the evil, how much more so will He be to those who love Him and try earnestly to serve Him. He is not hard to please, and if we really try to please Him, we shall not only succeed, but have the testimony of His Spirit in our hearts that He is well pleased with us.

He can be pleased only with that which is right. He hates iniquity; He hates every evil thing and can find no pleasure whatever in such. If, then, we would please Him, we must depart from evil; must shut it out of our lives; must allow none of our conduct to be evil. God is pleased with that which is good and all that is good. In order to please Him, therefore, we have only to do that which is good and right. Some people think that the Christian life is an unnatural and hard life; they seem to think that we must put ourselves in a sort of strait-jacket and live a life of bondage. They look at the negative aspect of the life and think that the life of the Christian consists in not doing and not being and not feeling and not thinking this, that, and the other. They feel that they must shut themselves off from that which they naturally desire. This is looking at things from the wrong angle. The Christian life is a positive life; it consists in doing and being. It is not an unnatural or forced life; it is not a strained life. It is not a life in which we have to repress all our normal desires; on the contrary, it is a life wherein our desires are brought into conformity to the will of God so that we can carry out these desires in a natural and normal and holy way,

and find in carrying them out our truest pleasure and God’s greatest glory.

The Christian life is not a repression of desire. It is the revolution of desire, so that our desires become holy desires and our purposes become holy purposes. If we try to live Christians without this revolution, we shall have a hard and irksome task. That is why so many professors say they have such a “hard row to hoe.” The reason why they find little or no joy in Christian service is because their lives have not been transformed by the power of God. Their life is lived wholly in their own power. It is thus an unnatural and powerless life, one beset with many difficulties, and one which cannot be a real Christian life, but at best can be only a cold formality.

The Christian life is a life full of warmth and strength and beauty. The law of that life is love. We are to walk in love. To do this we must lay aside all selfish purposes. This is not hard if we really love. That is the question—Do we really love? Christ is our example in pleasing God. He said, “I do always those things that please him” (John 8:29). Why did He do this? and how was He able to do this? It was because He loved the Father with a pure and tender love; it was because He loved the things that the Father loved. The basis of all acceptable service is love. God could force us to serve Him had He chosen that way, but that service would never have satisfied the heart of God or the heart of man. Love, not force, is God’s method. He has not put us under compulsory law; He has left for us to choose whether we will serve Him or not. There is no harshness in His rule. He will not compel us. Jesus thus stated the foundation of God’s law: “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings” (John 14:21, 23, 24). If we love, we will serve, not because we must, but because we love. The only compulsion is the compulsion of love, and that, after all, is the strongest of all compulsion. If we love God, we desire with all our hearts and with all our strength to please Him. We shall seek throughout our lives to conform to His will in all the details and in all the aspects of our lives. It is not hard for love to serve; in fact, love finds its greatest delight in service. It is true that there is self-denial in service, but to love, self-denial is not bitter, but sweet. How gladly we lay ourselves out for those whom we love! and how sweet is the approval thus gained! The early Christians “took joyfully the spoiling of their goods.” They bore persecution of the bitterest kind and rejoiced. Why could they do this? Because they loved.

The power of love is illustrated by the following incident: A minister who was ill was lying on a couch one day while his little girl played around the room in her childish way. Presently he said to her, “Daughter, will you bring Papa a drink?” She went on with her playing as though she had not heard him. He repeated his request. She was all absorbed in her play, and said, “Oh, I don’t want to.” Her father said, “I thought you loved Papa.” Instantly she dropped her playthings, her

face lighted up, and she started, saying, “Oh, yes, Papa, I’ll go, I’ll go”; and quickly she ran and brought the desired drink. When her love was appealed to, her response was immediate. So God appeals to our love, and if that love is genuine, our response to Him will be ready.

The contemplation of God’s love and goodness is the strongest possible incentive to live holy. We love Him because He first loved us and gave Himself for us. When we behold how good and how kind He has been through all our lives, how He has borne with our evil ways and not cut us off, how He still offered us mercy day after day until finally He won our love—when we view all this, how strongly we are impelled to serve Him and how easy His service becomes! We do not wish to wound those whom we truly love.

We may find many things in the Christian life that are hard to do with our own strength, but we do not have to trust to our own strength alone. Paul, who had learned the secret of the Christian life, says, “Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me” (Galatians 2:20). Ah, that is the great secret of the life! That is what makes it easy, that is what makes it joyful, that is what makes it glorious—Christ liveth in us. Again, it is said, “It is God which worketh in you” (Philippians 2:13). The secret of a victorious life is permitting Him to work in us—submitting to Him that His will may be wrought in us, and not only submitting, but throwing our will actively with His, causing His will to be accomplished. Too many people try to live the Christian life without first becoming Christians. They take upon themselves a profession of religion, but they do not get Christ in their hearts. Their service is all a human service, and consequently it fails and comes short and is inadequate. Throw open your heart’s door. Let Christ come in to reign. Let Him be the power that worketh in you, and then you can live the kind of life that will please Him. To try in your own strength is but to fail. To succeed you must needs have His power joined with your power.

For a year and a half, the writer tried to be a Christian before he really became a Christian. It was his heart’s true purpose to serve God and do right, but alas, how often he came short! alas, how often he was involved in sin! Sometimes he felt that it was not worth trying any more, that only failure awaited him. At last he threw himself upon the mercy of God and received Jesus Christ into his life. What an unspeakably glorious change was wrought! He could now live—Christ could live in him; and for more than twenty-five years he has proved the Christian life to be an easy, a natural, and a happy life filled with the glory and grace of God. Christ broke the gravitation earthward and established a gravitation heavenward. From that time forward, service was delightful, and it has been his joy to follow Christ, and he knows what it is from personal experience to have the testimony of the Spirit of God in his heart that God is well pleased with him. He is not an isolated example. There are tens of thousands who know this in their own lives and hearts. They live this kind of life and have this kind of testimony. In fact, such is the outcome of a true Christian experience. If service is hard, it is from a lack of love. If service is imperfect,

it is from a lack of love. Therefore, let us love that we may serve, and serve because we love. †



Editor's Note: These questions and answers in this issue are taken from *The Way of Truth Question and Answer Book*, 1946-2001.

QUESTION: May I know whether the last supper we are observing now in remembrance of Christ is the same as the Passover observed by the Israelites?

ANSWER: It is not the same. We do not kill a lamb and do as they did. It was a full meal. The Passover Jesus observed with His disciples was the last such supper God recognized. Jesus is our "Passover Lamb." There in the upper room, after they had eaten the Passover meal, Jesus took bread and blessed it and gave, I would assume, a small piece to the eleven disciples—Judas had already gone out—and He also gave them a drink of the fruit of the vine. This is what Paul calls the "Lord's Supper" and this is what we observe.

QUESTION: What is the difference between the Passover and the unleavened bread? Should the Lord's Supper be eaten every Sunday the church meets?

ANSWER: The Passover was instituted in the land of Egypt. It was the first of the great annual feasts both in significance and time. It was to be observed the 14th day of the first month, Abib or Nisan, (March-April). See Leviticus 23:4, 5.

The feast of unleavened bread started on the 15th day and lasted for seven days—verse 6. During this time the Hebrews were to have NO leaven in their homes as well as not eating any leaven bread.

The Passover lamb was a type of Jesus Christ, our Passover Lamb. No bone was to be broken in the lamb, so no bone was broken in His body. The blood on the doorpost protected the children of Israel from the death angel—provided they were in the house—and thus covered by the blood.

If we are truly saved we are in the house of God, the Church of God, and are covered by the blood.

Leaven, in the New Testament, represents evil, malice, error. That is why Jesus told the disciples to "beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees" (Matthew 16:6).

Unleavened bread symbolizes purity, holiness, righteousness. The seven days represent our getting malice and evil out of our hearts and keeping it out. Seven is

a perfect number, so when we repent of our sins, get a true experience of salvation, then we are to live holy lives.

You will note the Passover meal was to include "bitter herbs," which represented our repentance of sin, but they were NOT to be eaten during the seven days of the feast. Once we have repented, been saved, we are to live holy.

There is nothing in the Bible that teaches we should eat the "Lord's Supper" every week. The Passover was observed once each year. Jesus said "as oft" as you eat the bread and drink the fruit of the vine, you show the Lord's death. But He did not say how often it should be.

QUESTION: Is it true that the bread is the symbol of the church and the wine the symbol of the kingdom of God?

ANSWER: No. When it comes to God's people there is no difference in the kingdom and church. The subjects in the kingdom are the members of the church. Christ is the King of the kingdom and the Head of the church.

Christ said the bread was a symbol of His body, and here He was not speaking of the church but His own physical body; and the wine was a symbol of His blood that was to be shed for the salvation of souls; the blood of the New Testament, or Covenant.

QUESTION: Jesus said, "It is finished" on the cross. What did He mean? Did He mean to say He finished the work before He ascended into heaven? Then why are so many people still innocent about the Word of God?

ANSWER: Jesus came into the world to accomplish the work His Father gave Him to do. This included His death on the cross. He purchased our salvation by His death and resurrection. He purchased healing for us by the stripes He suffered, and He purchased our sanctification by suffering death "outside the gates" of Jerusalem. He left nothing undone that the Father gave Him to do.

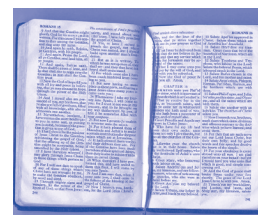
If you mean, by the last question, why are there people still uninformed as to the truth of the Word of God, Jesus gave His church the commission to preach the gospel to the world. The church still has that commission today. But, even as when Jesus was here on earth, "the laborers are few." There is much yet to be done.

QUESTION: We learned that Jesus died to save the world. How are we saved by His death? Could He not have saved the world while He was living?

ANSWER: God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit made the gospel plan before the world was created. They could have made it differently if they would have seen fit, but they didn't. As it is, the blood of the Son of God had to be shed, for without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. It took not only the death, but also the resurrection to complete the plan. Paul said, "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (I Corinthians 15:17). †

HOW TO STUDY THE WORD OF GOD

By Bro. Richard Lehman



FIRST and foremost: we must realize that truth must be revealed to the heart and soul through Jesus Christ. It is not because we *only* academically studied the Bible, and therefore we now believe we comprehended it. God is not a book! God "is" therefore, when asked about His name by Moses, He said "I am that I am." He wants to be respected and worshiped for all that *He is*, not just as a collection of words we academically study in a book.

The Bible is a book given by God, therefore we highly respect it and desire to know more about what it means, because it helps us *understand who God is*. And the Bible shows us what God expects from those who desire to obey and serve Him. An academic study can definitely help if the heart is contrite and sincere. Otherwise, understanding scripture will tend to make us proud, and by this same pride, we will deceive our own selves. "And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known of him.—I Corinthians 8:2, 3.

Do people know that God's love is alive in you? If so, they will sense God's presence within you, by the authority of God's love reaching to them and teaching them. "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"—II Corinthians 13:5.

Don't trust in your own capability to comprehend, nor someone else's ability to understand. God revives the understanding of those who humbly draw near to God, to walk with God. "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."—Isaiah 57:15.

And that takes a sincere desire to obey God, even if it requires that we may suffer for obedience, because that is how Jesus learned the depth of loving obedience; by what He suffered. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."—Hebrews 5:8, 9.

So to follow the Author of all things, and understand Him, you must also be willing to suffer for obedience. Otherwise, your understanding will be tainted by fleshly or worldly reasoning of your own thinking, or somebody else's. Obedience is the best way to show that you believe the Word, and to keep yourself from being deceived. "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself,

and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."—James 1:22-25.

To be able to see spiritual things beyond what is basic for your situation, you must be born from above (be saved from all your sins). To be able to start seeing and understand spiritual things, the power to receive forgiveness and deliverance from sin through Jesus' blood must first be revealed to your own heart and soul. "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."—John 3:3.

Then having experienced the salvation of your soul, you then will have eyes to see things you didn't see before. This is because it is only Jesus that can reveal truth. For Jesus spoke: "And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."—Matthew 18:3, 4.

This is both the choice of Jesus and His Father: that everyone first starts out as a humble newborn baby in Christ Jesus. And even as they grow up in Christ, they need to keep a humble childlike attitude. "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."—Matthew 11:25-30.

But don't start with studying the more difficult things in the Bible. Because the Scriptures teach us that we all start out like a newborn baby in Jesus Christ. A baby needs milk first, something that their newborn baby body can handle without vomiting it up again. Your newly born spirit can only handle the spiritual milk of the Word of God. "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."—I Peter 2:2.

Then, as time goes on, as you apply the Word of God to your life, you will understand more, and you will be able to receive more; even by things that you willingly suffer for obedience to the Word. "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power."—Ephesians 1:17-19.

So when you are more mature in Christ Jesus, then take heed how you go about your study, and order your

study according to the directions of God. “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”—II Timothy 2:15.

Don’t just study the Bible so that a man, or a group of people may approve you. Study to be “approved unto God” *first*. Then be careful that you study the Word thoroughly, comparing spiritual things with spiritual, and that you clearly understand the original context of the words that are in the Bible. “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, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”—II Timothy 3:16, 17.

By living the Word and comparing all of the Word, you will be “thoroughly furnished” for every good work. You will not be shallow in your understanding. Because if you allow yourself to become lukewarm towards God, you can become shallow like a newborn babe again. “Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”—Hebrews 5:11-14.

Put the Word to use in your life. Exercise yourself in it! You cannot become just a classroom student of the Word for your life. You must go out into the harvest for souls in some way, using the Word to win them. Then your spiritual senses will become clear and discerning. If you spent 40 years in a classroom learning the techniques and technicalities of swimming, you still would not know how to swim until you get into some water that is deeper than you are tall.

The same is true with using the Word in your life, and using the Word to win souls. You have to train yourself by doing, not just studying! And that includes stepping into some spiritual water that is deeper than you are, so that you can comprehend in a greater way who God is, and what He can do! “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.”—Ephesians 3:17-19.

Additionally, even after being saved for a while: if you get careless, you might end up allowing a little of the hardness of unbelief into your heart while you are in the middle of a difficult trial. “Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.”—Luke 24:25-27.

Keep your understanding of the Scriptures submitted to the Holy Spirit’s will. Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you into all truth. Jesus told us specifically that we would need the Holy Spirit to understand scripture. “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”—John 16:13, 14.

You can only know the deeper meaning of scripture through the work of the Holy Spirit in you and guiding you. “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”—I Corinthians 2:9-14.

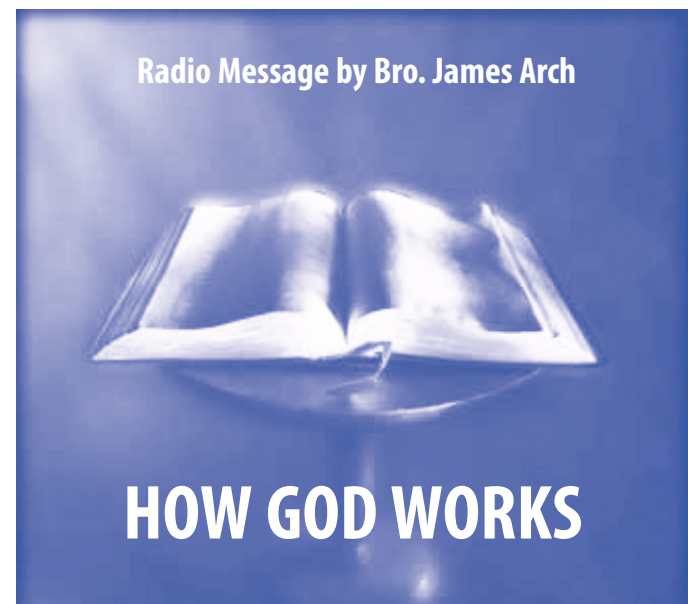
Finally, don’t manipulate the Word, or change it! It is God’s Word, not ours. “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”—II Peter 1:19-21.

If there is something in the Scriptures you don’t understand, then leave it alone! Simply be honest and let people know you are not sure of the understanding of that scripture. Do not feel pressured to give an answer that the Holy Spirit has not revealed to you yet. “As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.”—II Peter 3:16, 17.

Study to understand the original meaning of the scripture, and allow the Holy Spirit to show you how to apply and teach them in your current situation and day. Do not add to the principle that the scripture is teaching, and do not take away from the principles that the scriptures teach. “For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of

the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”—Revelation 22:18, 19.

So allow me to summarize what has been said by repeating again the following scripture: “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”—II Timothy 2:15. †



I AM VERY thankful to come into your homes today with another broadcast, or wherever you may be listening. I’ll be reading quite a lengthy text for the service. Acts, chapter 3, beginning with verse 1—“Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. And a certain man lame from his mother’s womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. Then Peter 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. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.”

There are two main thoughts expressed in that passage of scripture that I’d like to emphasize for a few minutes, although it’s a beautiful story of a man who found new hope, a new life, and a new beginning in Jesus Christ. The two main thoughts are: *Peter used what God had given him and God got the glory*; and *God moves in mysterious ways, His wonders to perform*. We’ve heard that phrase all our lives and it’s very, very true. Sometimes God moves in ways that people don’t understand.

This man in our text was totally surprised. He didn’t go there expecting to find what he did, but the circumstances of this, of course, are found in the preceding chapter, which is chapter 2. This was a historic part of the Christian church. Acts 2:1, 2 says, “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.” In other words, this was a fulfillment of a prophecy where the church was filled with the Holy Spirit, which is taken from the Old Testament as well as the New. God had bestowed on them what He had promised and gave them the power to go and carry out the commission He had given them. They were filled with the Holy Spirit of God.

Acts 2 is a very beautiful chapter. People were moved by the preaching on that day. It tells us, “Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Of course, Peter had gotten up and preached a message on that very day and 3,000 souls responded to that message. “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41). What a revival! They continued in what they had found. “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” Not only did they do that, but they stayed together. “And all that believed were together, and had all things common.” They not only stayed together, but wonders and signs resulted. And, of course, this was one of those signs that I read here a while ago. “And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles” (verse 43).

I read the text earlier from Acts, chapter 3, which is a beautiful story. There were three times a day set by the Jews for public prayer. In fact, David himself referred to praying evening, morning, and at noon. There are three times mentioned in the book of Acts that I read: the third hour (nine o’clock in the morning), the sixth hour (twelve o’clock at noon), and the ninth hour (three o’clock in the afternoon).

The temple had nine gates which were covered on every side with gold and silver, but there was one without the temple which was of Corinthian brass. This one was also larger than the other gates. This was probably the gate called Beautiful because it was on the outside of the temple to which there was easy access. It was a constant custom for all who entered the temple to carry money to give to the treasury or to the poor or to both of them. That’s why that man was there. There was nothing else that he could do but to reach out his hand for a little bit of help. There are so many circumstances in life that people find themselves in.

This man in Acts, chapter 3, was lame from his mother’s womb. Can you imagine what a day that must have been to that man to be able to get up and walk and leap and run for the very first time? There is nothing that God cannot do. Sometimes we don’t trust God enough. God is still the miracle-working God, and when others give up on us, He doesn’t give up on us. God is still available to us.

Peter and John valued the hour of prayer as well. That's why they were there. The Bible says, "Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour" (Acts 3:10). There are times in a day, in a week, in a month that Christians need to be sure that they're praying and communing with God. Prayer is the pulse of the church. It is the strength of the Christian. We cannot make it without praying, spiritually, and have any kind of spiritual level. Calling out to our Father is the breath of a Christian. So Peter and John went into the temple together to pray. God had a blessing in store for one suffering human being. We never know what God will do for us. I say that all the time in my ministry. We never know what God will do for us until we ask Him. We are told to ask.

This man in Acts 3 was always taken to the place where people gathered. That's why he was there where many people frequented that he might be able to receive a little bit of help. There was a reason for that; and that reason was, he was unable to provide for himself. We live in a very callous world, too. Many people go through serious circumstances in the world that others don't understand. Maybe people whom we call "well-to-do" may not always understand what desperation really is. I suppose this man was there asking for a little help because he could do nothing else.

This man quickly asked of Peter and John the little help he wanted. "Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms." They stopped. He drew their attention. I suppose what they probably asked themselves, "Do we look like people with money?" They said to this man, "Look on us." Perhaps this man didn't know who they were, or what they had, but God knew. This increased the man's hope. "And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them." What a story!

Peter and John had something more than silver and gold. They had the power in the name of Jesus. Acts 3:6, "Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee [That was Peter alone. Peter didn't say 'we.']: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." They certainly used what they had. You know, God gives us abilities and other things that we must use for His glory. Mankind is only God's instruments on Earth. Peter and John did not get the glory for this incident. God got the glory. Men can't do anything without the help of God. Peter and John certainly used what they had. It was God who was glorified in what they did. If you'll notice, they lifted the man up. They didn't throw him down. All through the Bible you will find where people were lifted up. Even Jesus Himself lifted them up.

This man then entered the temple with Peter and John. He was praising God. Acts 3:8, "And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God." Wasn't that something to praise God for? Thank God today He honors those who trust in Him.

God loves every one of us. God cares about us. The whole world belongs to God. The Bible tells us, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not

willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." The Lord can save a man and a woman from sin and keep them. He can heal their bodies, too. The Bible says, "There is nothing impossible with God if we can but believe."

Jesus asked a question one time, "Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" Yes, there will be faith on the earth. I believe there will be individuals with faith because there has to be a church when Jesus returns, and there cannot be a church without faith.

The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians one time, and I will read a couple of scriptures here in conclusion of this message: I Corinthians 1:26-28, "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are." What Peter had was the Holy Ghost in his life. That's what does the work.

The passage of scripture that I just read is not intended to convey the thought that God did not send the gospel to the wise, the powerful, and the noble, or did not will their salvation. That's not what it's saying. "Paul seems to allude to the Corinthian believers, in particular, since the Jews seem to assert the idea that it was by those wise and powerful, etc., that I had the right to God and His service." The truth is: the gospel has equal call to all classes of men, but in many cases the wise and the mighty, etc., are usually too busy to pay attention to any invitation to spiritual matters; therefore, it seems to be few, generally speaking, that avail themselves to God. God can use any human being. It doesn't matter where they come from, what their financial status is, what their nationality is, or anything else. The gospel is for the whosoever will. Once a man or a woman avail themselves to God, and say, "Here am I; Lord, use me, if you can, in your service for whatever you would like for me to do," He will use them in His kingdom.

God needs everyone that He can find to work for Him. The fields are white already to harvest, and the laborers are few. It looks like the world is making inroads into the church instead of the church making inroads into the world. God moves in mysterious ways, His wonders to perform. Even in national issues, if the church got down and did more praying and fasting, and got down to business with God, we could see things changed and turned around. God has done it in the past and He can do it in the future. God moves in ways, sometimes, that we don't understand.

This man, this one single individual that I've spoken about, found hope and joy and a new life in the power of God. He then walked with God and served Him. That's a good way to do it. Give it wholly and completely to the Lord. It's a wonderful way to live.

I trust that this story from the Bible here has blessed some soul that listened to me today. †

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER



HELPING

A Bible Lesson by Sis. Rebecca Bland

"Do you think the car will make it up the hill tonight?" I asked my father anxiously. Our poor old car had a habit of losing power on the steep hill that led to our house, and sometimes we had to park it at the bottom and walk the rest of the way home. I was only six, and the hill seemed like a mountain to me.

"I don't know. We'll see," said my father.

A few minutes later, we turned off the main road and started up the hill. About halfway up the steep incline, the car began to slow. "Come on," said my father to the car. "You can do it." But the car did not respond. It crept a few more feet and then stopped.

"We'll have to back up and try again," my father said. That was the part I dreaded—backing down the steep curves of the hill in the dark. Suppose our brakes worked no better than our engine did!

I breathed a sigh of relief when we arrived at the bottom of the hill. "This time I'm going to 'gun it' from the very beginning," said my father. "I think we'll make it."

"I hope so," said my mother. "Do you want some of us to get out and see if that makes any difference?"

"No," said my father. "We'll try it again with everyone riding."

My father pressed the accelerator, and the car started to climb the hill. When we got to the steepest part, however, it began to slow again, just as it had before.

That was when my four-year-old sister, Twila, and I decided we would help. We placed our hands on the back of the driver's seat and pushed with all of our might.

"Please go up!" Twila, said to the car. "Please!"

"Can you feel us pushing?" I asked my father.

"Yes," said my father. "I can feel it."

"Do you think the car can feel it?" I asked.

My father chuckled. "I doubt it," he said.

No matter how hard we pushed, the car could not make it up the hill. Back down we went to the bottom.

"I guess most of us will have to get out and walk," said my father, "so the car will have less of a load." He paused to think, and then he said to my mother, "If you want to drive, I'll walk and carry Wilma." My sister, Wilma, was only two years old. She could walk, but the steep hill would quickly become too much for her little legs, and someone would have to carry her.

"No," said my mother. "I'd rather walk, even carrying Wilma, than back the car down this hill in the dark if it stops again."

We all got out of the car except for my father. Once again he floored the accelerator and started up the hill. We listened intently, smiling to ourselves when we heard the sound of the engine fade in the distance as my father rounded the last curve and left the steep hill behind him. The car had made it!

In a short while, my father rejoined us, lifting Wilma onto his shoulders and leading the way through the darkness toward our home.

"Daddy," asked Twila, "why couldn't we get the car up the hill? We pushed with all our might!"

My father laughed. "You weren't really pushing the car," he said. "You were only pushing me."

"You mean we weren't helping at all?" she said in surprise.

"Nah," said my dad. "But it was nice of you to try."

I thought about that for the rest of the way up the hill. It seemed to us that we were helping a lot when we pushed as hard as we could against the back of my dad's seat in the car, but our efforts had been totally useless.

Helping is a good thing. Our parents teach us how to help when we are very young. The older we get, the more we are able to help. Adults help each other when they have challenging tasks to accomplish. But there are some things that require God's help. When we have done all that we can do, we must trust Him to take care of the part that is too big for us.

We should never be so confident in our own abilities that we do not remember the importance of asking God for His help. Those who rely only upon their own strength to be successful in life are bound to fail.

Our wise saying for this month is found in Proverbs 10:29, which says, "The way of the Lord is strength to the upright: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity." If we trust in the Lord for the power to defeat temptation and sin, we will be able to live upright lives that are pleasing in His sight.

Activity

What does it mean to live a life that is "upright"? Here are some words we find in the Bible that mean the same as "upright." Unscramble the letters to discover what they are.

1. tensho
2. broonhale
3. shigroute
4. sutroiuv
5. lambslees

Answer to Last Month's Activity

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." †

Jesus loves all the little children of the world!

SUFFERING SAINTS

By the late H. R. Matthews

SUFFERING is an inevitable component of the human race. It comes in many forms, for various reasons, and from different sources. However, we will limit our thoughts to the divine ordained suffering of the saints of God. “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Romans 8:17).

Suffering as used in this article means, “the chisel in the hand of the Divine Sculptor with which He prepares the sainted heart for service in taking the gospel to all the world; the Refiner’s flame that removes the dross from the heart of the saint so that he may be able to bear more fruit; the Potter’s wheel on which He forms the vessel for use in His divine service.”

There may be much that we do not understand as to why the divine ordained suffering of the saints is a part of God’s plan for His faithful children, but this we must understand: it comes from a heart of divine love, that the Divine One must never be questioned or charged foolishly.

There is no possibility that any plan of God could be flawed. The chisel in the hand of the Divine Sculptor is the chisel of love. The Refiner’s flame is the flame of compassion. The Potter’s wheel is the wheel of mercy. “For he doth not afflict willingly” (Lamentations 3:33). There are times, however, when Satan is directly involved in divine ordained suffering, but only with God’s permission.

Divine ordained suffering comes in various forms. To name just a few forms of divine ordained suffering, we will consider the following: losses in the domestic area, such as, financial woes; rejection by loved ones; bodily afflictions; with the mind being the battle-ground, the tranquility of the mind may be interrupted; the necessity of chastisement or correction; God withdrawing His presence for a time.

The divine ordained suffering of the saint is always an expression of God’s love and is permitted for the good of the saint and for the glory of God.

Perhaps it would be a help and encouragement for us to consider three Bible characters of the past who were examples of divine ordained suffering.

JOB: With the Lord’s controversy with Satan, He said to him, “Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?” (Job 1:8). Job was a wealthy man, and Satan said to God, “But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand” (Job 1:11, 12).

By God’s permission, Satan, by various means, destroyed Job’s flocks, his herds, all that he possessed. Job’s most prized possession, his children, were also destroyed. Did this cause Job to forsake his righteous integrity and curse God as Satan hoped that it would?

No! Rather, Job said, “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:21).

Though Satan failed in his first attempt to corrupt Job, he did not desist. He went again to God and said, “But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life” (Job 2:5, 6). “So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown” (Job 2:7).

God was in complete control of Job’s severe time of testing. God had a leash on Satan and he could go no further than the permission given him by God. By God’s permission, Satan did not stop with the affliction of boils, for the wife of his bosom became a mouthpiece for Satan, saying to Job, “Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die” (Job 2:9).

Next on Satan’s agenda were the supposed comforters that he sent that were actually his accusers who declared that Job’s suffering was the result of sin in his life. Not being able to perceive the presence of God when in the midst of a fiery trial can be most uncomfortable. Job describes this experience in the following words: “Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!” (Job 23:3). “Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him: But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold” (Job 23:8-10).

Job did come forth as gold. At the conclusion of the long, severe trial of suffering, God rewarded Job with twice the possessions he had before the suffering began; but why did God permit His faithful servant to suffer as he did, and for so long? It seems clear that Job’s suffering was the result of God’s controversy with Satan concerning Job’s integrity toward God in time of suffering. In this, God proved to Satan that He had a people that would love and serve Him, no matter what!

THE APOSTLE PAUL: After Saul (later called Paul) was blinded by the light from heaven and was converted, he traveled on into the city of Damascus and into the house of a man named Judas. God spoke to a disciple of Christ named Ananias who resided in Damascus, and instructed him to go to Saul and pray for him, “For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake” (Acts 9:16). Paul’s life was soon threatened as he began to preach the Christ he had so recently persecuted.

Paul suffered in many ways during his earthly ministry; however, we wish to dwell on the thorn in the flesh which he speaks of in the following words: “And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given unto me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in

my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (II Corinthians 12:7-9).

We are not told what the thorn in the flesh was. Some say it was persecution, others believe it was sickness, but it doesn’t really matter what it was; it was the purpose for which it served that is important, and that purpose was to keep Paul humble.

Now, let me draw your attention to **OUR LORD AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST:** Christ left His seat at the right hand of the Father and came among men where the Divine took on humanity housed in the body of clay. The human, to sustain the body, was nourished by the food that all other humans partook. He delighted in the sumptuous meals that Martha prepared for Him as He visited the home of Mary, Martha, and their brother, Lazarus. While the meal was being prepared for the human, the Divine spoke words of eternal life to Mary who was sitting at His feet.

The human grew weary and fell asleep in the rear of the boat on which Jesus and His disciples were crossing to the distant shore of the Sea of Galilee. The disciples became alarmed when a fierce storm arose and woke Jesus for His help. The Divine spoke to the tempest, saying, “Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm” (Mark 4:39).

The human experienced grief and wept as Mary and Martha grieved the death of their brother, Lazarus. The Divine said, “Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth” (John 11:43, 44).

The human experienced disappointment. The human said to the twelve, “Will ye also go away?” (John 6:67). Many of His followers were offended when He said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you” (John 6:53). “From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him” (John 6:66). The Divine said, “I am that bread of life” (John 6:48).

In Gethsemane, on the night of betrayal, the human was in agony, and in seeking escape from the coming suffering of the whip and of the cross, He prayed to the Father, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matthew 26:39). It was there in the garden that the Divine took on Himself the sins of all the world. This did not mean that He became a sinner in our place, but that He took on Himself the penalty of sin and paid the debt of sin we could not pay.

The humanity of Jesus felt the pain as the Roman whip left His back badly lacerated and torn. His humanity felt the pain as the nails were driven through His hands and feet. The human felt the pain as the weight of the body was borne only by the nails as He pushed Himself up so that He could gasp for another breath of air. The Divine said, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). The Divine said to the penitent thief on the cross to His right, “Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43). As the end drew near, the human cried out, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34). As Jesus breathed His last breath, the Divine said, “It is finished” (John 19:30). The plan of redemption was complete.

On the third day, the human rose from the grave and became the first fruits of them that slept. After forty days with His disciples, the visible human ascended toward heaven until a cloud obscured His view. Soon the Divine was seated again at the right hand of the Father interceding for His pleading saints.

In conclusion, consider the words of this song:

WHO WILL SUFFER WITH THE SAVIOR? D. S. Warner

Who will suffer with the Savior, Take the little that remains

Of the cup of tribulation Jesus drank in dying pains?

*Who will offer soul and body On the altar of our God?
Leaving self and worldly mammon, Take the path that Jesus trod?*

*O for consecrated service ’Mid the din of Babel strife!
Who will dare the truth to herald At the peril of his life?*

Soon the conflict will be over, Crowns await the firm and pure;

Forward, brethren, work and suffer, Faithful to the end endure.

Chorus:
*Lord, we fellowship thy passion, Gladly suffer shame and loss;
With thy blessing pain is pleasure, We will glory in thy cross!*

The great apostle Paul said, “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18). †

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FIVE REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD BE A CHRISTIAN

Radio Message by Bro. Greg Tyler

(aired 2/11/90)

I WOULD like to speak to you on “Five Reasons Why You Should be a Christian.” First of all, I would like to approach this subject of *what a Christian really is*.

I believe in our day and age, people have worked ideas of what it means to be a Christian. The word *Christian* means, “Christlike”; and the followers of Jesus were first called *Christians* at Antioch. They were called Christians out of mockery because they were endeavoring to live like Christ.

People have the idea, especially in our country, that as long as you’re not a Muslim, or a Hindu, or of some other religion, you are automatically a Christian. Beloved, such is a false idea. Others have the idea that as long as you go to church somewhere, that makes you a Christian. Not necessarily so, Beloved. There are many, many church members who are not really Christians. Christlike—endeavoring to live like Christ.

Jesus Christ had a twofold mission when He came into the world. First, He needed to suffer and die for our sins. He was our Passover Lamb; but also, He was our Teacher, our Example. He taught us how to live. He set the example before us, and a true Christian is one who endeavors to pattern his life after Jesus Christ. So when I speak on “Five Reasons Why You Should be a Christian,” I’m not talking about reasons why you should join some church, or reasons why should not be a Muslim or a Hindu, etc., but I’m speaking of reasons why you actually need to be a follower of Jesus Christ.

The first thing you must do to be a follower of Jesus Christ is to repent of your sins and be born again of the Spirit of God. That makes you a member of God’s church; that makes you a real Christian. If you go to church and you are not born again, then in the true sense of the word, you are not really a Christian. So what I’m desirous of doing is challenging you to get a real experience of salvation with almighty God.

Reason number one: **you were created for God’s pleasure.** The Bible tells us in the book of Revelation that for His pleasure we are, and were created. You were born to serve the Lord. If you’re not a Christian, you’re serving the devil and not the Lord. But God did not make you to serve the devil. God did not make you to follow sin. You were born to serve the Lord. You were created for His pleasure, and that’s one reason why you should be a Christian. Now, if you don’t believe in God and you don’t believe in creation, and you believe we’re all here by chance and there is no hereafter, then what I’m about to say will have no weight with you; but if deep down inside you are convinced that you are the creation of God, that you are the offspring of God, then you must realize that you were created for His pleasure,

for His glory, and to do His will. If you’re not doing the will of God, you’re not doing what you are here for. You were created. You live and move and have your being in God. “He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.” So you have a responsibility to God. You ought to be a Christian because that is why you’re here on this earth. If you’re outside the will of God, you’re outside the real purpose for your life.

Reason number two: **you should be a Christian because a life of sin brings spiritual death.** The life of sin brings heartache. The life of sin brings woe. There are two classes of people in the world: true Christians and sinners. Sin separates you from God and Christ. Sin is one thing that will bring havoc into your life. We must admit that most people live the life of sin, but you should be a Christian because sin brings spiritual death. Why choose the pathway of sin? You don’t have to go that way, Beloved. You can choose to serve Christ. You can choose to leave the path of sin, which leads us to our third thought—

Reason number three: **you should be a Christian because Jesus Christ came into this world, bled and suffered and died for your salvation.** I can hardly imagine how people can go through their daily lives and never give Christ a thought. He has done so much for every one of us. I believe with all of my heart that if I were the only sinner in the world, my Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, would have come and suffered, and would have allowed wicked men to crucify Him so that I could know eternal life. The same is true for each one of you. Jesus suffered stripes for you. He wept, as it were, great, great drops of blood for you. Doesn’t it mean anything to you that the Savior of men, the Son of the living God would weep in the Garden of Gethsemane with the sins of the whole world coming down upon His shoulders for you? Then He allowed men to take Him away, pluck out His beard, pierce His side, put a crown of thorns upon His brow, and finally crucify Him on Golgotha. Doesn’t it mean anything to you? You should be a Christian because of what Jesus did for you.

Reason number four: **you should be a Christian because pure Christianity is the only thing that will bring real happiness, peace, and pleasure in this time world.** One songwriter wrote: “I’ve tried the road of sin and found, Its prospects all deceive; I’ve proved the Lord and joys abound, More than I could believe.” You can try sin, you can try anything that sin offers, but in the end, Beloved, sin brings heartache, misery, and woe. But pure Christianity, real Christianity, real Holy Ghost religion will bring happiness, peace, and contentment to your soul. That’s why you should be a Christian. It’s not to be found in the world; it’s not to be found in the way of sin. Happiness is not there.

Why is there so much discontent, why is there so much heartache, why is there so much suicide, etc., in the world? It’s because people are not Christians. People are serving the world and trying everything that Satan has to offer, but it’s not to be found there. Believe me, the only way to really have purpose in your life, the only way to build a respectable and profitable life is to be a Christian. Give your life to Christ. Follow His teachings and precepts. Love your fellow man, and do

good even unto your enemies. Let me tell you, to live the Christian life in all of its purity brings happiness. Yes, there are some crosses to bear. There are some Gethsemanes to go through. There are some tears to be shed, but in it all, there’s a deep settled peace and joy that the world cannot take away. They might tempt us, try us, and do what they can to try to separate us from the love of Christ, but they cannot do it if we be true to the Lord. I challenge you, you need to be a Christian. There are many other reason why you should be a Christian, but I’m only mentioning five on this broadcast.

Reason number five: **you should be a Christian because if you die in your sins, hell will be your portion.** I know a lot of people don’t believe in hell. They don’t believe that a righteous God would send anyone to hell; but Beloved, if you believe the Bible, then you believe that there is a place of torment that was created for Satan and all of his imps. If you believe the Bible, then you must believe “the soul that sinneth, it shall die.” If you believe the Bible, then you must believe that when you depart, or any individual departs from this life in a state of sin, he or she cannot go to heaven.

*Heaven is a holy place,
Filled with glory and with grace;
Sin can never enter there:
All within its gates are pure,
From defilement kept secure,
Sin can never enter there.*

Since there are only two places of eternal abode—one, in glory—heaven with God, with Christ, with the Holy Ghost, with all the angels, and with all the saints who have gone on before, it’s either there—or the other, the place as we know as hell—torment, anguish, pain, misery throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. We’re living in a time of probation, and what we do, here and now, will determine where we’ll spend eternity. You should be a Christian because if you die in your sins, where Christ is, you cannot go.

We don’t know the day nor the hour when Christ shall come again. We don’t know the day nor the hour when we shall depart from this time world. We’re living in jeopardy every hour. My heart could stop beating in the next moment. Yours could, too; and when we die, there’s no chance of repentance. There’s no chance of turning to Christ then, no! If you’re going to turn to Christ and serve Him, it’s here and now. If you don’t, eternal punishment shall be your lot.

I’ve mentioned five reasons why you should be a Christian. These are things to think about and to consider. I want you to know, as we close this broadcast, if you’ll seek God’s face right now in true repentance and godly sorrow, He will accept you and redeem you from all iniquity. †

John 3:16

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

April 2020

RADIO LOG

The Way of Truth Broadcast

Alvin A. Craig, Radio Minister

(Aired on Sundays unless otherwise noted.)

- Alabama**, Mobile, WIJD 1270, AM & 97.9 FM 6:00 A.M.
5,000 Watts—Heard in part of AL, and MS
- Georgia**, Augusta, WFAM 1050, 8:00 P.M. Wednesday & 11:30 A.M. Sun.
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- Illinois**, Carmi, WROY 1460, 9:00 A.M.
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- Kentucky**, Prestonsburg, WDOC 1310, 7:30 A.M.
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- Louisiana**, Ball, KWDF 840 & 99.7 FM, 9:00 A.M.
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- Virginia**, Christiansburg, WKEX-FM 105.9, 8:00 A.M.
3,000 Watts—Heard in part of VA
- Virginia**, Lynchburg, WKPA 1390, 1:30 P.M. Fri., 5:30 P.M. Sat. & 6:00 A.M. Sun.
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- Virginia**, Lynchburg, WKPA-FM 106.7, 1:30 P.M. Fri., 5:30 P.M. Sat. & 6:00 A.M. Sun.
250 Watts—Heard in part of VA
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50,000 Watts—Heard in part of VA and WV

SHORTWAVE

- WWCR**, Nashville, Tennessee 4.840 on SW band
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